

Repetition, variation, and word pairs in the discourse of Middle English devotional prose

Akio Katami

Aoyama Gakuin University, Japan

1. Introduction

In view of the style of English today, repetition is often associated with unsophisticated styles, such as in children's narratives or medieval chronicles. In Middle English prose, however, repetition occurs very frequently, especially in crucial context. This fact leads us to believe repetition in Middle English (henceforth, ME) needs to be investigated from different viewpoint. Another way of saying this is it is inappropriate to deal with the topic solely based on a basis of present-day English.

Wales suggests that repetition is felt as lack of premeditation characteristic of ordinary speech, and quotes Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. The underlines and shadings below are all mine:

This beast went to the well and drank, and the noise was in the beast's belly like unto the questing of thirty couple hounds, but all the while the beast drank there was no noise in the beast's belly...(quoted from Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* in Wales 1989:402)

Wales states this kind of repetition may go back to oral techniques of composition and delivery. Added to this, he mentions stylistic effect of anaphora, epistrophe and symploce as significant means for heightening emotion and 'pointing' an argument. Wales quotes an instance of repetition as means for demonstrating intense emotion and identifying its essential features:

Tell zeal it wants devotion;

Tell love it is but lust:

Tell time it is but motion;

Tell flesh it is but dust. (quoted from Raleigh's *The Lie* in Wales 1989:403)

Toolan (2008) also argues, in the Second International Stylistic Conference in Shanghai, that repetition lies at the core of verbal art, and maintains as follows:

Repetition is the simplest and most direct evidence of an elevated reflexivity, or focus on the message, a special attention, over and above what you say, to the way that you say it. (Toolan: 2008)

Repetition, when looked at in all its productive variety, is at the core of many of the principles and terms which are central to stylistic analytical discourse: marked and unmarked, foregrounded and backgrounded, what is striking or deviant and what is not, what is a pattern and what is unpatterned or seemingly arbitrary. (ibid.)

I would like to argue that both repetition and variation are indispensable to oral tradition in medieval English literature, and can contribute to theory of cohesion systematized by Halliday and Hassan.¹ As the opposite and complementary rhetorical device to repetition, we can mention variation. Variation is the repetition of the same thought in different words, phrases, or clauses, often with grammatical parallelism. Repetition and variation contain vital clues to stylistic studies and present them as subjects to be solved on individual writers. Likewise, much remains to be done on the rhetoric of mystical prose in ME. Wilson (1956) states as follows to indicate the repetitive expressions that carry stylistic significance in *A Revelation of Love*:

It may even be that on occasion some of the rhetorical devices which depend on repetition are used accidentally, and are due to the efforts of an unskilled writer to emphasize and drive home her points. But on the whole they are used too frequently and too effectively for this to be the whole answer. (Wilson 1956:97)

Leech (1969) remarks on the emotive connotation in repetition by using metaphor:

It (=repetition) may further suggest a suppressed intensity of feeling – an imprisoned feeling, as it were, for which there is no outlet but a repeated hammering at the confining walls of language. (Leech 1969:79)

In this paper, I discuss the ways in which these crucial repetitions to convey the message have an effect on ME prose.

In the next chapter, we deal with the expressiveness of repetition in interpreting the content of each work. The works we will observe are *The Parson's Tale* by Geoffrey Chaucer, *Ego Dormio* by Richard Rolle, *The Scale of Perfection* by Walter Hilton, and *The Book of Margery Kempe* by Margery Kempe.

In chapter 3, we will set the short version of Julian of Norwich's *A Revelation of Love* against the long version. The purpose of this comparison is to find out the difference of repetitive usage in the corresponding passages of the two versions. Approximately twenty years after writing the short version might give Julian time to introspect her mystical experience and revelation. Moreover, the years might give Julian time to polish her literal style.

2. Contextual Effects of Repetition in Middle English Prose

2.1 Geoffrey Chaucer

Schlauch (1966) investigates style of some Chaucer's prose. In this section, we will focus on repetition and variation in *The Parson's Tale*. Schlauch classified this as "The Heightened Style of Homiletic Discourse."² It befits to take up this didactic tale to compare with other religious prose in this paper since its element is a combination of penance and the Seven Deadly Sins. Schlauch points out effects of anaphora and the rhythm of parallel grammatical constructions in *The Parson's Tale*. In the quotation below, the theme of the tale is attracted attention by the use of repetition *penitence*:

Penitence is the pleynynge of man for the gilt that he hath doon, and namorre to do any thing for which hym oghte to pleyne...

