

Leaves of Grass: Song of Myself: A Phono-Stylistic Analysis

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse how sound patterning contributes to meaning construction in Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* through a phono-stylistic approach. The study addresses the limited attention given to phonological features as a meaning-making mechanism, since previous research has focused mainly on thematic and lexical aspects. Employing a qualitative method supported by quantitative sound-frequency analysis, the study examines selected lines from *Song of Myself*. Data were collected through close reading and phonetic transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The analysis focuses on consonants, vowels, alliteration, assonance, consonance, repetition, and phonological foregrounding (Simpson, 2004; Leech & Short, 2007). The findings show that soft consonants support themes of harmony and unity, while plosive consonants reinforce identity construction. Long vowels enhance musicality and reflection, whereas repetition and parallelism emphasize key ideas. The study concludes that sound patterning functions not only aesthetically but also semantically in constructing poetic meaning.

Keywords/Kata Kunci: *sound patterning, Walt Whitman, phono-stylistics, meaning construction, phonological features, poetry analysis.*

Introduction

Language is an important tool in human life because it serves as a means of communication that conveys a wide range of information. All human activity is basically interconnected through communication. In the absence of communication, humans tend to live independently and even in opposition to one another. As social creatures, humans cannot live alone and have always needed interaction with others. Language is a written and spoken form of communication based on a system of symbols (Santrock, 2010, p. 67). Such opinions indicate that language plays a key role in building social relationships and the process of transmission of meaning between individuals. In addition, Abdul Chaer (2014) explains that language is an arbitrary system of non-existent sound that humans use for cooperation, communication, and identification. Language can also be a means of self-expression because through one's language one can convey his feelings, ideas, and thoughts to others (Karyaningsih, 2018, p. 130). In literary studies, language is recognized not only as a tool for communication, but also as an artistic medium used to create aesthetic value and meaning. According to René Wellek and Austin Warren (1949), literature reflects human life and experiences through imaginative language. Fundamentally, literary works are manifestations of human self-expression that integrate experiences, thoughts, and beliefs into concrete forms to evoke a sense of wonder through the medium of language (Sumardjo & Saini, 1997). As a creative endeavor, literature possesses a complex, interrelated structure that gives rise to a cohesive artistic whole (Wellek & Warren, 2014).

Therefore, the linguistic aspects of literary works are creatively constructed through the selection of vocabulary, the intensity of imagery, and the interplay of symbols and sound patterns to create a profound aesthetic impression on the reader. Sound patterns in literary texts are not merely decorative auditory elements, but rather an organization of phonetic elements that play a functional role in reinforcing tone and emotional atmosphere (Pradopo, 2014). Technically, these patterns are manifested through the orchestration of sounds such as alliteration, assonance, and rhyme, which work simultaneously to create a specific musicality or rhythm. As explained by Sayuti (2002), the presence of sound patterns or rhythm is the “soul” that breathes life into literary language, enabling the text to transform denotative meaning into a profound aesthetic experience for the reader. Through the mechanisms of euphony (melodious sounds) and cacophony (harsh sounds), the author consciously directs the reader’s inner perception to align with the intensity of the message being conveyed.

According to Geoffrey N. Leech (1969), stylistics is the study of language use in literary works, focusing on the relationship between linguistic form and its aesthetic effects. Thus, stylistic analysis is essential for understanding how meaning is constructed in literary works. Stylistic studies have long been at the heart of literary and linguistic analysis, focusing on how linguistic choices through vocabulary, syntax, and rhetorical devices shape meaning, tone, and emotional resonance in a text. Stylistic analysis allows researchers to explore how writers and speakers make deliberate decisions in their use of language, and how these choices contribute to the overall aesthetic and communicative impact of their work. According to Bradford (2013), stylistics is the study of how language is used in literary and non-literary texts, focusing not only on the meaning of words but also on how the structure and form of language shape the meaning and emotional impact of a text. Wales (2014), on the other hand, offers a more detailed perspective, describing stylistics as the study of expressive language use and its function in various communicative contexts. Wales emphasizes that stylistics goes beyond structural analysis of texts and seeks to understand the relationship between language, power, and ideology specifically how certain linguistic features are used to influence and engage readers. Simply put, stylistics emphasizes language structure, focusing on the rules, patterns, and conventions that govern meaning. However, a more nuanced and critical approach has emerged with the development of phonostylistics, a subdiscipline that investigates the role of sound in communication. Phonostylistics extends stylistic analysis into the realm of phonetics, examining how sound through pitch, stress, rhythm, and timbre interacts with language to evoke emotions, enhance thematic content, and convey meaning (Al-Hindawi & Hussien, 2020).

