

# Chiasmus as a Stylistic Device in Donne's and Vaughan's Poetry

Dunya Muhammad Miqdad I'jam\* Zahraa Adnan Fadhil  
Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon

## Abstract

This study investigates chiasmus as a stylistic device in ten metaphysical poems (five for *John Donne* and five for *Henry Vaughan*). It aims at showing how both, *Donne* and *Vaughan*, utilize chiasmus at the different linguistic levels as a stylistic device in their poetry. Thus, to achieve this aim, it is hypothesized that chiasmus as used by *Donne* constitutes a distinctive stylistic device in his poetry, in comparison with *Vaughan*. Then, in order to achieve the aim of the study and test its hypothesis, the following procedures are adopted: (1) presenting a theoretical background about chiasmus and the linguistic levels on which it can manifest itself. (2) analyzing ten poems (five for each poet) according to an eclectic model developed by the study.

**Keywords:** Chiasmus, poetry, stylistics.

## 1. Introduction

Chiasmus is one of the linguistic figures of speech that make the ordinary extraordinary. It is employed to indicate an outburst of verbal creativity. It can be defined as the criss- cross placing of sentence elements that correspond in either syntax or meaning, with or without word repetition (Preminger et al., 1986: 36). Putting the sentence elements in an inverse order results in a perfect cross, an **X**, which is a defining feature of chiasmus, as the following example illustrates (Grothe, 2002: n.p.):

1. Never let *a fool* *Kiss* you,

  
or *a kiss* *fool* you.

Chiasmus can be actuated on the different linguistic levels. In addition, it performs a number of functions in literature, particularly in poetry. Accordingly, this study highlights, amply, the linguistic perspective of chiasmus as a stylistic device to find answers to the following question: how far chiasmus along with its different linguistic levels, patterns, and types can function as a stylistic device in the poetry of *Donne*, on the one hand, and that of *Vaughan* on the other? As such, the present study aims at showing how both of *Donne* and *Vaughan* utilize chiasmus as a stylistic device in their poetry. Thus, it is hypothesized that chiasmus as used by *Donne* constitutes a distinctive stylistic device in his poetry in comparison with *Vaughan*. In order to achieve the aim of the study and test its hypothesis, the following procedures are adopted: (1) presenting a theoretical background about chiasmus and its linguistic levels. (2) analyzing ten poems (five for each) according to an eclectic model developed by the study.

## 2. Definitions

In its origin, chiasmus is a transliteration of the Greek word *khiasmós* (χιάσμα), which is postclassical in origin and means crossing; that is, to mark with a cross (**X**). Hence, chiasmus takes the form of an **X**. At the same time, the *chi* in *chiasmus* stands for the letter **X** in the Greek alphabet (Lederer, 2012: 40). It is defined according to different perspectives: grammatical, syntactic, semantic, rhetorical, and finally the stylistic perspective.

Grammatically, the venerable Oxford English Dictionary defines chiasmus as a grammatical figure of speech referring to the crossing, diagonal arrangement in which the order of words in one of two successive clauses is inverted in the other (Raffa, 2000: 137):

2. *Conceived in sin*, and unto labour borne,  
*Standing with fear*, and must with horror fall, And  
destined unto judgment, after all.

(from Jonson's "To Heaven", cited in Ibid.)

According to Dupriez (1991: 95), chiasmus refers to the placing in inverse order of segments formed by two syntactically identical groups of words, as it is shown up in the following quotation of the world's greatest thinker, Aristotle (cited in Lederer, 2012: 40):

3. "*We* should behave to our friends as we would  
wish our friends to behave *to us*."

