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Repetition and Reactance in Graham's "Underneath" Poems

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Abstract

The present paper gives a detailed analysis and interpretation of 16 poems in Jorie Graham's collection, *Swarm* (2000), which bear "UNDERNEATH" as their main titles. The poems are marked with different types of repetition such as graphological repetition, word, phrase, and sentential repetition, semantic repetition, and syntactic repetition. The study draws on Lakoff and Johnson's theories on metaphor and Brehm and Brehm's reactance theory. It is argued "underneath" is a conceptual (orientational) metaphor which signifies a state of being limited, lack of control and freedom, and loss of power. The paper investigates the speaker's reactant behavior in "Underneath" poems, seeking a way to restore her lost freedom. Reactance behaviors can be skepticism, inertia, aggression, and resistance. It is concluded despite her thematic inertia, representing her submission to the oppressed state, her stylistic reactance reflected in repetitions, innovations, and disruptive diction stands for her attempts to regain her lost control.

Keywords: Graham, repetition, reactance, "UNDERNEATH", poetry

1. Introduction

Freedom and limitation (loss of freedom) have always been main issues of concern among philosophers, poets, psychologists, politicians, sociologists, etc. Brehm and Brehm (1981) define freedom as the individual's control over a potential outcome (p. 3). They view freedom as an "expectancy" which "can be held with more or less certainty" (1981, p. 5). In literature, freedom and its loss can be generally investigated on two levels of theme and style. Either the writer cherishes or invents a state of freedom or suffers its loss. In both cases, the literary text becomes a space wherein the psycho-linguistic behavior of the writer can be investigated.

This study picks up the notion of freedom to probe into the realm of poetry. As a case study, the paper chooses 16 poems from *Swarm* (2000) by Jorie Graham, the American Pulitzer Prize winner of poetry. All of these poems bear "Underneath" as their main titles; from now on, they are referred to as "Underneath" poems. All the 16 poems are distinguished from one another either by a name or a number put in parentheses. The title "Underneath" has metaphoric significance; it conceptualizes spatial position as being down or covered/hidden and thus stands in opposition to being up or shown/revealed. By way of convention, down has negative connotations. Envisaged through the binary freedom-slavery, "underneath" is linked to slavery which negates the existence of or access to freedom. The fact that this conceptual metaphor stands as the title of 16 poems scattered in Graham's collection itself gives a good reason to probe the significance of the poems. Besides, in the restricted scope of a poem, the repetition of a word may signify emphasis or hesitation. Stylistically, repeating a word may even be the writer's technical strategy to challenge, undo, or deconstruct the ideological load of the word.

This study approaches all these possibilities through reactance theory, a psychological lens provided by Brehm and Brhem (1966 & 1981). Having exerted a great influence on health behavior research, reactance theory has gradually found its way in other disciplines like education (Dehnad & Farsi, 2016). However, no scholar has to date approached literature from this lens. Like all other approaches to literary works, reactance theory can be applied both textually (on the level of characters) or extra-textually (on the level of author and reader). For its concision and verbal economy, poetry, in comparison, yields much less space and clues for such an analysis. Despite all this, the present paper takes up this task to investigate the poet's psycho-linguistic reaction with respect to her conditions.

2. Literature review

Research has displayed the significance and ubiquity of repetition "as a meaning-making strategy" (Tannen, 2007, p. 17). Hymes (1981), Becker (1984), and Bolinger (1961) all accord repetition a primary role not only in creating a particular discourse but the discourse itself. Wang (2005) speaks of the pervasiveness of repetition "in all types of everyday language" as well as in literary discourse (p. 532).

Tannen takes repetition as one of the strategies that both literary and non-literary discourses draw upon to create "interpersonal involvement" (2007, p. 25). She focuses on repetition especially in conversational discourse (2007, p. 25). She distinguishes strategies that work primarily, but not exclusively, on sound from those on meaning and includes

repetition in the first category (2007, p. 32). By "strategy", she intends simply to "convey a systematic way of using language" (2007, p. 30).

The first function of repetition is to tie cohesively the different parts of a text together and make it coherent. Tannen accentuates the contribution of "familiar strategies" like repetition to coherence and involvement and contends meaning is elaborated through the play of familiar patterns, "the eternal tension between fixity and novelty . . . constitutes creativity" (2007, p. 29). Similarly, Johnstone (1987) believes repetition is a way of creating categories and of giving meaning to new forms in terms of old (in Tannen, 2007, p. 57). Gregory Bateson (1972) posits repetition sends a "metamessage of rapport" between the communicators (in Tannen, 2007, p. 29). Following Dewey, Becker (1982) develops a notion of an aesthetic response which he defines as an emergent sense of coherence. In his observation, what makes an aesthetic response possible is the coherence of the text (1979, p. 241). Becker further on refers to the emotional response that experiencing coherence makes possible (1984).

Repetition has been the core of attention for many literary scholars. It usually appears in the form of recurrent patterns of sound, words, phrases, or sentences. Finnegan (1977) states, "The most marked feature of poetry is surely repetition" (p. 90). Many critics celebrate the economy of words in poetry and believe that poetry is maximally effective when it conveys the most meaning in the fewest words. Referring to this as a function of repetition in "*Participation in sensemaking*", Tannen suggests "this makes discourse effective because the more work readers or hearers do to supply meaning, the deeper their understanding and the greater their sense of involvement with both text and author" (2007, p. 37). Tannen enumerates the main functions of repetition in discourse as production, comprehension, connection, and interaction (2007, p. 58), all of which contribute to the establishment of coherence and interpersonal involvement. The present study takes titular repetition in Graham's "Underneath" poems as a linguistic reactance aimed at restoring some loss. Therefore, the scope of study on repetition is narrowed down to connection and interaction.

