

RHYTHM IN E. M. FORSTER'S *A PASSAGE TO INDIA*

Victoria Guillén
University of Alicante

I. INTRODUCTION

“The musicalization of fiction” (Huxley, A., 1921) has become a familiar subject in recent years. It seems that the modern novelist prefers a discontinuous structure to a continuous one and for that reason his aim is to alter the notion of time at both levels: expression and content. Phonic, syntactical, lexical and situational repetitions are quite frequent in modern texts; as a result of this, the structure of the novel seems to follow an endless circle.

Following E. K. Brown (1950: 89), novelists may use many kinds of rhythm in one work and this may be the result of the combination of phrases, characters, symbols, and a complex evolution of themes. And it is precisely the use of expanding symbols and thematic structure the most remarkable feature of E. M. Forster's novel, *A Passage to India*.¹

A Passage to India (Forster, E. M., 1934) is a modern novel with a musical structure in which rhythm plays an important role. The main function of it is, as E. M. Forster has suggested, “Not to be there all the time like a pattern but to fill us with surprise and hope” (Forster, E. M., 1974). And this implies that the author is not simply using language for a communicative purpose but also for a poetic one² because the reader's attention seems to be drawn towards the specific nature of language itself, so that a careful reading is invited. It is also loaded with an emotive intention since it is designed to produce certain effects on the receiver's mind. When reading *A Passage to India*, it seems unavoidable to fall into the rhythmic timelessness of its echoes and choruses, which emphasize perfectly the mystery of the ancient Indian culture along with its sacred songs, prophecies and legends. The rhythmic musicality of this novel has also been noted by P. Burra (1970: 61-85) who has even suggested that the rhythmic variation that appears to be present in the three parts of which the novel consists (*Mosque, Caves, Temple*) reminds us of the structure of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony: fall rhythm-rise rhythm-fall rhythm.

Likewise, E. K. Brown (1950: 113) defines *A Passage to India* as “three big blocks of sound”. A first block in which evil creeps about weekly and the secret understanding of the heart is dominant; a second block in which evil streams forth from the caves and destroys almost everything about, except for the contemplative insight of Professor Godbole and the intuitive fidelity of Mrs. Moore. And a third block in which evil is obliged to withdraw by the allies of good, that is, tolerance, sympathy and fidelity.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyse the structural function of rhythm as well as its contribution to the creation of textual meaning in the novel *A Passage to India*.

2. PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON RHYTHMIC PROSE

There is a vast bibliography on rhythmic prose³ distributed among different fields of research, namely, phonetics, psychology, stylistics, etc.; however the surface upon which we attempt to build the methodology of the present study is applied linguistics. Before concentrating on our model, we should introduce briefly some of the most outstanding theories that have analysed rhythmic prose on the basis of two dichotomies:

- a) objective theories *versus* subjective theories;
- b) simple theories *versus* multiple theories.

Let us consider each of them apart in the next sections.

a) Objective theories *versus* subjective theories.

In order to provide an example of thesis that defends an objective character in the perception of rhythmic prose, we shall quote A. Alonso (1960: 256-291), for whom rhythm procures for us a pleasurable experience, because our body experiences rhythm through ordered movements of tension and relaxation that reflect the interest and active participation with which our physiology follows the march of our thought. According to A. Alonso, hence, rhythm perception is objective, that is, rhythm is intrinsically in discourse flow.

On the other hand, E. Anderson Imbert (1963) upholds the opposite thesis when he explains that rhythm is a changeable structure, which consists of a series of successive sensations, designed, monitored, regulated and experienced inwardly by the person; consequently, it is us who assign rhythm to things.

However, an intermediate position between the aforesaid perspectives appears in R. Brenes Mesén's paper, “El ritmo de la prosa española” (quoted in Paraíso de

Leal, I., 1976). This linguist upholds in her piece of research that man grants rhythm to everything he creates, and, hence, to words. But if he does so, it is because he himself has a vital rhythm, that is, the two successive movements displayed by both his heart and breath.

Besides, psychological studies on the field throw some light upon this blurred phenomenon when they indicate a great relativism in time perception that affects, thus, our sense of rhythm; in other words, the general trend is to adopt methodologies based on objective grounds, on tackling the analysis of rhythmic prose; nevertheless, as the effects produced on the reader's mind are subjective, it is impossible to apply these data to an empirical analysis.

