

CHAPTER III

PRACTICAL STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

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4.1 Morning Prayer

	<u>No.of Syllables</u>
1 God grant me privacy, cvc ccvcc cv ccvccv	6
2 Secretive as the mole, cvccvcc vc cv cvc	6
3 Inaccessibility, vcvccvccvccv	7
4 But only of the soul. cvc vccv vc cv cvc	6
5 Restore my waking time cvccv cv cvccv cvc	6
6 To vital present tense cv cvcc ccvccc cvcc	6
7 And dreams of love or crime vcc cvcc vc cvc v ccvc	6
8 To primal quiescence cv cvcc ccvccc	6
9 God grant me certainty cvc ccvcc cv cvcccv	6
10 In kinships with the sky. vc cvccvcc cvc cv ccv	6
11 Air, earth, fire, sea - vc vc cvc cv	4
12 And the fresh inward eye. vcc cv ccvc vccvc v	6
13 Whatever the enigma, cvcvccv cv vcccv	6
14 The passion of the blood, cv cvcv vc cv ccvc	6
15 Grant me the metaphor ccvcc cv cv cvccv	6
16 To make it human good. cv cvc vc ccvccv cvc	6

Syllabic Structure

Morning Prayer

- 1 God grant/me privacy,
 2 Secretive as/the mole,
 3 Inaccessibility,
 4 But only of/the soul.
- 5 Restore/my waking time/
 6 To vital present tense/
 7 And dreams/of love/or crime/
 8 To primal quiescence/
- 9 God grant/me certainty /
 10 In kinships with/the sky,
 11 Air,/earth,/fire,/sea -/
 12 And the/fresh inward eye./
- 13 Whatever the enigma,
 14 The passion of/the blood,
 15 Grant me/the metaphor/
 16 To make/it human good./

Metrical Structure

MORNING PRAYER

- 1 gʊd grɑ:nt mi: praɪvəsi
- 2 si:kɹətɪv əz ðə məul
- 3 ɪnæksesəbɪləti
- 4 bʌt əʊnli əv ðə səul

- 5 rɪstə: məɪ weɪkɪŋ taɪm
- 6 tə vaɪtl preznt tɛns
- 7 ən dri:smz əv lʌv ə: kraɪm
- 8 tə praɪml kwəɪsɪns

- 9 gʊd grɑ:nt mi: sə:tntɪ
- 10 ɪn kɪnʃɪps wɪð ðə skai
- 11 eər, ə:θ, faɪə, si:
- 12 ənd ðə freʃ ɪnwəd aɪ

- 13 wɒtevə ðə ɪnɪgmə
- 14 ðə pæʃn əv ðə blʌd
- 15 grɑ:nt mi: ðə metəfə
- 16 tə meɪk ɪt hju:mən gʊd

Phonetic Structure

Morning Prayer

A Detailed Analysis:

Ezekiel wrote this poem in 1959 and published it in The Unfinished Man. This poem is a short lyric which expresses Ezekiel's poetic skill of representing his urge for becoming an authentic poet. I have chosen this poem particularly because Ezekiel has succeeded here in his art of composing a short, meaningful poem. The opening lines of the poem remind one of 'Invocation to the Muse' in epic poetry. Just as epic poets sought inspiration from the Muse - the Goddess of Poetry, Ezekiel, in this poem, is seeking help from God.

The poem is written in 16 lines and has four stanzas of 4 lines each. In each stanza there is a different prayer. Lines 1 to 3 are linked with a half-rhyme (privacy/inaccessibility), 2 and 4 by a regular rhyme (mole/soul), 5 and 7 by a regular rhyme (time/crime), 6 and 8 by a half-rhyme (tense/quiescence), 9 and 11 by a half-rhyme (certainty/sea), 10 and 12 by a regular rhyme (sky/eye); there is no rhyme in lines 13 and 15: the words (enigma/metaphor) do not rhyme, and lines 14 and 16 are linked by an eye-rhyme (blood/good). From this description we observe that the poem follows a symmetrical rhyming pattern. It is:

abab cdcd efef ghih

From the rhyming pairs illustrated above we notice that

most of them are bound by close semantic connections which help create structures of meaning in the poem. For instance: 'privacy/inaccessibility' (1/3), 'time / crime' (5/7) and 'sky / eye' (10/12).

The syllabic pattern of the poem is as follows:

<u>Stanza</u>	<u>No. of syllables in each line</u>			
1	6	6	7	6
2	6	6	6	6
3	6	6	4	6
4	7	6	6	6

Out of 16 lines 13 lines have 6 syllables. Lines 3, 11 and 13 have 7, 4 and 7 syllables respectively. The foregrounding of line No. 11 which has 4 syllables is very significant in the sense four elements of life - 'air', 'earth', 'fire' and 'sea' are foregrounded in it. Out of 66 words in the poem, 48 words are monosyllabic and 18 words are polysyllabic. The foregrounding of the polysyllabic words like 'inaccessibility' (3), 'privacy' (1), 'secretive' (2), 'quiescence' (8), 'kinships' (10), 'enigma' (13), and 'metaphor' (15) is semantically significant. The predominance of monosyllabic words explains the poem's simplicity.

The poem is written in iambic trimetre. Spondee and pyrrhic are used as modulations. The 4 stressed monosyllables in line 11

are foregrounded in the metrical pattern to state the basic elements of life.

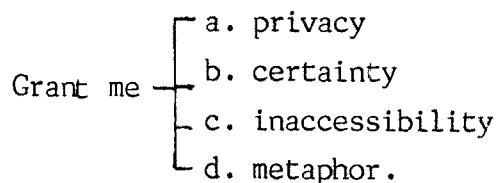
Most of the lines in the poem are not end-stopped lines and there is a syntactic pull all the time. Such run-on lines reinforce the effect of poet's genuine urge for help. It also impels the reader to move from one line to another without a rest. The following lines illustrate the point:

- 5 *Restore my waking time* ⇒
 6 *To vital present tense,*
- 7 *And dreams of love or crime* ⇒
 8 *To primal quiescence.*
- 15 *Grant me the metaphor* ⇒
 16 *To make it human good.*

The syntactic pattern of the poem is repetitive. Repetition of 'Grant me' in the following lines is important:

- 1 God Grant me privacy
 9 God Grant me certainty
 15 Grant me the metaphor.

It reflects Ezekiel's intense urge in the prayer for 'privacy', 'certainty', 'inaccessibility' and 'metaphor'.



There is also syntactic parallelism in lines 6 and 8:

6 To vital present tense

8 To primal quiescence

and in

1 God grant me privacy S-V-IO-DO

2 God grant me certainty S-V-IO-DO

3 Grant me the metaphor -V-IO-DO

This syntactic parallelism highlights the submissive nature of the protagonist before God.

The use of conjunction 'and' in the lines:

7 And dreams of love or crime

12 And the fresh inward eye

is meaningful and the conjunction 'and' is used in the additive sense.

On the phonological level there are some instances of alliteration in the poem:

God grant (1 and 9)

me metaphor (15)

The use of such phonological foregrounding adds to the musicality of the poem.

The syntactically parallel constructions of the noun phrases such as:

dreams of love or crime (7) H-M

passion of the blood (14) H-M

and

vital present tense (6)

fresh inward eye (12)

indicate the poet's efforts in composing the poem and suggest the semantic difference effectively.

4.2 Marriage

		<u>No. of</u> <u>Syllables</u>
1	Lovers, when they marry, face cvcvc cvc cv cvcv cvc	7
2	Eternity with touching grace. vcvcvcv cvc cvcvc ccvc	8
3	Complacent at being fated cvcccvccc vc cvc cvcvc	8
4	Never to be separated cvcv cv cv cvcvcvcvc	8
5	The bride is always pretty, the groom cv ccvc vc vccvc ccvcv cv ccvc	9
6	A lucky man. The darkened room v cvcv cvc cv cvcvc ccvc	8
7	Roars out the joy of flesh and blood. cvc vc cv cv vc ccvc vcc ccvc	8
8	The use of nakedness is good. cv cvc vc cvcvcvc vc cvc	8
9	I went through this, believing all, v cvcc ccv cvc cvcvcvc vc	8
10	Our love denied the Primal Fall. v cvc cvcvc cv ccvc cvc	8
11	Wordless, we walked among the trees, cvccvc cv cvcc vcvc cv ccvc	8
12	And felt immortal as the breeze vcc cvcc vcvc vc cv ccvc	8
13	However many times we came cvvcv cvcv cvcc cv cvc	8
14	Apart, we came together. The same vcvc cv cvc cvcvcv cv cvc	9
15	Thing over and over again. cvc vcv vcc vcv vcvc	8
16	Then suddenly the mark of Cain. cvc cvcccv cv cvc vc cvc	8
17	Began to show on her and me. cvcvc cv cv vc cv vcc cv	8
18	Why should I ruin the mystery cv cvc v cvvc cv cvccvcv	8
19	By harping on the suffering rest, cv cvcvc vc cv cvcvcvc cvcc	9
20	Myself a frequent wedding guest? cvcvc v cvcvcvc cvcvc cvcc	8