Penitence is the waymentynge of man that sorweth for his synne, and pyneth himself for the hath mysdoon.

Penitence, with certeyne circumstances, is verray repentance of a man that halt hymself in sorwe and oother peyne for his giltes. (I 83-85) (*The Parson's Tale* quoted from Schlauch 1969:150)

Schlauch quotes an instance of anaphora which is fortified by antistrophe. This instance of repetition is also quoted in Horobin (2007):

...in how manye maneres been the acciouns or wekynges of Penitence, and how manye speses ther ben of Penitence, and whiche thyges apertenen and bihoven to Penitence, and which thyges destourben Penitence (82-83) (Schlauch *ibid*: 150, Horobin 2007:148).

Through the echo caused by repetition, *penitence* is foregrounded. Besides instances above by Schlauch and Horobin, Chaucer tries to fashion his language with various types of repetition to rhetorical end. We shall note other repetitive effect at the outset of *The Parson's Tale*.

Penance is a religious discipline which atone for a crime with some act of self-mortification or undergoing some penalty. Chaucer takes up *penance* for subject of anadiplosis by repeating the last word at the beginning of the next in (1):

- (1) Pryvee penaunce is thilke that men doon alday for privee synnes, of whiche we shryve us prively and receive privee penaunce. (I. 105)

By virtue of anadiplosis of *Pryvee penaunce* at the beginning of the story, the sentence can

achieve vivid effect to impress the idea upon the audience. Let us consider other types of repetition in (2), symploce. In this, we see variation to form parallel construction in meaning.

- (2) First, for man hath agilt his Lord and his Creatour; and moore sharp and poynaunt for he hath agilt hys Fader celestial;/ and yet moore sharp and poynaunt for he hath wrathed and agilt hym that boghte hym, that with his precious blood hath delivered us fro the bondes of synne, and fro the crueltee of the devel, and fro the peynes of helle. (I.130-131)

Before the quotation in (2), a parson poses explanation of penance as “contricioun is the verray sorwe that a man receyveth in his herte for his synnes, with sad purpos to shryve hym”. The parson explains the reason why he suffers such harsh sorrow by way of symploce. Besides, with repetition of “moore sharp and poynaunt”, variations are made in underlined parts by holding together with “and”. These repetition and variation give stylistic effect of foregrounding the concept of God.

One of the themes of this tale is that the venial sin is coupled with the deadly one. Quotation in (3) emphasizes the topic with repetition that even the trivial venial sins, when shirked from mending one’s way, lead to the deadly sins:

- (3) 1)For certes, ther is no deedly synne that it nas first in mannes thought and after that in his delit, and so forth into consentynge and into dede.
Wherfore I seye that many men ne repentnen hem nevere of swiche thoghtes and delites, ne nevere shryven hem of it, but oonly of the dede of grete synnes outward. Wherfore I seye that swiche wikked delites and wikked thoghtes been subtile bigileres of hem that shullen be dampned.
- 2)Mooreover, man oghte to sorwe for his wikkede words as wel as for his wikkede dedes. For certes, the repentaunce of a synguler synne, and nat repepente of alle his othere synnes,...may nat availle. For certes, God almighty is al good, and therefore he foryeveth al or ells right nocht. (I. 296-300)

Two shaded parts are topic sentences as the basis of repetition. The themes of the topic sentences are elucidated and highlighted by the use of repetition. Firstly, let us note a shaded part 1).

Before the quotation, it is mentioned that vicious pleasure that dwell long in mind are perilous, though they are trifling ones. The reason is that the diversion, after a while, is prone to the consent that leads to a wicked act. Then the phrase, “wherfore I say,” refers to the idea that many men never repent nor confess great sins from the bottom of their hearts. In addition,

“wherefore I say,” is reiterated to give an admonition such wicked delights and thoughts are deceivers of those who are condemned to death. Let us now move on to the second shaded part 2). It describes man’s duty to sorrow for his wicked deeds and words. This topic sentence is reinforced by repetition of “For certes.” The first phrase leads the claim that repentance for a singular sin is not avail enough, and the second one advocates God’s almightiness. Thus, we see the repetition of the phrase foregrounds the topic of the plot like echo.

