

SEMESTER II- APPRECIATING POETRY

MODULE I- KEY CONCEPTS

Basic Elements of Poetry

Many writers have tried to define poetry at different times. Poetry is literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm. Poetry (ancient Greek: (poieo) = I create) is an art form in which human language is used for its aesthetic qualities, instead of, its notional and semantic content. It consists largely of oral or literary works in which language is used in an artistic manner that is felt by its user and audience to differ from ordinary prose. It may use condensed form to convey emotion or ideas to the reader's or listener's mind or ear. Poems frequently depend on the effect on imagery, word association, and the musical qualities of the language used. The interactive layering of all these effects to generate meaning is what marks poetry.

Prosody

Prosody is the study of meter, intonation, and rhythm of a poetic work. It is a phonetic term that uses meter, rhythm, tempo, pitch, and loudness in a speech for conveying information about the meanings and structure of an utterance. In addition, prosody is an important element of language that contributes toward rhythmic and acoustic effects in a piece of writing. It includes different elements, such as scansion, sound, pace, and meaning.

Types of Prosody

There are four distinguishable prosodic metrical patterns, which are:

i) Syllabic Prosody – Syllabic prosody counts a fixed number of syllables in each line, while accent, tone, and quantity play a secondary role. Accentual Prosody – Accentual prosody measures only the accents or stresses in a line of verse, while the overall number of syllables may vary in a line. It is very common in Germanic, old English, and modern English verses.

ii) Accentual-syllabic Prosody – Accentual-syllabic prosody counts both the number of syllables and accents in each line. We commonly find it in English poetry.

iii) Quantitative Prosody – Quantitative prosody does not measure the number of syllables, rather depending upon duration of syllables. This can be determined by the amount of time used on pronunciation, such as a free-verse poem that consists of unmeasured lines. We find this type of

prosody in Roman and classical Greek poetry, and only very rarely in English poetry.

Rhythm

The word rhythm is derived from *rhythmos* (Greek) which means, “measured motion.” Rhythm is a literary device that demonstrates the long and short patterns through stressed and unstressed syllables, particularly in verse form. A rhythm may be produced by the recurrence of a sound, but rhythm and sound are not identical. When we speak of the rhythm of a poem we mean the recurrence of stresses and pauses in it.

Types of Rhythm

English poetry makes use of five important rhythms. These rhythms are of different patterns of stressed (/) and unstressed (x) syllables. Each unit of these types is called foot. Here are the five types of rhythm:

1. Iamb (x /)

This is the most commonly used rhythm. It consists of two syllables, the first of which is not stressed, while the second syllable is stressed. Such as:

“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”

(Sonnet 18, by William Shakespeare)

2. Trochee (/ x)

A trochee is a type of poetic foot commonly used in English poetry. It has two syllables, the first of which is strongly stressed, while the second syllable is unstressed, as given below:

“Tell me not, in mournful numbers”

(Psalm of Life, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

3. Spondee (/ /)

Spondee is a poetic foot that has two syllables, which are consecutively stressed. For example:

“White founts falling in the Courts of the sun” (Lepanto, by G. K. Chesterton)

4. Dactyl (/ x x)

Dactyl is made up of three syllables. The first syllable is stressed, and the remaining two syllables are not stressed, such as in the word “marvelous.” For example:

“This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,”

(Evangeline, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

The words “primeval” and “murmuring” show dactyls in this line.

5. Anapest (x x /)

Anapests are total opposites of dactyls. They have three syllables; where the first two syllables are not stressed, and the last syllable is stressed. For example:

“’Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house,”

(’Twas the Night Before Christmas, by Clement Clarke Moore)

Rhythm in verse is determined by the presence of various kinds of metrical pattern

Alliteration

Alliteration is derived from Latin’s “Latira”. It means “letters of alphabet”. It is a stylistic device in which a number of words, having the same first consonant sound, occur close together in a series.

Consider the following examples:

But a better butter makes a batter better.

A big bully beats a baby boy.