Syllabic Structure

Marriage

- 1 / x x / / x / /
 Lovers, / when they / marry, / Face /
 2 x / x x x / / x / /
 Eternity / with touching grace, /
 3 x / x x / / x / / x / /
 Complacent at / being / fated /
 4 / x / x x / / x / / x / /
 Never / to be / separated /

 5 x / x / / x / / x x / /
 The bride / is always pretty, the groom /
 6 x / /
 A luckyman. The darkened room
 7 / x x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Roars out / the joy / of Flesh / and blood /
 8 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 The use / of nakedness / is good. /

 9 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 I went / through this, / believing all, /
 10 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Our love / denied / the Primal Fall. /
 11 / x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Wordless, / we walked / among / the trees, /
 12 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 And felt / immortal as / the breeze. /

 13 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 However many times / we came /
 14 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Apart, / we came / together. The same /
 15 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Thing over and / over / again. /
 16 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Then suddenly / the mark / of Cain /

 17 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Began / to show / on her / and me. /
 18 / x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Why should / I ruin / the mystery /
 19 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 By harping on / the suffering rest. /
 20 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Myself / a frequent wedding guest?

Metrical Structure

MARRIAGE

- 1 lavəz wen ðei mæri feis
 2 itə:nəti wið tatʃiŋ greis
 3 kəmpleisnt ət bi:iŋ feitið
 4 nevə tə bi sepəreitid

 5 ðə braid iz ə:lweiz priti ðə gru:m
 6 ə ləki mæn. ðə dɑ:kənd ru:m
 7 rə:z aut ðə dʒəi əv fleʃ ənd bləd
 8 ðə ju:s əv neikidnes iz gud

 9 ai went θru: ðis bili:viŋ ə:l
 10 əs lav:dinaid ðə praɪml fə:l
 11 wə:ðles wi wə:kt əməŋ ðə tri:z
 12 ənd felt imə:tl əz ðə bri:z

 13 hauevə meni taimz wi keɪm
 14 əpɑ:t wi keɪm təgeðə ðə seɪm
 15 θiŋ əuvə ənd əuvə əgen
 16 ðen sɑdnli ðə mɑ:k əv keɪn

 17 biɡən tə ʃəu ɒn hə: ənd mi:
 18 wai ʃəd ai ru:ɪn ðə mistəri
 19 bəi hɑ:pɪŋ ɒn ðə sɑfəriŋ rest
 20 məɪself ə frɪkwent wediŋ gest

Phonetic Structure

Marriage**A Detailed Analysis:**

This poem is taken from The Unfinished Man published in 1960. The poem deals with love, marriage, and failure in marriage. The poem is written in 20 lines, five stanzas of four lines each. Lines 1 and 2 are connected with a regular rhyme (face / grace), 3 and 4 by a half-rhyme (fated / separated), 5 and 6 by a regular rhyme (groom / room), 7 and 8 by a half-rhyme (blood / good), 9 and 10 by a regular rhyme (all / fall), 11 and 12 by a regular rhyme (trees / breeze), 13 and 14 by a regular rhyme (came / same), 15 and 16 by a regular rhyme (again / Cain), 17 and 18 by a half rhyme (me / mystery), and lines 19 and 20 by a regular rhyme (rest / guest). The rhyme-scheme which is:

aa bb cc dd ee ff gg hh ii jj

plays an important part in its emotional effect as the rhyming words are semantically bound and the associations between them are skillfully brought about. It will be seen that Ezekiel has maintained rhyme throughout the poem. The rhyming words are semantically connected. For instance:

fated - separated (3/4)

groom - room (5/6)

trees - breeze (11/12)

rest - guest (19/20)

This shows that Ezekiel has taken meticulous care while using the rhyming words which have created structures of meaning intended by the poet. However, critical comments like:

The musical scheme of the lines rhyming together in a stanza of four lines relieves the tension which the poet feels on account of the loss of love and failure in marriage.¹

seem to be rather vague and highly subjective and do not help the reader to appreciate the poem.

The syllabic structure of the poem is as follows:

Stanza	No. of syllables in each line			
1	7	8	8	8
2	9	8	8	8
3	8	8	8	8
4	8	9	8	8
5	8	8	9	8

Ezekiel has used 8 syllabic pattern throughout the poem except in lines 1, 5, 14 and 19, which have 7,9,9 and 9 syllables respectively. The foregrounding of these lines in their syllabic structure gives an emphasis on the ideas they carry.

Out of 114 words in the poems, 78 words are monosyllabic and 36 words are polysyllabic. Thus the predominance of monosyllabic words shows the slow and smooth movement. The polysyllabic words

in the poem carry much information. For example, words such as 'eternity', 'complacent', 'nakedness', 'darkened', are thematically quite significant.

When we read the poem, it strikes us with its formal organization and impresses us with the concreteness in terms of meaning. The five stanzas of the poem can be divided into two groups in the following way:

stanza 1	}	deal with general experience
stanza 2		
stanza 3	}	deal with personal reaction
stanza 4		
stanza 5		

In the first two stanzas of the poem the poet speaks about 'Marriage' and states the facts of marriage but in the remaining three stanzas he narrates his own experience of marriage and his reactions to married life. This thematic division of the poem appears to be logical and convincing.

The metrical analysis of the poem shows that Ezekiel is very skillful in his versification. He uses iambic tetrametre in the poem with a few modulations. The use of a stressed monosyllabic word at the end of the first line is very significant.

/ x / x / / x /
Lovers, / when they / marry / face (1)

It makes the reader aware of what happens after marriage. The third stanza describes the protagonist's mental state during the happy days immediately after marriage. But the dream and the metre are shattered in the fourth stanza. Here the rhythm is jerky, the sentence structure works against the metre and the last sentence spills onto the next stanza:

Stanza 4: Then suddenly the mark of Cain } (16)

Stanza 5: Began to show on her and me (17)

After the smooth, regular versification of the earlier stanzas this very effectively enacts the break-down of the marriage. Though the poem is written in rising rhythm and the basic metre is iambus, Ezekiel has used trochee as modulation in order to avoid the monotonous rhythmic pattern.

Many lines in the poem are not end-stopped lines. Ezekiel has used run-on lines in the poem to connect and correlate meaning in the poem:

- 1 *Lovers, when they marry, face* ⇒
- 2 *Eternity with touching grace*
- 5 *The bride is always pretty, the groom* ⇒
- 6 *A lucky man. The darkened room* ⇒
- 7 *Roars out the joy of flesh and blood.*
- 9 *I went through this, believing all* ⇒
- 10 *Our love denied the Primal Fall*

- 13 *However many times we came* ⇒
 14 *Apart, we came together. The same* ⇒
 15 *thing over and over again.*

The use of enjambment reinforces the continuity of thought and emotion in the poem.

There is not much foregrounding on the phonetic level. However, the alliteration in line 11 is significant.

11 Wordless we walked among the trees.

The diction of the poem is quite suitable for its theme. Ezekiel uses words with great freedom of definition. Common experience of marriage is expressed with the help of common words. In the following line Ezekiel has brought out the contrast very cleverly:

- 13 *However many times we came*
 14 Apart we came together

The repetition of the words 'came' and 'over' intensifies the action. There are biblical overtones in the poem:

Primal Fall (10)

Cain (16)

These biblical allusions of the primal fall of man and the fate of Cain are used to convey the seriousness of the theme. The word 'grace' (2) has religious associations yet it is used to convey the idea of endless joy:

Eternity with touching grace.

On the syntactic level, the word order is normal except in some lines where he has transposed some words in order to draw the attention of the reader:

1. **Lovers**, when they marry, face
11. **Wordless** we walked among the trees

The use of inversion in the above lines is significant because it highlights the activity of walking without exchanging words. The poet has also used two rhetorical questions in the poem which imply answers. It is an emphatic way of making statements. For example,

18. Why should I ruin the mystery
20. Myself a frequent wedding guest?

With the help of these rhetorical questions Ezekiel has brilliantly summed up the paradoxical pleasure of the marriage.

