POETRY

IMRTODUCTION

Poetry is emotion put into measure: Thomas hardy

Poetry is the spontaneous outflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origins from emotion recollected in tranguility.william words worth

Differences between prose and poetry

**PROSE**

Most everyday writing is prose form.

The language of prose is typically straight forward without much decoration.

There are no line breaks .sentences run to the right margin.

The first word of each sentence is capitalized.

Prose looks like large blocks of words.

**POETRY**

Poetry is typically reserved for expressing something special in artistic way.

The language of poetry tends to be more expressive or decorated, with comparisons, rhyme, and rhythm contributing to a different sound and feel

Ideas are contained in lines that may or may not be sentences. Lines are arranged in stanzas.

Traditionally, the first letter of every line is capitalized, but many modern poets choose not to follow this rule strictly.

The shape of poetry can vary depending on line length and the intent of poet

**ASPECTS OF POETRY**

1. **Speaker**

It is always important to talk about the speaker in reading poetry. Even though the word “I” is used in the poem, the poet will not be the one speaking. The voice, whatever its origin, whether real or imagined, personal or impersonal, always has an important function in a poem. This is because it’s the owner of that voice to whom “thing” happen. He/ She is the one who feels an emotion or has reflection to share and it is through that voice that sequences of events are revealed.

In the novel, we talk of a narrating voice and in poetry the speaking voice is that of the persona. The poet often “hides” behind this voice in order to address the audience: the poet imagines what it is like to enter someone else” s personality in presenting the speaker. In analyzing a poem, you should never make a mistake of referring to the poet.

1. Subject, Subject matter and theme
2. Subject

Subject refers to the topic that is being explored in the poem. It usually serves as the foundation for the poem and is what essentially what the themes are built on. If a poet, for instance, writes about love as the subject, he/she can develop multiple theme like faithfulness, forgiveness, marriage, trust, etc. the subject of a poem is usually developed throughout the poem.

Sometimes the subject can be found by analyzing the title because poets can write on any topic imaginable to them, as long as they make it appropriate for their audience

1. **Subject matter**

This refers to the experiences or feelings that the poet describes. It does this by paraphrasing it. It look at what the piece is literally saying and disregarding any associations and possible interpretations.

The subject matter creates the foundation from which to establish the poem’s theme.

1. Theme

The theme is the central idea or conception in a poem. In other words it is the main point the poet is trying to make. The theme sows what the poet wishes to teach to readers about morality. It also displays the poet’s opinion on the subject.

The theme is identified by analyzing the tone, and subject. It conveys the universal ideas which revolve around life and how it affects actions in general.

When writing, the author usually intends to pass on the readers a totality of the human experiences which can either be restricted or universal. These experiences/ author’s message are sum up as the poems theme.

Universal themes are aspects of life reflected in the poem that everyone goes through. These may include: death, love, betrayal, independence, religion, etc.

Restricted themes on the other hand are those aspects of that appeal and responded to by particular group of people. These may include racism, suffering, colonialism, etc.

1. **Setting**

This is the time and place of the actions or events in a given poem. It ranges from specific real world place that exists to an imaginary one. In the analysis of a poem, one realizes that all those events that happen in the poem must have taken place in a given place and time. Setting also includes the social status, weather, the historical period, etc.

It provides the background to the events in the poem and helps to create mood e.g. as I stretched myself in bed, I could see the bright rays of the sun flashing through the broken walls.

Time setting

This refers to the period in which events in a poem have been placed. The time setting can be the historical, political, social, economic or the physical time of the day.

1. **ASPECTS OF FEELING**
2. **Tone and Attitude**

In poetry, tone is any aspect or quality of the speaking voice, especially the inflections of the voice from which we infer the attitude of the speaker. We may sense speaker’s tone is guy, nasty, melancholic, soothing, bitter, somber, angry, or meditative. The more attentive we are to the precise intonation, the closer we seem to come to an exact notion of the speaker’s attitude towards the subject.

When we for instance hear someone say, good try or I don’t believe it, it is the tone of the voice that reveals, for instance, mockery, reverence, or contempt.

Other adjectives used to describe tone include: sarcastic, bitter, satirical, hostile, contemplative, commanding, calm, conversational, indifferent, ironic, humorous, dismal, appealing, scornful, somber, defiance, resigned, matter-of –fact accusatory, impatient, happy, flippant, cynical, exaggerated,, loving, etc.