2.1 Connection

Repetition shows how new utterances are linked to earlier ones (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). More subtly, repetition "evidences a speaker's attitude, showing how it contributes to the meaning of the discourse" (Tannen, 2007, p. 60). For Labov (1972), repetition is evaluative in the sense that it contributes to the point. In Halliday's terms of theme and rheme, repetition is a way of contributing to the rheme or comment (1967). The paradoxical function of repetition is its "foregrounding" – Jakobson's term – both similarities and differences, "By focusing on parallelisms and similarities in pairs of lines, one is led to pay more attention to every similarity and every difference" (Jakobson & Pomorska, 1983, p. 103)

2.2 Interaction

Repetition is an effective strategy for achieving interaction between participants with each other as well as with the discourse. Referring to this point, Tannen enumerates some interactive functions of repetition such as "getting or keeping the floor, showing listenership, providing back-channel response, stalling, gearing up to answer or speak . . . persuasion . . . linking one speaker's ideas to another's . . . " (2007, p. 61). As all these instances reveal, repetition is ideology-laden since it takes roots in the author/speaker's perspective.

2.3 "Underneath" as metaphor

As the site of tension, or site of power struggle between participants, ideas, and ratifications, repetition is opened up to both linguistic (conceptual) and psychological discourses. In Graham's "Underneath" poems, repetition appears as a conceptual metaphor since all the 16 poems bear "Underneath" as their shared title. "Underneath" has a cognitive function; it belongs to orientational metaphors (Kovecses, 2010). In Kovecses' observation, the cognitive job of orientational metaphors is to make coherent a set of target concepts in human conceptual system. This kind of metaphors is called "orientational" because they are based on basic human spatial orientations such as up-down, center-periphery, back-forth, etc. (2010, p. 40). These orientations are far from being innocent and neutral for they are evaluation-based and defined by cultural context. Kovecses lists the concepts that are characterized by an "upward" orientation and those that stand in their opposite position and are featured by a "downward" orientation (2010, p. 40):

More is up; less is down.

Healthy is up; sick is down.

Control is up; lack of control is down.

Happy is up; sad is down.

Virtue is up; lack of virtue is down.

Rational is up; nonrational/emotional is down.

Lakoff and Johnson add (2003, pp. 16-17 & 25):

High status is up; low status is down.

Good is up; bad is down.

Active is up; passive is down. (p. 25)

Unknown is up; known is down. (p.138)

For Knowles and Moon, power is up and powerlessness is down (2006, p.33).

According to this list, "Underneath" poems signify negative evaluation such as lack of control, virtue, and rationality, being less, sick, sad.

2.4 Reactance theory

The notion of control and/or freedom metaphorized in Graham's poems serves as the nodal point that opens up the discourse of reactance theory. Reactance theory emerges out of studying people's behavioral reactions to changes that restrict their control and eliminate their freedoms. Brehm and Brehm (1981) refer to freedom and control as "popular concepts in the behavioral sciences" and use the two terms interchangeably. They define "control" as the individual's power to maneuver over each potential outcome (p.3). This comprises the domain of their behavioral and motivational researches from which their reactance theory has come.

Reactance theory concerns with "motivational consequences that can be expected to occur whenever freedoms are threatened or lost" (Brehm & Brehm, 1981, pp. 3-4). In general, "the theory holds that a threat to or loss of a freedom motivates the individual to restore that freedom. Thus, the direct manifestation of reactance is behavior directed toward restoring the freedom in question" (Brehm & Brehm, 1981, p. 4). Reactance is aroused maximally when a freedom is eliminated altogether or when the individual loses total control (Brehm & Brehm, 1981, p. 4). When the individual gets absolutely convinced that there is no way to restore the lost freedom, s/he "gives up" the freedom to attain a particular outcome; in this state, the individual does not experience reactance and instead reaches the state of "learned helplessness" (Wortman & Brehm, 1975).

More recent studies on reactance evince an increased interest in giving psychological reactance a personological orientation (Brehm & Brehm, 1981; Dowd, Milne, & Wise, 1991; Jahn & Lichstein, 1980). The experiments carried out by Dowd, Wallbrown, Sanders, and Yesenosky (1994) suggest more than a mere situation-specific construct, psychological reactance is charactological as well as situational in nature (1994, p. 602). Their study shows that reactant individuals are

> less concerned with making a good impression on others, are less likely to follow social norms and rules and maybe somewhat careless about fulfilling duties and obligations, are less likely to be tolerant of other's beliefs and values . . . more inclined to express strong feelings and emotions, and . . . concerned about problems and the future. (1994, p. 609).

Similarly, Dowd and Wallbrown (1993) have found out reactant people tend to be aggressive, dominant, defensive, autonomous, and nonaffiliative. The paper investigates if such features can be detected in Graham's speaker.