To finish with this first dichotomy, we shall quote W. Morris Patterson (1917) who offers one of the most remarkable studies on rhythmic prose. In accordance with his perspective, rhythm is connected to our sense of time and intensity. The conclusion to which Morris Patterson comes, after long laborious analyses, is that there are persons who have a deep rhythmic sense and thus he calls them *aggressively rhythmic persons*, as they find rhythm in almost all prose texts; whereas the persons who have very little sense, or no sense at all, of rhythm cannot appreciate it clearly in any example. Hence, we may say that any opinion given on prose rhythm will be a subjective interpretation.

b) Simple theories *versus* multiple theories.

If we concentrate on simple theories, we have to take into account Paraíso de Leal's (1976) classification:

- the *cursus*;
- clause-type frequency;
- the *numerus*.

The concept of *cursus* has been widely discussed since Aristotle's times. It is defined as the rhythm produced out of the succession of stressed and unstressed syllables that affects, above all, the beginning and end of sentences. In this respect, we may refer to the classical studies of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, among others, which were based on this perspective.

The theory of clause-type frequency consists in exploring the frequency with which certain types of clauses appear in texts; or in analysing how unstressed syllables gather around a stressed one. A. Lipsky's book, *Rhythm as a Distinguishing Characteristic of Prose Style* (1907) is perhaps one of the most relevant pieces of research that follows this perspective in Anglosaxon studies.

In almost all languages, analyses have been carried out to discover the predominant syllabic set that separates two successive pauses in speech. According to H. Brémond (1924), rhythm consists precisely in the *numerus*, that is to say, in syllabic similarity, or, in other words, in the identical number of syllables that fills in

the speech uttered between two pauses. He comes to the conclusion that the difference between verse rhythm and prose rhythm is just a question of grade.

To sum up, we may say that simple theories confine prose rhythm to the presence of a single linguistic element, let us say, stress (illustrated through the *cursus* and clause-type perspectives); or quantity (exemplified through the *numerus* theory).

Furthermore, we should also comment briefly on multiple theories, called so because they claim that prose rhythm is the resulting sum of several linguistic elements. In accordance with P. Franklin Baum (1952), the fundamental suprasegmental elements of prose rhythm are tempo, intonation and stress, the latter being considered by Baum as the most important rhythmic component. In this sense, we agree with I. Paraíso de Leal (1976) when she suggests that Baum's defence of stress indicates that he is taking part in the conflict that has been held for long between the North American psychologists who are called *timers*, as they argue that we perceive time through rhythm; and those who are known as *stressers*, since they state that we grasp time through stress patterns.

However, Baum's definition of rhythm is not exclusively based on stress, as it also introduces the notion of isochrony. Consequently, rhythm is defined in his work, *The Other Harmony of Prose* (1952) as "a series of units of elements which are similar not necessarily in themselves or in their duration, but the more alike they are in both characteristics the more obvious is the rhythm".

In French studies on rhythmic prose, we should take into account the theory of Pius Servien Coculesco (1930). This linguist has designed a working methodology that proves valid to poetic prose. It is based on the basic rhythmic patterns of the French language, viz., stress rhythm; syllabic rhythm; and timbre rhythm.

Generally speaking, we shall say that multiple theories are called so because they indicate the simultaneous working of several rhythm generating elements, and so, they grant us with more integrated analysis of rhythm that may, hence, tackle all types of prose texts. We think that this is the position taken by I. Paraíso de Leal's piece of research, *Teoría del ritmo de la prosa*⁴ (1976) in which she carries out an exhaustive analysis on texts written in both verse and prose, and within the latter, she goes further to distinguish different types of prose, that is, poetic, narrative, expository, dramatic, etc.

Another recent research that has been carried out under this perspective is the study of F. J. Castillo Martín (1984), "The Fall of the House of Usher: acercamiento a su ritmo narrativo". This paper deals with Poe's aesthetic concern with the music of words and the poetic function of literary language in *The Fall of the House of Usher*. The analysis of rhythm ranges from phonetic, syntactical and lexical aspects to conceptual or thematic elements, and it shows a wide variety of linguistic means⁵ used by the writer to produce rhythmical effects and musical beauty.⁶

3. AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO RHYTHM IN *A PASSAGE TO INDIA*

The methodology of our study is multiple because in it the basic principles of both structuralism and pragmatics cooperate; in other words, we could say that our methodology of rhythm is being constructed on the basis imposed by the sentence and next focuses on its texture conditions: cohesion, coherence, progressiveness, intentionality and closure, among others (Alcaraz, E., 1983a) to end with the range of effects caused by rhythm on the reader's mind.