1. **Mood and Atmosphere**

Mood is an aspect of the speaking voice that is defined as the state of mind of the speaker (persona) in the poem. This is the emotion(s) or feeling (s) that the persona expresses in the poem which in turn affect how the reader feels about the poem. Generally we refer to mood as good or bad. This is not sufficient. There are numerous ways of developing the mood of a give poem:

. Description of setting

. What the speaker says

. The theme of the poem

. The employment of the sensory images

Come adjectives used to describe the mood include: aggravated, amused, angry, calm, cheerful, complacent, content, discontent, ecstatic, enraged, envious, excited, gloomy, indifferent, mad, melancholy, relaxed, happy, angry, bitter, violent, resigned, ironical, satirical, sarcastic, etc

I speak for the Bush..

Black Winchester

Similar to the mood is atmosphere which refers to the feeling or emotion a writer conveys to a reader through the description of setting and adjectives. The description of place, time, colour, action, etc affects the atmosphere. When we read lines, they immediately bring to our mind an emotional response. This is what mood does in a work. Atmosphere keeps on changing as ideas develop.

The purpose is to make the work lively, fascinating and interesting by keeping the readers more engaged. It appeal to the reader’s sense by making the story more real, allowing them comprehend the idea easily.

Common adjectives used to describe atmosphere include: apathetic, benevolent, bewildered cheerful, comforting, desolate, harsh, delightful, detached, euphoric, evasive, flippant, friendly, modest, gleeful, gloomy, mirthful, jubilant, light, tranquil, impartial, nostalgic, hilarious, reassuring, reflective, relaxed, religious, reverent, serene, tense, etc

1. **Word Choice and Word Order**

Language in poetry is used in a distinct manner, quite different from those in the other forms of creative writing. This is essentially, due to economy of words. The poet must choose his words to be used in a poem diligently and arrange them skillfully to express him/herself. The selection and choice words used in a poem is known as diction.

1. **Diction**

This is choice of words used in a poem which is determined by vocabulary and syntax. The poet’s choice of ordering words, phrases, sentence structures and figurative language are some of the components of diction. However, formal diction consists of dignified and elevated (grammatically perfect use of language which makes an emphasis on grammar) and use of language generally.

Other components of diction include the:

1. Denotation and Connotation

Denotation refers to the exact or dictionary meaning, however, connotation refers to the implied meaning and all associations the word brings into play. Here, words are deliberately used to mean quite different from what they usually mean i.e. the word is usually given meaning depending on the context in which it has been used.

**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

Figurative language refers to language use in which words and expressions have meaning that is different from literal interpretations. It uses language in comparison, alterations, etc to make a linguistic appeal.

The effectiveness of such uses varies widely but may seem uninteresting if that particular expression has too often been used. The following are the commonly used figurative languages.

1. **Allusion**

Allusion is a brief and indirect reference to a person, place, thing or idea of historical, cultural, literary, or political significance. It does not describe in detail the person or thing to which it refers. It is just a passing comment and the writer expect the reader to possess enough knowledge to spot the allusion and grasp its importance in a text.

In addition to drawing upon the connotative richness of words and the many possibilities of syntactic arrangements, poets often enlarge the implications of their poems by making reference to specific events, characters or scenes of religious, historical, scientific or literary nature. Besides, Allusions engages the reader and will often help the reader remember the message or theme of the poem. It also allows the writer to give an example or get a point a cross without going into a lengthy message.

Examples

In literature

1. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted: but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere
2. **Kenning**

This is figurative language in which a compound word or phrase an object without naming it directly. This is most common in old English (Anglo-Saxon) poetry. In a kenning, an objects is describe in a two-word phrase, such as whale-road for sea kenning is used to describe an object in detail. Here, the two parts of a compound word represent a relationship between subjects and object s, which creates associations in an abstract and concise way.

Kenning helps to describe something in alternative ways, in order to provide a richer and different meaning. Also, its metaphorical usage makes the poetic language more lively, and improves critical thinking.

The examples include: ring-giver (king),what –road(the sea), sea-horse(ship), iron-shower(the rain of spear/ arrows during battle), sea-street/ realm of monsters(ocean), battle-sweat(blood), sky-candle(the sun), bone-house(body), etc

1. **Simile**

This is one of the most common figurative language used that makes an explicit comparison between two entities using words such as “like” or “as”. The elements being compared are essentially different in nature but come together in the poet’s perception.