Semantically, chiasmus is seen as a "figure composed of a double antithesis in which the terms cross each." In other words, the terms come back on themselves with a different and often opposite meaning (Meynet, 2012:154). Here is an example from Matthew (19: 30) (cited in Rosenwasser and Stephen, 2009: 285):

4. But many that are *first* shall be last,  
and the last shall be *first*.

Then, as Grudzina and Beardsley (2007: 113) point out that rhetoric is considered to be more or less skilful application or manipulation of grammatical rules, they define chiasmus as a rhetorical device by which the second part of a grammatical construction parallels the first, but in inverse order. They state that instead of “*lost unhappily*” being paralleled by “*found gladly*” where both of them are phrases consisting of a verb and an adverb, “*lost unhappily*” will be followed by a phrase with inverse order of the elements; that is, an adverb and a verb “*gladly found*”, as in the example below:

5. The coin that is *lost unhappily* is *gladly found*.

(Ibid.)

Finally, chiasmus is defined as a stylistically ornate device that flips the original form of a structure around. It involves the inversion of the expected. It is often used to reinforce a statement (McGuigan, 2008: 107):

6. While *the sun* was *hot and scorching*, *cool and soothing* were *the waves*.

(Grudzina and Beardsley, 2007: 113)

### 3. Levels of Chiasmus

In this section, an attempt is made to take account of the different linguistic levels on which chiasmus can manifest itself.

#### 3.1 The Phonological Level

As far as the phonological level (sound patterning) is concerned, chiasmus is based on reversing *phonemes* and *syllables*. The reversal of phonemes is exemplified in a line of John Dryden’s “The Twelfth Book of Ovid His Metamorphoses” (cited in Nänny, 1994: 127):

7. His hollow belly *echoed* to the *stroke*;

in which the phonemic reversal can be put in the following sketch:

/k > əʊ / > < /əʊ < k/

As for the reversal of syllables, it is found in the speech of Lincoln (cited in Fransworth: 2011: 109):

8. Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought

Fourth on this *continent* a *new nation*, *conceived* in liberty....

In the first part of the chiasmic sequence, the syllable /kən/ is followed by that of /nju:/ and in its second part, the syllable /kən/ is followed by that of /neɪ/ constituting phonological chiasmus.

#### 3.2 The Morphological Level

At the morphological level, chiasmus involves a morphological change in both of the words repeated in an inverse order (Myers and Wukasz, 2003: 20):

9. Nowhere but here did ever meet

*Sweetness* so *sad* and *sadness* so *sweet*.

(Fonagy, 2001: 363)

Throughout the process of morphological derivation, the nouns *sweetness* and *sadness* are derived from the root words *sweet* and *sad* by adding the morpheme *-ness* in the form of an affix, then are put in a chiasmic order denoting chiasmus at the morphological level. As a result of this morphological change, there will be an exchange of the grammatical functions of the elements reversed, as happened in the example above where the **N** becomes an **Adj.** and vice versa.

#### 3.3 The Syntactic Level

At the syntactic level, Cockcroft and Cockcroft (2014: 284) state that chiasmus includes the reversal of the order of syntactical elements depending on either function or form. There is a number of syntactic elements that are reversed resulting in chiasmus, for example:

10. “**I** (S) shall *undertake* (V) noble *courage* (O)  
or my end *day* (O) in this meadhall *abide* (V).”

(Sauer, 2008: 113)

The structure of the first clause (that is before the “or”) is an **SVO** structure, where the **S** is for subject, **V** for Verb and **O** for object. Yet, the structure of the second clause is an **OV** with an unstated subject (**S**). the second part reverses the order of the first clause and at the same time intensifying it (Ibid.). Moreover, the **S** in the first part of the chiasmic sequence can be followed by the **V** and an adjective (**Adj.** henceforth) and in the second part the **Adj.** precedes the **S** and the **V** as in:

11. Well may I ween, your *grief* (S) *is* (V) wondrous *great* (Adj.);  
For wondrous *great* (Adj.) *griefe* (S) *groneth* (V) in my spright,

(Bond, 2011: 121)

The chiasmic criss- cross also involves the inversion of the **V** and **O** as they are mirrored in the second part of the chiasmic sequence (Dillon, 1978: 52). As in:

12. To *prove* (V) *his puissance* (O) in battell brave

Upon his foe, and **his new force** (O) to **learne** (V);

(Ibid.)