As a further example of the repetitive effect, let us consider the following instance which explains the existence of two kinds of sins as venial and deadly. As we incline to commit venial sins without realizing them, the quotation warns us not to fall into the jeopardy. The following (4) is another instance of repetition to reinforce and clarify the topic:

(4) For sothe, the dede of this **venial synne** is ful perilous, for it amenuseth the love that men sholde han to God moore and moore.....For certes, the moore that a man chargeth his soule with **venial synnes**, the moore is he enclnyed to fallen into deedly synne. And therefore lat us nat be necligent to deschargen us of **venial synnes**.....the love of every thing that is nat biset in God, ne doon principally for Goddes sake, although that a man love it lasse than God, yet is it **venial synne**. ...and therfore dooth he synne. For he that is dettour to God ne yeldeth the love of his herte. (I. 358-370)

“For soothe” and “for certes” as emphasizees, indicate the perilousness of venial sins. These parts are topic sentences to cause repetition of double-underlined clauses that a man does not dedicate enough love to God. As is indicated, over thirteen lines from line 358 to 370, we shall see through repetition that the insufficiency towards love of God is a sin which a man is likely to fall into. Two types of sins, venial and deadly ones are the theme here and, especially warnings against unconscious venial sins function as a single whole to create cohesion.³

Let us now attempt to extend the observation into ME devotional prose which is contemporary with Chaucer. As one of the earlier studies, Wilson (1956) should be mentioned. He maintains that there would seem to be a close connection between the appearance of mystical writings and the increasing importance of the vernacular. This study limits to study to styles of three mystics, Richard Rolle, Julian of Norwich, and Margery Kempe such as repetition, doublet, and rhythm by alliteration. Stone (1970) compares and contrasts the similarities and differences between Julian and Kempe to discuss the effects of the differing personalities on style; the use of diction, figurative language, alliteration and syntax. Although significance of these studies is admitted, unfortunately, there is likely to be some dissatisfaction in the light of semantic view associated with interpretation of the plot. In this paper, we shall see contextual effects of repetition and variation in ME devotional prose. The Roman numerals indicate the chapter and Arabic ones point the page in each quotation.

2.2 Richard Rolle

For the purpose of loving God faithfully, Rolle advocates three things in mind: thinking, speaking, and acting. Rolle advances the suggestion as follows in (5):

(5) Chaunge bi thoght fra þe worlde, and kast it haly on hym; and he sall norysche þe. Chaunge bi mowth fra unnayte and warldes speche, and speke of hym; and he sall comforth þe. Chaunge bi hend fra þe warkes of vanitese, and lyft þam in his name, and wyrke anly for hys lufe;...(*The Commandment*: 78)

In the speech act⁴ as commanding, we see the aim of this sentence is persuasion. Anaphora is effective in enumerating orders as we see in a number of instances of *The Parson's Tale*. Repetition in anaphora is effective in clarifying the assertion. Roll's other prose also lists the warnings about the three things as indispensable attitude in faith as, "ne in evel thoghtes, ne in evel words, ne in evel warke" (*Ego Dormio*: 67). The three essence of faith are, significantly enough, itemizes in (6) by way of epistrophe:

(6) I trowe treuly þat þe comforth of Jhesu Criste and þe swetnes of his love, with þe fire of þe Haly Gast, þat purges all syn, sall be in þe and with þe, ledand þe, and lerand þe how þou sall think, how þou sall pray, what þou sall wyrk; (*The Form of Living*: 89)

The point to observe is that the main clause with emotional tone of "I trowe treuly" proves that the belief is expressed with not only by enumeration but also emphasis.

The righteous way of thinking, praying, and acting are crucial theme of Rolle's prose. And it is noteworthy that the theme repeats itself inclusively in all his three-subject prose. On this ground, it seems reasonable to state Rolle forms a group of prose under the repetition of concept of thought, pray, and behavior.

Added to these repetitions above, we shall frequently see another repetitive pattern such as climax, the same kind of repetition continued through three or more phrases. Take (7) as an example:

(7) he hates noght bot syn, he lufes noght bot God, he dredes noght bot to wreth God.
(*The Form of Living*: 115)

Repetition in (7) arises for the effect of rhythm rather than that of an uprush of emotion. Rolle who had already produced an outstanding achievement in Latin, wrote in English for the purpose of instructing the laity such as the nobility and the landlords. Through writings of

English, he managed to convey his religious teaching to larger audience. Clarity is one of the indispensable elements to realize the aim. However deep the thought is, rhetoric of repetition and variation may enable his writings to relate the public as a means of persuasion.