A simile is different from a simple comparison in that it usually compares two unrelated things. For example, “she looks like you” is a comparison but not a simile. On the other hand, “she simile like the sun” as it compares a woman with something of a different kind-the sun.

1. **Metaphor**

This is a direct comparison of two unlike or dissimilar elements in which the qualities of one element is placed to another. Unlike in simile, metaphor omits the words that show the aspect of comparison (like, as) thus creating a more thorough identification between the two elements.

Metaphor is a Latin phrase meaning “to carry a cross,” i.e. meaning, it carries a shared quality or characteristic a cross two distinct things.

Examples

. The sun is a golden ball.

. Time is money.

. Her lovely voice was music to his ears.

. She is peacock.

. Their home was a prison

. The snow is a white blanket.

. The light of my life.

A phrase or an expression my also be metaphorical when it uses words to indicate something implied i.e. that which is not literal.

Examples

. My brother was boiling mad.

. Sea of grief

. Fishing

. Broken heart

. All the words a stage

And all the men and women merely players

They have their exits and their entrances (Shakespeare)

. When the young men was flaming out his thoughts upon a palace wall for Rome to see.

1. **Personification**

This refers to the figure of speech in which an abstract idea or an in animate object or aspect of nature is given human attributes (it described as if it were human/ given human attributes). Personification helps to foster effective communication of ideas in a poem. It is also a source of humor as the readers get caught up when they realize human attributes being given to non- human objects.

1. **Synecdoche**

Closely to related to metaphor are synecdoche and metonymy. Synecdoche refers to the figurative language in which part is used to represent the whole or the whole for a part.

Synecdoche displays and creates new connections in the way that humans understand concepts. I.e. any connection between previously unassociated concepts creates new cognitive links.

Examples

. His parents bought him a set of wheels

. The hand that sways the king beguiles

. Boots on the ground refers to soldiers

. Ask for hand refers to asking a women to marry

. He has many mouths to feed.

1. **Metonymy**

This is a type of metaphor in which objects or abstract ideas are referred to by naming some attributes or qualities associated to them. For instance, the “pen” or “sword” are metonymies of “education, administration or the written ideas” and “the military force”, respectively. Metonymy is often used to give more profound meaning to otherwise common ideas.

Others include:

. The crown: royalty/ king

. The white house for the president

1. **Apostrophe**

This is a figure of speech in which the speaker of a poem makes a direct address to a person, ideas, or thing. Apostrophe is often used in connection with personification.

Here, the speaker breaks off from addressing one party and instead addresses a third party may be an individual, either present or absent in the scene. It can also be an inanimate object, like a dagger, or an abstract, such as death, or the sun. Because there is a clear speaker and change of addressee, apostrophe is most commonly found in plays. It does, however, sometime occur in poetry and prose. Apostrophe is less common in poetry written from the 20th century.

It provides a way for him persona to give his or her own commentary, or state feelings inspired by abstract concepts. Many examples of apostrophe in English being with the exclamatory sound “o”, to signify a change in the addressee. By addressing a person who is not present or an inanimate object that cannot feel or express emotions, the persona is instead showing their own inner state.

Example

. Ugh, cell phone, why won’t you load my messages.

. Holy night. The stars are brightly shining.

1. **Oxymoron**

Oxymoron is the joining of words with apparently opposing meanings to make a new union i.e. it combines adjective with contrasting meanings to form a new word.

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

However, the contrasting words/ phrases are not a ways glued together. The contrasting ideas may be spaced out in sentence, such as “in order to lead, you must walk behind.”

1. Pun

Pun is a play on a single word that has two different meanings or sometimes on two words have the same sound but different meanings. Pun offer the pleasure of recognition, but they can also intensify the seriousness of a poem. Many pun rely on simple homophones (words that sound alike)

A pun always plays on words which usually center on a word with more than one meaning or the replacement of a homonym that changes the meaning of the sentence for humorous or rhetorical effect. It is produced by using a word that suggests two or more meanings or exploiting similar sounding words having different meanings. The ambiguities arise mostly in homophones and homonyms.

A pun is a play on words that takes advantage of two things: (1) the fact that some words with different meanings, sound the same, such as “air” and “her” and (2) the fact that other words with different meanings sound, such as “case” which can mean either a piece of baggage or a instance of a disease.

