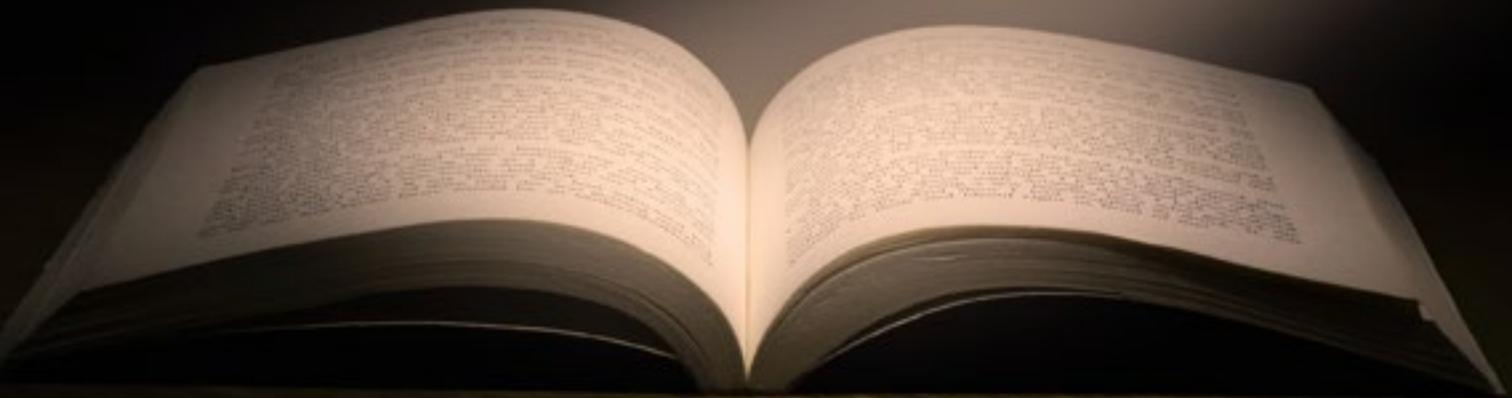# Alliteration in W. Shasha's Zihlabana nje Ziyalamba

By Zilibele Mtumane and Ruth Nozibele Tabu

Abstract

This paper examines the use of alliteration in Welile Shasha's poetry in Zihlabana nje Ziyalamba. This aspect is chosen as Shasha uses it very intensively in his poetry. Alliteration is discussed as demonstrated by the use of assonance and consonance in the poetry. To be considered then is the repetition of vowel and consonant sounds. The subheadings of this discourse are introduction, theoretical framework, research methodology, assonance and consonance. The concept of alliteration is defined as part of the introductory section of the study. A concluding remark, which provides the summary of the research, evaluation and recommendation for further study, will be included towards the end of the discourse. The theoretical framework that underpins this study is that of literary stylistics. The study uses the qualitative research methodology of data collection and analysis.

Introduction

While Shasha employs alliteration very convincingly in his poetry in *Zihlabana nje Ziyalamba*, very little attempt has, so far, been made to analyse this aspect of his poetry. Tabu (2007), on whose Master's study this research is based, is probably the only scholar who has attended to it. However, the concept of alliteration has been discussed by scholars analysing the works of other poets. For instance, Mtumane (2000) has a section on alliteration in his study of S. M. Burns-Ncamashe's poetry. Bobelo (2008) also includes a discussion on the concept as part of her discussion of isiXhosa poetry on Nelson Rholihlahla Mandela. The discussion is structured according to the following subheadings: theoretical framework, research methodology, assonance, consonance, and conclusion.

According to Milubi, as quoted by Kgobe (1994: 237) and Mtumane (2000: 194), alliteration plays an important role in determining the external form of poetry. It is a literary device whereby a sound (consonant or vowel) is repeated in two or more nearby words in a line. Mc Rae (1998: 149) views alliteration as the repetition of the initial sound of successive words in a line of text. Barnet et al. (1997: 610) also define alliteration as the repetition of initial sounds in adjacent words in a line and sometimes as the prominent repetition of a consonant. Bobelo (2008: 95) views alliteration as 'a literary device, where a consonant or a vowel is repeated more than once in a line. It is a repetition of consonants, vowels and/or syllables in close proximity within a line'. She further cites Myers and Simms who see alliteration as 'deliberately used for the sake of melody and rhythm' (ibid.).