Starting with an initial hypothesis, viz., the existence of rhythm in the text structure and its capacity to impose functions and effects on the discourse-text, we have devised, within the frame of structuralism, the first part of this paper (Structure and Rhythm) that includes the following points:

- a) phono-phonological rhythm;
- b) morphosyntactical rhythm;
- c) lexical-semantical rhythm.

On the other hand, in the second part of our analysis (Textual Dynamics and Rhythm), we study, within the field of pragmatics, the operative potentials that rhythm may help to develop in textual dynamics: cohesion, coherence, progressiveness, intentionality and closure, etc. Our methodological frame is completed with a pragmatic vision of the communicative-literary scheme, according to which the effects registered by the reader may indicate the successful performance of rhythm in a musical structure.

4. STRUCTURE AND RHYTHM

We have chosen for the aims of our study the deductive basis of European structuralism (Manoliu, M., 1973; Holloway, J., 1979), which claims the existence of a hierarchical organization and dependence among the different components that comprise the structure of the text. Russian Formalism may be considered as the first model which concentrated on the systematic differences that appear to exist between poetic language and non-poetic language. The formalists⁷ came to the conclusion that poetic language disautomates the mechanical organisation of communicative language and so its main aims are to draw the reader's attention towards the means and not towards the message and to underline the link between sound and meaning. This hypothesis suggests the autonomous value of the linguistic sign and therefore of all its structural levels: the phono-phonological, the morphosyntactical and the lexical-semantical. The question of how rhythm arises in this complex textual network is our next point of analysis.

From a micro-structural point of view, the performance of rhythm is noticed in the repetition⁸, alternance and contrast mechanisms that may take place at each of the above mentioned levels. The function of rhythm consists in conferring relevance, prominence and emphasis on each of these layers. Because of the different nature of the elements repeated, alternated and contrasted at each section, we suggest the following division:

4.1. Phono-phonological rhythm (which we call partial rhythm I). It should be analyzed in terms of intonation, stress patterns and repetition of sounds, etc.

4.2. Morphosyntactical rhythm (which we call partial rhythm II). It should be analyzed by means of the following phenomena: foregrounding, periodical sentences and parallelism, etc.

4.3. Lexical-semantic rhythm (which we call partial rhythm III). It should be studied by means of repetition mechanisms such as lexematic isotopy and isosemy.

From our point of view, the sum of all the aforementioned rhythms is equal to a global text rhythm which, therefore, presents a major force and relevance within the text structure; besides, after carrying out consecutive analyses, we suggest a cooperative principle and an interrelation among this set of rhythms, the main objective of which is to create textual meaning.

4.1. PHONO-PHONOLOGICAL RHYTHM

We study phono-phonological rhythm, which we call partial rhythm I, by means of the following mechanisms: intonation, isophony and stress.

According to R. Quirk (1973: 450), we speak of intonation when we associate relative prominence with pitch, the aspect of the sound that we perceive in terms of high and low. On the other hand, D. Crystal (1969: 195) defines intonation as a complex set of elements that belong to different prosodic systems, let us say, stress, pitch and tempo. Besides, he also stresses the fact that any description of intonation without reference to situational information is likely to be too general and ambiguous to be really useful (Crystal, D., 1969: 285). Once we have provided an integrated definition of intonation, we feel that we should state why it has been included in this section. The reason is quite simple: it happens that the repetition, alternance, and contrast of intonation patterns produce a rhythmic accompaniment which systematically combines tension and relaxation.

The other mechanism that is tackled in this section is isophony, which could be defined as the repetition of sounds, and it is precisely this recurrent feature that supplies a rhythmic effect to the phono-phonological level of a poetic prose text. Isophony is an important rhythmic component because "it establishes a set towards the medium and not the message and interrogates the connections between sounds and meanings" (Attridge, D., 1982: 310).

Likewise we should also include in this section the rhythmic effect caused by the repetition of stress patterns. R. Quirk (1973: 450) defines it as “the pattern formed by stresses perceived as peaks of prominence or beats, occurring at somewhat regular intervals of time. The recurring beats being regarded as completing a cycle or measure”.

To sum up all that has been stated so far, we may say that poetic prose invites the reader to perform a careful intonation and pronunciation and so it emphasizes the linguistic system, the connections among stresses, sound and meaning. On the contrary, oral language is characterized by a rapid flow of words and it is the urgent transmission of information what really matters.