As psychologists have searched, reactant individuals display different behaviors when faced with threats to their freedoms. Matt Fox (2011) refers to inertia (a state of unresponsiveness to change), skepticism (a state of doubt), resistance (a state of non-acceptance of change), and aggression (a violent reaction against change). Simon Moss (2016) states that physical features of an environment can also provoke reactance; in this regard, he refers to Levav and Zhu's study (2009) that shows confined space encourages individuals to engage in uncommon acts to seek independence (2016, par. 13). Similar studies (Meyers-Levy & Zhu, 2007) show that in a constrained physical space, individuals feel encumbered; as a consequence, "they seek independence, manifested as variety" (in Moss 2016, par. 12). The paper shows how variety is reflected in Graham's "Underneath" poems.

2.5 "Underneath" poems

"Underneath" poems are scattered through *Swarm* (2000). Although some of the poems are numbered parenthetically, their arrangement follows no specific order. The titles are all capitalized and appear in the collection in this way: (Ellipses show there appear some other poem(s) between the two concerned poems.)

"UNDERNEATH (9)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (UPLAND)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (SIBYLLINE)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (ALWAYS)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (CALYPSO)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (7)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (1)", "UNDERNEATH (2)", "UNDERNEATH (3)", "UNDERNEATH (8)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (LIBATION)", "UNDERNEATH (EURYDICE)", "UNDERNEATH (WITH CHORUS)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (11)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (SPEZZATO)" . . . "UNDERNEATH (13)"

Baym (2003) contends the exploration of new forms and responses has remained a significant element in the work of poets like Graham (p. 2618). She attributes the importance of Graham's poetry to her "ability to shape poetic forms in which disjunctive acts of thinking occur, whether the poem addresses questions of metaphysics, epistemology, or expression" (2003, p. 2619).

3. Methodology and analysis

The adopted methodology is analytic and interpretive. It is a hybrid approach which mixes Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphor with psychological theory of reactance behavior. The recurrence of the orientational metaphor of "Underneath" leads the study to investigate the significance and contribution of repetition in these poems. The present paper takes titular repetition of "Underneath" as Graham's linguistic reactance against loss of freedom. As mentioned above, reactance behavior against confined physical space is variety. Here, the main focus is on the ways diversity is enacted in "Underneath" poems both stylistically and thematically. It also looks for symptoms of inertia, skepticism, resistance, and aggression in repetitions that occur all through the poems.

The study starts with a focus on repeated words, phrases, syntactic structures, themes, and situations in all the poems. It locates sites of tension in each poem, sees how the repeated item expands semantically in each reiteration, what it adds

to the poem, and how non-repeated items influence the repeated ones. Then all these are approached from a psychological angle to see which reactance behavior they evince and what characterological dimension they reveal about the speaker. In addition, the study tries to detect interlinks between all the 16 poems together, reaching a sort of pattern among them.

Table 1 summarizes the four main types of repetitions that can be detected in "Underneath" poems.

Table 1. Types of repetition and their instances in "Underneath" poems

Type of repetition	Instances of repetition
Graphological	Spaces, italicization, capitalization, parentheses
Word, phrase, and sentential	Underneath, explain, gods, veil, surface, etc.
Syntactic	Imperatives, questions, single-word sentences, causatives, permissive structures
Semantic repetition	Catalogue of words, single words, definitional words

3.1 Graphological repetition

In all the 16 poems, there occur some graphological repetitions. These include spaces, italicized words, capitalized words, and parentheses. Anyone of these adds some significance to the poems which will be discussed respectively.

3.1.1 Spaces

In English, words are separated from one another and thus given autonomy by a space. Simultaneously, the space interlinks words together like a chain. Therefore, the space between words gives the words a logical sense and order. All through Graham's poems, there are lines in which spaces between words violate the standard form and thus create a gap between words. These spaces function as a challenge to the reader. The first impression of such spaces is that they draw the reader's attention to themselves. Thus technically, they have a foregrounding effect (Jakobson). Thematically also, they function as silences that disrupt the words. Or, they bring interruptions in the normal course of words. Psychologically, the interruption may signify emphasis, hesitation, skepticism, a sudden turn or twist. They may also stand for the speaker's inertia; she remains unresponsive to the environment and thus pauses between words, letting her mind run wildly among various alternatives.

Sometimes, the space may display emphasis:

Believe me I speak now for the sand (2000, p. 12).

The emphasis conveyed by the space is backed up by the verb "Believe" and the imperative tone of the sentence which has the least hesitation and is authoritative and straightforward. The sentence that follows the space is complete both syntactically and semantically.

The space may signify hesitation:

Explain two are

Explain not one (2000, p. 10)

The sense of hesitation is manifest in the space which lies between two incomplete parts of a sentence. The verb "Explain" has a state of syntactic suspension as the doer or agent of the verb is not clear and cannot be concluded either. Semantically also, it calls for clarification in the form of explanation. Moreover, the words that appear after the space are not grammatically complete; it seems as if the speaker herself is not clear-minded what she is talking about. The quantifiers "two" and "one" are not adequately modified. Besides, there appear no punctuation marks after them to clarify what type of structure they have: they can be part of rhetorical questions or they may belong to simple statements. If an exclamation mark is put there, they can be interpreted in a different way. Such indeterminacies render the reader also hesitant about what the speaker has been trying to say.

Spaces may represent the speaker's skeptical outlook:

Gods defeated or perhaps in fact – (p. 23)

In this line, the space adds to the speaker's skepticism, vacillating between the finality of "in fact" and the indeterminacy of "perhaps". The space between the two reflects the gap between the two cognitive states: determinacy and indeterminacy.

Spaces may function as a chance to give the speaker's speech/line of thought a turn:

two rips you keep repairing.

How much left out?