4.3 Night of the Scorpion

No.of
Syllables

1	I remember the night my mother	9
	v cvcvccv cv cvc cv cvcv	
2	was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours	8
	cvc ccvc cv v ccvcvc cvc vvc	
3	of steady rain had driven him	8
	vc ccvcv cvc cvc ccvc cvc	
4	to crawl beneath a sack of rice.	8
	cv ccvc cvcvc v cvc vc cvc	
5	Parting with his poison-flash	7
	cvcvc cvc cvc cvcc ccvc	
6	of diabolic tail in the dark room -	9
	vc cvcvcvc cvc vc cv cvc cvc	
7	he risked the rain again.	6
	cv cvccc cv cvc vcvc	
8	The pleasants came like swarms of flies	8
	cv cvcccc cvc cvc ccvc vc cvc	
9	and buzzed the Name of God a hundred times	10
	vcc cvcc cv cvc vc cvc v cvcccvcc cvcc	
10	to paralyse the Evil One.	7
	cv cvcvcvc cv vcc cvc	
11	With candles and with lanterns	7
	cvc cvcccc vcc cvc cvccvcc	
12	throwing gaint scorpion shadows	7
	ccvvc cvvcc ccvcvc cvcvc	
13	on the sun-baked walls	5
	vc cv cvc cvcc cvcc	
14	they searched for him: he was not found.	8
	cv cvcc cv cvc cv cvc cvc cvcc	
15	They clicked their tongues.	4
	cv ccvc cv cvcc	
16	With every movement that the scorpion made	10
	cvc vccv cvccvcc cvc cv ccvcvc cvc	
17	his poison moved in Mother's blood, they said	10
	cvc cvcc cvcc vc cvcvc ccvc cv cvc	
18	May he sit still, they said.	6
	cv cv cvc ccvc cv cvc	
19	May the sins of your previous birth	8
	cv cv cvcc vc cv ccvcvc cvc	
20	be burned away tonight, they said.	8
	cv cvcc vcv cvcvc cv cvc	
21	May your suffering decrease	7
	cv cv cvcvcvc cvccvc	
22	the misfortunes of your next birth, they said	10
	cv cvccvccvc vc cv cvccc cvc cv cvc	
23	May the sum of evil	5
	cv cv cvc vc vcc	
24	balanced in this unreal world	7
	cvcvccc vc cvc vccvc cvcc	
25	against the sum of good	6
	vcvccc cv cvc vc cvc	

		<u>No. of</u> <u>Syllables</u>
26	became diminished by your pain. cvcvc cvevevcc cv cv cvc	8
27	May the poison purify your flesh cv cv cvcc cevevev cv cvc	9
28	of desire, and your spirit of ambition, vc cvevvc vcc cv cevevc vc vccvcc	11
29	they said, and they sat around cv cvc vcc cv cvc vevcc	7
30	On the floor, with my mother, in the centre, vc cv ccv cvc cv cvcv vc cv cvccv	11
31	the peace of understanding on each face cv cv vc vccvccvccvc vc vc cvc	10
32	More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours, cv cvcccc cv cvccvcc cv cvcvc	9
33	more insects, and the endless rain cv vccvccc vc cv vccvcc cvc	8
34	My mother twisted through and through cv cvcv cevevc ccv vcc ccv	8
35	groaning on a mat. cvevc vc v cvc	5
36	My father, sceptic, rationalist, cv cvcv cevevc cvccvcc	8
37	trying every curse and blessing, cvc vccv cvc vcc cevevc	8
38	powder, mixture, herb and hybrid. cvcv cvccv cvc vcc cvccvc	8
39	He even poured a little paraffin cv vcc cvc v cvcc cvevevc	9
40	upon the bitten toe and put a match to it vcvc cv cvcc cv vcc cvc v cvc cv vc	12
41	I watched the flame feeding on my mother. v cvcc cv ccvc cvevc vc cv cvcv	10
42	I watched the holy man perform his rites v cvcc cv cvcv cvc cvevc cvc cvcc	10
43	to tame the poison with an incantation. cv cvc cv cvcc cvc vc vccvccvcc	11
44	After twenty hours vccv ccvccv vvc	5
45	it lost its sting. vc cvcc vcc ccvc	4
46	My mother only said cv cvcv vccv cvc	6
47	Thank God the scorpion picked on me cvcc cvc cv ccvvc cvcc vc cv	8
48	and spared my children vcc ccvc cv cvccvc	5

Syllabic Structure

Night of the Scorpion

1 I remember the night/my mother /
 2 was stung/by a/scorpion./ Ten hours/
 3 of steady rain/had driven him/
 4 to crawl/beneath/a sack/of rice./
 5 Parting/with his/poison-flash
 6 of diabolical/tail in/the dark room--/
 7 he risked/the rain/again./
 8 The peasants came/like swarms/of flies/
 9 and buzzed/the Name/of God/a hundred times /
 10 to paralyse/the Evil One./
 11 With candles/and with/lanterns
 12 throwing/giant scorpion/shadows
 13 on the sun-baked walls/
 14 they searched/for him: he was/not found./
 15 They clicked/their tongues. /
 16 With every movement that/the scorpion made/
 17 his poison moved/in Mother's blood,/they said./
 18 May he/sit still,/they said/
 19 May the/sins of/your previous birth/
 20 be burned/away/tonight,/they said./
 21 May your/suffering/decrease/
 22 the misfortunes/of your/next birth,/they said./
 23 May the sum/of evil/
 24 balanced/in this unreal world/
 25 against/the sum/of good/

- 26 / x / x / / x x / / / your pain. /
 27 x x / / x / / x x / / / your flesh /
 28 x x / / x x / / x x / / / of ambition, /
 29 / x / / x / / / and they sat / around /
 30 x x / / x x / / x x / / / in the centre, /
 31 x / / x / / x / / / the peace / of understanding on / each face. /
 32 / x / / x / / / More candles / more lanterns, / more neighbours, /
 33 / x / / x / / / more insects, / and the endless rain. /
 34 x / / x / / x / / / My mother twisted through / and through /
 35 / x / / x x / / / groaning / on a mat. /
 36 x / / x / / x / / / My father, sceptic, rationalist, /
 37 x / / x / / x / / / trying / every / curse and / blessing, /
 38 / x / / x x / / x / / / powder, / mixture, / herb and / hybrid. /
 39 x x / / x / / x x / / / He even poured / a little paraffin /
 40 x / / x / / x / / / upon / the bitten toe / and put / a match / to it. /
 41 x / / x / / x x / / / I watched / the flame / feeding / on my mother. /
 42 x / / x / / x / / / I watched / the holy man / perform / his rites /
 43 x / / x / / x x / / / to tame / the poison with / an incantation. /
 44 / x / / x / / / After / twenty hours /
 45 x / / x / / / it lost / its sting. /
 46 x / / x / / x / / / My mother only said /
 47 / x / / x / / x / / / Thank God / the scorpion picked / on me /
 48 x / / x / / x / / / and spared / my children /

NIGHT OF THE SCORPION

- 1 ai rimembə ðə nait mai maðə
- 2 wəz stɑŋ baɪ ə skɔːpiən ten əwez
- 3 əv stedi rein həd drivn him
- 4 tə krɔːl biniːθ ə sæk əv rais
- 5 pɑːtɪŋ wið hiz pɔɪzn flæʃ
- 6 əv daɪə bɒlik teil in ðə dɑːk ruːm
- 7 hi riskt ðə rein əgen.
- 8 ðə pezn̩ts keɪm laɪk swɔːmz əv flɑɪz
- 9 ənd bɑːzð ðə neɪm əv ɡʊd ə haʊndrəd taɪmz
- 10 tə pərəleɪz ðə iːvl wɪn
- 11 wið kændl̩z ənd wið læntən̩z
- 12 θrəʊɪŋ dʒaɪənt skɔːpiən ʃædəʊz
- 13 ɒn ðə sɑn beɪkt wɔːlz
- 14 ðei sɔːtʃt fə him hi wəz nɒt faʊnd
- 15 ðei klikt ðeə tɑŋz
- 16 wið evri muːvmənt ðət ðə skɔːp iən meɪd
- 17 hiz pɔɪzn muːvd in maðəz blɑd ðei seɪd
- 18 meɪ hi sit stɪl ðei seɪd
- 19 meɪ ðə sɪnz əv ʒəː prɪːvɪəs bɔːθ
- 20 bi bɔːnd ə wei tə nait ðei seɪd
- 21 meɪ ʒəː sɑfəriŋ dɪkriːs
- 22 ðə mɪsfɔːtʃuːnz əv ʒəː nekst bɔːθ ðei seɪd
- 23 meɪ ðə sɑm əv iːvl
- 24 bælənst in ðis ʌnriəl wɔːld
- 25 ə ɡenst ðə sɑm əv ɡuːd
- 26 bi kɑm dɪmɪnɪʃt baɪ ʒəː peɪn