In phonostylistics, auditory features such as intonation, prosody, and timbre play a crucial role in influencing the emotional and cognitive interpretation of a text. Alowonle (2013) highlights the importance of phonological patterns, demonstrating that writers and performers deliberately manipulate sounds to evoke specific emotional responses. This expands traditional linguistic perspectives by demonstrating that sound patterns, whether in speech or music, are just as important in shaping meaning as the words themselves. Phono stylistic devices such as rhythmic variation, alliteration, and vocal stress are not mere embellishments, but essential tools that artists use to enhance the emotional depth and resonance in their works (Gafurov, 2020). Among the literary genre that highlights the use of aesthetic language is poetry. Poetry is so concise, expressive, and imaginative that each language element has a meaning and function. In poetry, poets often use the elements of sticism such as reps, metaphors, rhythm, alliteration, and origination to strengthen messages and create musical effects. Roman Jakobson (1960) explains that

the function of language pickling emphasizes the shape of the message itself so that the sound pattern and the structure of the language become important elements of poetry. Thus, fonosticism studies can be used to analyse the relationship between sound patterns and the construction of meaning in the poetry.

One of the poems known for the richness of figures and sound patterns is *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman. It is regarded as a significant milestone in American literature because of the use of the innovative free verse form and the exploration of strong sound and rhythm. According to Harold Bloom (2003), Whitman had a profound impact on the development of modern American poetry through the free and expressive use of language. In *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman explored the themes of individuality, democracy, humanity, and human relationships with nature through the peculiar use of poetic language. According to Harold Bloom (2003), Whitman had a profound impact on the development of modern American poetry through the free and expressive use of language. In *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman explored the themes of individuality, democracy, humanity, and human relationships with nature through the peculiar use of poetic language. Hence, it is interesting to examine through the fonosticism approach to understand how sound patterns and figures of speech are used to build meaning and create aesthetic effects in poetry. Previous studies on phonostylistics have been conducted by several researchers. For instance, Zhu (2021) investigates stylistic changes across different editions of the work using computational methods, revealing shifts in lexical choice and emotional tone over time. Meanwhile, Akakpo-Dome (2022) examines linguistic elements in Whitman's death poems, highlighting phonetic, syntactic, and semantic features that contribute to the poet's distinctive style. Additionally, Pedada (2020) analyses the dynamics of language in *Leaves of Grass*, focusing on symbolism, metaphor, and Whitman's representation of human experience.

However, previous research has primarily emphasized stylistic elements without specifically addressing the relationship between sound patterns and meaning construction in *Leaves of Grass*. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by applying a phonostylistic approach to analyze how sound devices contribute to meaning construction in Whitman's poetry.

Literature review

Stylistics and Phono-Stylistics

Stylistics is a branch of linguistics that studies language use in literary and non-literary texts. It focuses on how linguistic choices create meaning and aesthetic effects in a text. According to Geoffrey N. Leech and Mick Short (2007), stylistics connects linguistics and literary criticism by analyzing how language functions in literary works. Through stylistic analysis, readers can understand how authors use language creatively to express ideas, emotions, and artistic values.

One important area in stylistics is phono-stylistics, which examines the relationship between sound patterns and meaning in literary texts. Phono-stylistics studies phonological elements such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhythm, and rhyme to identify how sound contributes to aesthetic and emotional effects in literature (Verdonk, 2002). In poetry, sound devices are often used intentionally to strengthen themes, create musicality, and influence readers' interpretations. Paul Simpson (2004) explains that repeated sound patterns can function as foregrounding because they attract readers' attention and make certain expressions more significant. Likewise, Mick Short (1996) states that phonological repetition helps create cohesion and symbolic meaning in literary

texts. These ideas show that sound patterns in poetry are not only decorative elements, but also contribute to meaning construction.