The objects (**his puissance** and **his new force**) are switched around with respect to the verbs (**prove** and **learn**). In addition, it is possible for the chiasmic structure to start with the **O** followed by the **V**, i.e. **O- V/ V- O**, as in Milton's translation of the Psalm 5.3 in which he retains its chiasmic form (cited in Radzinowicz, 1989: 86):

13. **My voice** (O) shalt thou **hear** (V) in the morning, O Lord;

In the morning will I **direct** (V) **my paper** (O) unto thee, and will look up.

Chiasmus at the syntactic level results also from the inversion of a *noun phrase* (NP henceforth) and a **V** (Vendler, 2007: 244), as in the following example:

14. Adieu! For, once **the fierce dispute** (NP)

Betwixt damnation and impassion'd clay

Must I **burn** (V) through: once more humbly **assay** (V)

**The bitter- sweet** (NP) of this Shakespearean fruit.

(Ibid.)

Furthermore, a *prepositional phrase* (PP, henceforth) when followed by a **V**, then preceded by the **V** can also result in a syntactic chiasmus (Longman III and Enns, 2008: 159):

15. **From Aram** (PP.) **brought** (V) me Balaq and

the king of Moab **from the eastern mountains** (PP.).

(Ibid.)

In this example chiasmus is accompanied by verbal ellipsis, i.e. the PP. (**From Aram**) in the first chiasmic pattern is followed by the V (**brought**), and in the second the V is elided to be followed by the PP. (**from the eastern mountain**) (Ibid.).

Additionally, the verb may also be followed by an Adverbial Phrase (Adv. P.) creating syntactic chiasmus, as in:

16. **Eat** (V) **hastily** (Adv. P.),

and **thoughtlessly** (Adv. P.) **clean up** (V).

(McGuigan, 2008: 112)

### 3.4 The Semantic Level

At the semantic level, Williams (2013: 233) states that chiasmus repeats the same words in inverse order resulting in what so-called *antimetabole*. The latter emphasizes the cross shape of chiasmus by reversing the words in the first part more or less exactly in the second part. To illustrate, the following instance of Samuel Johnson from *Lord Chesterfield* is presented (cited in McArthur, 1992: 209):

17. This man I thought had been **a Lord** among **wits**;

but, I find, he is **a wit** among **Lords**.

As such, chiasmus is forged to create a counterbalancing effect in the second of the two connected phrases. Apart from identical words, chiasmus can use words that are related in some recognizable way, i.e. either *synonyms* or *antonyms* (Fahnestock, 1999: 123):

18. **Napoleon was defeated** by **a Russian winter**

And **the snows of Leningrad destroyed Hitler**.

(Ibid.)

Semantically speaking, the chiasmic order of words will be as such:

**Invader: Russian winter / Russian winter: invader**

(Ibid.)

Chiasmus also includes the repetition of opposed lexis, i.e., in reverse order. However, it does not repeat its terms precisely. An instance is a translation, by Luther, of the answer of the man blind from birth whose sight was restored by Jesus (cited in Fahnestock, 1999: 124):

19. That I **blind was** and **am now seeing**.

(Ibid.)

### 4. Functions of Chiasmus

A good chiasmus serves a number of typical **structural** and **general functions**. The structural uses of chiasmus contribute to the whole form of a poem or a poetic sub-unit, i.e. a stanza, for example, to begin a stretch of poetry **opening a stanza or a poem** (Watson, 1994: 369):

20. **At my post** will **I stand**,

**I will position** myself **on the watch-tower**.

(Ibid.)

Also, a kin to the previous function is the use of a chiasmic structure to **bring a section of poetry to an end**. In other words, it marks the closure of a stanza echoing the sequence of the elements that are presented in the previous line or lines in inverse order (Vierke, 2011: 155):

21. Turned to *mourning* has *my lyre*, and  
*my flute* to *weeper's voices*.

(Watson, 1994: 370)

Chiasmus can be used to express merismus denoting totality by naming representative parts of that totality (Schokel, 2000: 83):

22. *Dissolve* will *the mountains* beneath him,  
*The valleys* will be *tore apart*.