Both sentences are alliterative because the same first letter of words (B) occurs close together and produces alliteration in the sentence. An important point to remember here is that alliteration does not depend on letters but on sounds.

Alliteration has an important role in poetry and prose. It creates a musical effect in the text that enhances the pleasure of reading a literary piece. It makes reading and recitation of the poems appealing and it renders flow and beauty to a piece of writing.

Assonance

Assonance takes place when two or more words, close to one another repeat the same vowel sound, but start with different consonant sounds.

For instance, in the following sentence:

“Men sell the wedding bells.”

The same vowel sound of the short vowel “-e-” repeats itself in almost all the words, excluding the definite article. The words do share the same vowel sounds, but start with different consonant sounds – unlike alliteration, which involves repetition of the same consonant sounds. See a line from Wordsworth’s poem ‘Daffodils’, “A host of golden daffodils”, there is a repeated ‘o’

sound., Below are a few assonance examples that are common.

“I feel depressed and restless”

“Go and mow the lawn”.

“Men sell the wedding bells.”

Diction

Diction can be defined as style of speaking or writing, determined by the choice of words by a speaker or a writer. Diction, or choice of words, often separates good writing from bad writing. It depends on a number of factors. Firstly, the word has to be right and accurate. Secondly, words should be appropriate to the context in which they are used. Lastly, the choice of words should be such that the listener or reader understands easily.

Proper diction, or proper choice of words, is important to get the message across. On the other hand, the wrong choice of words can easily divert listeners or readers, which results in misinterpretation of the message intended to be conveyed.

Types of Diction

Individuals vary their diction depending on different contexts and settings. Therefore, we come across various types of diction.

- Formal diction – formal words are used in formal situations, such as press conferences and presentations.
- Informal diction – uses informal words and conversation, such as writing or talking to friends.
- Colloquial diction – uses words common in everyday speech, which may be different in different regions or communities.
- Slang diction – is the use of words that are newly coined, or even impolite.

Poetic Diction

Poetry is known for its unique diction, which separates it from prose. Usually, a poetic diction is marked by the use of figures of speech, rhyming words, and other devices. Debates about what constitutes poetic diction can be traced back to the eighteenth century. Neo-classical writers of the eighteenth century developed a special poetic diction that mostly derived from the characteristic usage of earlier poets such as Virgil, Edmund Spenser and John Milton. They often employed lofty and archaic words and used recurrent ‘epithets’ in their poetry. For instance “the finny tribe” for “fish”, the bleating kind” for “sheep” etc. In Wordsworth’s Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, he has strongly attacked the neoclassical doctrine of special language for poetry and claimed that there is an “essential” difference between the language of prose and metrical

composition.

Figures of Speech

A figure of speech is a word or phrase using figurative language—language that has other meaning than its normal definition. In other words, figures of speeches rely on implied or suggested meaning, rather than a dictionary definition. We express and develop them through hundreds of different rhetorical techniques, from specific types like metaphors and similes, to more general forms like sarcasm and slang.

Simile

Simile is a very common figure of speech that uses to compare two distinctly different things is indicated by words “like” and “as” .For example, “he is as tall as a mountain,” doesn’t mean he was actually 1,000 feet tall, it just means he was really tall. Some other well-known similes you will often hear are:

As cute as a kitten

As happy as a clam

As light as a feather

As blind as a bat

Metaphor

In a metaphor, words are used in a manner other than their literal meaning. However, metaphors use figurative language to make comparisons between unrelated things or ideas. Metaphors are illustrations that make a strong point by comparing two things you wouldn't necessarily pair.

- Eg., "I'm drowning in a sea of grief."

Here grief is so overwhelming that the person feels helpless, like they're being pulled underwater.

- "She was fishing for compliments."

The woman isn't literally casting a lure to hook compliments out of the ocean. Rather, it's a dead metaphor used to signify a desire for compliments.

Personification

Personification is a figure of speech that attributes human qualities to that which is non –human. For example, when we say, “The sky weeps,” we are giving the sky the ability to cry, which is a human quality.