Previous studies have explored phonological features in poetry through stylistic approaches. For instance, Verdonk (2002) emphasized the role of sound patterns in creating aesthetic effects in literary texts. Similarly, Simpson (2004) examined foregrounding and phonological repetition as important stylistic devices in poetry. However, these studies mainly focused on general stylistic analysis rather than the relationship between sound patterning and meaning construction in *Leaves of Grass*. Therefore, this study focuses on the phonostylistic analysis of selected poems in *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman. This research aims to explain how sound devices such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, and rhythm contribute to meaning construction and aesthetic effects in Whitman's poetry. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the relationship between sound patterns and meaning using a phonostylistic approach, especially in Whitman's free verse poetry.

Foregrounding Theory

Foregrounding theory was developed by the Prague School linguists to explain how literary language becomes more noticeable through deviation and repetition. Jan Mukařovský (1964) argues that literary language differs from ordinary language because it creates artistic emphasis. Repeated sound structures, such as alliteration and assonance, help readers focus on important parts of a text. In addition, Geoffrey N. Leech (1969) states that foregrounding can appear at phonological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic levels. In poetry, phonological foregrounding is commonly found through repeated consonant and vowel sounds that strengthen rhythm and meaning.

Sound Patterning in Poetry

Sound patterning is one of the important elements in poetry because it creates rhythm, musicality, and emotional effect. According to M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham (2015), alliteration refers to the repetition of initial consonant sounds, while assonance refers to repeated vowel sounds and consonance refers to repeated consonant sounds within nearby words. These sound devices help make poetry more expressive and memorable. Research in stylistics also shows that certain sounds may create particular emotional impressions. Katie Wales (2014) explains that soft sounds such as /s/ and /m/ often create calm and smooth impressions, while stronger sounds such as /t/ and /d/ may produce emphasis and intensity. In Whitman's poetry, repeated sounds contribute to the flowing and reflective atmosphere that characterizes his free verse style. Based on these theories and previous studies, this research applies a phonostylistic approach to analyze sound patterning and meaning construction in selected poems from *Leaves of Grass*.

Method

This study employs a qualitative stylistic approach to analyze how sound patterning contributes to meaning construction in *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman. Stylistics is concerned with the analysis of linguistic features in literary texts to explain how meaning is constructed through language use (Leech & Short, 2007). In this study, a phonostylistic perspective is used to examine phonological elements such as consonants, vowels, alliteration, assonance, consonance, and repetition. In addition, this research applies a limited quantitative element through frequency counts of phonological features to support the qualitative interpretation, following Creswell's (2014) view that qualitative research may incorporate simple quantitative data to strengthen analysis.

Data Source

The data source of this study is selected poems from *Leaves of Grass*, especially *Song of Myself*, which is widely recognized for its rich sound patterns and free verse style. The data were selected purposively by focusing on lines containing dominant phonological features such as repetition, alliteration, and assonance. This selection was intended to ensure that the data were relevant to the objectives of the study and representative of Whitman's poetic style.

Data Collection

The data were collected through close reading, which is commonly used in literary studies to identify significant linguistic elements in a text (Carter, 2010). The selected poetic lines were then transcribed into the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to facilitate phonological analysis. After that, phonological features were identified and classified into several categories, including consonant sounds, vowel sounds, alliteration, assonance, consonance, and repetition.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted through two stages: phonological analysis and stylistic interpretation. First, the phonological features were analyzed to identify dominant sound patterns in the selected poetic lines. Frequency counts were also applied to determine the occurrence of particular sound features. Second, the identified sound patterns were interpreted stylistically to explain their contribution to meaning construction in the poems. The concept of phonological foregrounding proposed by Simpson (2004) and Leech and Short (2007) was used to examine how repeated sounds create emphasis and attract readers' attention. Through this approach, the study explains how sound patterning functions not only as an aesthetic device but also as a meaningful stylistic strategy in Whitman's poetry.

Results

This section presents the findings of the phonostylistic analysis conducted on selected lines from *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman. The analysis focuses on dominant vowel and consonant sound patterns and their stylistic effects within the poem.