Who tore what's left bitter the I

More bitter yet the sewing back together. (2000, p. 31)

Read in the light of the preceding and proceeding lines, the spaced line bears almost no logical relation to either one. "Who tore" may relate to "two rips" which comes in the first quoted line; "what's left" shares the word "left" with the previous line but it does not secure semantic continuity. The phrase, "bitter the I" bears no logical relation with the succeeding line, although the word "bitter" recurs there. Therefore, the spaced line comprises three separate chunks of speech that strike the speaker's mind just out of the blue. Each one of them represents a turn or twist in the speaker's mind.

The last function of spaces is reflecting the speaker's unresponsiveness to the environmental stimuli:

Deposit in me my busyness, flesh.
Deposit thirst in me. (2000, p. 68)

In these two succeeding lines, the speaker is receptive of "busyness", "flesh", and "thirst" and the spaces intervening display her unresponsiveness or psychological inertia to the depositing forces on her.

The other instances of graphological repetition are capitalized and italicized words. Like spaces, capitalization and italicization attract the reader's attention to themselves and thus have a foregrounding role. Cases of capitalization occur in titles and subtitles and no (sub)titular word is italicized. Instead, some words are italicized in the texts of the poems. In a poem like "UNDERNEATH (11)", the italicized sentences like: "*Give me the map there*" (2000, p.85), "*Bloody wedding!*" accord the text of the poem a dialogical tone since they represent the speech of a person other than the speaker. At times, the italicized statements may be quotations. In the same poem, it seems as if King Lear is the speaker of the italicized words.

The last form of graphological repetition is parentheses. Like spaces, parentheses are scattered over the 16 selected poems, in addition to the subtitles that accompany "UNDERNEATH". Therefore, after spaces, parentheses are the most significant graphological repetition. In a famous letter to Thomas Poole, Coleridge takes the use of parentheses as "the very drama of thought, which showed the thought growing and ramifying and made of the words on the page a living process rather than a *hortus siccus*" (original emphasis; Spiegelman 2005, p. 174). The words put in parentheses play different roles: they may add, subtract, extend, merely repeat, intensify, or mitigate the force of the included words. For each case, an example can be referred to here.

3.1.2 Addition

Sometimes the word(s) put in parentheses add(s) to the semantic tension of the whole line:

Up here how will I
(not) hold you. (2000, p.10)

The word "not" intensifies the semantic tension of these lines because it gives the whole sentence a contrastive hue. "how will I /hold you" shows the speaker's sense of commitment; while the word "not" in parentheses neutralizes that commitment and marks the stand of the speaker with indeterminacy. The reader also cannot decide if the speaker is committed or not towards her addressee.

3.1.3 Distraction

The words in parentheses may distract the reader from the main course of thought in the poem. The second part of the first poem titled "SUMMER" ends in these lines:

And *bless*. And *blame*.
(Moonless night)
(Vase in the kitchen) (2000, p.10)

The first quoted line runs between two extreme points of bless and damnation (blame); the second line points to the time setting; and the third line directs the reader's attention towards a vase in the kitchen, bearing no semantic or logical compatibility with either bless or blame.

3.1.4 Repetition

Sometimes the words in parentheses are mere repetition of some proceeding or preceding words. This repetition may weaken or accentuate the force of the repeated words. The impact depends on the text of the poem.

At the front end, the *meanwhile*: God's laughter.
Are you still waiting for the true story? (God's laughter)
The difference between what is and what could be? (God's laughter) (2000, p.12)

While in the first line, "God's laughter" has a definitional role, coming after colons, in the second and third lines, it appears parenthetically and gives the lines a dramatic base. God's laughter is heard while the two questions are being asked. Thus "God's laughter" recedes to the background against which the speaker's voice raises the questions. The parentheses in this case weaken and at the same time steady the impression of God's laughter in the context of the poem. Another example is from "UNDERNEATH (UPLAND)":

As if it would ravage of course but it won't
made precisely to hold back (precisely)
while the creatures are felled, (2000, p. 17)

The repetition of "precisely" in parentheses followed by a long space accentuates the significance of precision, although it is a temporal precision while in its first occurrence it signifies physical exactness.

3.1.5 Extension

The words in parentheses extend the scope of the poem by adding some other course to the lines:

Explain accident
after gods
is born
(fall)
(I'll catch)
(you) (2000, p. 64)

Here, the brief words in parentheses extend the scope of the poem with allusion to the Original Fall.

3.1.6 Intensification

The words in parentheses intensify the impression or affect of the line or some words in the line:

have you counted your steps
is crying now
(is crying now)
(is crying now)
begin again (2000, p.65)

The parenthetical repetition of "is crying now" intensifies the gloomy atmosphere of the poem.

3.1.7 Specification

The parenthetical words specify the scope of a word or the whole line to some type, class, or mood, or entity. As an example, one can refer to this line from "UNDERNEATH (EURYDICE)":

as if the words (spoken) were the one thing growing warmer (2000, p.74)

Here, the word "spoken" specifies the type of words that grow warmer and thus implicitly puts them in contrast to "written" words.