The above scholars seem not to agree about the exact position of the repeated sounds in words. For instance, Milubi (op. cit.) and Mtumane (op cit.) do not mention any specific position while Mc Rae and Barnet et al. (op cit.) emphasise that it is the initial sound that is repeated. This difference might be caused by the fact that alliteration applies differently in the poetry of different languages. For instance, the poetry of disjunctive languages such as English, Sesotho, and Setswana has alliteration that applies differently from that of more conjunctive languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa, and siSwati. This study only considers the poetic effect of such a repetition in a particular line, irrespective of the exact position, as isiXhosa, the language of the poetry studied, is a conjunctive language with morphemes combined together in a single word.

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this section is to introduce the theoretical framework of this discourse. As this research is conducted with literary stylistics as the underpinning theory, the discussion in this section will then concentrate on this theory. This section commences with a general comment on literary theory. Thereafter, the theory of literary stylistics will receive more attention under the following subheadings: the concept of stylistics, historical background, assumptions, and stylistics and poetry.

Literary Theory

Literary theory developed in the course of the twentieth century into a branch of literary studies that is studied and taught as a distinct subject. It is, however, not a very new subject, as scholars have always been inclined to speculate about the theoretical implications of literary practice. Most literary theorists of the twentieth century were also conscious of belonging to a tradition that goes back at least as far as Plato and Aristotle (Jefferson and Robey, 1986: 7).

Theories of literature vary greatly with regards to the importance they ascribe to the language component of literature. To the extent that literary theory can be distinguished from aesthetics, it seems obvious that it needs to take some account of the main element which distinguishes literature from other art forms: the linguistic medium. Some of the theories concerned with establishing the distinctiveness of literature as an independent category use language as a central feature in their definition of that distinctiveness, usually by defining literature as a special use of language. Literary theory has benefited from the enormous expansion in linguistic science and certain theorists such as Roman Jakobson and his colleagues in the Prague School, who developed their theories in relation to and alongside their works on linguistics. Other theorists, such as those associated with

Parisian structuralism, actually use linguistic theory as their starting point for literary theory. Saussurean linguistics, in particular, has had enormous influence on the development of a number of different kinds of literary theory (Jefferson and Robey, 1986: 16–17).

Some practitioners of literary stylistics, including Halliday, as cited by Jefferson and Robey (1986: 70), would insist on supplementing the comparative approach that is described with some kind of functional analysis that questions what the language of a text does, and how it contributes to the meaning and the effect of the whole (Jefferson and Robey, 1986: 70).

The Concept of Stylistics

According to Baldick, as quoted by Mabuza (2000: 12–13), stylistics is a branch of modern linguistics devoted to a detailed analysis of literary style or of the linguistic choices made by speakers and writers in non-literary contexts. In the words of Weber (1996: 94), stylistics is an attempt to put criticism on a scientific basis. Jefferson and Robey (1986: 62) view stylistics as a convenient label for the branch of literary studies that concentrate on the linguistic form of texts. Literary stylistics is also viewed as the analysis of the language of literary texts, usually taking its theoretical models from linguistics, in order to undertake this analysis (Simpson as quoted by Mills, 1995: 4). Simpson (op cit.) further states that stylistics uses linguistic analysis to provide a window on the devices which

> **“** Stylistics is also growing as a branch of general linguistics that studies variations in non-literary language use. These are variations connected with the different contexts in which language is used (the style of radio commentaries, journalism, official documents, etc.). Stylistics, as a branch of literary research, can draw on this kind of work. However, its concerns must, in general, be very different because, from a literary point of view, the linguistic form of texts is of importance only in certain respects. **”**

characterise a particular literary work.

Peck and Coyle (1992: 137) state that a much more productive and precise way of talking about language is to concentrate on style. This involves describing how a particular piece of writing functions and discussing what words are used and why. Literary stylistics, then, may be viewed as a theory that deals with the analysis of literary works, putting more emphasis on the use of language in texts. This use of language may be determined by the use of stylistic techniques in literary texts. These stylistic techniques may include figures of speech, imagery, repetitions, and idiomatic expressions, among others. It is on this basis that this contribution examines the use of alliteration, which is a repetitive device, as a stylistic technique in W. Shasha's poetry.