Table 1. Dominant Vowel Sounds and Stylistic Effects

Poem Line	Phonetic Transcription	Dominant Sound Pattern	Stylistic Effect
I celebrate myself	/aɪ 'sɛləˌbreɪt maɪ'sɛlf/	Repetition of /aɪ/ and /e/	Creates openness and lyrical flow
And what I assume you shall assume	/ænd wʌt aɪ ə'su:m ju ʃæl ə'su:m/	Repetition of /u:/ and /ə/	Produces rhythmic continuity and harmony
For every atom belonging to me	/fɔr 'ɛvri 'ætəm brɪ'lɔ:ŋɪŋ tə mi:/	Repetition of /ə/ and /ɒ/	Creates balanced and reflective sound quality
As good belongs to you	/æz gʊd brɪ'lɔ:ŋz tə ju:/	Repetition of /u:/ and /ɔ/	Reinforces smoothness and emotional warmth
I loafe and invite my soul	/aɪ loʊf ænd ɪn'vaɪt maɪ soul/	Repetition of /ou/ and /aɪ/	Creates a meditative and expansive tone
I lean and loafe at my ease	/aɪ li:n ænd loʊf æt maɪ i:z/	Repetition of /i:/ and /eɪ/	Produces softness and relaxed rhythm
Observing a spear of summer grass	/əb'zɜrvɪŋ ə spɪr əv 'sʌməɪr græs/	Repetition of /ə/ and /æ/	Enhances natural imagery and musicality

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes	/ˈhaʊzɪz ænd ru:mz ɑr fʊl əv pərˈfju:mz/	Repetition of /u:/ and /ɔ/	Creates richness and sensory impression
The shelves are crowded with perfumes	/ðə ʃelvz ɑr ˈkraʊdɪd wɪð pərˈfju:mz/	Repetition of /e/ and /u:/	Produces rhythmic cohesion and poetic texture
I breathe the fragrance myself	/aɪ bri:ð ðə ˈfreɪgrəns maɪˈself/	Repetition of /i:/ and /eɪ/	Strengthens reflective and intimate mood

Table 2. Dominant Consonant Sounds and Stylistic Effects

Poem Line	Phonetic Transcription	Dominant Sound Pattern	Stylistic Effect
I celebrate myself	/aɪ ˈsɛləˌbreɪt maɪˈself/	Repetition of /s/ and /l/	Creates smooth rhythm and musicality
And what I assume you shall assume	/ænd wʌt aɪ əˈsu:m ju ʃæl əˈsu:m/	Repetition of /s/ and /m/	Produces continuity and harmony
For every atom belonging to me	/fɔr ˈɛvri ˈætəm brɪˈlɔ:ɪŋ tə mi:/	Repetition of /m/ and /b/	Emphasizes unity and connectedness
As good belongs to you	/æz gʊd brɪˈlɔ:ɪz tə ju:/	Repetition of /b/ and /z/	Reinforces cohesion and emphasis
I loafe and invite my soul	/aɪ loʊf ænd ɪnˈvaɪt maɪ soul/	Repetition of /l/ and /f/	Creates a relaxed and flowing tone
I lean and loafe at my ease	/aɪ li:n ænd loʊf æt maɪ i:z/	Repetition of /l/ and /n/	Produces softness and calmness
Observing a spear of summer grass	/əbˈzɜrvɪŋ ə spɪr əv ˈsʌməɹ græs/	Repetition of /s/ and /r/	Enhances natural imagery and rhythm
Houses and rooms are full of perfumes	/ˈhaʊzɪz ænd ru:mz ɑr fʊl əv pərˈfju:mz/	Repetition of /f/ and /m/	Creates richness and auditory texture
The shelves are crowded with perfumes	/ðə ʃelvz ɑr ˈkraʊdɪd wɪð pərˈfju:mz/	Repetition of /ʃ/ and /f/	Produces cohesion and poetic resonance
I breathe the fragrance myself	/aɪ bri:ð ðə ˈfreɪgrəns maɪˈself/	Repetition of /f/ and /s/	Strengthens reflective and intimate mood

The analysis identified recurring vowel and consonant patterns throughout the selected lines of the poem. Repeated vowel sounds contribute to rhythm, musicality, and emotional resonance, while consonant repetition enhances emphasis, cohesion, and phonological foregrounding. These sound patterns indicate that phonological features are systematically employed in the poem to support aesthetic expression.

Table 3. Total Frequency of Vowel Sounds

No	Vowel Sound	Total Frequency
1	/ə/	33
2	/ɪ/	19
3	/æ/	18
4	/i:/	17
5	/ʌ/	17
6	/e/	15
7	/ɑ:/	15
8	/ɜ:/	15
9	/əʊ/	15

10	/e/	10
11	/ɔ:/	8
12	/ɔɪ/	8
13	/aʊ/	8
14	/ɒ/	7
15	/ʊ/	7
16	/u:/	7
17	/ɪə/	7
18	/eə/	7
19	/aɪ/	5
20	/ʊə/	5

Table 3 shows that the schwa vowel /ə/ is the most frequently occurring vowel sound, with 33 occurrences. Other frequently occurring vowels include /ɪ/ (19), /æ/ (18), /i:/ (17), and /ʌ/ (17). Long vowels and diphthongs are also recurrent across the selected lines, indicating a strong presence of vowel repetition within the poem.