- 27 mei ðe pɔɪzn pjuərɪfai jə: fleʃ
 28 əv dɪzəɪər ənd jə: spɪrɪt əv ɛm bɪʃn
 29 ðei seɪd ənd ðei sət əraʊnd
 30 ʊn ðe flə: wɪð maɪ mɑðeɪn ðe sentə
 31 ðe pi:s əv ʌndəstændɪŋ ʊn i:tʃ feɪs
 32 mɑ: kændlɪz mɑ: lɛntənz mɑ: neɪbɔ:z
 33 mɑ: ɪnsɛkts ən ʃi ɛndlɛs reɪn
 34 maɪ mɑðeɪn twɪstɪd θru: ənd θru:
 35 grəʊnɪŋ ʊn ə mæt
 36 maɪ fa:ðeɪ sɛptɪk rɛʃnəlɪst
 37 traɪŋ ɛvri kɔ:s ənd blɛsɪŋ
 38 paʊde mɪktʃə hɔ:b ənd haɪbrɪd
 39 hi i:vɪn pɔ:d ə lɪtl pɛrɛfɪn
 40 əpɒn ðe bɪtɪn təʊ ənd put ə mætʃ tu: ɪt
 41 aɪ wɒtʃt ðe fleɪm fi:dɪŋ ʊn maɪ mɑðeɪn
 42 aɪ wɒtʃt ðe hæʊlɪ mæn pɛfɔ:m hɪz raɪts
 43 tə teɪm ðe pɔɪzn wɪð ən ɪnkɛntɛɪʃn
 44 ɑ:ftə twenti ɔwez
 45 ɪt lɒst ɪts stɪŋ

 46 maɪ mɑðeɪn əʊnli seɪd
 47 θæŋk ɡɒd ðe skɔ: piən pɪkt ʊn mi
 48 ənd spɛəd maɪ tʃɪldrən.

Phonetic Structure

Night of the Scorpion**A Detailed Analysis:**

This poem is regarded as Ezekiel's masterpiece. It was published in 1965 in the volume The Exact Name. This is a simple narrative poem. It reflects the love of an innocent Indian mother for her children. The theme of the poet's mother, stung by a scorpion, is given multiple treatment, bringing in its sweep the world of magic and superstition, science and rationality and the maternal affection.

I have selected this poem for my analysis because in this poem, Ezekiel succeeded in his attempt to discard the traditional verse form and to use free verse. The success of the poet lies in his careful variation of rhythm which helps him to achieve different effects. The protagonist's detachment and his observation of the things happening around him are skillfully presented in free verse. It is free in the sense that it does not follow stanza pattern and rhyme. In the analysis of this poem my aim is to show that Ezekiel's free verse is not a mere escape from the restraints imposed by a fixed form but it is the employment of a rhythm that suits the emotional mood of the poem. In the present poem Ezekiel seeks a stricter discipline and arrives at what according to Marjorie Boulton is the third kind of free verse: "Incantatory verse with rhythms suggesting the Bible ... and verse with a more colloquial style, suitable for the expression of difficult thought or sometimes

of cynicism or the 'man-of-the-world' attitude".² The poem follows a linear narrative pattern.

The poem is written in 48 lines and there is no stanza division except the last three lines where the poem reaches its climax. However, it has verse paragraphs and it is split into such paragraphs. For instance, lines 1 to 4 form one verse paragraph. So the semantic unit of the content is embodied by one verse paragraph.

The lines in the poem are uneven in length and vary in the number of syllables they have and that is why there is no uniform syllabic pattern. The spread of syllables in the poem is as follows:

1 line has 12 syllables
 3 lines have 11 syllables
 8 lines have 10 syllables
 5 lines have 9 syllables
 14 lines have 8 syllables
 7 lines have 7 syllables
 4 lines have 6 syllables
 4 lines have 5 syllables
 2 lines have 4 syllables

Thus, it is seen that the lines in the poem vary from 4 syllables to 12 syllables in their syllabic structure. Out of 288 words in the poem 213 words are monosyllabic and 75 words are polysyllabic, and we do not notice any significant foregrounding of

the polysyllabic words.

Since the poem is written in free verse, it does not follow a specific metrical pattern. Yet it has incantatory rhythm; the arrangement of stressed syllables is significant. For example:

38 powder, / mixture, / herb and / hybrid /

This line in trochee suggests the collection of so many things.

The lines in the poem are not end-stopped lines. As it is natural to the free verse Ezekiel has used a number of run-on lines. The following are the examples of run-on lines:

- 1 I remember the night my mother ⇒
- 2 was stung by a scorpion. Ten hours ⇒
- 3 of steady rain had driven him ⇒
- 4 to crawl beneath a sack of rice.

- 5 Parting with his poison-flash ⇒
- 6 of diabolic tail in the dark room ⇒
- 7 he risked the rain again.
- 11 With candles and with lanterns ⇒
- 12 throwing giant scorpion shadows ⇒
- 13 on the sun-baked walls ⇒
- 14 they searched for him: he was not found.

The above examples illustrate that the run-on lines are used to form verse-paragraphs. Here Ezekiel's skillful construction of verse paragraphs reminds us of Milton's verse-paragraphs in Paradise Lost and the essence of the verse paragraph is an avoidance of finality. There is a grammatical overflow from one line to the

It deprives the reader of relaxing at intermediate stopping places.

The phonological repetition of certain sounds gives rise to images in the poem. The nasal sounds are used very frequently to produce certain effect. For example:

/m/ is used 49 times

/n/ is used 83 times

/ŋ/ is used 11 times

The recurrent use of nasal sounds helps to create an incantatory rhythm. When we read the poem it sounds like someone uttering the *mantras*. Ezekiel has selected such words in which nasals predominate. It shows his deliberate attempt to correlate the meaning of the poem with sounds of the words. The use of onomatopoeia is very significant in the poem. The phenomenon of transparent words sound echo the meaning - is called onomatopoeia. For example:

buzzed the Name of God (9)

They clicked their tongues (15)

Here, the sounds suggest the meaning of the words. Throughout the poem we notice religious undertones and they are produced by using certain phrases. For instance,

'Name of God', (9) 'Evil One' (10), 'Sins of birth' (19), 'Sum of evil' (23), 'Sum of good' (25), 'purify your flesh' (27), 'spirit of ambition' (28), 'curse and blessing' (37), 'holy man perform his rites' (42), 'with an incantation' (43), 'thank God' (47).

With the help of above phrases Ezekiel has succeeded in creating an appropriate situation for his theme. The use of such phrases in the poem helps to present the superstitious behaviour of the ignorant village folk.

The use of capitalization is very significant in the poem. For example,

God (9)
Evil (10)
Mother (17)

The contrast is brought out with the help of using capitalization in the above words. Ezekiel uses the device of alliteration in order to connect the two words by similarity of sounds to make the reader think their possible connections. The examples are:

I remember the night (m)y (m)other (1)
(P)arting with his (p)oison flash (5)
of (d)iabolic tail in the (d)ark room (6)
May the (p)oison (p)urity your flesh (27)
(h)erb and (h)ybrid (38)
He even (p)oured a little (p)arafin

It is seen from the above illustrations that Ezekiel's sense of sound is a centrally operating factor in a variety of ways in the poem. He builds the basic structure of the poem on the basis of poem's 'orchestration' of phonological units.

On the syntactic level there are good examples of structurally

parallel constructions. For example:

May he sit still, they said
May the sins of your previous birth
 be burned away tonight, they said
May your suffering decrease
 The misfortunes of your next birth, they said.
May the sum of evil
 balanced in this unreal world
 against the sum of good
 become diminished by your pain, they said.
May the poison purify your flesh
 of desire, and your spirit of ambition
they said. (18-31)

With the help of structurally parallel construction 'May - they said' the enactment of the ritual is deliberately foregrounded. Here, the parallelism rests upon the principle of equivalence between two or more elements which are either similar or contrastive. The polite and submissive manner of expressing one's wishes is expressed with the help of above syntactic pattern. Again, while foregrounding this construction Ezekiel has used another stylistic device of inversion. For example:

May he sit still they said (18)

The normal word-order would be:

They said he may sit still

The postponing of the subject verb unit of the clause to the end position of the clause highlights the topicalized elements - 'May

he sit still'. The series of such expressions used in a parallel manner paradigmatically, from lines 18 to 29 form a coherent unit and create a unique structure of meaning conveying the various opinions of the village folk gathered on the occasion. The repetition of the phrase 'they said' in the lines referred above suggests an anxiety and intensity of the feelings expressed by the villagers. Here is another example of parallelism, involving only initial repetition:

I watched the flames feeding on my mother (41)

I watched the holy man perform his rites (42)

Here, the parallelism is significant as it sets up a relationship of contrast. It opposes two different attitudes to one and the same event. Or again take these lines:

More candles, more lanterns, more neighbours, (32)

more insects and endless rain (33)

Immediate repetition predominates here, and it contrasts sharply with the formality of the parallelisms preceding it. It also injects a note of feverish activity into the tedium of the ritual. The mixing of registers in the above examples, ironically points to the helplessness of onlookers. The parallelism in the above examples stands out rhythmically too in sharp contrast to other lines in their lessened tempo. This in turn reinforces the meaning. They imitate the ritual of exorcism.