(Watson, 1994: 371)

A chiastic structure helps emphasizing antithesis and is fairly frequent in proverbs (Ibid.: 372):

23. *The just man* eats to sate *his appetite*,  
But *the belly* of *the wicked* is empty.

(Prov. 13: 25, cited in Ibid.)

By and large, chiasmus can function generally **breaking the monotony of direct parallelism** to attract the reader's attention (Ibid.: 369). Thus, instead of writing the parallel sentence:

24. *What is now great* was *at first little*,

(Harris, 2010: 2)

it could be written chiastically where the **ab** structure is followed by a **ba** structure instead of a similar **ab** structure:

25. *What is now great* was *little at first*.

(Ibid.)

Chiasmus is also used **aphoristically**, i.e. it is designed to be noticed, just as epigrams and slogans are designed to be remembered. Thus, the surface crossover of linguistic content implies a dovetailing of ideas at a deeper level. For those ideas to be driven home, chiasmus relies on repetition. Here, the explicit repetition of words becomes a hallmark of chiasmus, as in the popular slogan of the American gun lobby:

26. When *guns* are *outlawed*,  
only *outlaws* will have *guns*.

(Besold et al., 2015: 198)

Apart from the aphoristic use of chiasmus, it is used **to emphasize** the original claim. The reversal of words conveys no new information or idea, but repeats the same items of a certain structure to add emphasis. The additional emphasis is caused only by the reversed arrangement of the elements within that structure (Fransworth, 2010: 107):

27. A most beastly place. *Mudbank*, *mist*, *swamp*, and *work*; *work*, *swamp*,  
*mist*, and *mudbank*.

(Dickens' *Great Expectations*, cited in Ibid.)

Then, the stylistic effect of a chiastic structure contributes, as well, to **the rhythmical quality of a sentence** (Константиновна and Петровна, 2014: 81). For example:

28. He sat down whistling and played by ear:  
Just picture you upon my knee  
With *tea* for *two* and *two* for *tea*  
And *me* for *you* and *you* for *me*

(Ibid.)

Chiasmus in the last two lines is backed up by parallelism, polysyndeton, along with phonetic stylistic devices and expressive means creating the rhythm of the lines as a whole (Ibid.).

The sequence of elements in a chiastic sequence can be associated with reversal. In other words, the chiastic structure is construed as reversing its movement or inverting its development (Nänny, 1998: 170):

29. The widest parties have **electric fences**,  
For though *old cattle* know they must not **stray**  
*Young steers* are always scenting purer **water**  
Not here but anywhere, beyond *the wires*  
Leads them to blunder up against *the wires*  
Whose muscle- shredding violence gives no **quarter**.  
*Young steers* become *old cattle* from that **day**,  
**Electric limits** to their widest **senses**.

(Muller- Zettelmann and Rubik, 2005: 245)

For Miller (1994: 209), the chiastic structure also **creates a reciprocal relation** in which items change places and their difference becomes undecidable. Such a use of chiasmus denotes a sense similar to 'and vice versa'. It is shown in the following sentence which is of the English essayist William Hazlitt (cited in Fransworth, 2010: 101):

30. People do not seem *to talk* *for the sake of expressing their opinions*, but *to*

***maintain an opinion for the sake of talking.***

## 5. The Model of Analysis

This section presents the eclectic model adapted in this study. It is made up of Leech's *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (1969), and Niazi and Gautam's *How to Study Literature: Stylistic and Pragmatic Approaches* (2010). The analysis starts with presenting the general idea of the poem, then pinpointing the linguistic features according to Leech's model (1969) and at the same time linking them to the general interpretation of the poems under analysis according to Niazi and Gautam's model (2010).

## 6. Data Analysis

### 6.1 Donne's Poems

#### Poem 1: "The Good Morrow"

It investigates the nature of true love. *Donne* employs chiasmus structurally, to open the stanza with a chiasmic sequence at **the semantic level** where it is called **antimetabole**:

*My face in thine eye,  
thine in mine appears,*

This chiasmic order of the words employs the reversal of the same words with some grammatical changes that are meant to increase the stylistic effect of the line of verse. Such a chiasmic sequence sheds light on the idea that the lovers constitute a complete world and at the same time it underscores the harmonious union in which they live where it is reflected in their eyes.