3.2 Word, phrase, and sentential repetition

Sometimes a single word, a phrase, or a sentence is repeated in "Underneath" poems. Such recurrences not only function as nodal points that interlink the poems together, but also extend their semantic scope. The new context where the repeated item reappears brings alternations to the semantic dimension of the item. In "UNDERNEATH (9)", the word "Explain" occurs 10 times in the poem. The first occurrences of "Explain" are in lines 11, 12, and 13:

Explain the six missing seeds.
Explain muzzled.
Explain tongue breaks thin fire in eyes. (2000, p. 8)

The word is separated from the rest by a long space. The space makes a gap/blank as if some word(s) is missing. The reader is required to fill in the blanks. Each alternative gives the line a thematic twist:

Explain to me the six missing seeds.
Explain where/when to look for the six missing seeds.
Explain how it feels when one finds the six missing seeds.
Explain how to find the six missing seeds.
Explain what happened to the six missing seeds.

As each case shows, the story of the six missing seeds changes with each option. In the following two-word line, "Explain" is again separated from "muzzled". The gap accentuates the semantic contrast between the two words. While "Explain" is an act of speaking, "muzzled" signifies "silenced".

In line 13, there are three spaces/gaps between the words, waiting for the reader to be filled in.

Explain how tongue breaks passionate thin fire aroused in eyes.
Explain when tongue breaks unwanted thin fire lit in eyes.
Explain what happens when tongue breaks red thin fire inflamed in eyes.

Moreover, the speaker's insistence on "Explain" can be taken as her psychological skepticism, a state that craves for explanation and clarification but never seems satisfied. The same strategy can be applied to the other repeated words followed by a long space. In the same poem, the word "muzzled" reappears in line 61, subtitled as "WINTER":

Muzzled the deep.
Fermenting the surface. (2000, p. 11)

By this point, the reader has already experienced the tension between "muzzled" and "Explain". Therefore, the contrastive relation is the first thing that is brought to this line by the reader. When read in the light of the second line where "the surface" contrasts with "the deep", the same sense of tension is highlighted. In this way, repetition of a word yokes to the new context its previous connotations; these connotations may be further backed up in the new context or may even be challenged. This example shows the supportive relation. As a contrastive relation, one can refer to "explain" which reappears in "UNDRENEATH (2)" and "(3)". In these two poems, the repeated verb is no longer capitalized; the space between it and the next word is longer, and the whole line lacks any punctuation. Lack of punctuation renders the line run-on, depriving it of finality. The longer space gives room to more words improvised by the reader. The non-capitalized form of the verb deprives it of its authoritative role, and gives it a median status instead of an initial position. The reiteration of this verb brings onstage all the previous connotations attached to it in the first poem:

explain calm
explain vision
explain property (2000, p.63)

However the blanks here are filled in, the whole lines lack the totalitarian voice the first capitalized occurrence of "Explain" used to have. The disempowerment of the verb "explain" in "UNDERNEATH (3)" reaches its extreme point by the theme of submissiveness the whole poem conveys; the poem starts:

explain given to
explain born of
explain preoccupied (2000, p.65)

The past participles that appear after "explain" imply the passivation of the speaker and it can psychologically reflect the speaker's inertia.

Significantly enough, the last "Underneath" poem starts with:

needed explanation
because of the mystic nature of the theory
and our reliance on collective belief (2000, p.102)

The beginning lines include "explanation" which reminds the reader of "Explain" in the earlier poems and "explain" in the later ones. These lines read like sort of justification for her call for "explanation". Here, "explanation" appears after the long space, unlike other cases; it is modified, changed to a noun. Nominalization deprives it of that authoritative role it used to have and mitigates its force especially that it stands as the direct object for the verb "needed". The alternations the verb "Explain" goes through from the beginning up to the end shows the semantic extension it acquires in each reiteration.

Sometimes a phrase is repeated in the poem. IN "UNDERNEATH (ALWAYS)", the phrase "Not in time" occurs 6 times. Being "in time" denotes "Within an indefinite time or at an unspecified future time"; it thus matches with the subtitle "ALWAYS" that means almost the same. However, the word "Not" negates this denotation and thus challenges the subtitle. This challenge accords the poem a central tension as the title of the poem is negated by the body of the poem. This tension reaches its pinnacle in the penultimate line of the poem where the italicized phrase "*Once upon a time*" (2000, p.31) appears and thus does away with the eternal notion of "ALWAYS" and instead anchors the poem in the past.

Some phrases are definitional for they define a specific entity. "UNDERNEATH (7)" starts with such phrases that define "Mirror". In the first line, the poet uses a space instead of colons and capitalizes the first word: "Mirror Roll away/the stone" (2000, p.53). In its second repetition, it gets colons: "Mirror: a thing not free"; in its third occurrence, the first model is used: "Mirror These are not questions" (2000, p.53). Such vacillations between two forms represent both similarity and diversity. This implies the arbitrariness of either structure and psychologically may hint at the speaker's state of hesitation. Such a sense of skepticism is explicitly referred to in this stanza: "The repeated vacancy/ of touch/begging for real work" (2000, p.53).

Sentential repetition happens when a whole sentence is repeated in the poem. Like in other types of repetition, the new context where the sentence is repeated accentuates, adds, modifies, alters, or challenges the previous significance of the sentence. In "UNDERNEATH (WITH CHORUS)", the sentence "What shall I use" appears three times in the first ten lines of the poem. In the first time, it is part of a definitional phrase, coming after colons: "My sacrifice: what shall I use/ Face dawn and pour out/ What shall I use" (2000, p.77). The poem is subtitled as "WITH CHORUS" and it starts with the two key words "Citizen" and "Sacrifice" both of which appear on the first line, are spaced, and capitalized; therefore, the verb "use" here gets the meaning of putting into service. Besides, the chorus has been a component of Greek dramas; it consisted of fifty old men or senior citizens of the society, and it used to play the role of separating scenes from one another in addition to supporting, interpreting, and commenting on the characters' speech. Here, the repeated sentence separates scenes/acts from one another. The first scene/act is that of sacrifice which is separated from

the position of "Face dawn and pour out", and is itself separated from "What offering sufficient/Say act/Be called/ What shall I use" (2000, p.77).