1. Paradox

Paradox is a statement which seems to be self- contradictory on the surface but on close scrutiny, reveals a fundamental truth. Oxymoron is also paradoxical. Similar to paradox is juxtaposition. Here, two elements are placed side by side, without comment, so that the reader can make a personal, unbiased judgment.

The use of paradox is not confined to mere wit and pleasure, rather, it becomes an integral part of poetic diction. Poets usually make use of a paradox to create a remarkable thought or image out of words.

Some types of paradox in poetry are meant to communicate a tone of irony to it readers as well as lead their thoughts to the immediate subject. Paradox in most poems normally strives to create feelings of intrigue and interest in reader’s minds to make them think deeper and harder to enjoy the real message of the poem.

Examples

. He is a compulsive liar

. You can save money by spending it.

. I can resist anything but temptations.

. The only way to make ends meet, is to crush them together completely till not even bones remain

. War is peace.

Freedom is slavery.

Ignorance is strength.

. Refer to Sonnet 130(My mistress’s eyes)

1. Satire, Sarcasm and Irony

Satire refers to the use of language to attack the foolishness, stupidity or vices in humans, organizations or even governments. It uses sarcasm, irony, and parody to ridicule or mock these vices. It is often sued to effect political or social change or even to prevent it from occurring.

Irony is a figurative language that uses meaning different from the actual. It’s often divided into three types:

1. Verbal Irony

This is the use language in which one says the opposite of what one means. Here, the discrepancy may be between appearance and reality or between expectation and fulfillment.

1. Dramatic Irony

This type of irony is popular in work of art such as plays. it occur when the audience is aware of something that the characters in the story are not aware of. Here, the difference is between what the speaker says and what the author or poet intends. It may be used to convey attitude towards the character or give a comment may be harsh, gently mocking, or sympathetic.

1. Imagery, Symbolism and Allegory
2. Imagery

Imagery often used in general sense to refer to the various figures of speech. Powerful forms of imagery engage all the sense and used metaphor and simile to express ideas and concepts. This vivid and descriptive language is used by the poet from the world of the five sense. When any image mingles two or more sense using one sense to describe another, we describe the device synesthesia.

Examples

. The children were screaming and shouting in the fields.

. He whiffed the aroma of brewed coffee.

. The girl ran her hands on a soft satin fabric

. The fresh and juicy orange is very cold and sweet.

There are seven forms of imagery, each corresponding to a sense:

. Visual imagery pertains to the sense of sight.

. Auditory imagery pertains to sounds, noises, music, or the sense of hearing.

. Olfactory imagery pertains to odor, scents or smell.

. Gustatory imagery appeals to flavors or the sense of taste.

. Tactile imagery appeals to physical textures or just the sense of touch.

. Kinesthetic appeals to movements or bodily motion.

. Organic / subjective imagery appeals to personal experiences like emotion, hunger, thirst, fatigue, and pain.

1. **Symbolism**

Symbolism is the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them abstract meanings, an action, an event or a word spoken by someone may have a symbolic value. Symbols shift their meanings depending on the context they are used. They may undergo changes in meaning over the centuries.

1. **Allegory**

Allegory refers to a structural narrative in which a system of abstract concepts is represented by persons, objects, and events. Though many poems may have allegorical overtones, in strict allegory, there ought to be no possibility of differing interpretations. The interplay between objects, characters, incidents and the external framework is fixed by a one-to-one correspondence between the surface action of the narrative and the external system of ideas.

The effectiveness often depends on the reader’s to put forward their moral and political point of views.

1. **Hyperbole, Understatement and Litotes**

Hyperbole refers to the exaggeration of a concept or idea. It may also me referred to as an overstatement. The purpose of hyperbole is the to create emphasis or humour, but is not intended to be taken literally.

1. **Understatement**

An understatement, also called meiosis, is when you represent something as less than what it is. This can be done in writing or speech. When you make an understatement, the issue at hand is minimalized or made to seem less important or severe. This can be done for an ironic effect or simply to be polite.

Examples

. Describing a huge storm overnight, an understatement would be: “Looks like it rained a bit last night.

. J.D. Salinger’s the catcher in the Rye, a character says, I have this operation. It isn’t very serious. I have this tiny little tumor on the brain.”