As the narrative begins to move towards the Marabar Caves, sounds exercise a decisive effect on the two women, Mrs. Moore and Adela, who are to find the echoes in those caves so disturbing for their minds and thoughts. Let us consider the following example which has been taken from *A Passage to India* (p. 148):

The train crossed a nullah. Pomper, pomper, pomper was the sound that the wheels made as they trundled over the bridge, moving very slowly (...). And as she appraised it with its adjuncts of Turtons and Burtons, the train accompanied her sentences, pomper, pomper, pomper (...).

The phono-phonological rhythm of this text is regular, heavy and intensively marked through the repetition of stress and intonation patterns (low rise) and sounds. This passage starts and finishes with the very same repetition: /pomp / pomp / pomp/; its main purpose being to imitate the sound made by the train wheels, but at the same time to convey the sensation of monotony and timelessness which is also underlined with the alliteration of the nasal phoneme /n/ in such words as: *sound*, *train*, *trundle*, and the pair *Burtons and Turtons* that almost repeats the same set of phonemes.

Moreover, we would also take into account the monotony provided by the lexical-semantic rhythm where isosemy focuses on sluggishness. This semantic field is especially marked with two words: *trundle* and *slowly*. The cohesion of the text is guaranteed by means of a repetitive pattern that connects with the text meaning: “The train accompanied her sentences, pomper, pomper, pomper (...)”. This sound repetition is meaningful within the context of *A Passage to India* because it establishes a link up with Adela’s apathy. In this sense, E. K. Brown (1950: 99) has suggested that “this dull repetitive sound of the wheels has the effect of refiguring the echo’s influence on Mrs. Moore”.

4.2. MORPHOSYNTACTICAL RHYTHM

Generally speaking, we may say that poetic prose modifies the grammatical order of the sentence because it introduces the repetition of certain syntactical

schemes that produce the effects of periodicity and timelessness. Morphosyntactical rhythm is, therefore, the result of the repetition, alternance, and contrast, of the different elements that build up this linguistic layer. In the following sections we shall focus on such elements as foregrounding, the periodical sentence, the complex syntactical pattern, isotaxy and parallelism, etc.

Foregrounding modifies the grammatical order of the sentence and so it places words emphatically, either at initial or final position. And all this results in a rhythmic contrast between tension and relaxation (Mukarovsky, J., 1964). Consider the following:

(...) and in the midst of it he saw an Englishman and beneath it —Oh joy!—
smiled not Mr. Heaslop; but Fielding (p. 66).

To place the verb *to smile* at initial position, before its subject *Mr. Heaslop*, implies that the former is stressed strongly and so it conveys a change of intonation. Besides the denial of Mr. Heaslop as the agent of the action *to smile* imposes an increasing tension in quest of the true agent, who is placed at a foregrounded final position. And after this rising climax, the text seems to be closed with a falling tone.

The periodical sentence is defined by W. Nash (1980: 225) as “last is more important”; the fact of placing, either at initial or final position, subordinate clauses, parenthesis, prepositional phrases, etc. implies the creation of suspense in the text. The longer the subordinate clause preceding the main clause, the more information the memory has to process and so the more tension it stores. Let us look at the next example:

- a) John has visited his parents, although he doesn't visit them very often.
- b) Although he doesn't visit them very often, John has visited his parents.

If we consider the first example, the combination main clause + subordinate clause, we may say that it has an anaphoric reference which creates expectations in the narrative structure. However, in the second example, the subordinate clause placed at initial position has a cataphoric reference and so it introduces tension in the narrative process because we have to wait for a while to find out who that he is. But let us now analyse the following example from *A Passage to India*:

Having seen one such cave, having seen two, having seen three, four,
fourteen, twenty four, the visitor returns to Chandrapore uncertain whether
he has had an interesting experience (...) (p. 138).

The time clause *having seen x caves* is placed at initial position and it is repeated again and again throughout the narration, which, due to this timeless reiteration, does not progress at all⁹. The reader seems to be performing the same

stress, intonation and word patterns and therefore this fact makes him anxious to find out the result and to relieve his perplexity.