As another example of sentential repetition, one can refer to "and that one does not kill" (2000, p.61) that is repeated twice with no interruption in "UNDERNEATH (1)". This line is preceded by "what's its name?" and followed by "look it is dead" (2000, p.61). The indefinite pronoun "it" and the deixis "that" have no referents and this adds up to the ambiguity of the poem. There can be no resolution nor is there any suggestion for these vague points in the poem. The ambiguity of the lines increases when the speaker gradually shows her being stifled by the referent of "you". First, she says "your/teeth and lips holding my /whole ear"; then she states, "your hand over my/ mouth". The poem ends up with "yr hand now/(actually over) my throat" (2000, p.62). The word "yr" can be taken as the abbreviated form of "your" or of "year" (signifying "time"); it is a pun because both of these are applicable within the context of the poem. Moreover, such words as "painful", "hit", "drop", "nervousness", "cries", "hushing", "kill", "dead", "drown", and "hungry" give the dominant atmosphere of the poem a violent base and render it aggressive.

The feature that singles out "UNDERNEATH (7)" is alliteration of most words. In the first line, "Can call me *by name*" (2000, p.90), the first two words have cacophony of /k/ sound repeated in the word "keel" in the second line. This poem also has sentential repetition: "You never touched a truer stone/than this exile" is repeated after two lines in the form of "I never touched a truer stone/than this your face" (2000, p.91). The change from "You" to "I" marks the poem with partial symmetry. Such a symmetrical identification signifies a sense of stoniness which is shared by "you" and "I". Another instance of partial symmetry occurs in "UNDERNEATH (7)" where the two succeeding lines are: "Reach your fingers here./Reach your hand here." (2000, p.54). This poem starts with definitional phrases of mirror. In such a context, partial symmetry destabilizes the complete symmetry a mirror is expected to give of an entity. The incompatibility between the two types of symmetry renders the poem a site of tension.

3.3 Syntactic repetition

Like word repetition, "Underneath" poems are marked with syntactical repetition. The case of "Explain" mentioned above is an example of this. Syntactical structures recur either in normal or distorted forms. These include imperatives, questions, exclamatory phrases, single-word sentences, definitional structures, and statements. The first "Underneath" poem starts with the obligatory modal "must" that accords the speaker an authoritative role and is compatible with the repetition of "Explain" all through the poem:

> Up, up you go, you must be introduced.
>
> You must learn belonging to (no one) (2000, p.8)

Such a start with its imperative tone makes the reader take all the verbs that are not modified by any subject as imperative, like:

Learn what the great garden – (up, up you go) – exteriority, exhales: (2000, p.8)

In "UNDERNEATH (8)", two questions have the same syntactic structure, but they differ because of the spaces that intervene:

> What if there is no end?
>
> What if there is no
>
> punishment. (2000, p.67)

The first question is one in the middle of which there occurs a long space. The second question only looks like a question as it is left unfinished and remains incomplete. Nothing appears after "no"; the reader may ask, "no what?" The space that comes after that provides no answer; it does not have even a question mark. The only word that appears is "punishment" which is preceded by a space; that initial space can be filled by a question, a word, or a statement. The full stop which comes after "punishment" does not encourage the reader to take this word as the missing word of the question in the previous line.

The other instance is in "UNDERNEATH (8)" where the same syntactical structure occurs:

> Make the sore not heal into meaning.
>
> Make the shallow waters not take seaward the mind.
>
> Let them wash it back continually onto the shore.
>
> Let them slap it back down onto the edges of this world. (2000, p.68)

In these lines two syntactical structures recur: causative (the first two lines), and permissive (the second two lines). The first apparent difference between them is spaces. The causative ones give the reader enough space to intervene, while the permissive ones impose their uninterrupted structure on the reader. The pronoun "it" in the third quoted line refers back to "the mind" and thus interlinks the two sets together. Lack of spaces gives the permissive sentences an imposing hold that is missing in spaced lines. This feature runs in contrast to the permissiveness of the syntactical structure. By contrast, the causative structure which seems to run non-interruptedly is marked by spaces. Thus syntactic structure runs in contrast to graphological repetitions. This syntactical tension can be taken as the speaker's syntactic reactance representing her aggression. This sense of aggression is accentuated further in such verbs as "wash back" and "slap back".

Of all the "Underneath" poems, "UNDERNEATH (LIBATION)" has the most questions. In the fifth line of the poem, the speaker explicitly states, "Disperse question marks" (2000, p.71). This line foreshadows the 10 questions that follow. The occurrence of so many questions in a poem stands for the speaker's skepticism, curiosity, or disbelief. In this poem, they can represent the speaker's doubts about racial identity of her addressee. Each question gives the poem a new dimension; as an instance, one can refer to the following:

How many syllables is your nation?

How pronounce it?

Who first spoke it?