2.3 Walter Hilton

The subject of this section is to examine the patterns and variations in *The Scale of Perfection* by Walter Hilton. We meet this in a quotation like (8):

(8) Whoso higheth hymself, he schal be lowed, and whoso loweth himsilf, he schal be highed. (xviii: 50)

The sentence cautions his readers by means of anaphora “whoso” to be modest in the presence of God. Furthermore, the antithesis “higheth” and “loweth” forms rhetorical effect to impress readers and listeners. Hilton’s frequent employment of variations attracts our notice to concepts and deeds. Let us consider the following quotation:

(9) so that hem liketh nothyng so mykil for to do as for to sitte stille in reste of bodi and for to alwey pray to God and to thynke on oure Lord, and for to thynke sum tyme on the blissid name Jhesu,... (vii:37)

To express faith in God, variation is manipulated with “for to” phrases as “sit still in rest”, “always pray to God and think on our Lord”, and “sometimes think about blessed name, Jesus”. The accumulative effect of variation gives a leisurely pace and sense of redundancy. The variations are also helpful in broadening and deepening an image of faith in God. And repetition of “for to” is conducive to emphasis of the meaning. The quotation (10) offers another notable variation:

(10) Nevertheles, yif a spirit, or a felynge, or revelacion maketh his desire more, knytteth the knotte of love and of devocion to Jhesu fastere, openeth the sight of the soule into goostli knowynge more cleerli, and maketh it more meke in itsilf, this spirit is of God. (xii: 43)

The words “a felynge” and “revelacion” are variations of “a spirit” with shading. In addition, the word “a spirit”, which is basis for variation is repeated at the end of a sentence as shown by shaded ‘this spirit’. Consequently, variation and repetition form cohesion by a frame of narrative. Let us look into another instance of variation:

(11) Be not drunken with wyn, but be ye fulfilled of the Holi Goost, seiande to youresilf in ympnes and psalmes and goostli songes, syngynge and phalmynge in youre hertes to oure Lorde. (vii: 37)

In (11) there are three variations of hymn as underlined. In addition to that, hymn is foregrounded by word pairs with a dotted line.

2.4 Margery Kempe

In *The Book of Margery Kempe*, we see a speech style around the year 1430 in which the book is transcribed. Redundancy is characteristic of her work. (12) is an instance of climax:

(12) For, whan thow gost to chyrch, I go wyth be;whan thu syttest at thi mete, I sytte wyth be; whan thow gost to thi bed, I go wyth be;and, whan thu gost owt of towne, I go wyth be. (xiv: 31)

Margery is replete with love for God, then at one time the voice of God reached her. Succession of an identical phrase conveys her surge of emotion. As a further example of repetition, let us consider another extract.

Margery received merciless treatment at her hometown even after a pilgrimage. The cruelty is expressed by repetition as in (13):

(13) ... ,wher sche suffryd meche despite, meche reprefe, many a scorne, many a slawndyr, many a bannyng, and many a cursyng. (55: 137)

On one occasion a reckless man, caring little for his own shame, deliberately and on purpose threw a bowlful of water on her head as she was coming along the street. She, not at all disturbed by it, said, “God make you a good man”, highly thanking God for it. Kemp’s attitude to this maltreat is a pious act supported by Christianity. Here we must draw attention to her rage behind her words. Succession of emotional repetitions makes her self-possessed composure of mind conspicuous.

In addition to the repetition as in (12) and (13), Margery makes use of variation to express her emotional uplift. Let us take (14) for an example.

After Margery receives a letter from an archbishop of Canterbury, she returns to her house in Lynn in Norfolk with her husband. On their way home, they face disaster. A man throws suspicion on the couple so as to regard them as Lollards that is deemed heretical. He threatens her to arrest and put her into prison:

(14) ...,þer cam a man rydyng aftyr a gret spede and arestyd hir husbond and hir also, purposyng to ledyn hem bothyn into preson. He cruely rebukyd hem and al-to-revylyd hem, rehersyng many reprevows wordys. (55: 136)

Margery had to show the letter from the archbishop to the evildoer in order to avoid stirring up trouble. His ferocious attitude of rebuking is emphasized through connecting words with “and” to occur variation: “rebukyd” and “al-to-revylyd” make a word pair, and create variation with a phrase “rehersyng many reprevows wordys”.