Another example from Emily Dickens’ poem “Because I Could not Stop for Death” ;

“ Because I could not stop for Death

He kindly stopped for me”

In this poem, a female speaker tells the story of how she was visited by "Death"—personified as a "kindly" gentleman—and taken for a ride in his carriage.

Oxymoron

Oxymoron is a figure of speech in which two opposite ideas are joined to create an effect.

The common oxymoron phrase is a combination of an adjective proceeded by a noun with contrasting meanings, such as “cruel kindness,” or “living death”. Oxymoron produces a dramatic effect in

both prose and poetry. For instance, when we read or hear the famous oxymoron, “sweet sorrow,” crafted by Shakespeare, it appeals to us instantly. It provokes our thoughts, and makes us ponder the meaning of contradicting ideas. This apparently confusing phrase expresses the complex nature of love, that can never be expressed through simple words. Shakespeare makes

use of oxymora in his plays to develop a paradox.

"I will bestow him, and will answer well

The death I gave him. So, again, good night.

I must be cruel, only to be kind:

Thus bad begins and worse remains behind.

One word more, good lady". (Hamlet by William Shakespeare)

In the above lines, Shakespeare brings two contradictory ideas: "be cruel ... to be kind". The contradiction is understood in the context of the play. Hamlet wants to kill Claudius, the murderer of his father, who has married his mother. Hamlet does not want his mother to be the beloved of his father's murderer. Therefore, he is of the view that this murder will purge her.

Metonymy

It is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is replaced by the name of something closely associated with the same thing or concept. For example, the word "crown" is used to refer to power or authority is a metonymy. It is not a part of the thing it represents. Metonymy is employed to add a poetic color to words to make them come to life. The simple ordinary things are described in a creative way to insert this "life" factor to literary works. For instance; These lines are taken from "Out, Out", by Robert Frost:

"As he swung toward them holding up the hand

Half in appeal, but half as if to keep

The life from spilling"

In these lines, the expression "The life from spilling" refers to the spilling of blood. It develops a link between life and blood. The loss of too much blood means loss of life.

Synecdoche

Synecdoche is a type of metonymy in which a part of something represents the whole, or it may use a whole to represent a part. By using synecdoche, writers give otherwise common ideas and objects deeper meanings, and thus draw readers' attention. Moreover it helps the writer to keep brevity. For example, note the following lines from the poem 'Ozymandias' by Percy Bysshe Shelly)

"Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them."

"The hand" in these lines refers to the sculptor, who carved the "lifeless things" into a grand statue.

Transferred Epithet

Transferred Epithet is a literary device which use as a modifier (usually an adjective) qualifies a noun other than the person or thing it is actually describing. It is really a figure of description sharing similarities with personification and metonymy that arrest audiences with

incongruity. An example of a transferred epithet is: "I had a wonderful day." The day is not in itself wonderful. The speaker had a wonderful day. The epithet "wonderful" actually describes the kind of day the speaker experienced.

Poetic Forms

Lyric

Originally as its Greek name suggests, a lyric poem sung to the music of a lyre (a stringed musical instrument). It is related to the Classical Greek word 'mele' which means air, melody. But

the lyric that is written today is defined as a short poem expressing the thoughts and feelings of a single speaker. It is during the Alexandrine period, the term lyric was meant any poem that was composed to be sung, a meaning that it retained till Renaissance. A lyric poem is relatively short one and noted for the presence of sensuality and passion. Romantic period in the British Literature is considered as the golden period of Lyric poems as the poets like Wordsworth, Shelly, Keats , Burns and Coleridge were written many beautiful lyric poems. Nineteenth century poets like, Tennyson, Browning and Arnold were also produced some very fine lyrics. Examples: "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" by W B Yeats, "Piano" by D H Lawrence, "O, Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast" by Robert Burns etc.