#### Poem 2: "Song: Sweetest Love, I Do not Go"

It explores the idea of "separation with wit, sophistication, intelligence, and immense poetic skill" (Negri, 2002: 1). *Donne* uses chiasmus aphoristically to underscore issues that go beyond the problem of separation from one's beloved. He paves for such a use by a **phonological chiasmus** in the second stanza:

Yesternight the sun went hence,

And *yet* is here *today*;

It involves the criss- cross of **the syllables /et/ and /tə/** as shown in the sketch below:

/e > t / > < / t < ə /

He employs phonological chiasmus to express metaphorically that his leaving is just like the sun which leaves darkness behind at the time when it goes down, yet it comes back and shines again in the other day. Again, the aphoristic use of chiasmus is implied in the third stanza where chiasmus is manifested at **the syntactic level** (V- O/ O- V) as it involves the reversal of both of the elements, i.e. V (*add/ recall*) and O (*another hour / a lost hour*):

That if good fortune fall,

Cannot *add* (V) *another hour* (O),

Nor *a lost hour* (O) *recall* (V)!

He wants to mirror how man has so weak a power that in the times of good luck he can neither add another hour nor a previous one recall.

Likewise there is another chiasmic construction at **the syntactic level** (S- V- O/ O- V) to break the monotony of the direct parallelism attracting the reader's attention:

*Destiny* (S) may *take* (V) *thy part* (O),

And may *thy fears* (O) *fulfil* (V);

The reversal here also involves that of the V (*take/ fulfil*) and O (*thy part/ thy fears*). *Donne* tries to show throughout chiasmus how the lover is urging his beloved to stop predicting him any harm as it is possible for *destiny* to lead to true dangers and fulfil what she is afraid of.

#### Poem 3: "A Jet Ring Sent"

The speaker of the poem addresses a jet ring that is sent to him by a lady. In the Renaissance, such rings were ,in many times ,tokens of love. *Donne* employs chiasmus at **the syntactic level** (S- V- Adj./ Adj.- S- V) making use of its structural function of opening a poem to express that he is disillusioned by his lady and her love to him as it is indicated by the ring which is no longer a token of love since it is neither like his heart nor hers. The chiasmic inversion involves that the Adj. (*Brittle*) is followed by the S (*thou*) which is followed by V (*art*) in its first part. And in the second, the same S (*thou*) followed by the same V (*are*) are followed by the Adj. (*black*):

*Thou* (S) *art* (V) not so *black* (Adj) as my heart,

Nor half so *brittle* (Adj) as her heart, *thou* (S) *art* (V);

#### Poem 4: "Upon The Annunciation and Passion Falling Upon One Day"

*Donne* produces a dazzling meditation on the fundamentals of Christian faith. He contemplates the fact that the feast of the Annunciation (March 25) happened to fall on Good Friday in the spring of 1609, which is the date when the angel announces to Mary that she will give birth to the Son of God, and later when Christ dies on Good Friday (Guibbory, 2006: 156). Thus, he employs chiasmus at three different levels. He starts with a

**phonological chiasmus** involving the reversal of **the phonemes /h/ and /m/** to indicate the pure creation of the Son of God:

*Her Maker put to making, and the head  
Of life at once not yet alive, yet dead;*

This phonological chiasmus can be put in the following sketch:

*/h/ > /m/ > < /m/ < /h/*

This phonological reversal has the function of enclosure or inversion and circularity by which it inverts its movement as it is moved from describing his birth to the moment when he dies. Then, it is immediately followed by another use at **the syntactic level (NP- V/ V- NP)** involving the reversal of the **a** element represented by the NP (**the Virgin Mother**) in the first part of the chiasmic structure and by (**she**) in the second part along with the **b** elements represented by a **V (reclused/rejoiced)**:

*She sees at once the Virgin Mother (NP) stay  
Reclused (V) at home, public at Golgotha;  
Sad and rejoiced (V) she (NP) is seen at once,*

Here, **Donne** uses chiasmus reciprocally as the items exchange places denoting a sense similar to ‘and vice versa’. He describes how confused ‘*the Virgin Mother*’ seems for the crucifixion of her son. That is, he associates her being isolated with being sad and her being social with being rejoiced and happy. Then, the final use of chiasmus is at **the semantic level** where there is an exchange of words rather than that of structures:

*Gabriell gives Christ to her, He her to John;*

It has the same function of the preceding syntactic chiasmus. The reversed words are considered as being **synonyms** because they are related in some way. The chiasmic reversal is expressing that both of the virgin mother and her son are gifts presented by Gabriell, i.e. as he gives Christ to her, he also, himself, gives her to John.

#### **Poem 5: “To Mr. George Herbert”**

**Donne** explicates the symbolic meaning of his newly adopted seal — the image of Christ on an anchor/cross — portraying it as a sign of his shift to a career of ecclesiastical service (Marotti, 1986: 277). He employs chiasmus to shed light on the symbolic meaning of the cross. Such a chiasmic sequence functions to express merismus, as the cross and anchor stands for the saviour:

*The Cross – my seal at baptism – spread below  
Does by that form, into an Anchor grow.  
Crosses grow Anchors;*

This chiasmic structure is at **the semantic level** developing a case of **antimetabole**. Here, chiasmus is so well fitting as a stylistic device since the crossing is its defining feature. Thus, **Donne** uses it in order to make clear the image of the cross through which represents a refuge to humanity. At the same time, the use of chiasmus is for the sake of emphasis because it adds no new information, but repeats the same items to add emphasis to the idea that the cross provides an anchor if it is born with faith. In addition, this image is indicated by the fact that Christ, by his crucifixion, sacrifices himself in order to save the Christian people. A few lines later, **Donne** employs chiasmus **at the phonological level** twice successively:

*Yet may I, with this, my first serpents hold;*

The first chiasmic reversal is of **syllables /wið/ and /ðis/** whereas the second is of **phonemes /st/ and /ts/**, as is shown in the following sketch:

*/w > i > < ð / > < /ð > < i < s /  
/s > < t / > < /t > < s /*

Such a use is meant by **Donne** to add to the rhythmicity of the line of verse. Then, taking the serpents to represent sins, **Donne** here is employing the phonological chiasmus in order to illustrate that he is telling his friend, **Herbert**, that the crucifixion of Christ (which he refers to in the line by the PP. **with this**) is as the guide that leads him to hold the first of the serpents, i.e. sins, and gives it up believing in God's mercy that He will forgive him.

Then, there is another chiasmic sequence at **the semantic level** whereby the criss- cross involves the reversal of **antonyms (my death/ my cure)**. It is to be mentioned that in the second part of the chiasmic sequence the **S (he)** and **V (is)** between parentheses have deliberately been inserted to ensure a chiasmic reversal:

*My death he is, but on the Cross (he is) my cure;*

In addition, this use of the chiasmic structure is meant to highlight the antithesis between the serpent and Christ. That is, the serpent causes the death of the Israelites, whereas Christ is God's means of salvation. This use is immediately followed by another at **the syntactic level (V- Adv. P./ Adv. P.- V)**:

*Crucify (V) nature then (Adv. P.),  
and then (Adv. P.) implore (V)*

Indicating reciprocity, this chiasmic reversal involves the crossing of the **V (crucify/ implore)** and the **Adv. P.(then)** elements. This chiasmic sequence is beautifully expressing that the crucifixion of nature as the

crucifixion of Christ indicates the grace of God. In all these chiasmic sequences *Donne* refers to the image of the cross which is the core of the poem as a whole as it is addressed to his friend, *Herbert* who is a religious poet.