In the twentieth century, stylistics developed into a significant academic discipline, situated on the borderline between the study of language and literature, and concerned to engage in technical analysis of what may be referred to as 'manners of expression'. It is important for students of literature due to its close relation to literary studies, and it has introduced a number of specifically linguistic terms and methods of analysis into literary analysis and theory (Hawthorn, 1994: 284).

Stylistics is also growing as a branch of general linguistics that studies variations in non-literary language use. These are variations connected with the different contexts in which language is used (the style of radio commentaries, journalism, official documents, etc.). Stylistics, as a branch of literary research, can draw on this kind of work. However, its concerns must, in general, be very different because, from a literary point of view, the linguistic form of texts is of importance only in certain respects. Literary stylistics views the language or style of literature as 'embellishment, self-reference, representation and manner'. These four categories correspond to real differences of approach in the study of literary language. They also help to show how stylistic and linguistic studies differ. This takes the form of the assumption that writing is made beautiful through the addition of certain linguistic ornaments, such as poetic figures, metaphor, antithesis, hyperbole, and the like (Jefferson and Robey, 1986: 62).

Carter and Simpson, as quoted by Mills (1995: 4), distinguish between linguistic stylistics and literary

stylistics. For them, linguistic stylistics is where 'practitioners attempt to derive from the study of style and language, a refinement of models for the analysis of language and thus to contribute to the development of linguistic theory.'

Literary stylistics, on the other hand, is more concerned with providing:

> 'the basis for fuller understanding, appreciation and interpretation of avowedly literary and author-centered texts. The general impulse will be to draw eclectically on linguistic insights and to use them in the service of what is generally claimed to be fuller interpretation of language effects than is possible without the benefit of linguistics.' (ibid.: 4)

Leech and Michael, as quoted by Mills (1995: 5), state that in general, literary stylistics has, one way or the other, the goal of explaining the relation between language and artistic function.

Historical Background

Stylistics enjoyed a certain vogue in the 1960s. That was when it underwent a profound revolution. It is remarkably resilient. It has included some of the findings of literary theory and critical linguistics, although in a more piecemeal fashion. It has now moved into the domain of 'literary linguistics, poetics and linguistics, contextual stylistics and discourse stylistics' (Toolan et al., 1995: 8).

In the late 1970s, stylistics was still wobbling from attacks of Fish and other critics. However, it managed to gather strength and developed in two most promising directions, the first of which is 'pedagogical stylistics.' These stylisticians turn away from theoretical matters and from bold claims of scientificity. They claim that stylistic analysis may not be objective and scientific while they agree that it can be 'rigorous, systematic and replicable' and, hence, 'achieve inter-subjective validity and pedagogical usefulness.' Their aim is simply to demonstrate that stylistic analysis, as a way of reading, can be of direct use to students, both in mother tongue-language learning and in the context of English as a foreign language – something that was already advocated by Henry Widdowson as early as the 1970s. In the 1980s, with the support of the British Council, more and more stylisticians worked towards an integration of language and literature study, and developed what they called pre-literary language-based activities (Weber, 1996: 3).

Another important development, which took place in stylistics at that time, was 'an orientation towards contextualization'. This gathered a new strength under the influence of similar approaches in mainstream linguistics, where the growing importance of context was acknowledged through the rise of sub-disciplines such as 'pragmatics and discourse analysis'. It became more and more clear that style is neither inherent in the text nor totally in the reader's mind but an effect produced in it, by and through the interaction between the text and reader. The movement towards greater 'contextualization' in stylistic criticism could be thought of as a succession of 'concentric circles' representing the gradual widening of the text's contextual orbit (Weber, 1996: 3–4). Stylistics was often used during the early period of its development 'to back up intuitions about the meaning of the text under analysis' (Mills, 1995: 7).

Assumptions

Stylistics was born out of a reaction to the 'subjectivity and imprecision' of literary studies.

> 'For the appreciative raptures of the impressionistic critic, stylisticians purport to substitute precise and rigorous linguistic descriptions to interpretations for which they can claim a measure of objectivity. Stylistics, in short, is an attempt to put criticism on a scientific basis.' (Weber, 1996: 94)

Stylistics largely found its theoretical foundations from 'contemporary literary criticism and linguistics'. As these fields have moved on, stylistics needs to respond to the new ideas which have emerged from both fields. For example, many of the early stylisticians took for granted that it is possible to analyse a text in isolation, as a 'self-contained entity', which has a meaning not dependent on any external considerations (Mills, 1995: 8–9).