Is it the third or the other world? (2000, p. 71)

These questions give a politico-racial base to the poem. The fact that these questions do not observe syntactical rules shows English is alien to the speaker. The last question is: "Who rules the house?" This question leaves no space for the reader to step in. The question's totalitarian gesture is further backed up by the single-word answer with which the poem ends: "Persuasion" (2000, p.72). Significantly, this last word is marked by no punctuations; it seems as if "persuasion" is never ending. The doubtful tone of the poem runs in contrast to religious discourse of the subtitle, "(LIBATION)". Libation is the drink which is offered to a deity and it thus connotes belief in a god.

3.4 Semantic repetition

Semantic repetition occurs when the same meaning or the nearest meaning is conveyed in the poem. In each recurrence, some new aspect or dimension is added to the semantic domain of the word; or sometimes, a part of the semantic scope is omitted, modified, altered, or contradicted in the new context. This is called semantic tension. Semantic tension happens when words take an ironical tone or when they are challenged by some other word in the poem. Semantic tensions may be interpreted as linguistic reactance displaying such symptoms as inertia, skepticism, aggression, or resistance depending upon the text of the poem. Sometimes the subtitle of the poem drags its title into semantic challenge. Such is the case with "UNDERNEATH (UPLAND)" (2000, p.16) where the contrasts between up and down gives the repetitive title a semantic tension. In "UNDERNEATH (CALYPSO)", the two words "era" and "period" share almost the same semantic scope:

Why should the exile return home?

Era? Period? (2000, p.42)

The word "Era" encompasses two or more periods of time; therefore, "period" covers a less scope of time. The long space between the two words may be interpreted as a quantity-based ranking of the words; what is of significance is that the previous line also has a space between an "exile" who is far from home and "return home" which is his far-fetched wish; this space signifies long duration of time and distance between the exile and his home. In both lines, the spaces accentuate duration and add to the semantic dimension of "Era" and "Period". This lies in line with the first line of the poem where the speaker states:

Sing to me of time and time again (2000, p.41).

Here, the main theme centers on time and repetition. In the two lines quoted above, time and repetition play an important role. Another instance of semantic repetition is in "UNDERNEATH (SIBYLLINE)" where the shared semantic scopes of words cement the seemingly separate lines together:

Burn all the letters.
Look in the ashes with both hands.
Finger in there for any bits intact.
Wrist-deep
in the fine grains, so cold,
feel further round for fragments,
for any last unburnt
piece of
the crashing of mind,
or any promises (so parched) come down through the sentences
to breath,
pushing the few bits back to the tiny fire,
the struck match,
and worrying, and keeping each fragment lit to the very end
by turning it
to every side every last side –
Look you have to lift the match to it again
because this syllable is still intact. (2000, p. 25)

In these lines, words "bit", "fragment", "piece", and "grain" are synonyms and thus interlink the lines together. Words like "fire", "burn", "unburnt", "match", "struck", "ash", and "lit" belong to the same semantic discourse. Verbs like "look with both hands", "finger", "wrist-deep", "feel further" share the same semantic domain. A verb like "crashing"

matches with "fine grains". The last word with which the poem ends is "intact" which appears once more in the third quoted line here and runs encounter semantically to all the repeated words abovementioned. The semantic contrast between the ending word and the previous ones gives the poem a semantic tension. Here the discourses of burning and crashing are dominant which signify doing violence to mind, language, sentences, and even syllables. In such a context, the semantic tension displays the speaker's aggressive reactance. This aggression is further backed up by the discourse of war with which the poem starts (2000, p. 23).

4. Discussion

Among the few critics who have written on Graham's poetry, not necessarily on "Underneath" poems, one can refer to Nina Baym (2003). In her introductory note on Graham, Baym states, "It is characteristic of Graham's poems to include the gaps in thought" (p. 2819). The above analysis shows how long spaces that intervene in her lines stand for the gaps in her thought and bring about such gaps in the reader's thought. Baym also quite briefly speaks of Graham's "skepticism of any version of reality that claims to be total" and attributes the undermining of her own assertions to this skepticism (2003, p. 2819). Baym, however, does not show how this skepticism is shown in her poems and what it actually does both stylistically and thematically. Her short introduction does not give her enough space to focus on the poet's sense of skepticism from a personological perspective. The above analysis fills in these gaps and addresses these points in detail. Here, the attempt is to detect sort of pattern among the "Underneath" poems.

Orientational metaphor suggested by "Underneath" marks a state of limitation, lack of control, and powerlessness. The speaker in Graham's poems shows her linguistic reactance to restore her lost freedoms. One way to detect her strategies is through repetitive structures that interlink poems across the collection and simultaneously display their differences. The study detects a pattern, albeit not a straightforward one, from the first poem which starts with "UP, up you go, you must be introduced" (2000, p.8) to the last poem that offers the addressee to

climb down
presence of world
……
I am beside myself
you are inside me as history
We exist Meet me (2000, p. 105)

In this pattern, there are nodal points that interlink all poems to the last poem, that is, "UNDERNEATH (13)". These nodes are words, structures, and phrases of the concluding poem that recur in the previous poems. The motivation for such a search is already there in the poem as this is what the "Underneath" speaker invites the reader to:

here we are, the forgone conclusion
……
do you remember my love my archive
touch me (here)
give birth to a single idea (2000, p. 103)

Among the most repeated words, one can refer to those that imply or explicitly express "explain", "god", "push", "freedom", "annihilation", "surface", "time", "voice", "word", "touch", "burning", "tongue", and "self". A glance over the implicit or explicit expressions of these words or their antonyms reveals lack of freedom is implied in "god", "push", "surface", "annihilation", and "time". Other words like "explain", "tongue", "self", "touch", "word", and "voice" imply the speaker's reactant outlets to restore her lost freedoms. Those words that are somehow related (either via similarity or opposition) discoursally together are shown in the following Table.