The complex syntactical pattern is explained by E. Bernárdez (1982: 87) as a set of closely connected sentences that imposes a special stylistic unit. Several sentences are put together with the aid of intonation and repetition and they are also relevant because they may express a micro-textual topic. Consider this example:

Not to love the man one's going to marry! Not to find it out till this moment!
 Not even to have asked oneself the question until now! Something else to
 think out. (p. 163)

This paragraph shows how the three partial rhythms combine to reinforce the production of a global rhythm that gives rise to a semantic unit. Some stylistic repetitions are worth noting: the isophony /au/ in words such as: *now* and *out*; the isotaxy: *Not* + infinitive + direct object + temporal complement in:

Not to love the man (...)
 Not to find it out till this moment
 Not to have asked the question until now

and finally the isosemy that underlines the negation of the verb to love in lexical units such as: *Not to love*, *Not to find it out*, *Not to have asked the question*. It is also worth pointing out how sound and sense connect leading to a micro-textual topic that represents Adela's failure to acknowledge love.

Isotaxy is a variety of isotopy that consists in the repetition of similar syntactical patterns. This fact implies an emphatic rhythm because stressed syllables are perceived with much more intensity and also there appears to be an approach to isochrony which makes "rhythm become self-reinforcing" (Attridge, D., 1982: 80). Let us analyse the following example selected from *A Passage to India*:

If one had spoken vileness in that place, (...) the comment would have been
 the same —ou-boum— If one had spoken with the tongues of angels (...) it
 would amount to the same (...) (p. 160).

In this particular sample, two conditional sentences are repeated conveying the sensation of an unavoidable recurrent failure:

If one had spoken vileness
 If one had spoken with the tongues of angels
 the comment would have been the same
 it O would O amount to the same

4.3. LEXICAL-SEMANTICAL RHYTHM

We may define lexical isotopy as the systematized repetition of words that takes place at regular intervals and so its interrelations accumulate and give rise to a textual progression. Gili y Gaya (1981: 328) has pointed out that word repetition is a rhythmic feature, because it establishes associations between sound and sense, which are shared by both the speaker and the listener in the speech act.

Besides we should also state that even the placement of words may result in a rhythmic effect, produced out of the combination of tension and relaxation, which depends on either the probability of co-occurrence those words have or the distance that separates them at the textual surface. Let us analyse the following example from *A Passage to India*:

(...) there was a confusion about a snake, which was never cleared up. Miss Quested saw a thin, dark object reared on end at the further side of a watercourse, and said, A snake! The villagers agreed, and Aziz explained: yes, a black cobra (...) she looked through Ronny's field glasses; she found it wasn't a snake, but the withered and twisted stump of a toddy-palm. So she said, it isn't a snake. (...) Aziz (...) insisted that it was a black cobra (p. 153).

In this example we find a careful lexical selection and combination; the word *snake* is repeated systematically and it seems that it connects with the echo. The lexematic isotopy unites the text at both levels: expression and content. Moreover the persistent assertion and negation of this word conveys an effect of confusion, which is closely related to the topic of the text: the confusion exerted on the characters by the Marabar Hills. Later on, we find the following example:

(...) echoes generate echoes, and the cave is stuffed with a snake composed of small snakes, which writhe independently (p. 159)

Once again we notice how the word *snake* is associated with the echo. The lexical selection and combination of this piece of text has a clear rhythmic effect; on one hand, the isophony of the fricatives /z/ and /s/, as well as the lexical parallelism between *echoes-echoes* and *snake-small snakes*. On the other hand, there seems to be a semantic redundancy pointing out the proliferation and fertility of such *snakes-echoes* and underlying the procreation of an evil spirit.

5. TEXTUAL DYNAMICS AND RHYTHM

The second part of this study is concerned with the role rhythm plays in textual dynamics and therefore its methodology is set within the field of pragmatics defined as "that branch of semiotics which studies the origins, the uses and the effects of



signs” (Searle, J. R., 1980). Pragmatics, therefore, studies the conditions according to which speakers and hearers determine the context and use-dependent utterance meanings. The basic unit of research in pragmatics is the text which is a unit not of form but of meaning. However, the text must follow certain texture conditions in order to be considered as a semantic unit; among the most outstanding ones, we should point out: cohesion, coherence, progressiveness, relevance, intentionality and closure. E. Alcaraz (1983b; 1990) has stated that both repetition and ellipsis are significant in the establishment of such conditions.

We believe the principle of repetition is very important for the purpose of our analysis. Repetition is a key element when dealing with rhythm because it reinforces textual coherence and because its stylistic variety imposes impressions and effects. The appearance of repetition in a literary text is voluntary and systematic, its main purpose being to provide the text with security, clarity and creativity; otherwise it should be avoided.

According to our point of view, the relevance of rhythm in a poetic prose text consists in conferring texture conditions as well as conveying effects on the textual dynamics that stress meaning and draw the reader’s attention towards the beauty of the narrative discourse.