## 6.2 Vaughan's Poems

### Poem 1: "Religion"

In this poem, *Vaughan* accounted for the refusal to lay the blame for religious corruption, except that of all mankind, in biblical terms (West, 2001: 161). *Vaughan* uses chiasmus at the **phonological level** to add to the rhythmicity of the line of verse:

He brings *him* water with *his* bread.  
/b/ /h/ /w/ > < /w/ /h/ /b/

He makes use of the phonological chiasmus to shed light on the importance of the angel who brings *the water* and *the bread* in an attempt to feed Elias. He also employs chiasmus reciprocally at the **syntactic level** (O- V/ V- O):

For must we for *the kernel* (O) crave (V),  
Because most voices like (V) *the shell* (O)?

In the first part of the chiasmic sequence the O (*the kernel*) is followed by the V (crave); in the second part the V (like) is followed by the O (*the shell*). He makes these two lines chiasmic to make them interesting as he expresses the issue that death represents the separation between the spirit (the Kernel) and the body (the shell). And people have to tame their spirits as the spirit takes its advantage over the body.

### Poem 2: "Pursuite"

It is a paraphrase of the story of the son whose prodigality is required in order that he wants his home (Calhoun, 1918: 156). Chiasmus is employed at the **syntactic level** (V- O/ O- V) to break the monotony of direct parallelism involving the inversion of V (*left/ desired*) and O (*husk/ home*):

The lost son had not *left* (V) the husk (O)  
Nor home (O) *desired* (V).

This chiasmic structure explicating how man keeps on working in commerce to the extent that he does not return home and continue in roaming as he is made restless.

### Poem 3: "Come, Come, What Do I Hear?"

It is a gnomic elegy talking about the sting of death in which *Vaughan* prays to be entombed like the dead of the youth he laments (Ibid.: 159). Here, chiasmus is used structurally to close the stanza or the poem. It is employed at the **syntactic level** (PP.- V/ V- PP.):

*With him* (PP.)  
I weep (V)  
Abed, and sleep (V),  
To wake *in thee* (PP.).

The first chiasmic part stands for the sting of death as a result of which he spends his day time weeping and lamenting the death of the youth; the second part represents *Vaughan's* dreaming of death and seeing himself awake in the tomb he prays for.

### Poem 4: "Midnight"

This poem evokes spiritual transformation by portraying an image of starry heaven literally blazing with activity (Vaughan, 2004: 2). Chiasmus is used at the **morphological level** contributing to the rhythmicity of the lines. The morphological chiasmus is carried on to describe the brightness and quickness of the effect of God's Spirit on the water:

O what *bright quickness*,  
*Active brightness*,

It is a special use of chiasmus as the first element (*bright*) occurs last (*brightness*) and the last element (*quickness*) occurs first (*active*). It is meant to make clear how this quick coming of the Spirit of God has left everything shining and glowing behind. It. Such an exchange is accompanied by a morphological change, i.e. throughout the process of morphological derivation, the N *brightness* is derived from the root *bright* and *quickness* is derived from the root *quick* which is a synonym of *active*.

### Poem 5: "The Knot"

This poem maintains a theological vision informed of God's immanence in creation. He also crosses a doctrinal line by praising the Virgin in such a way that opposes the Puritan by expressing an essentially Catholic view of her (Martin, 2014: 144). Here, *Vaughan* employs **semantic chiasmus** to close the poem and at the same time expressing God's immanence particularly in Man:

Which *us* in *him*,  
and *him* in *us*,

As it repeats the same words in an inverse order, then it is an **antimetabole** creating a counterbalancing effect in the second part of the chiasmic sequence. That is, we read God in us and we, in our turn, translate the

Creativity of our God.