Ode

. Ode is a literary technique that is lyrical in nature, but not very lengthy. In odes the poets praise people, natural scenes, and abstract ideas. Ode is derived from a Greek word aeidein, which means to chant or sing. It is highly formal and serious in its tone and subject matter, and usually is used with elaborate patterns of stanzas. However, the tone is often formal. A prominent feature of ode is its uniform metrical feet, but poets generally do not strictly follow this rule though use highly elevated theme. Since the themes of odes are inspiring and lofty, they have universal appeal. Also, by using sublime and exceptional style, poets endeavor to compos grand and elevated types of odes

Odes are of three types, including (1) Pindar ode, (2) Horatian ode, and (3) irregular ode.

- Pindaric ode- This ode was named after an ancient Greek poet, Pindar, who began writing choral poems that were meant to be sung at public events. It contains three triads; strophe, antistrophe, and final stanza as epode, with irregular rhyme patterns and lengths of lines.
- Horatian Ode- The name of this de was taken from the Latin poet, Horace. Unlike heroic odes of Pindar, Horatian ode is informal, meditative and intimate.
- Irregular Ode: This type of Ode is without any formal rhyme scheme, and structure such as the Pindaric ode. Hence, the poet has great freedom and flexibility to try any types of concepts and moods. William Wordsworth and John Keats were such poets who extensively wrote irregular odes, taking advantage of this form.

Sonnet

The word sonnet is derived from the Italian word "sonetto," which means a "little song" or small lyric. In poetry, a sonnet has 14 lines, and is written in iambic pentameter. Each line has 10 syllables. It has a specific rhyme scheme, and a volta, or a specific turn. Generally, sonnets are divided into different groups based on the rhyme scheme they follow. The rhymes of a sonnet are arranged according to a certain rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in English is usually abab-cdcd-efef-gg, and in Italian abba-abba-cde-cde. The sonnet has become popular among different poets because it has a great adaptability to different purposes and requirements. In fact, it gives an ideal setting for a poet to explore strong emotions.

Types of Sonnet

Sonnets can be categorized into six major types:

- Italian Sonnet
- Shakespearean Sonnet
- Spenserian Sonnet
- Miltonic Sonnet
- Terza Rima Sonnet

- Curtal Sonnet

Haiku

A haiku poem has three lines, where the first and last lines have five 'moras', and the middle line has seven. The pattern in this Japanese genre is 5-7-5. The mora is another name for a sound unit, which is like a syllable, though there is a difference. Haiku became popular as tanka poems in Japan during the 9th and 12th centuries. Initially, it was called "hokku" and Basho, Buson, and Issa were the first three masters of the haiku genre. Haiku poetry is also full of metaphors and personifications. However, this has often been argued against, since haikus are supposed to be written on objective experiences, rather than subjective ones. Haiku poems are usually about nature or natural phenomena.

"Autumn moonlight—

a worm digs silently

into the chestnut."

("Autumn Moonlight", by Basho)

Ballad

Ballad is a song, transmitted orally which tells a story. It was basically used in dance songs in ancient France. Later on, during the late 16th and 17th centuries, it spread over the majority of European nations. Owing to its popularity and emotional appeal, it remained a powerful tool for poets and lyricists to prepare music in the form of lyrical ballads. The art of lyrical ballad, as well as ballad poetry, lost popularity during the latter half of the 19th century. In all probability the initial version of a ballad was composed by a single author, but he or she is unknown. Typically the popular ballad is dramatic, condensed and impersonal. Ballads, as stage performances, enjoyed the status of being one of the main sources of entertainment in ancient times. Legends and historical events were narrated in the form of ballads, which would comprise song and dance.

Couplet

A couplet is a literary device that can be defined as having two successive rhyming lines in a verse, and has the same meter to form a complete thought. It is marked by a usual rhythm, rhyme scheme, and incorporation of specific utterances. It could be an independent poem, and might be a part of other poems, such as sonnets in Shakespearean poetry. It is widely used in satires, epigrams, verse essays and narrative verses. If a couplet has the ability to stand apart from the rest of the poem, it is independent, and hence it is called a

"closed couplet." A couplet that cannot render a proper meaning alone is called an "open couplet." One of the commonly used couplet examples are these two lines from William Shakespeare's Hamlet:

"The time is out of joint, O cursed spite

That ever I was born to set it right!"