In what follows, we shall outline the contribution rhythm may give to the text. We shall in each case provide a definition and, at the very end of our expository analysis, we shall supply a global example to clarify what has been discussed before. No attempt will be made to offer an exhaustive list; the whole object of this section is to make it clear just how rhythm may help to develop texture conditions within the literary frame.

In the first place, we shall tackle coherence. This is defined by Halliday as follows: “the concept (...) is a semantic one; it refers to the relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text” (Halliday, M.A.K., 1976: 4). Such a semantic relationship is clearly noticed by means of discourse repetition and for that reason we may talk about a pragmatic repetition because it occurs when the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except through recourse to it. (Halliday, M.A.K., 1976: 99). Our next point of discussion is therefore how rhythm helps to impose coherence.

Rhythm has often been used as an instrument of cohesion in poetry until recently; nevertheless it has been proved in modern texts that rhythm may also serve as a basis to unite the text semantically, that is to say, it may act as the major unifier of semantically unrelated or conflicting elements (Attridge, D., 1982: 303). And it follows that the reader may grasp the content more easily from the musical repetition of key words.

Likewise we should also take into account another interesting element that is closely connected with the texture condition of coherence: the leitmotif. Baquero Goyanes (1970: 98) considers this as one of the most frequently used procedures to

achieve a musical structure. It consists in a motif which is repeated several times in the course of an opera. In fiction we define the leitmotif as the recurrence of a certain element throughout the narration and that is the reason why it produces a musical effect. Many writers have claimed that the leitmotif is the basic rhythmic component that makes us consider *A Passage to India* a musical novel. In this respect, E. K. Brown (1950: 89-115) suggests as the most outstanding expanding symbols and images the following ones: *the wasp*, *the bees*, *the horses*, and *the echo*; all of them serve to connect different parts of the novel either formally or semantically. Consider the example below in which the leitmotif *the echo* links up rhythmically different parts of the story:

There was a terrifying echo. (p. 158).
 (...all produce boum (...) echoes generate echoes (p. 159).
 So you thought an echo was India (p. 214).
 My echo has come back again badly (p. 216).

The second condition of texture that we tackle is cohesion. According to Rastier (quoted in Greimas, A. J., 1970: 107-118), it could be analysed by means of syntactical isotopy and lexical isotopy. If we consider the former, we have to analyse the repetition of connectors such as pronouns, determiners, conjunctions, etc.; on the other hand, if we take into account the latter, we come up against the fact that one effective device of lexical cohesion is simply to reiterate a word until it becomes a persuasive motif, insistently claiming and directing the reader's attention (Halliday, M.A.K., 1976: 289). Both syntactical and lexical isotopy produce rhythm by repetition; and that is the reason why whenever certain connectors and words are repeated, the same set of sounds and stress patterns may be recalled as well. As a result of this, there seems to be an approach towards isochrony and, therefore, a firm dense structure is devised.

The third condition of texture that we study is progressiveness¹⁰. We say that a text is progressive when "it flows" (Nash, W., 1980). In the text-process the writer tries to find the most effective combination of sentence-processes, working sometimes with ostensible "norms" of unmarked theme, end-focus and weight and sometimes with the stylistic variations of the marked theme. In our view, rhythm should contribute to develop the flow of information by altering, interrupting, connecting, emphasizing, etc. For example, a constant tension or relaxation in textual dynamics would produce an effect of stagnation; on the contrary, the combination and emphasis of certain elements over the rest produces the swaying of convergence and divergence that creates the illusion of flowing discourse. G. N. Leech (1983: 215) has claimed that regular patterns help the text to progress with a measured dynamic movement.

When studying the textual condition of progressiveness, we may find it convenient not only to analyse the rhythmic progression of single paragraphs, but

also to pay attention to what Halliday (1976: 289) calls paragraphs with tight and loose structure, which are quite often transitional paragraphs in the narrative process.

Generally speaking, we may say that the three partial rhythms that have already been mentioned help to develop this texture condition; the phono-phonological rhythm with its swinging of rising and falling tones; the morphosyntactical rhythm with the fluctuation of regular and irregular patterns, and the systematized combination of tight and loose paragraphs. Finally, the lexical-semantic rhythm may also play an important role with reference to this point because the accumulation of key words provokes an increase of tension that is alternated with passages that lack such a concentration. As the very combination of topic and commentary in the narrative process means the progressive flow of information, we suggest that the function of rhythm is mainly emphatic.