Table 2. The most frequently repeated key words in all "Underneath" poems

Main entry in "UNDERNEATH (13)"	Related words
Word	"Explain", "voice", "tongue", "say", "whisper"
Freedom	"free" and its opposite "push"
Annihilation	"god", "burning", "war"
Time	"century", "years", "history"
Touch	Body parts
Surface	"veil", "cover", "hide"
Self	"myself", "my body", "me"

Of all the entries, "freedom" and its opposite forms outnumber the others. This feature indicates the speaker's main concern is freedom since she has been divested of that.

Tracking up the repetition of some words like "god" reveals sort of pattern all through "Underneath" poems. The word "god" first appears as a capitalized force in "UNDERNEATH (9)", as "Lord" in "UNDERNEATH (UPLAND)", and as capitalized and pluralized in "UNDERNEATH (SIBYLLINE)". Then, it becomes non-capitalized and modified by indefinite article "a" in "UNDERNEATH (ALWAYS)". In "UNDERNEATH (2)", it merely becomes "god". It gets implied in "The tabernacle" in "UNDERNEATH (8)" and in "offer prayers to" in "UNDERNEATH (LIBATION)". It reappears as "the god" in "UNDERNEATH (WITH CHORUS)" and once again it gets implied in "oracle" in "UNDERNEATH (11)". Therefore, the further one goes ahead through the poems, the more the concept of god is exposed to diminishment so that at the end, in "UNDERNEATH (13)", "god" is recognizable only in "god's tiny voices" (2000, p. 104).

"Underneath" poems target such destructive forces as God, time (history), king, war, language, death, rituals, and the body as the restrictive agents which deprive Graham's speaker of her freedoms. All through "Underneath" poems the speaker endeavors to fight back these limitations and restore her lost freedoms. In the first two poems, the main focus is on God and nature and their indifference toward man's misery. In "UNDERNEATH (UPLAND)", the speaker laments having the "privilege of /*no rights*" in the Lord's hall where even the savior has no right to choose (2000, p. 19). War and language are the main concerns of "UNDERNEATH (SIBYLLINE)", while time is targeted in "UNDERNEATH (ALWAYS)". In "UNDERNEATH (CALYPSO)", the speaker reveals the plights of mankind all through history, walking in flames and anguish, "Going broken" (2000, p. 43). Here, the speaker shows resistance as her reactant behavior, stating "Do not pass through me" (2000, p. 43). "UNDERNEATH (7)" shows the speaker getting aware of herself; she finds her image in the mirror, "See that it is *I*, myself" (2000, p. 54). The other destructive force is a history of oppression which is attended to in "UNDERNEATH (1)". In "UNDERNEATH (1"), "(2)", and "(3)", the speaker seeks explanation for different entities and concepts and thus craves for re-definition of them all and meanwhile reveals her skepticism toward the established norms.

"UNDERNEATH (8)" enters the speaker in a new phase of her life; here she repeatedly states, "Deposit in me" and thus shows her state of inertia, "Refuse/rescue" (2000, p. 69); she finds herself helpless before all the oppressive forces. In "UNDERNEATH (LIBATION)", she restarts asking many questions as if she is bent on reaching somewhere. In "UNDERNEATH (EURIDYCE)", the speaker sounds to return to her previous state of inertia, "I like submission to such untouchable authority" (2000, p. 73) and prefers to resort to silence: "how neatly silence describes the thing" (2000, p. 76). "UNDERNEATH (WITH CHORUS)" shows her awareness that "Obedience is hard", but still, she seems involved in justifying her submission: "Do you know why I yield/ When I have heard your reason I will know" (2000, p. 79). In "UNDERNEATH (11)", she is preoccupied by the tragedy of King Lear, is aware of her inertia, and yet still insists on her being kept underneath; thus the poem ends thus, "With one law/Cover me" (2000, p. 87). "UNDERNEATH (SPEZZATO)" shows the speaker in a different phase of her life; she is shown constructing sort of identity for herself: "Can call me *by name*" (2000, p. 90); but paradoxically, she remains nameless. Simultaneously however, she is well aware of her oppression. What differentiates her state here is that she has found a companion, somebody with whom she shares her miseries: "Both of us hands tied/half-dead from thinking" (2000, p. 92). It is in "UNDERNEATH (13)" that she decides unification with her companion can help them out of their oppressive state:

I am beside myself
you are inside me as history
We exist Meet me (2000, p. 105)

The poem significantly does not end in any full stop, showing the eternity of her invitation and readiness for restoring their lost freedoms.

5. Conclusion

The present study starts with the oppressive state metaphorized in the repetitive title of "Underneath" in 16 poems by Graham. It then enumerates and introduces four main types of repetition. Simultaneously, the study approaches these repetition-based strategies from a psychological angle and detects the speaker's linguistic reactance with respect to her oppression. Finally, a sort of pattern emerges from the poems that interconnects all the poems across the volume. Although Graham at times gives way to inertia and shows to be submissive, her diction, poetic and linguistic innovations persistently do away with the literary and linguistic norms. This feature renders her poems chaotic and ambiguous, and concurrently, it epitomizes her incessant linguistic and poetic resistance as her reactance strategy to the established standards.

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