One more example of structural parallelism on the phrase level is unique:

on the floor, with my mother, in the centre:

The parallel construction:

Prep. + Det. + Noun

in the above line, in anapaest, is quite outstanding in the poem.

The contrast is brought out very skillfully with the help of semantically deviant structure in the following lines:

My father, sceptic, rationalist,
trying every curse and blessing (36-37)

Diction of the poem is quite appropriate to its theme. The words like, 'sack', 'rice', 'dark room', 'peasants', 'candles', 'lanterns', 'insects', 'neighbours', 'sun-baked walls', 'mat', 'find help to create the atmosphere which we in most of the Indian villages.

Lexical cohesion occurs in the use of the words 'poison', 'diabolic', 'evil', 'pain', 'suffering', 'purify' since they all refer to a coherent situation related to the stinging of a scorpion. The religious tone is achieved in the poem by using the words like 'God', 'Evil', 'curse', 'blessing', 'rites', 'previous birth', 'next birth', 'spirit', 'sin', 'unreal world', 'sum of good', 'sum of evil', and 'incantation'.

The use of simile in the following line:

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The peasants came like swarms of flies (8)

highlights the sudden arrival of the farmers at the place.

All the above observations prove Ezekiel's skill of using free verse, a form which is suitable for his theme. It also reinforces what Ezekiel has said about the form in poetry:

*I cannot think of poetry without at the same time thinking of its form ... form is as much the aim of the poet as meaning in all its modes.*³

which I have already referred in Chapter I of this dissertation.

4.4 Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher

		No.of Syllables
1	To force the pace and never to be still cv cvc cv cvc vcc cvcv cv cv cvc	10
2	Is not the way of those who study birds vc cvc cv vc vc cvc cv cecvc cvcc	10
3	Or women. The best poets wait for words. v cvevc cv cvcc cvcc cvc cv cvcc	10
4	The hunt is not an exercise of will cv cvcc vc cvc vc vccvvc vc cvc	10
5	But patient love relaxing on a hill cvc cvccc cvc cvevcvc vc vc cvc	10
6	To note the movement of a timid wing; cv cvc cv cvevcvc vc v cvcvc cvc	10
7	Until the one who knows that she is loved vccvc cv cvc cv cvc cvc cv vc cvcc	10
8	No longer waits but risks surrendering -- cv cvccv cvcc cvc cvccc cvevcvcvc	10
9	In this the poet finds his moral proved cv cvc cvc cvvc cvccc cvc cvevc cvcc	10
10	Who never spoke before his spirit moved. cv cvcv cvc cvcv cvc cvevc cvcc	10
11	The slow movement seems, somehow, to say much more cv ccv cvccvcc cvccv cvccv cv cv cvc cv	11
12	To watch the rarer birds, you have to go cv cvc cv cvcv cvcc cv cvc cv cv	10
13	Along deserted lanes and where the rivers flow vcvc cvevcvc cvcc vcc cv cv cvccv ccv	12
14	In silence near the source, or by a shore cv cvcvcc cv cv cvc v cv v cv	10
15	Remote and thorny like the heart's dark floor cvevc vcc cvcv cvc cv cvcc cvc ccv	10
16	And there the women slowly turn around. vcc cv cv cvcvc ccvcv cvc vcvcc	10
17	Not only flesh and bone but myths of light cvc vccv cvc vcc cvc cvc cvcc vc cvc	10
18	With darkness at the core, and sense is found cvc cvccvc vc cv cvc vcc cvcc vc cvcc	10
19	By poets lost in crooked, restless flight, cv cvcc cvcc vc cvcc cvccvc cvc	9
20	The deaf can hear, the blind recover sight cv cvc cvc cv cv cvcc cvevc cvc	10

Syllabic Structure

Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher

- 1 x / x / x / x / x /
 To force/the pace/and never to/be still/
 2 x / x / x / x / x /
 Is not/the way/of those/who study birds /
 3 x / x / x / x / x /
 Or women. The/best poets wait/for words./
 4 x / x / x / x / x /
 The hunt/is not/an exercise/of will/
 5 x / x / x / x / x /
 But patient love/relaxing on/a hill /
 6 x / x / x / x / x /
 To note/the movement of/a timid wing:/
 7 / x / x / x / x / x /
 Until/the one/who knows/that she/is loved/
 8 x / x / x / x / x /
 No longer waits/but risks/surrendering-/
 9 x / x / x / x / x /
 In this/the poet finds/his moral proved,/
 10 x / x / x / x / x /
 Who never spoke/before/his spirit moved./

 11 x / / / x / / / x / x / / / / /
 The slow/movement/seems somehow to say/much more./
 12 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 To watch/the rarer birds/you have/to go /
 13 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Along/deserted lanes/and where/the rivers flow /
 14 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 In silence near/the source,/or by/a shore /
 15 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Remote/and thorny like/the heart's/dark floor./
 16 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 And there/the women slowly turn around,/
 17 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 Not only flesh/and bone/but myths/of light/
 18 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 With darkness at/the core/and sense/is found/
 19 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 By poets lost/in crooked,restless flight,/
 20 x / / x / / x / / x / / x / /
 The deaf/can hear, the blind/recover sight./

POET, LOVER, BIRDWATCHERNissim Ezekiel

- 1 tə fə:s ðə peɪs ənd nevə tə bi stɪl
 2 ɪz nɒt ðə wei əv ðəuz hu: stɑ:di bə:dz
 3 ə: wɪmɪn. ðə best pəʊɪts weɪt fə wə:dz
 4 ðə hɑ:nt ɪz nɒt ən ɛksəsaɪz əv wɪl
 5 bʌt peɪnt lʌv rɪlæksɪŋ ɒn ə hɪl
 6 tə nəʊt ðə mu:vmənt əv ə tɪmɪd wɪŋ
 7 ʌntɪl ðə wʌn hu: nəʊz ðæt ʃi: ɪz lʌvd
 8 nəʊ lɒŋgə weɪts bət rɪskz sərendərɪŋ
 9 ɪn ðɪs ðə pəʊɪt faɪndz hɪz mərəl pru:vɪd
 10 hu: nevə spəʊk bɪfə: hɪz spɪrɪt mu:vɪd

 11 ðə sləʊ mu:vment sɪms, sʌmhaʊ tə sei mʌts mə:
 12 tə wɒtʃ ðə ree bə:dz, ju: hæv tə ɡəʊ
 13 ə lɒŋ dɪzə:ɪd leɪnz ənd weə ðə rɪvəz fləʊ
 14 ɪn saɪləns nəɪ ðə sə:s, ə: baɪ ə ʃə:
 15 rɪməʊt ənd θə:ni laɪk ðə ha:ts dɑ:k flə:
 16 ənd ðeə ðə wɪmɪn sləʊli tə:n əraʊnd
 17 nɒt əʊnli flɛʃ ənd bæʊn bʌt mɪθs əv laɪt
 18 wɪð dɑ:knes ət ðə kə:r ənd sɛns ɪz faʊnd
 19 baɪ pəʊɪts lɒst ɪn krukt restləs flɑɪt
 20 ðə def kən hɪə, ðə blɑɪnd rɪkəvə saɪt.

Phonetic Structure

Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher

This poem is taken from The Exact Name, published in 1965, and is remarkable for its association of ideas. The title of the poem is meaningful in the sense it equates poet, lover and birdwatcher as they share common experience in life - waiting, surrendering and slow movement in achieving their goal. Here Ezekiel's two major concerns - poetry and love - are blended into one unique experience, the nature of which is perceived and recreated in terms of another - that of the birdwatcher. The bird-beloved-poem-syndrome runs parallel throughout the poem. There is a realization that the poets do not compose poems but the poems are found, as an ornithologist, waiting by the hill side suddenly catches a bird, or as the beloved, who, when she finds she is loved, surrenders to her lover. The poet is like the beloved in that, unless the body wakes to love or unless the spirit is moved, neither love nor poetry is possible.

The poem is written in 20 lines: two stanzas of 10 lines each. The end-rhyme pattern is handled very cleverly in the poem. The rhyming pattern is parallel in two stanzas of the poem and it can be represented diagrammatically as follows:

1	still	a	11	more	a
2	birds	b	12	go	b
3	words	b	13	flow	b
4	will	a	14	shore	a
5	hill	a	15	flore	a
6	wing	c	16	ground	d
7	loved	d	17	light	d
8	surrendering	c	18	found	c
9	proved	d	19	flight	d
10	moved	d	20	sight	d

Many rhyming words are bound by the semantic connections.