Relevance is a condition of texture which is very much related to the perception of meaning. Following N. Smith and D. Wilson (1979: 176), one remark is relevant to the other, if the two combine to yield new information which was not derivable from either in isolation. And so rhythm emphasizes the text relevant meanings so that the receiver may grasp the meaning more easily. The appearance of recurrent rhythmic patterns makes the reader bring to the surface certain layers of meaning that have appeared in the text before, but now are lying at its bottom. And what is really interesting with regard to this point is the fact that they may suggest rich, new connotations.

In this section, we shall include a brief commentary on closure in our analysis. We say that a text has a good closure when all the created expectations are completed at the very end of the narration. D. Attridge (1982: 308) has suggested that "rhythm may participate in the closure of a text by bringing that onward movement to a satisfying end". There are times in which a rhythmic pattern may be altered and therefore it can unravel a suspense effect; but if it is restored at the end, we may say it gives, especially when it coincides with textual isosemy, a good closure to the text and implies the psychological satisfaction of the reader. Let us analyse the following example from *A Passage to India*:

Colour throbbed and mounted behind a pattern of trees, grew in intensity, was yet brighter, (...) They awaited the miracle. But at the supreme moment, when night should have died and day lived, nothing occurred. (p. 149).

In this passage rhythm helps to develop the texture conditions of cohesion and coherence by means of the lexematic isotopy colour, which, in spite of the fact that it is elliptical in the sentences, (0) *grew*; (0) *brighter*, it is recalled by the reader. The isosemy of the text also points out the sense of brightness in *throbbed*, *mounted*, *grew in intensity*, *was yet brighter*; as well as a religious ritual feeling which can be noticed in words such as *miracle*, *supreme moment*, *night died*, *day lived*, etc. The text progresses regularly until the short sentence *They awaited the miracle* bursts into the narration. This sentence draws to itself all the energy and mystery that is

embodied in the text. The rhythmic progression of the passage is, in this way, interrupted by a periodical sentence that thwarts the expectations of the reader and therefore creates a rising suspense effect. Finally the rhythm of the text is resumed by means of a falling anticlimax: nothing occurred that closes the passage. Rhythm helps to impose the condition of relevance because it stresses the connection between this failure and the tragic consequences of the Marabar Caves on the characters.

To conclude this second section, which we have called Textual Dynamics and Rhythm, we may suggest that a systematized rhythm may serve as an aid to the creation of texture conditions. Among the most important ones, we have considered in our analysis: cohesion (or the unity of form) and coherence (or the unity of content) because without them the text would not exist as such. Rhythm, which was initially considered as no more than a cohesion device, plays an important role in the creation and unity of meaning in modern texts because it is able to increase the poetic function of the prose text.

6. THE EFFECTS OF RHYTHM

At the very beginning of this paper, we claimed the need for a discourse analysis that would make it possible to consider the implications and effects that meaning may produce in the reader. We feel that the reader of literary texts should not be passive; on the contrary, our view is that he should participate actively in the process of communication. Many critics and writers have reflected on this point and it seems to be an acknowledged fact that “each book sounds quite differently, depending on who plays it and where and when it is played” (Baquero Goyanes, M., 1970: 91).

It happens that rhythm is a private experience and so its perception is subjected to what Patterson (1916) has called “aggressively rhythmic people”, that is to say, people who have a special rhythmic sense. Consequently, if the reader is believed to be an active participant, we may define the concept of effects as the subjective impressions that are formalized by the receiver when he reads.

The aim of this section consists in focalizing the role played by the receiver in the literary act and we believe this fact to be very important because it is precisely the reader who can, through his active participation, waken the sleeping beauty and richness of the text. From our point of view, the literary act should be characterized by the following features, among others:

a) The writer manipulates language so as to produce certain effects on the reader’s mind.

b) The reader has to activate a secondary competence¹¹ to grasp the connotative and metaphorical values that the writer has so carefully created for him.

c) The reader should have certain qualities that may help him to carry out a sound interpretation of meaning; he should be active, sensitive, motivated and sensible.

Among the very many critics who have pointed out the connection between textual rhythm, the author's intention, and the active participation of the reader, we may acknowledge W. Nash (1980: 117) who has explained that "there is a relationship between the rhythmic procedures of a text and the supposed intention of its author to convey a posture, reflect or evoke a state of mind and echo sensory impressions". G. N. Leech (1983: 15) has also emphasized how the writer uses language in order to produce a particular effect on the reader's mind and this is in *A Passage to India*, as E. K. Brown (1950: 114) has suggested, "order in the universe, but order that can be merely glimpsed, never seized for sure".