Types of Couplets

- Short Couplet
- Split Couplet
- Heroic Couplet (Closed and Open Couplets)
- Shakespearean Couplet
- Alexandrine Couplet

- Qasida
- Chinese Couplet

The rhyming couplets are usually used in poetry in order to make a poem interesting and rhythmic. They help create a rhyming effect in a poem. In literature, Chaucer, Dryden, Pope and Shakespeare have been famous for using rhyming heroic couplets.

Villanelle

The villanelle is a highly structured poem made up of five tercets (three line stanza) followed by a quatrain, with two repeating rhymes and two refrains. The word 'villanelle' is derived from the Italian word 'Vilano' means rural, rustic and peasant. French poets who called their poems "villanelle" did not follow any specific schemes, rhymes, or refrains. Rather, the title implied that, like the Italian and Spanish dance-songs, their poems spoke of simple, often pastoral or rustic themes. Jean Passerat a 16th century French poet is generally credited with defining the specific characteristics of Villanelle. It has become increasingly popular among poets writing in English. An excellent example of the form is Dylan Thomas's "Do not go gentle into that good night."

Dramatic Monologue

Dramatic monologue is a poetic form in which a person is speaking to himself or to an imaginary listener dramatically to reveal specific intentions of his actions. In this monologue, he or she reveals his character, temperament and their intentions. The most famous dramatic monologue ever written is "The Last Duchess" by the Victorian poet Robert Browning, who developed this poetic form. He liked to put words in the mouth of characters who were conspicuously nasty, weak, reckless or crazy, for instance, Browning's "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" in which the speaker is an obsessively proud and jealous monk.

Features of a Dramatic Monologue

A dramatic monologue has these common features in them.

- a) A single person delivering a speech on one aspect of his life
- b) The audience may or may not be present
- c) Speaker reveals his temperament and character only through his speech

Elegy

Elegy is a form of literature that can be defined as a poem or song in the form of elegiac couplets that laments the death of a person with intense feeling. It often involves a poet who knows how to phrase thoughts imaginatively in the first person. Towards the end the poet generally tries to

provide comfort to ease the pain of the situation. Christian elegies usually proceed from sorrow and misery, to hope and happiness because they say that death is just a hindrance in the way of passing from the mortal state into the eternal state. A traditional Elegy is written in elegiac metre - alternating lines of dactylic hexameter and

pentameter. A pastoral elegy is a distinct kind of elegy in pastoral setting with characters who are shepherds. It starts with the invocation of the muse and then proceeds by referencing traditional mythology. Elegy is derived from the Greek word elegus, which means a song of bereavement sung along with a flute. The forms of elegy we see today were introduced in the 16th century. "Elegy

Written in a Country Churchyard", by Thomas Gray, and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd", by Walt Whitman are the two most popular examples of elegy.

Satire

Satire is a type of literature that exposes and criticizes foolishness and corruption of an individual or a society, by using humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule. The main intention behind writing a satire is to improve humanity by criticizing its follies and foibles. In satire, writer uses fictional characters, which stand for real people, to expose and condemn their corruption. The function of satire is not to make others laugh at persons or ideas they make fun of. It intends to warn the public, and to change people's opinions about the prevailing corruption and conditions in society. There are two types of satire ; Formal and Informal. In formal satire the satiric voice speaks out in the first person. 'I' may address either reader or a character within the work. E. g., In Alexander Pope's "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot", Two types of formal satire are commonly distinguished; Horatian and Juvenalian. Named after the Roman satirist Horace, Horatian satire is gentle , humorous and light hearted. Horace himself described his aim as "to laugh people out of their vices and follies". Pope's "Moral Essays" is an example for Horatian satire. While Juvenalian satire , named after the Roman satirist Juvenal is abusive, scornful and sharp. Samuel Johnson's "London" (1738) and "The Vanity of Human Wishes" (1749) are distinguished instances of Juvenalian satire. Indirect satire is mainly found in Fictional narratives, in which the object of the satire are characters themselves and their opinions ridiculous by what they think, say and do. John Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe is one of the best verse – satire in English," "Mac Flecknoe" is personal satire which the poet wrote to please himself.