For example:

still - hill (1/5) - stillness
 go - flow (12/13) - movement
 light - sight (17/20) - sight.

The rhyme-scheme plays an important part in emotional effect of the poem.

The syllabic pattern of the poem is as follows:

	no. of syllables in the line:
Stanza I	10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10
Stanza II	11 10 12 10 10 10 10 10 9 10

The syllabic pattern of the poem is very much uniform.

There are 10 syllables in each line except in lines 11, 13 and 19 which have 11, 12, and 9 syllables respectively. It appears that these lines are foregrounded in the sense the number of syllables in these lines vary from the basic syllabic pattern of the poem.

Out of 162 words in the poem, 128 words are monosyllabic and 34 words are polysyllabic. The spread of polysyllabic words is as follows:

- 7 lines have only one polysyllabic word
- 9 lines have two polysyllabic words
- 3 lines have three polysyllabic words
- 1 line does not have any polysyllabic word.

Thus the predominance of monosyllabic words suggests the apparent simplicity of the poem. It also shows that the movement in the poem is slow and smooth.

From the metrical analysis of the poem, it is seen that the basic metre of the poem is iambus. It is written in iambic pentametre. Here, Ezekiel has followed the traditional verse form because he does not consider any form as outdated and writes in the way as it comes to him: "To use traditional form is not to be outdated or old-fashioned. It is the idiom that becomes outdated not the form".⁴ In order to avoid the monotony of rising rhythm Ezekiel has used trochee and pyrrhic as modulations. The use of spondee in the following line is significant:

^x / / ^x / / ^x ^x / / /
 The slow/movement/ seems somehow to say/much more /

This line is well organized on the metrical level because it has one iambus, one anapaest, one trochee and two spondees. It gives us the impression of hope the poet wishes to have from the 'slow movement'. The rhythm of the poem is fluent, as Bijay Kumar Das remarked:

*No constriction, no strain in the rhythm, neither is it melifluous. The reading is not clogged by clumsiness and difficulty in the rhythm.*⁵

On the phonological level, the poem is foregrounded with a number of alliterations as follows:

Ⓦomen Ⓦait Ⓦords (3)

Ⓢpoke. Ⓢpirit (10)

Ⓢlow Ⓜovement Ⓢeems Ⓢomehow to Ⓢay Ⓜuch Ⓜore (11)

Ⓢilence Ⓢource Ⓢhore (14)

Ⓟone Ⓟut (17)

The cross alliterations are:

Ⓛove re Ⓛaxing hi Ⓛl (5)

Ⓛost rest Ⓛess Ⓛight

Ezekiel uses the device of alliteration in order to connect the words by similarity of sounds so that we are made to think of their possible connections. This also adds to the musicality of the poem. It illustrates Ezekiel's sense of sound which is an operating factor

in a variety of ways in the poem. Line 13 is an excellent example of alliteration which reinforces meaning.

On the syntactic level, Ezekiel has used inversions in the poem. The examples are:

- To force the pace and never to be still (1)
- To note the movement of a timid wing (6)
- To watch the rarer birds (10)

These syntactically parallel constructions which begin with to + infinitive construction are used to topicalize the goal of the birdwatcher. The inversions in the above lines highlight the theme of the poem.

Most of the lines in the poem are end-stopped type in which the last syllable coincides with an important grammatical break such as a full-stop, semi-colon or a comma. However, there are some examples of enjambment:

- 1 *To force the pace and never to be still* ⇒
- 2 *Is not the way of those who study birds*
- 5 *But patient love relaxing on a hill* ⇒
- 6 *To note the movement of a timid wing*
- 12 *To watch the rarer birds, you have to go* ⇒
- 13 *Along deserted lanes and where the rivers flow*

Thus, enjambment creates a conflict between the metrical system, which demands a pause, and the grammatical system which

resists one.

Lexical cohesion occurs in the use of the words 'birds', 'wing', 'hunt', 'flight', and 'poets' 'words', 'spirit', since these words refer to coherent situations of 'catching a bird' and 'composing a poem'. The common verbs like:

wait, risk, surrender, relax, find, watch,
are used commonly for all the three (poet, lover, birdwatcher). Ezekiel has taken a great care while selecting words to write this poem.

The metaphoric use of language:

heart's dark floor (15)

myths of light (17)

demonstrates an unusual depth of feeling, a remarkable economy of language, and rare originality of insight. The thought pattern in the poem is compressed and the choice of words is appropriate. Shakespeare observes that the lunatic, the lover and the poet "are of imagination all compact". Ezekiel substitutes birdwatcher for lunatic and says that all the three - lover, poet, birdwatcher - gain by waiting.

In the last line of the poem he brings two dissimilar things, with the help of structurally parallel construction, together:

The deaf can hear, | the blind recover sight (2)

The phrases like: 'deserted lanes', 'thorny grounds' mark the essential loneliness and hardships involved in the pursuit. The phrase 'slowly turn around' flashes back to 'the slow movement' which seems somehow to say much more.

The lines like,

The best poets wait for words (3) and

The deaf can hear, the blind recover sight (20)

have become maxims and rest long in the mind of the reader. Thus 'Poet, Love, Birdwatcher' is a persuasive poem with a fine flow and cogency of thought.

4.5 The Railway Clerk

		<u>No.of</u> <u>Syllables</u>
1	It isn't my fault vc vccc cv cvcc	4
2	I do what I'm told v cv cvc vc vcc	5
3	but still I am blamed cvc ccvc v vc ccvcc	5
4	This year my leave application cvc cv cv cvc vccvcc	8
5	was twice refused cvc ccvc cvccvcc	4
6	Every day there is so much work vccv cv cv vc cv cvc cvc	8
7	and I don't get overtime vcc v cvcc cvc vcvcvc	7
8	My wife is always asking for more money cv cvc vc vccvc vccvc cv cv cvcv	11
9	Money, money, where to get money? cvcv cvcv cv cv cvc cvcv	9
10	My job is such, no one is giving bride cv cvc vc cvc cv cvc vc cvcvc ccvc	10
11	While other clerks are in fortunate position cvc vcv ccvcc v vc cvcvcvc cvcvc	12
12	and no promotion even because I am not graduate vcc cv ccvccvcc vcc cvcvc v vc cvc ccvcc	14
13	I wish I was bird v cvc v cvc cvc	5
14	I am never neglecting my responsibility v vc cvcv cvccvccvc cv cvccvccvccvccv	14
15	I am discharging it properly. v vc cvccvccvc vc ccvccv	9
16	I am doing my duty, v vc cvcc cv ccvcc	7
17	but who is appreciating? cvc cv vc vccvccvcc	7
18	Nobody, I am telling you cvcvcv v vc cvcvc cv	8
19	My desk is too small cv cvcc vc cv ccvc	5
20	the fan is not repaired for two months cv cvc vc cvc cvcvc cv cv cvcc	9

No. of
Syllables

21	three months. cvv cvccc	2
22	I am living far off in Borivali, v vc cvevc cvc vc vc cvevcv	10
23	my children are neglecting studies, cv cvcccvc v cvcccvcvc cvevc	9
24	How long this can go on? cv cvc cvc cvc cv vc	6
25	Once a week I see film cvcc v cvc v cv vccc	6
26	and then I am happy, but not otherwise. vcc cvc v vc cvcv cvc cvc vcvvc	11
27	Also, I have good friends, vccv v cvc cvc cvccc	6
28	that is only consolation. cvc vc vccv cvcccvcvc	8
29	Sometimes we are meeting here or there cvcccvc cv v cvevc cvc v cv	9
30	and having long chat. vcc cvcvc cvc cvc	5
31	We are discussing country's problems. cv v cvcccvc cvcccvc ccvccvc	9
32	Some are thinking of foreign cvc v cvcccvc vc cvevc	7
33	but due to circumstances, I cannot think cvc ccv cv cvcccvcvc v cvevc cvcc	11
34	My wife's mother is confined to bed cv cvcc cvcv vc cvcccvc cv cvc	9
35	and I am only support. vcc v vc vccv cvevc	7

THE RAILWAY CLERK

- 1 it iznt mai fə:lt
 2 ai du: wɒt aim təuld
 3 bət stil ai əm bleimd
 4 ois jə: mai li:v əplikeiʃn
 5 wəz twais rifju:zd
 6 evri dei ðeər iz səu matʃ wə:k
 7 ənd ai dəunt get əuvətaim
 8 mai waif iz ɔ:lweiz a:skiŋ fə mə: mani
 9 mani mani weə tə get mani
 10 mai dʒɒb iz satʃ nəu wən iz giviŋ braib
 11 wail ʌðə klɑ:ks a: in fə:tʃənət pə zi:ʃn
 12 ənd nəu prəmeʃn i:vn bikoʒ aiəm nɒt grədʒuət