7. CONCLUSIONS

A Passage to India is a modern novel written in poetic prose and this means that it has been created with the purpose of provoking an emotive response. This idea was already tackled in the works of Plato where it was asserted that rhythmic form can provide a foundation for any evocation of psychological conditions, whether mediated by a dramatic speaker or not. (Attridge, D., 1982: 299)

To sum up, we may define rhythm in poetic prose as a systematic and motivated force which, by means of mechanisms of repetition, alternance and contrast, conveys relevance, prominence and emphasis to each of the different layers that comprise the text structure; its main purpose being to draw the reader's attention towards language itself, and also to intensify the semantic fields that create the meaning of the poetic work mimetically and emphatically.

Notes

- ¹ For the study of rhythmical thematic structure, consider also the novels of E.M. Forster, *Howards End*. London: Penguin, 1941; *A Room with a View*. London: Penguin, 1955; *The Longest Journey*. London: Penguin, 1960; *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. London: Penguin, 1959; and *Maurice*, London: Penguin, 1972.
- ² For the poetic function of language, see. R. Jakobson, *Lingüística y Poética*. Trans. Ana Ma Gutiérrez-Cabello. Madrid: Cátedra, 1981.
- ³ See A. Classe, *The Rhythm of English Prose*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939; J. H. Scott, *Rhythmic Prose*. University of Iowa Studies: Humanistic Studies, vol. III, 1, 1925.
- ⁴ The methodological frame that I. Paraíso de Leal develops starts with the assumption that prose rhythm is basically a rhythm produced out of repetition mechanisms such as:
 - Stress rhythm, being the result of the repetition of a series of contiguous stress sets.
 - Tone or intonation rhythm, being the result of a series of phonic sets that are repeated within the bounds of several adjoining sentences.

-Parallelism rhythm, being the result of the repetition of phonic sets within the limits of several contiguous paragraphs.

- ⁵ F. J. Castillo Martín suggests that repetition is the most relevant rhythmic device used by E. A. Poe in order to produce resonances through the narrative text and, hence, a circular structure. According to him the ternary syntactical pattern is the one that Poe uses more frequently. In order to exemplify this point, he selects and classifies quotations from the tale according to the grammatical category that is repeated, that is, subject, predicate, direct object, adjective, adverb, gerund, etc. Besides, he goes further to suggest another classification of repetitions that may include, for instance, the following: identical syllabic structures; enumerations; parenthesis; interrogative sentences; and finally he classifies the main thematic structures that are interwoven in the musical text, that is, death, isolation, and time, among others.
- ⁶ For the function of rhythmic prose in the novel, see also Thomas H. McCabe, "Rhythm as Form in Lawrence: *The Horse Dealer's Daughter*", PMLA, vol. 87, 1, 1972, pp. 64-68.
- ⁷ For an analysis of Russian formalism, see O. Brik, "Ritmo y Sintaxis" in T. Todorov (ed.), *Teoría de la literatura de los formalistas rusos*. México, 1978, pp. 107-144.
- ⁸ E. K. Brown in *Rhythm in the Novel* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1950, p. 115) defines *repetition* as "the strongest assurance an author can give of order; the extraordinary complexity of the variations is the reminder that the order is so involute that it must remain a mystery".
- ⁹ See F. J. Castillo Martín, "Notas sobre la estructuración sintagmática ternaria en la narrativa de Edgar A. Poe", RCEI, 5, 1982, pp. 95-102. This study, after distinguishing between progressive and non-progressive sentences, goes further to analyse the poetic function of the non-progressive sentence and concentrates mainly on the so-called ternary sentence structure. We agree with Castillo Martín when he stresses the fact that, far from being a redundant, monotonous pattern, it provides a poetic rhythm to the text and it is a source of secondary meanings.
- ¹⁰ For the functions of non-progressive sentences, see D. Alonso, "Sintagmas no progresivos y pluralidades: tres calillas en la prosa castellana" in D. Alonso y C. Bousoño, *Seis calas en la expresión literaria española*, Madrid: Gredos, 1970, 4ª ed., pp. 21-41.
- ¹¹ See A. García Berrio, "Lingüística, Literaridad/Poeticidad, Gramática, Pragmática, Texto", pp. 125-170 in *1616 Anuario de la Sociedad española de literatura general y comparada*, II.

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