It is true that each reader will interpret a text differently from others, due to the fact that people are different from one another, have had different experiences, and so on. However, it should be clear that such a subjectivist opinion of literary understanding runs

against the presuppositions of stylistic analysis, as its proponents assume that a shared knowledge of the process for giving meaning to utterances points to a relatively large degree of common understanding, in spite of variations in individual responses.

Mills (1995: 5) states that:

'For the stylisticians, the major fact to be explained is that, although we are all different, we agree to a remarkable extent over the interpretation… the range of interpretations which have been produced for even the most discussed texts is remarkably small compared with the theoretically infinite set of possible recordings.'

In stylistic analysis in general, the type of text and language that is used is rarely explicit. That is:

'the text itself is assumed to exist in some self-evident state, whereby it contains meanings, which the critic does not need to explain to the reader because it is taken as common sense knowledge about texts in general, which both the reader and the critic share.' (Mills, 1995: 25)

Stylistic studies which have been undertaken have used 'a text immanent model of meaning', that is, they have taken it that what the analyst finds in the text is discovered in the text itself, rather than being the result of a 'negotiation between the reader and the text' (ibid.).

A question that may arise is what the student of the stylistics text is supposed to do with the knowledge which is produced, since there is, very often, an underlying belief that the reader is supposed to learn the techniques and skills described, in order to be able to perform better readings than he currently does (Mills, 1995: 26).

Sperber and Wilson, who are quoted by Mills (1995: 27), attempt to bring to the surface some of the assumptions. They illustrate that it is assumed that thought comes before the production of words and speech and that it is separate from language and exists outside of it. It is taken for granted that the message that is encoded in language is the same as the message that is decoded. That means that there are no obstructions to communication and

there are no misinterpretations. This is an ideal form of communication, where words have meaning in a clear and simple way. It is assumed that the normal manner of language-use is between two role players, speaking face-to-face: the speaker or author, and the listener or reader. Lastly, it is assumed that the speaker or author has perfect control over language and can choose to utter whatever s/he wishes; the language exerts no limitations on what can be expressed. Here, language is seen as an unambiguous medium that is used for the conveyance of thought to information.

New critical stylistics is concerned not only with the identification of linguistic features that make poetry different from other discourses. It is also concerned with poetry as a form of signification which strangely changes the familiar relationship between language and meaning. Bradford (1997: 35–36) insists that, although terminology and frame of reference are founded upon non-literary linguistics, the effects produced by poetry are not easily reducible to predictable and scientific models of language.

Stylistics and Poetry

Poetry uses language in a special way as it uses figurative language and repetitions. Figurative, in this sense, means language used in a non-literal way. Figurative language includes imagery as determined by simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, euphemism, and idiomatic expressions. Repetitions include alliteration, linking, parallelism, and refrains (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 40–41; Newmark, 1995: 70). Alliteration is the technique that is studied in this discourse.

As a form of literature, poetry is written in language, using techniques and features of language. That is why, in order to arrive at a satisfactory understanding of poetry, the reader must have an understanding of language, its function, and its mode of operation (Ngara, 1982: 11). The way in which the poet employs poetic devices determines his style, which then determines the form and standard of his poetry. Stylistics, as a literary theory, then concerns itself with the analysis of the style of the poet as it is determined by the use of literary devices, of which alliteration is part, as later sections of this study will illustrate.

When reading a poem, use is made of linguistic

techniques, the aim being to present the reader with a vocabulary to describe what is going on in the text and in the reader's mind when he reads the text. When a text is read, it is not always done so suspiciously, as the reader is used to certain types of messages, which often strike him as necessarily oppressive or pernicious. Language is viewed as a vehicle for ideas rather than as material. Stylistics is then used to discover what is revealed by linguistic units, as in communication, and how the effects of different conventions reveal themselves in the way messages are structured in the text. All of this is applied with regard to alliteration in this paper.