In (15) Margery uses repetition and variation by sentence units:

(15) I swer to þe be my mageste þat 1) I schal neuyr forsakyn þe in wel ne in wo. I schal helpyn þe & kepyn þe þat 2)þer schal neuyr deuyll in Helle parte þe fro me, ne awngel in Heuyn, neman in erthe, for deuelys in Helle mow not, ne awngelys in Heuyn wyl not, 3) ne man in erthe schal not. (V: 17)

Variation occurs in shaded clauses 1), 2), and 3) to indicate that God never forsakes us. Generic antithesis is represented to make the content distinctive as “in wel ne in wo”, “ne awngel in Heuyn”, and “ne man in erthe”. Here, we see again that repetitions make the theme foregrounded, moreover, “shall” is repeated as epanalepsis, and in “helpyn þe & kepyn þe” epistrophe is involved. In such a way, overlapping of repetition and variation helps convey message vividly and impress the audience.

3. A Comparison between a Short and a Long Text of *A Revelation of Love*ⁱ by Julian of Norwich

Julian of Norwich wrote two accounts of her visions; the Short Text and the Long Text. It is generally agreed that the shorter version (henceforth ST) was written first and that the longer one (henceforth LT) takes into account Julian’s growth in understanding of her revelations which took place nearly twenty years after her initial experiencing of them. In this section we shall compare corresponding parts of ST with LT to see how repetitions remain intact or vary. Among the three manuscripts of LT, Sloane manuscript No.2499 has been chosen as copy for this paper.⁵

When she was thirty years and a half, the suffering which she had been longing for came to her. She believed that she was purified through the disease, and was anxious to suffer pain identical to death like Jesus crucified. At the time what she saw nothing but an image of cross. She expresses how she felt then as in (16 ab):

(16) a. And zette be the felynge of this ese I trystede nevere the mare that I schulde lyeve,

ne the felynge of this ese was ne fulle ese to me. For me thouzt I hadde leuere have bene delyverede of this worlde, for my herte was wilfulle thereto. (ST ii: 718)

- (16) b. ...and yet by the feleing of this ease I trusted never the more to levyn; ne the feleing of this ease was no full ease to me, for methought I had lever a be deliveryd of this world. (LT iii: 5)

Both ST and LT repeat “the feeling of this ease”. Facing with imminent death, Julian holds her peace of mind. Then it came suddenly to mind that she should ask for the second wound of the Lord’s gracious gift, that she might in her own body fully experience and understand his blessed passion. At once she saw the first revelation. Julian uses thus common expressions for sensational experience of revelation.

The Lord showed her a little thing in the size of a hazelnut in the first revelation. Both in ST and LT the hazelnut as a symbolic representation of God’s handiwork is shown in the form of antistrophe “it” in (17) with repetition of “God”:

- (17) a....the fyrste is that god made it the Secounde ys that he loves it the thyerde ys that god kepes it. (ST iv: 718)

- (17) b. ...the first is that God made it, þe second is that God loveth it, the iii þat God kepith it (LT v: 7)

After Julian had the sixteenth revelation which concluded and confirmed all the previous fifteen, she heard word from the God as follows:

- (18) a. ...he sayde nought be tempestyd thowe schalle not be trauayled þu schalle not be desesed bot he sayde þu schalle nouzt be ouercommen. God wille that we take hede of his worde and that we be euer myghtty in sekernesse in wele and in waa for he luffes vs and likes vs and so wille he that we luff hym and lyke hym and myghtely triste in hym and alle schalle be wele and sone eftyr alle was close & I sawe na mare. (ST xxii: 772)

- (18) b. He seid not “Thou shalt not be tempestid, thou shalt not be travelled, thou shalt not be disesid”, but he seid: “Thou shalt not be overcome.” God will that we taken heede at these words, and that we be ever myty in sekir troste, in wele and wo; for he lovith and lekyth us, and so will he that we love him and lekin him and mytily trosten in him; and al shal be wele. And sone after al was close and I sow no more. (LT lxxviii:111)

Underlined clauses are repeated to enumerate, and double-underlined clauses indicate a chiasma.