 13 ai wiʃ ai wəz ɒs:d
 14 ai əm nevə niŋlektiŋ mai risponsəbiliti
 15 ai əm distʃɑ:dʒiŋ it propəli
 16 ai əm du:ŋ mai dju:ti
 17 bət hu: iz ə pri:ʃieitiŋ
 18 nəubɛdi ai əm teliŋ ju:

 19 mai desk iz tu: smə:l
 20 ðə fə:n iz nɒt ripeəd fə tu: manəs
 21 θri: manəs
 22 ai əm liviŋ fə:r ɒf in beʊrivli
 23 mai tʃildrən a: niŋlektiŋ stadiz
 24 hau lɒŋ ois kən geʊ ɒn

- 25 wʌns ə wi:k ai si: film
 26 ænd ðen ai əm hæpi bət nɒt ʌʊəwaiz
 27 ə:lseu ai həv gud frendz
 28 ɒt iz əunli kɒnsəleɪʃn
 29 sʌntaɪmz wi a: mi:tiŋ hiər ə: ʊeə
 30 ænd hæviŋ lɒŋ tʃæt
 31 wi a: diskasiŋ kʌntriz prɒbləmz
 32 sʌm a: θiŋkiŋ əv fɔrən
 33 bət dju: tə sə:kəmstənsɪz ai kænəy θiŋk
 34 mai waɪfs maʊə iz kənfaɪnd tə bed
 35 ænd ai əm əunli sə pɔ:t

Phonetic Structure

The Railway Clerk

A Detailed Analysis:

This poem is taken from Hymns in Darkness. It is one of the eight 'Very Indian Poems in Indian English'. It was written in 1972. The poem is written in the form of 'dramatic monologue'. It is written in free verse.

I have selected this poem for the analysis because Ezekiel has succeeded in his attempt to locate the 'common errors', noticed in the use of English, of an average Indian speaker who unconsciously applies the rules of his mother tongue to English. In this poem Ezekiel has not only tried to describe Indian culture but has made good use of 'Babu Angrezi' or 'Swadeshi Angrezi'. At the same time he has been consciously Indian in his sensibility. While speaking about Indian English he told me:

Indian English has developed unavoidably from the cultural and linguistic situation in India. It can certainly be used for creative literary purposes when a particular theme, situation and characters demand it.

It is true about this poem because the language used in the poem is typical variety of English spoken by southern Indian clerks. It seems from the observations of the of the language used in the poem that there is no exaggeration of the errors that Indian speaker commits. When I asked him the purpose of using Indian English, he replied:

The main motive in my use of Indian English is realis, which has its comic effects. That is why I refer to the series not as Poems in Indian English but as Very Indian Poems in Indian English.

'The Railway Clerk' is 'Very Indian' in this sense. It not only represents the real character of the railway clerk but also represents the variety of language used by the railway clerks. The poem illustrates Ezekiel's minute observation of the language used by that class.

The poem is written in prosaic style, therefore there is no rhyme and rhythm. The Indian English is foregrounded on the background of British English so my attempt in the analysis is to show how deviant structures are used to create comic effects.

One of the common errors that Indian speakers make is that of using Present Continuous Tense where Simple Present Tense is required. The following examples will illustrate the point:

My wife is always asking (8) → My wife always asks

no one is giving bride (10) → no one gives bride

I am never neglecting (14) → I don't neglect

I am discharging (15) → I discharge

I am telling you (16) → I tell you

I am living (22) → I live

My children are neglecting → my children neglect

We are meeting → we meet

having long chat → have long chats

We are discussing → we discuss

Some are thinking → some think

It is true that many Indian speakers of English commit this error. Such faulty use of tense creates comic effect for both the native speakers and the competent Indian users of English language

The poet also points out another common mistake of Indian speakers and that is their habit of dropping of articles. Let us look at the instances in the poem where Ezekiel has dropped articles deliberately:

I am not graduate (12) → I am not a graduate

I wish I was bird (13) → I wish I was a bird

I see film (25) → I see a film

that is only consolation (28) → that is only a consolation.

having long chat (30) → have a long chat

country's problems (30) → the country's problems

A careful observation shows that a number of Indian speakers tend to drop articles in their speech and writing because there are no such articles in their mother-tongue. That is why they are careless in the use of articles.

Again, the formation of questions is faulty. Indian learners of English always form questions in English with wh- word in the beginning followed by a normal word-order of the statement. For instance:

24. how long this can go on? → how long can this go on?

17. who is appreciating? → who appreciates?

Such deviant structures certainly create comic effect and are mocked at.

One of the important devices of reinforcing something in Indian languages is the repetition of that element in a sentence. While speaking English the Indian speaker tries to apply this norm to English language. For example:

My wife is asking for more money

Money, Money, where to get money (8-9)

and

the fan is not repaired for two months, three months.

This repetitive strain shows how Indian speakers directly translate their thoughts into English.

Though the poem is foregrounded with parody of the way Indians speak English, it is well organized on the thematic level. The railway clerk is the principal character in the poem and his pathetic position is highlighted. He has a number of problems both in office and at home. He complains about the problems which cannot be solved. The complaints are:

Complaints
(office)

- 1 He is not sanctioned leave
- 2 There is much work
- 3 He doesn't get salary for overtime
- 4 No one gives him bribe
- 5 He doesn't get promotion
- 6 No one appreciates his work
- 7 His desk is very small
- 8 His fan is not repaired

Complaints
(home)

- 1 His children neglect study
- 2 His wife asks for more money
- 3 His residence is away from his office
- 4 He has to look after his sick mother-in-law
- 5 He cannot participate in the discussion with friends

It shows his utter failure to solve these problems. The tone is that of frustration. On this background the line:

I wish I was bird (13)

is foregrounded on the formal and semantic level. It indicates his urge for freedom in his life. He wants to live a carefree life without any worries. But it is not possible for him to come out of the situation in which he is placed. Therefore he goes to see a film where, at least for some time, he forgets everything and lingers in the dreamland and then he becomes happy. But outside the theatre he is unhappy except when he is among his friends because:

Also, I have good friends,
that is only consolation (27-28)

Yet he is unable to think of the problems of the country since he cannot think of the solutions for his own problems. For him, his own problems are more difficult than any other problem.

Ezekiel has used syntactically parallel constructions to highlight his sincere efforts to work honestly in the following lines:

I am never neglecting my responsibility
I am discharging it properly
I am doing my duty (14-16)

The foregrounding of S-V-O pattern in these lines reinforces similarity. On this background the contrast is very significant in lines:

I am never neglecting my responsibility (14)
My children are neglecting studies (23)

It reinforces the sorrowful state of his mind.

Lexical cohesion occurs in the use of the words 'leave application', 'overtime', 'bribe', 'promotion', 'responsibility', 'desk', 'fan', 'position' since they all refer to a coherent situation which we see in any office. In this poem the diction carries the burden of the natural mode of thinking.

Ezekiel has pointed out the typical way of Indians to construct

emphatic statements with the help of double negatives. For example:

I am never neglecting my responsibility.

He criticises this tendency in other poems which he wrote in Indian English.

On the phonetic level, Ezekiel has not made any experiments in this poem. His chief motive is to create a realistic situation involving Indian users of English Language who speak 'a variety' of Indian English on a number of common occasions such as these.

4.6 Goodbye Party For Miss Pushpa T.S.

		<u>No.of Syllables</u>
1	Friends, cvcccc	1
2	Our dear sister. v cv cvccv	4
3	is departing for foreign vc cvccvcc cv cvccv	7
4	in two three days vc cv ccv cvc	4
5	and vcc	1
6	we are meeting today cv v cvccv cvcv	6
7	to wish her bon voyage. cv cvc cv cvc cvcc	6
8	You are all knowing, friends cv vc cv cvcc cvcccc	6
9	what sweetness is in Miss Pushpa. cvc cvccvc vc vc cvc cvccv	8
10	I don't mean only external sweetness v cvcc cvc vccv vcccvcc cvccvcc	10
11	but internal sweetness. cvc vccvcc cvccvcc	6
12	Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling cvc cvccv vc cvccvcc vcc cvccvcc	9
13	even for no reason vcc cv cv cvcc	6
14	but simply because she is feeling. cvc cvcccv cvccv cvc vc cvccv	9
15	Miss Pushpa is coming cvc cvccv vc cvcc	6
16	from very high family ccvc cvcv cv cvccv	7
17	Her father was renowned advocate cv cvcv cvc cvccvcc vccvccv	9
18	in Balsar or Surat vc cvccv v cvccv	6
19	I am not remembering now which place. v vc cvc cvccvccvcc cv cvc ccv	10
20	Surat? Ah. yes cvcvcc v cvc	4
21	once only I stayed in Surat cvcc vccv v ccvc vc cvccv	8
22	with family members cvc cvccvcc cvccvcc	6