From the discussion in this section, it is clear that stylistics offers itself as an easily definable activity with specific functions and objectives. It enables the reader to identify the distinguishing features of poetic texts and to specify generic, figurative, and structural subdivisions of the genre. This section has introduced literary stylistics as the underpinning theory for this study. It has done so by commenting briefly on the significance of theory in the analysis of literary texts, and by explaining the concept of stylistics – including its historical background, its assumptions, and how it links to poetry.

Research Methodology

This research is conducted with qualitative research methodology as the relevant approach. This methodology considers people's views about life and the world. It makes an in-depth description and understanding of social actions (Babbie and Mouton, 2015: 269). Malterude (2001: 483) views the qualitative method as involving 'the systematic collection, organization, and interpretation of textual material derived from talk or observation'. This kind of research generally includes 'interviews, observations, surveys, content analysis of visual and written materials and oral history' (Mason, 2002: 49). As compared with the quantitative method, in which data and findings are presented in numbers, qualitative research presents its data and findings in words (Walliman, 2011: 71).

As this discourse analyses how Shasha uses alliteration in his poetry, it involves the collection, organisation, and interpretation of textual material. No interviews will be conducted. Even observations

will be based on the reading of the poems. The poems have been studied with the aim of identifying the use of alliteration. Therefore, Shasha's *Zihlabana nje Ziyalamba* is the primary source of the study. Books, journals, and theses have been relied on as secondary sources.

Assonance

Assonance is a form of alliteration that is sometimes referred to as vocalic rhyme and consists of the repetition of similar vowel sounds, usually close together, to achieve a particular effect of euphony (Kgobe, 1994: 237). It is the recurrence, in words of proximity, of identical vowel sounds (Barnet et al., 1997: 610). Poems where Shasha uses assonance very vividly are 'Ihagu', 'Ucango', 'Izinja Namathambo' and 'UNongqawuse'. For instance, in the poem 'Ihagu' the poet uses assonance with the recurrence of the -i- vowel within a line or even a word in the line, as the following example illustrates:

*Kwath**i** ngx**i**ngx**i**l**i**l**i** kwangamants**i**ntsint**s**i;*

(There was an abrupt standstill and heavy quivering followed;)
(Shasha, 1992: 2)

The poem from which this example is taken is about a pig that was pursued by dogs. In the above example, the -i- vowel is used eight times. The repetition of this vowel in the ideophone *ngxingixilili* (dead stop) emphasises how frustrated the pig was when the dogs arrived in the field to attack it. The re-use of this sound, specifically, emphasises that the pig remained on the same spot. The word *ngxingxilili* (dead stop) is employed to illustrate how the pig came to a standstill, confused as to which direction to take, as it was attacked by the dogs from all directions.

Again, in the word *kwangamantsintsintsi* (there was quivering) the repetition of the -i- vowel illustrates how the dogs attack the pig, one tearing the ear, the other one holding the tail and the next one pulling any part it could bite. It also illustrates that this action took place at one spot, as the pig could not run away. The recurrence of the vowel gives the line a musical effect.

In the poem 'Ucango', which is about knocking at

the door, the poet uses assonance in the following line:

*O*nkq*o*nkq*o*za ng*o*bun*o*n*o* ng*o*ntliziy*o* –mhl*o*phe,

(The one who knocks gently is a good-hearted person,)
(Shasha, 1992: 4)

The vowel sound -*o*- appears nine times in the above line and is repeated in all the members of the line. The repetition of this vowel emphasises that the person who knocks gently is a good-hearted one, who has no bad intentions and does not cause any fear or threat, unlike someone who knocks as if to break the door because of their cruel hearts. This is reflected by the beautiful rhythm that is created by the repetition of this vowel. The repetition of the -*o*- vowel also illustrates the consistency with which a gentle person knocks, as he does not change the rhythm of knocking. Here, the intention is to illustrate that there are different ways of knocking. There is a way of knocking that illustrates love and one that illustrates distress and hatred.

In the poem 'Izinja Namathambo', which is about dogs fighting over bones, the poet uses assonance in the following lines:

*Z*axhom*a*n*a* ng*a*m*a*th*a*mbo z*a*d*a* z*a*bul*a*l*a*n*a*;
*Z*angq*a*vul*a*n*a* z*a*bul*a*l*a*n*a* ngenx*a* y*a*m*a*th*a*mbo;
*Z*anc*a*m' iny*a*m*a* y*a*zo z*a*lib*a*l*a* ng*a*m*a*th*a*mbo!