Table 4. Total Frequency of Consonant Sounds

No	Consonant Sound	Total Frequency
1	/n/	34
2	/s/	28
3	/r/	23
4	/t/	19
5	/m/	19
6	/l/	16
7	/d/	15
8	/h/	15
9	/k/	11
10	/w/	9
11	/f/	8
12	/p/	7
13	/b/	7
14	/g/	7
15	/v/	7
16	/z/	7
17	/θ/	5
18	/ð/	5
19	/ʃ/	5
20	/ŋ/	5

21	/j/	5
22	/tʃ/	5
23	/dʒ/	4
24	/ʒ/	0

Table 4 indicates that /n/ is the most dominant consonant sound with 34 occurrences, followed by /s/ (28), /r/ (23), and /t/ and /m/ (19 each). Nasal, fricative, and liquid consonants appear frequently throughout the selected lines, demonstrating a substantial pattern of consonant repetition in the poem.

Appendix B. Frequency of Dominant Consonant Sounds

Consonant Sound	Frequency
/s/	18
/l/	15
/m/	13
/f/	11
/b/	8
/t/	7

Appendix C. Frequency of Dominant Vowel Sounds

Vowel Sound	Frequency
/ə/	21
/aɪ/	15
/u:/	8
/i:/	7
/ou/	5

Discussion

The findings reveal that sound patterning plays a significant role in constructing meaning and aesthetic effects in *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman. The analysis demonstrates that repeated vowel and consonant sounds are not merely decorative linguistic features but function as important stylistic devices that contribute to rhythm, emphasis, emotional tone, and thematic development. Through the systematic use of sound repetition, Whitman creates a poetic texture that supports the reflective and expansive characteristics of his free verse style.

Vowel Sounds and Meaning Construction

The results show that the schwa vowel /ə/ is the most dominant vowel sound, occurring 33 times throughout the selected lines. This finding suggests that Whitman's language closely resembles natural spoken discourse. According to Verdonk (2002), neutral vowels such as schwa contribute to a smooth and conversational rhythm because they reduce phonological rigidity and facilitate fluent speech patterns. The high frequency of /ə/ therefore supports Whitman's poetic objective of presenting poetry as a natural expression of thought rather than a highly structured form constrained by conventional metrical patterns.

Other frequently occurring vowels include /ɪ/, /æ/, /i:/, and /ʌ/. The recurrence of these sounds contributes to the poem's musical quality and emotional resonance. Long vowels such as /i:/ create prolonged acoustic effects that encourage a slower and more reflective reading pace. For example, the repetition of /i:/ in phrases such as "*I breathe the fragrance myself*" enhances the contemplative atmosphere and reinforces the speaker's introspective perspective. Similarly, the repetition of diphthongs such as /aɪ/ in "*I celebrate myself*" and "*I loafe and invite my soul*" produces an open and expansive sound quality that reflects themes of individuality, self-awareness, and personal freedom.

The alternation between front vowels and back vowels also contributes to the poem's expressive variation. Front vowels such as /i:/ and /æ/ create brighter and lighter auditory impressions, whereas back vowels such as /ɔ:/ and /ʊ/ generate deeper and calmer sound effects. This variation enriches the auditory experience of the poem and supports the emotional complexity found within Whitman's exploration of self, nature, and spirituality. As noted by Abrams and Harpham (2015), repeated vowel sounds, or assonance, function to establish rhythm, cohesion, and emotional tone in poetry. The present findings support this view by demonstrating that vowel repetition contributes directly to the poem's aesthetic and semantic dimensions.

Consonant Sounds and Stylistic Function

The results further indicate that consonant repetition is an important stylistic feature in the selected lines. The most dominant consonant sound is /n/, with a total frequency of 34 occurrences, followed by /s/, /r/, /t/, and /m/. The prevalence of nasal consonants such as /n/ and /m/ produces soft and continuous sound effects that contribute to the meditative and harmonious atmosphere characteristic of Whitman's poetry. These sounds are particularly noticeable in lines such as "*For every atom belonging to me*" and "*I lean and loafe at my ease*," where the repetition of nasal consonants creates a sense of continuity and interconnectedness.