We see repetition in the crucial and critical points in the above quotations; a previous notice of the first revelation (16), the linchpin of the message (17), and the scene of the last revelation (18). Most of these parts are not rewritten in LT except some minor emendations. (19 ab) is an instance which a clause is added to the same structure of repetition. In both text:

(19) a. The sextet es that god is alle thyngge that ys goode & the goodenes þt of alle thyngge has is he. (ST V: 100)

(19) b. the vith is that God is al thing that is gode, as to my sight, and the godenes that al thing hath, it is he... (LT viii:12)

Here we see an epanalepsis that repeats at the end of a construction of the word which begins it. In both (19a) and (19b) the subordinate clauses following a relative pronoun “that” begins with the word “god” or “God” and ends with personal pronoun “he” that refers to god. The point to notice is that a phrase “as to my sight” is interposed by emphatic “it is” in LT. It is not unreasonable to suppose that Julian intended to make “god” highly conspicuous.

Let us now move on to an instance existing only in ST. “I saw” is triplicated one after another in the scene of the first revelation comes to her. Note (20):

(20) And in this same time I saw this bodily sight, our Lord showed me a ghostly sight of His homely loving. I saw that He is to us all-thing that is good and comfortable for our help... And so in this sight I saw truly that He is everything that is good,... (ST iv: 719)

According to Masui (1962: 233-234), the repetitions of “I saw” in *The House of Fame* and *The Parliament of Fowl* functions as enumeration, and quotes from D.S.Brewer’s unpublished paper that this repetition helps the audience absorb into the plot and makes mental linkage consciously or unconsciously. The correspondent part in LT (v: 7) leaves the second ‘I saw’, but the first one is altered into ‘our lord shewed’, and the third one is omitted. By avoiding the simple repetition, Julian uses a variety of expressions to enrich literary embellishments. The usage indicates her maturity in twenty years between ST and LT.

We should also notice that there are repetitions missing in ST. Take (21) for example. In the scene of the first revelation, anadiplosis of “God” appears, and “the Trinite” is repeated in the form of anaphora, then by repetition of “everlasting” as an adjective of “the Trinite”, the word “the Trinite” is foregrounded all the more:

(21) For the Trinite is God, God is the Trinite; the Trinite is our maker and keeper, the Trinite is our everlasting lover, everlasting ioy and blisse, be our lord Iesus Christ. (LT

iv:6)

Yet, interestingly enough, in showing of the second revelation, the content of LT is expanded about as five times as that of ST. Quotation (22) is the added part and shading 1) and 2) are repetitions put in LT:

(22) ...and thus 1) I saw him and sowte him, and I had him and I wantid hym. And this is, and should be, our comon werkeyng in this, as to my sight. One tyme mine understandyng was led downe into the seeground, and there I saw hill and dalis grene, semand as it were mosse begrowne, with wrekke and gravel. Than I understode thus: that if a man or a woman were under the broade watyr, if he might have sight of God so, as God is with a man continually, he should be save in body and soule and take no harme and, overpassing, he should have mor solace and comfort than al this world can telle; for he wille that we levyn that we se him continually, thowe that us thinkeith that it be but lital, and in this beleve he makith us evermore to getyn grace; for 2) he will be sene and he wil be sowte; he wil be abe dyn and he wil be trosted. (LT x: 15)

In the shading 1), there is a climax with a subject “I” clauses in one sentence. And 2) is a sentential variation of 1). In this quotation, thus, Julian uses repetition both of words and of a sentence, which needs to be considered in view of the discourse. The shading 1) describes her intense craving for God. And , then, refers to her another experience to see the god. It is noteworthy that the subject is changed from “I” to “he” to make a variation in 2) , and also worth noting that this discourse begins with 1) and concludes with 2) , presenting the reason with “for”. The repetition and variation enable the theme of faith in seeing and wanting God to be foregrounded effectively in a narrative frame. Here it suffices to note that Julian bears stylistic effect of repetition and variation in mind to impress her audience in writing LT.

4. Conclusion and Issues for Future Research

To summarize, the basic function of repetition is foregrounding by making audience take notice of repeated words and phrases. The purpose, which leads to clarification and deeper grasp of message, is also effective for intensification and persuasion. The appositive repetition, moreover, forms association of meaning and leaves an impression of depth. Repetition enables the work to express a great deal with small number of words. In addition to these functions, repetition is efficacious for expressing unspeakable sensation and mystic experience. On these grounds, we may conclude that repetition has a marked effect for instructing laity.

We found varieties of repetitions in Middle English devotional prose; a simple repetition of words and phrases, anaphora, epistrophe, symploce, epanalepsis, anadiplosis, and climax. Along

with variation, repetition is effective for heightening the idea to communicate.