(They were fighting heavily because of bones until they killed each other;
They attacked and killed each other because of bones;
They gave up on their meat and concentrated on bones!)
(Shasha, 1992: 28)

Note is taken of the repetition of the words *ngamathambo* (because of bones) and *zabulalana* (they killed each other). This is to emphasise that the dogs fight and kill each other because of bones. The -*a*- vowel appears 12 times in the first line, 12 times in the second line, and 11 times in the third one. By this practice, Shasha draws the reader's attention to the importance of bones to dogs. He illustrates how dogs can even go to the extent of killing each other just for the sake of bones. Among amaXhosa, dogs are normally given bones when there is meat. That is the

reason they are depicted as very fond of bones to the extent of killing each other. This fondness of bones is emphasised by the dogs giving up on meat and focusing on bones to the extent of killing each other. This shows how they are not used to eating meat but bones.

By repeating the -*a*- vowel in all the words of the three lines, the poet also draws the attention of the reader to the hidden meaning of these lines. The presence of a hidden meaning becomes apparent in the fact that dogs are presented giving up on meat and concentrating on bones. While dogs are normally given bones to gnaw when there is meat, in reality, they never leave meat for bones when it is available for them to eat. What is not understandable then is that, even though there is meat available for the dogs, they leave it and still rush for the bones and fight over them. This idea is discussed in more detail later in this paper.

It should also be noted that the bones, for the sake of which the dogs kill each other, are from animals that were hunted and caught by them, but taken away by a human being. It is this human being who gives the bones to the dogs while he eats up the meat. Xhosa literary writers often use animals to represent oppressed people, and human beings to represent the oppressors (Tshomela, 2006: 56). This is also found in Siyongwana's novel *Ubulumko Bezinja* (1962), in the poems 'Ukwenziwa Komkhonzi' by Jolobe (1992), and 'Inkabi Kabawo' by Qangule (1970).

Bones are what remains after meat has been cut away from them. In this sense, they are the leftovers of the meat that is taken away. They then represent the leftovers of the wealth that is taken away by the oppressors. In the above lines, then, the poet depicts a situation where the oppressed fight and kill each other for leftovers, while the oppressor consumes the actual wealth which the oppressed worked hard to make available. This is what happened during the apartheid regime in South Africa. Black people (the oppressed) fought and killed one another because of a very small portion of the wealth that they worked hard to create, while the white people (the oppressors) held the bulk of the wealth of the country. Black homeland leaders would be at loggerheads among themselves for the sake of the little wealth they were given by their white bosses in South Africa. A clear example of this

was when the then-President of Ciskei, L. L. Sebe, and that of Transkei, K. D. Matanzima, would have a war of words as Matanzima wanted to include Ciskei under his authority. This became more apparent when the Transkei government attempted a failed *coup d'état* over Ciskei in 1987. In addition, General Bantu Holomisa staged a successful coup against Stella Sigcawu, who was the Premier of Transkei, in 1987, while Brigadier Oupa Gqozo staged a successful overthrow of L. L. Sebe of Ciskei in 1989. At some stage, Mbotoli and his company staged an unsuccessful ousting against Holomisa, where people died. All of this proves that Black people fought each other over the little wealth they were given by the whites who controlled the wealth of greater South Africa. This little wealth can be regarded as the leftovers of the larger wealth of South Africa, as the homelands would receive their budget from South Africa after the latter had completed its own budget. Black people, most of whom resided in the Bantustan homelands (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei) and the self-governing states such as Zululand and KaNgwane, but worked in the mines of South Africa to create the wealth there, should have concentrated on fighting for the real wealth they had created. Instead, they fought over the leftovers.

Note should be taken of the use of the possessive *yazo* (theirs) in the third line of the extract. This refers to the meat as belonging to the dogs. In the same way, the wealth in South Africa belonged to the oppressed people, as they were the aboriginal inhabitants of the land while the oppressors came to it from 1652. The minerals were mined from their land, and they worked to create wealth by labouring in the mines and farms of the country – all of which should have given them ownership of this wealth. It was unfortunate that the oppressors took the real affluence and gave the residue to the oppressed. The idea of ownership is further emphasised by Mtumane and Tshomela (2019) as:

> 'the black people who inhabited Africa (including South Africa) long before the whites came to it, belong to the land. Blacks, who were then called the Bantu, are reported to have been in South Africa already by 300 AD…The minerals and all other forms of wealth produced by the land should be their inheritance. The whites, who only came to the land around the 17th century, were foreigners

or newcomers. By taking away the wealth of this country from the indigenous people, whom they found in Africa, they were usurping the latter's inheritance.'