The frequent occurrence of the consonant /s/ also contributes significantly to the poem's stylistic texture. Repeated /s/ sounds generate a smooth and whisper-like effect that enhances musicality and creates a calm auditory environment. This finding is consistent with Simpson's (2004) concept of phonological foregrounding, which suggests that repeated sounds attract readers' attention and strengthen poetic expression. In Whitman's poem, the repetition of /s/ not only improves rhythmic cohesion but also reinforces the tranquil relationship between the speaker and the natural world.

In addition, plosive consonants such as /t/ and /d/ appear regularly throughout the selected lines. Unlike nasal and fricative sounds, plosives create stronger and more forceful auditory effects. Their presence introduces moments of emphasis and assertiveness, particularly in expressions related to self-affirmation. Wales (2014) argues that plosive consonants often function to create emphasis and energetic movement in poetic discourse. The combination of softer consonants with stronger plosive sounds therefore enables Whitman to balance contemplation with confidence, reflecting the dual themes of introspection and self-celebration that characterize *Leaves of Grass*.

Liquid consonants such as /l/ and /r/ also contribute to the poem's flowing rhythm. The repetition of /l/ in words such as "*loafe*," "*lean*," and "*soul*" creates a smooth and lyrical movement that supports the free-flowing structure of Whitman's verse. These sounds reinforce the natural progression of ideas and emotions throughout the poem, demonstrating how phonological choices contribute to both aesthetic beauty and thematic coherence.

Sound Repetition and Aesthetic Effect

The findings suggest that the combined use of vowel and consonant repetition contributes substantially to the poem's aesthetic quality. Although *Leaves of Grass* does not rely on traditional rhyme schemes, the repetition of sounds creates internal musicality through assonance, consonance, and alliteration. These phonological patterns generate rhythm and cohesion while preserving the flexibility associated with free verse poetry.

The dominant sounds identified in the analysis create an auditory landscape that mirrors the poem's thematic concerns. Soft vowels, nasal consonants, and liquid sounds contribute to a sense of openness, harmony, and contemplation, whereas plosive consonants introduce emphasis and vitality. As a result, sound patterns work together with imagery and diction to guide readers' interpretation and emotional response. The poem's musicality emerges not from external rhyme but from carefully organized sound repetitions embedded within the language itself.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that phonological features function as meaningful stylistic resources in *Leaves of Grass*. Repeated vowel and consonant sounds help construct rhythm, reinforce thematic ideas, and strengthen emotional impact. The dominance of specific sound patterns supports Whitman's themes of self-expression, unity, freedom, and spiritual reflection. Therefore, the phonostylistic approach provides valuable insight into the close relationship between sound and meaning in Whitman's poetry, showing that phonological elements are integral to the poem's artistic and communicative power.

Conclusion

This study examined how sound patterning contributes to meaning construction in Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* from *Leaves of Grass* through a phono-stylistic approach. The findings reveal that phonological features play a significant role in shaping both the aesthetic and semantic dimensions of the poem. Through the use of consonants, vowels, alliteration, assonance, consonance, and repetition, Whitman creates rhythm, musicality, emotional depth, and thematic emphasis within his free verse poetry.

The analysis demonstrates that soft consonant sounds such as /s/, /l/, and /m/ contribute to a calm, reflective, and harmonious atmosphere, while stronger consonants provide emphasis and reinforce themes of individuality and self-expression. Repeated vowel sounds enhance the poem's musicality and support the construction of meaning by strengthening themes of unity, freedom, and spiritual reflection. Furthermore, the occurrence of repeated sound patterns functions as phonological foregrounding, drawing readers' attention to important ideas and enhancing the interpretative impact of the text.

Overall, the study confirms that sound patterning in *Song of Myself* functions not only as an aesthetic device but also as a meaningful stylistic strategy that contributes to poetic meaning construction. The findings highlight the close relationship between sound and meaning and demonstrate the value of phono-stylistic analysis in literary studies. Future research may examine a broader range of poems from *Leaves of Grass* or compare Whitman's sound patterns with those of other poets to gain a deeper understanding of the role of phonological features in literary expression.

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