		<u>No.of</u> <u>Syllables</u>
23	of my uncle's very old friend, vc cv vcccc cvcv vcc cvcc	7
24	his wife was cooking nicely ... cvc cvc cvc cvcvc cvccv	7
25	that was long time ago. cvc cvc cvc cvc vcv	6
26	Coming back to Miss Pushpa cvcvc cvc cv cvc cvccv	7
27	she is most popular lady cv vc cvcc cvccvvcv cvcv	8
28	with men also and ladies also. cvc cvc vccv vcc cvcvc vccv	9
29	Whenever I asked her to do anything, cvcvvc v vccc cv cv cv vcvcvc	11
30	she was saying, "Just now only cv cvc cvc cvcc cv vccv	8
31	I will do it." That is showing v cvc cv vc cvc vc cvcvc	8
32	good spirit. I am always cvc cvcvcvc v vc vccvc	7
33	appreciating the good spirit. vccvvcvcvc cv cvc cvcvcvc	9
34	Pushpa Miss is never saying no. cvccv cvc vc cvcv cvvc cv	9
35	Whatever I or anybody is asking cvcvvc v v vcvcvcvc vc vccvc	11
36	she is always saying yes, cv vc vccvc cvvc vcv	7
37	and today she is going vcc cvcv cv vc cvvc	7
38	to improve her prospect cv vccvcvc cv cvccvcvc	6
39	and we are wishing her bon voyage vcc cv v cvcvc cv cvc cvvc	9
40	Now I ask other speakers to speak cv v vcc vcv cvcvcvc cv cvcvc	9
41	and afterwards Miss Pushpa vcc vccvcvcc cvc cvccv	7
42	will do summing up. cvc cv cvcvc vc	5

Syllabic Structure

GOODBYE PARTY FOR MISS PUSHPA T.S.

- 1 frendz
 2 aʊə diə sistə
 iz dipɑ:tiŋ fə fʊrən
 4 in tu: θri: deiz
 5 ənd
 6 wi a: mitiŋ tədəi
 7 tə wiʃ hə bʌn vɔidʒ

 8 jə: a:r ə:l nəuiŋ frendz
 9 wɒt swi:tnes iz in mis puʃpɑ:
 10 əi dəunt mi:n əunli ik stə:nl swi:tnes
 11 bət intə:nl swi:tnes
 12 mis puʃpɑ: iz smailiŋ ənd smailiŋ
 13 i:vŋ fə nəu ri:zn
 14 bət simpli bikɒz ʃi: iz fi:liŋ

 15 mis puʃpɑ: iz kəmiŋ
 16 frəm veri hai fəməli
 17 hə fa:ðə wəz riŋaʊnd ədvəkət
 18 in balsa: ə: surət
 19 əi əm nɒt rɪmɛmbəriŋ nəu wiʃ pleis

 20 surət a: jes
 21 wəns əunli əi steid in surət
 22 wið fəməli mɛmbəz
 23 əv maɪ ʌŋklz veri əuld frend

- 24 hiz waif wəz kukiŋ naisli
 25 ðæt wəz lɒŋ taim əgəu
 26 kʌmiŋ bæk tə mis pʌʃpɑ:
 27 ʃi: iz məʊst pɒpjulə leidi
 28 wið men ə:lseu ənd leidi:z ə:lseu
 29 wenevə ai a:skt hə tə du: eniθiŋ
 30 ʃi: wəz seiŋ dʒʌst nəu əunli
 31 ai wil du: it ðæt iz ʃəuiŋ
 32 gʊd spirit ai əm ə:lweiz
 33 ə pri:ʃieitiŋ ðə gʊd spirit
 34 pʌʃpɑ: mis iz nevə seiŋ nəu
 35 wɒtevə ai ə: enibɒdi iz a:skiŋ
 36 ʃi: iz ə:lweiz seiŋ jes
 37 ənd tədeɪ ʃi: iz gəuiŋ
 38 tə ɪmpru:v hə prɒspekt
 39 ənd wi a: wiʃiŋ hə bɒn vɔɪidʒ
 40 nəu ai a:sk ʌðə spi:kə:z tə spi:k
 41 ənd a:ftəwədz mis pʌʃpɑ:
 42 wil du: samɪŋ ʌp.

4.6 Goodbye Party For Miss Pushpa T.S.

A Detailed Analysis:

Ezekiel wrote this poem in 1967 and published it in Hymns in Darkness in 1976. The poem is written in free verse in the form of a farewell speech. It is one of his 'Very Indian Poems in Indian English. In this poem Ezekiel tries to parody such speeches which are usually rambling. Even the logical connectives between ideas are missing. He has shown here the characteristic Indian craze for making speeches. He further demonstrates how the speaker deviates from the subject without least bothering about it. In the present poem Ezekiel has chosen a simple, day today formal occasion of farewell which is within the experience of the readers.

The poem is written in 42 lines and is divided into seven verse paragraphs. The lines in the poem are of uneven length. The syllabic pattern of the poem is as follows:

11 syllabic	2 lines
10 syllabic	2 lines
9 syllabic	8 lines
8 syllabic	5 lines
7 syllabic	9 lines
6 syllabic	10 lines
5 syllabic	1 line
4 syllabic	3 line
monosyllabic	1 line

Thus the syllabic pattern is not at all uniform since the lines carry from 1 syllable to 11 syllables. Out of 203 words in the poem, 127 words are monosyllabic and 76 words, polysyllabic. The

polysyllabic words like 'departing', 'sweetness', 'smiling', 'remembering', 'renowned', 'appreciating', 'afterwards' and 'summing' carry the load of information.

The poem is written in the form of a farewell speech; therefore there is no rhyme in it. Moreover there is no significant experiment in rhythm and therefore I have not commented on these metrical features in my analysis.

The important feature in this poem is lexical and syntactic foregrounding. The foregrounding is purposeful. It is used to mock at Indian English. In the present analysis I will deal with only these features and show the comic effects produced by the unacceptable use of language.

The title of the poem is in Indian English, where we see the words 'goodbye party' instead of 'farewell party' and 'Miss Pushpa T.S.' instead of 'Miss T.S. Pushpa'. The mistake of using Present Continuous where Simple Present is required forms an important factor of the parody. The examples in the poem are as follows:

- 1 we are meeting → we have met
- 2 You are all knowing → All of you know
- 3 Miss Pushpa is smiling → Miss Pushpa smiles
- 4 She is feeling → She feels
- 5 Miss Pushpa is coming → Miss Pushpa comes
- 6 I am not remembering → I do not remember
- 7 his wife was cooking → his wife used to cook

- 8 She was saying → She used to say
- 9 That is showing good spirit → That shows good spirit
- 10 I am always appreciating → I always appreciate
- 11 anybody is asking → anybody asks

The above examples are used to mock at the habit of Indian speakers to use continuous present tense in the place of simple present tense.

Ezekiel has also pointed out some common Indianisms. The examples are:

- 1 foreign → foreign country
- 2 two three days → a few days
- 3 high family → upper class/rich family
- 4 ladies → women
- 5 anything → something
- 6 my uncle's very old friend → a very old friend of my uncle

Ezekiel has also shown that Indians are not very careful about the use of the articles. The examples like:

- 1 Miss Pushpa is coming from very high family
- 2 Her father was renowned advocate
- 3 she is most popular lady

illustrate this point.

While speaking in English an average Indian speaker translates

the mother-tongue expressions into English. Ezekiel has made fun of it in the following examples:

- 1 *our dear sister*
- 2 *two three days*
- 3 *external and internal sweetness*
- 4 *smiling and smiling*
- 5 *very high family*
- 6 *long time ago*
- 7 *with men also and ladies also*
- 8 *Just now I will do it*
- 9 *Pushpa Miss is never saying no*
- 10 *Now I ask other speakers to speak*

The above examples show that Indian speakers always tend to translate their thoughts directly into English without taking care of the rules of the English language. The effect of such expressions is always comic. What is intended is not expressed properly only because of the misuse of the language.

The protagonist in the poem does not intend to mean what is actually communicated by the faulty use of language. For example:

- 1 Miss Pushpa is smiling and smiling even for no reason
- 2 Pushpa Miss is never saying no. Whatever I or anybody is asking she is always saying yes

These examples imply that Miss T.S. Pushpa is a woman of mean character. No doubt, the speaker has no such intention but because of improper use of the language this meaning is communicated



Thus the poem is aimed at making fun of the improper use of Indian English. It is a brilliant experiment of Nissim Ezekiel who uses Indian English to create humour and lifelike situations.

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