Mqhayi (1974: 73) also depicts this scenario in the poem 'Aa! Zweliyazuza' (Hail! Zweliyazuza) when he views Sir George Grey, who visited South Africa from Great Britain, as *Ndlalifa yelakowethu* (Heir of our own land). With this phrase, Mqhayi emphasises that Sir George Grey was considered as the beneficiary of the land (South Africa) which had its own inhabitants, while he was an external person and a visitor from Great Britain. In this manner, he is presented as seizing the birth right from its legitimate owners, the Africans.

The fact that Black people were given the leftovers of the wealth is also evident when one considers that the more developed towns and farms belonged to 'white' South Africa while the less developed ones belonged to the Bantustan homelands. For instance, the more developed towns of East London and King Williams Town, although they fell within the borders of Ciskei, belonged to white South Africa, while the less developed towns of Peddie, Whittlesea, Alice, including their rural areas, belonged to the Ciskei homeland.

In the poem 'UNongqawuse', the poet uses assonance in the following lines:

> *Indlala yasandlala sangcadalazela singcungcutheka,*
> *Sayilata sangcucalaza sayoba ngenxa yephango*
>
> (Famine degraded us as we emaciated,
> We moved from one place to another and fainted because of hunger)
> (Shasha, 1992: 47)

The poem from which this excerpt is taken is about the cattle killing of 1856 among amaXhosa, which was the plot of the white people who pretended to be ancestors and used Nongqawuse to order people to destroy their livestock and crops as they said there would be wealth thereafter, and that the Britons would be driven away, among other promises.

In the above excerpt, the *-a-* vowel is repeated 12 times

in the first line and 11 times in the second one. The repetition of this vowel emphasises how people fainted because of famine and hunger after the cattle killing brought by Nongqawuse's prophesy. The people who introduced themselves as ancestors, to convey the message to amaXhosa that they should destroy their livestock and field crops, appeared to Nongqawuse, who was Mhlakaza's niece. These people claimed that they (as ancestors) wanted to cleanse the land and destroy witchcraft. They promised that, in turn, there would be great wealth as people would have plenty of food, and that the dead would rise. AmaXhosa obeyed and destroyed their livestock and field crops. After all this, a big famine befell the nation. There was death all around (Brownlee, 1977: 126–159; Soga, 1989: 159–170; Peires, 1989: 78–181).

The repetition of the -a- vowel in the above lines then illustrates and emphasises the death caused by famine, which came because of Nongqawuse's prophesy, which later proved to be incorrect. The foregoing discussion has illustrated how assonance is used in Shasha's poetry. Besides emphasising certain actions and situations, the repetition of vowels creates a beautiful rhythm and gives the poetry an aesthetic effect as the reader appreciates reading it. When the poem is read aloud, the beautiful rhythm becomes audible and gives structure to the lines in which it is used.

Consonance

Consonance is a form of alliteration that is the repetition of a sequence of consonants but with a

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change in the intervening stressed vowel (Kgobe, 1994: 238). It is the repetition of identical consonant sounds (Barnet et al., 1997: 610). This repetition tends to give the poem a definite structure and creates audible rhythm. Poems in which Shasha uses consonance clearly are 'Isiphango', 'Utyhilo Lwelitye kwaNtsebeza eCala', and 'Ukhelekenkce'. For instance, in the poem 'Isiphango', which is about a hailstorm, the following lines reflect the repetition of consonant sounds:

> Isi**ch**o**th**o si**ch**o**th**oze saco**th**oza,
> Sa**ch**ol' i**ch**am lobu**ch**opho begusha;

> (The hailstorm dropped steadily,
> It picked up a sheep's brain at no cost;)
> (Shasha, 1992: 10)

Consonance, in these lines, is formed by the recurrence of the -ch- and -th- sounds. The -ch- sound occurs two times in the first line and three times in the second one. The -th- sound occurs three times in the first line only. The repetition of these consonants in the above lines emphasises the manner in which the hailstorm fell and its consequences.