Mock epic

Mock heroic is a type of satire that parodies classical heroic literature. It uses the conventions of epics and their elevated style to talk about less serious subjects. The mock heroic was popular during 17th century Italy and the Neoclassical England. A classical example of mock epic is Alexander Pope's "Rape of the Lock"

Free Verse

Free verse is a poetry that is free from limitations of regular meter or rhythm, and does not rhyme with fixed forms. Such poems are without rhythm and rhyme schemes, do not follow regular rhyme scheme rules, yet still provide artistic expression. In this way, the poet can give his own shape to a poem however he or she desires. Free verse is the literal translation of the French verse libre, a poetic form of the late 19th century France. It is based on natural rhythm and normal pauses. Free verse is a feature of contemporary poetry which gives greater freedom to the poet.

Tanka

The tanka is a thirty-one-syllable poem, traditionally written in a single unbroken line originated in Japan in 7th century. A form of waka, Japanese song or verse, tanka translates as "short song," and is better known in its five-line. In many ways, the tanka resembles the sonnet, certainly in terms of treatment of subject. Like the sonnet, the tanka employs a turn, known as a pivotal image, which marks the transition from the examination of an image to the examination of the personal response. Many of the great tanka poets were women, among them Lady Akazone Emon, Yosano Akiko, and Lady Murasaki Shikibu, who wrote The Tale of Genji, a foundational Japanese prose text that includes over 400 tanka.

Jintishi

Jintishi is one of the Chinese classical poetic Regulated verse form based on a series of set tonal patterns and strict structural features. The basic form of the jintishi has eight lines in four couplets, with parallelism between the lines in the second and third couplets. The couplets with

parallel lines contain contrasting content but an identical grammatical relationship between words. All regulated verse forms are rhymed on the even lines, with one rhyme being used throughout the poem. Jintishi often takes history or politics as its themes.

Ghazal

Ghazal is a seventh century Persian poetic form originated in Arabia, and gained prominence in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century. Persian poets as Rumi and Hafiz had played an important role in popularizing Ghazal. In the eighteenth-century, the Ghazal was used by poets writing in Urdu, a mix of the medieval languages of Northern India, including Persian. Among these poets, Ghalib is the recognized master. It is a collection of couplets called sher. A Ghazal may consist of six or seven Shers. Each Sher is a complete statement in itself and contains an independent idea. These Shers are highly philosophical and exploring themes of love and suffering. The metre of the Sher is called Beher. The rhyming pattern of the Ghazal is known as Kaafiya and the refrain is called Radif. It is a very popular in India and Pakistan. Popular Ghazal singers are Ghulam Ali, Farida Khan and Jagjit Singh.

Rubai

Is a Persian verse form in the stanzaic structure of a quatrain. Rubai is the Arabic term for quatrain. Rubaiyat is a collection of quatrains. Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat is one of the most popular illustrations of this verse form.

Prose Poetry

Prose Poetry is a fusion of prose and poetry that exhibits poetic quality and using emotional effects and heightened imagery. Amy Lowell, Rainer Maria Rilke, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman are some of the major writers of Prose Poetry.

Narrative Poetry

It is a type of poetry that tells a story or narrates an event. In Western culture, narrative poetry dates back to the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh (before 2000 B C) and Homer's epic Iliad and Odyssey. It may well have originated much earlier. It has characters, settings and dialogues. Some of the popular narrative poems are "Out, Out" by Robert Frost, "The Owl and the Pussy Cat" by Edward Lear.

Performance Poetry

Performance poetry uses the stage as the page, transforming poetry readings into theatrical events. It is invented by Hedwig Gorski in the 1970s. While the recent revival of performance poets is seen as a reaction against mainstream, print-based poetry, the style reminds the classic role of the poet, who recited notable happenings, emotions, and perceptions. Quite often experimental rhythms are used to engage the attention of the audience. Patricia Smith's performance of "Medusa", a feminist poem and Sarah Kay's performance of "Hiroshima" are the two significant contributions in this genre.