## 7. Results of the Analysis

This section epitomizes the findings of the stylistic analysis of the use of chiasmus in the whole data and its use at the different linguistic levels by both *Donne* and *Vaughan*:

**Table (1): The Densities of Chiasmus Per Data**

Poets	Chiasmus Per Poets	Ratios
<i>Donne</i>	13	68.%
<i>Vaughan</i>	6	32%

The table above shows that the totals of chiasmus in the data vary according to each poet given the fact that they stand at (13) for *Donne* and (6) for *Vaughan*. In terms of ratios they account to (68%) and (32%), respectively. In contrastive terms, this means that there is a differential in the use of chiasmus between the two poets since *Donne* uses chiasmus (36%)ratio in his poems more than *Vaughan*. Going back to the use of chiasmus at the different linguistic levels, the following table presents it:

**Table (2): The Densities of the Levels of Chiasmus Per Data**

Poets	Phonolo-gical Level		Morpholo-gical Level		Syntactic Level		Semantic Level		Totals	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rat1e	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
<i>Donne</i>	4	21.1%	0	0%	5	26.4%	4	21.1%	13	100%
<i>Vaughan</i>	1	5.2%	1	5.2%	3	15.8%	1	5.2%	6	100%
<b>Totals</b>	5	26.3%	1	5.3%	8	42.1%	5	26.3%	19	100%

The above table shows that *Donne* uses chiasmus at the phonological, syntactic and semantic levels and he does not employ it at the morphological level. In terms of percentage, it can be expressed as (21.1%) for both the phonological and the semantic levels as he employs them equally, and it is (26.4%) for the syntactic level. Consequently, it is clear that chiasmus at the syntactic level has the highest frequency of use in his poems, at the time when he employs the phonological and the semantic chiasmi equally with the percentage of (21.1%) for each. As for *Vaughn*, he also uses chiasmus at all the linguistic levels, but he employs it with a density that is much more lower than *Donne*. It is amounted to (5.2%) for all of the Phonological, morphological, and the semantic levels and it is (15.8%) for the syntactic level. The following table explicates the differentials of the use between the two poets, as far as the levels of chiasmus are concerned:

**Table (3): The Differentials of the Levels of Chiasmus Per Data**

Poets	Phonolo-gical Level		Morpholo-gical Level		Syntactic Level		Semantic Level	
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	No.	Rate
<i>Donne/ Vaughan</i>	3	15.9%	1	5.2%	2	10.6%	3	15.9%

Significantly, table (3) shows that *Donne* uses chiasmus at the phonological and the semantic levels more than *Vaughan* in the same frequency (3) and percentage (15.9%). The differential is also present to include the syntactic level as *Donne* uses (10.6%) chiasmus at the syntactic level more than *Vaughan*. What sheds the attraction is *Vaughan's* use of the morphological level which is more than *Donne* in (5.2%) ratio.

## 8. Conclusions

- Both of *Donne* and *Vaughan* utilize chiasmus along with its functions and levels in their poetry but with different frequencies.
- In confirmation to the hypothesis, *Donne* employs chiasmus structurally, expressively and generally to talk about different themes, amorous as well as religious themes, whereas *Vaughan* employs it only structurally and generally to talk about basically religious themes.
- The stylistic analysis shows that despite the fact that *Donne* does not use chiasmus at the morphological level, he employs it at the other linguistic levels with higher density than *Vaughan*. Thus, chiasmus constitutes a distinctive stylistic device in the poetry of *Donne* in contrast to *Vaughan* who also makes use of chiasmus, but with very lower density. This is clear in the percentage of the total use of chiasmus for both and which is (68%) for *Donne* and (32%) for *Vaughan*. As such, the hypothesis of the study is confirmed.
- Out of the conducted stylistic analysis, it is also inferred that both of the two poets employ chiasmus at the phonological and the semantic levels with the same density and percentage. However, the highest density in the use of chiasmus at these two linguistic levels is still attributed to *Donne* who employs



them with a density of (4) occurrences amounted to (21.1%) for each.

5. Also, both of them give priority to the use of chiasmus at the syntactic level, as *Donne* uses it with a ratio of (26.4%) which is a ratio higher than that of *Vaughan* that is amounted to (15.8%).
6. In confirmation of the hypothesis that is put forward, there are differentials between the uses of chiasmus at the different linguistic levels as far as each poet is concerned. That is, *Donne* employs (15.9%) chiasmus at both the phonological and the semantic levels more than *Vaughan* and (10.6%) chiasmus at the syntactic level more than him.

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