Note should be taken that the -ch- and -th- sounds form part of the root of the word isichotho (hailstorm). The recurrence of these sounds in the first line then points to the action connected to the hailstorm. It also gives the auditory image of the drops of the hailstorm dripping steadily. The frequency of the -ch- sound in the second line enhances the idea of the actions associated with the hailstorm. The hailstorm is depicted as having destroyed the sheep and the owners of the sheep lost out, as they got nothing in return, hence the storm is said to have picked up a sheep's brain at no cost.

In the poem 'Utyhilo Lwelitye KwaNtsebeza ECala', which is about the unveiling of a tombstone, the poet uses consonance as follows:

> Nda**hl**okoma ndi**hl**iki**hl**wa li**hl**ombe!

> (I made noise as I was moved by excitement!)
> (Shasha, 1992: 41)

Consonance in this line is fulfilled by the recurrence of the -hl- consonant sound, appearing four times in the line. The recurrence of this sound creates a

beautiful rhythm. Its repetition illustrates the noise that was made by people at the unveiling of the tombstone because of excitement. This repetition then emphasises the excitement experienced by people at the ceremony, as everyone (including the poet) present, wanted to say something. It is the positive speeches of the speakers about Ntsebeza that excited the audience. The poet, also, could not avoid the exciting feeling, as he reveals in the above line.

In the poem 'Ukhelekenkce', which is about the appreciation of isiXhosa language, consonance is fulfilled with the recurrence of the -*tyh*- sound in the following line:

> Ba**tyh**il' intyilazwi za**tyh**wa**tyh**wa izi**tyh**akala

(They opened dictionaries and fools were threatened)
(Shasha, 1992: 36)

The -*tyh*- sound appears four times in the above line. This consonance mainly serves emphatic and decorative functions. It also promotes the musical sounds effect in the poetry. The repetition of the -*tyh*- sound illustrates fear from those who fail to reason, as they cannot stand in defence of isiXhosa that is undermined by foreigners. Although they are being assisted by the presence of dictionaries, they are still being suppressed, as they are not free to use their language. All this causes concern to those who are proud of isiXhosa.

The above situation was a result of the undermining of the indigenous languages of Africa, in favour of English and Afrikaans, under the apartheid regime in South Africa. The speakers of these languages then felt apologetic and lacked confidence when using their own languages, isiXhosa being one of them.

It should be noted that the repetition of the -*ch*-, -*th*-, and -*tyh*- sounds, as illustrated in the above discussion, is a case of what Bobelo (2008: 98) refers to as the repetition of double consonants. Double consonants are an instance where different 'consonants are grouped at the area of the mouth or nostrils, where they are articulated. This results in the articulation of double consonants at the same time.' For instance, the -*ch*- sound is a double consonant in

the sense that it consists of the alveolar click sound -*c*- and the voiceless glottalic -*h*- sound, which are joined together to form the -*ch*- sound. This results in aspiration of the *c* sound with the -*h*- sound.

The -*th*- sound is also a double consonant in that the ejective alveolar -*t*- sound is articulated at the same time with the voiceless glottal -*h*-, which results in the aspiration of the -*t*- sound. The same applies with the -*tyh*- sound where the -*ty*- consonant is articulated simultaneously with the -*h*- glottal sound, resulting in the aspiration on the -*ty*- sound.

Conclusion

This article has discussed the employment of alliteration in Shasha's volume of poetry entitled *Zihlabana nje Ziyalamba*. Alliteration was discussed as it gets revealed through the use of assonance and consonance. Prior to discussing these forms, the theoretical framework, the theory of stylistics that underpins the study and research methodology, were introduced in the study.

Assonance and consonance, as they are used as forms of alliteration in the poetry under study, primarily serve decorative or ornamental and emphatic functions as they make the reading of the poetry more interesting. They also create rhythm, which, in turn, gives the poetry a definite structure, and affords it a musical sound effect or euphony. They further give the reader a clearer view of what the poet is presenting in his poetry.

While this study deals with alliteration in the poetry of W. Shasha, it is recommended that scholars of literature attend to the concept in considerations of the works of other poets. It would be interesting to read how other poets use alliteration to emphasise their messages in their works.

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