Additionally, I have argued the two types of repetitions. One is the intra-sentential repetition and another is the inter-sentential repetition. To grasp the stylistic effect of the repetition, a perspective on discourse is indispensable.

As ST is made by Julian soon after the vision was received, it lacks a kind of refinement but carries emotional overtones. This feature is reflected as vigorous repetition “I saw” in (20). In LT, on the other hand, we have seen some literary embellishments as in (21) and (22). It may safely be assumed that around twenty years between the two versions gave her time to contemplate the revelation and rewrite with deeper insight.

Stylistic effect of repetition and variation would become clearer by applying the concept of the functional grammar advocated by Halliday & Hassan. Another important point to notice is that since there is a speech act verb for ordering with repetition in (5), we see an obvious connection with persuasion, which is the major aim of devotional prose. From this conclusion, the next task will be to investigate in view of historical pragmatics as well as more extensive and exhaustive observations of the language of mystics.

Notes

¹ Halliday and Hassan define the concept of cohesion as ‘a semantic one; it refers to a relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text.’ (1976:4) and they categorize any instance of reiteration as (a) the same word, (b) a synonym or near-synonym, (c) a superordinate or (d) a general word (ibid.:279).

² Chaucer’s prose works fall within more than one literary genre. The other genres, as Schlauch put, are the Plain Style of Scientific Exposition which are exemplified by *A Treatise on the Astrolabe* and *The Equatorie of the Planetis*. She assigns eloquent style to the *Melibeus*, and rhythmical prose to the Boethius translation.

³ According to Halliday and Hassan (1976), the concept of cohesion is a semantic one referring to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text. There are two types of lexical cohesion; that is made explicit by means of an anaphoric reference item and that does not depend on identity of reference. The repetition comes under the former category.

⁴ Speech act is an utterance considered as an action. It explains linguistic meaning in terms of the use of words and sentences in the performance. In contrast to theories that maintain that linguistic expressions have meaning in virtue of their contribution to the truth conditions, it explains linguistic meaning in terms of the use of words and sentences in the performance of speech acts. J.L. Austin provided important stimuli for the theory’s development.

⁵ According to Glasscoe (1976: ix), this manuscript is much closer to fourteenth-century English than that of another manuscript, No.40.

Bibliography

Texts

- Allen, Hope Emily. ed (1931) *English Writings of Richard Rolle Hermit of Hampole*. London: The Clarendon Press.
- Anna Maria Reynolds, C.P. and Julia Bolton Holloway, eds. (2001) *Showing of Love*. (Short Text) Tafarnuzze- Impruneta- Firenze : SISMELE.
- Benson, Larry D ed. (1987) *The Riverside Chaucer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bestul, Thomas H ed.(2000) *The Scale of Perfection*. Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications.
- Glasscoe, Marion. ed. (1976) *A Revelation of Love*, (Long Text) Exeter: University of Exeter Press.
- Meech, Sanford Brown and Hope Emily Allen, eds. (1940) *The Book of Margery Kempe*. EETS O.S. 212. London: Oxford University Press.

References

- Austin, J.L. (1975) *How to Do Things with Words*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M.A.K. and Ruqaiya Hasan (1976) *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman
- Horobin, Simon (2007) *Chaucer's Language*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Leech N. Geoffrey (1969) *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. London: Longman.
- Manabe, Kazumi (1983) *Cyūsei no Eigosanbun to Sono Buntai* [Medieval English Prose and its Style] Tokyo: Kaibunsha.
- Masui, Michio (1962) *Chaucer Kenkyū* [Studied in Chaucer] Tokyo: Kenkyūsha.
- Nakao, Yoshiyuki (2004) *Chaucer no Aimasei no Kouzou* [The Structure of Chaucer's Ambiguity] Tokyo: Shohakusha.
- Schlauch, Margaret (1966) "The Art of Chaucer's Prose." in *Chaucer and Chaucerians*, edited by D.S.Brewer, London/Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons. 140-163.
- Stone, Karl Robert (1970) *Middle English Prose Style*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Toolan, Michael (2008) "Verbal Art: Through Repetition to Immersion." Second International Stylistics Conference, China (SISCC). Shanghai International Studies University,, Shanghai. Oct.22-25, 2008.
- Wales, Katie. (1989) *A Dictionary of Stylistics*, London / New York: Longman.
- Wilson, R.M. (1956) "Three Middle English Mystics." *Essays and Studies*, N.S.9, 87-112. London: John Murray.