Defining Poetry and Characteristics of Poetry

Poetry 1

-Ni Wayan Swardhani W.-

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POETRY

- a universal phenomenon --- exists along human's civilization
- from primitive to developed nation
- from spell to drive away evil soul to conventional one (from oral to written)
- enjoyed by everyone → entertainment and understanding
- never dies

“To fully understand Poetry, we first must be fluent with its meter, rhyme, and figures of speech. Then ask two questions; one, how are fully the objective of the poem have been rendered, and two, how important is the objective. Question one rates the poem’s perfection, question two rates its importance. And once these questions have been answered, turning the poem’s greatness into relatively simple matter. “

Cont .....

“If the poem scores for perfection is 5 on the horizontal of the graph and its importance is platted on its vertical, then calculating the total area of the poem yields the measure of its greatness. A sonnet by Byron might score high on the vertical, but only average on the horizontal. A Shakespearean sonnet on the other hand would score high both horizontally and vertically. Yielding the massive total area thereby revealing the poem to be truly great.”

(Dr. J. Evans Prichard, PhD.) (20:20 – 20: 35)

?

To define what poetry one can give his or her own understanding of it because one's perception about poetry is established by his/her experience.

The Definition of Poetry

- The kind of thing poets write (Robert Frost)
- The spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings (William Wordsworth)
- The recollection of an emotion, which causes a new emotion (William Wordsworth)

- Poetry is feeling confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude (John Stuart Mill)

- When we read a poem something happens within us. They bring to life a group of images, feelings, and thoughts (Stageberg & Anderson)

- Poetry is simply the most beautiful, impressive, and widely effective mode of saying things (Mathew Arnold)

- Poetry teaches the enormous forces of a few words (R.W. Emerson)

- Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to help reason (Samuel Johnson)

- Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best mind (Percey Bysche Shelley)

HOW TO READ POETRY?

- Read it more than once

  → don't scan or skim → you won't get it
- Use standardized dictionary
- Don't stop at every line

  → line ≠ sentence → be careful at stopping → run on-line or end stopped line?
- Read the poetry aloud

  → to determine its rhythm → related to tone and theme

  → use English accent instead of Indonesian

Now,
let’s go check your book on page 2

Types of Poetry

- lyric
- Narrative
- dramatic.

Classifications of this kind are not exclusive.

Poems in each of these categories may have elements characteristics of the other.

Lyric Poetry

- the most popular form of poetry today
- characterized by the expression of the speaker's innermost feelings, thoughts, and imagination.
- *lyric* ← a stringed musical instrument, lyre → was used in classical and medieval times to accompany a singer.

- lyric poems are melodic

  → melody not derived from a lyre but from the words and their arrangement → the words that accompany the melody in a song are called lyrics (Pickering and Hoeper, 1980).

- Types of Lyric poetry:
  - pastoral poem

    a poem telling the life in the countryside such as shepherds, cattle, hills, and mountains.
  - poem of praise
  - ode

    a lyric poem that expresses a noble feeling with dignity.
  - elegy

    a poem of lamentation.

Narrative Poetry

- tells a story
- the poet takes on a role similar to of a narrator in a work of fiction
- Ballad is narrative poem which is quite popular and there is Epic as well.

- Ballad is strongly marked by rhythm suitable for singing
- Traditional British ballads:
  - in quatrains, or four-line stanzas
    - lines 1 and 3 have four beats
    - lines 2 and 4 have three beats and rhyme
  - usually an anonymous and it deals with the comedies and tragedies of everyday life.
- Modern ballads:
  - composed by a certain poet → no longer anonymous
  - the structure is generally the same

- Epic
  - the longest narrative
  - it does not simply tell a single action but record a way of life
  - the traditional / old epic is anonymous
  - Some examples:
    - Beowulf → consists of around 3000 line
    - Dante's *Divine Comedy*
    - John Milton's *Paradise Lost*

Dramatic Poetry

- Produced when a poet tries to break out of his or her own consciousness and reach into the world of another

- It provides the reader an opportunity to hear the imagined thoughts of characters who lack the poet's opportunity of expression

- Soliloquy → the simplest form
  - the speaker is merely overheard, talking to no one in particular
  - is also called dramatic monologue (Bergman and Epstein, 1987,p.477-478).

- Some examples:
  - William Carlos William's *The Widow's lament in Springtime*
  - William Blake's *The Little Vagabond*

Basic Approaches to Poetry

- **Objective approach**
  - the oldest and traditional one
  - begins with a complete description of the poem's physical properties such as its length, rhyme scheme and figures of speech
  - the analysis proceeds to give more complex information about why the poet chooses to include them and also how is the meaning of the poem conveyed through the use of the technical devices

- **Subjective Approach**
  - begins with personal interest in the poem → respond to a poem based on our experience.
  - No deep analysis over the poem's structure but more into what the poem means to us → may produce a variety of interpretation.
  - weakness in term of its relativity
    - too subjective → We should consider the various possible responses (Reaske, 1966)
    - this approach can lead to the ignorance of literary clues that one should take into account

- **Thematic Approach**
  - sometimes also deals with the theme of the poem → that is what to search for when reading a poem
  - theme is the main idea of a work
  - It is the poet's view about phenomena presented in the poem.
  - It usually provides an insight about human life.
  - thematic approach attempts to find what a poem is saying.

Versification in Poetry

Prosody

- the pronunciation of a song or poem
- the general word describing the study of poetic sounds and rhythm
- Prosody = versification

  → (the study of the structure of a verse), mechanics of verse, and music of poetry.

- poetry often requires a regular beat, an appropriate speed and expressiveness of delivery → just like music
- they help the poets convey the meanings of their words or facilitate the readers to understand the ideas, the emotions the poets communicate through their words.
- the analysis of a poem's prosodic technique cannot be separated from that of its content.

Rhythm

- created by the pattern of repeated sounds—in terms of both duration and quality—and ideas

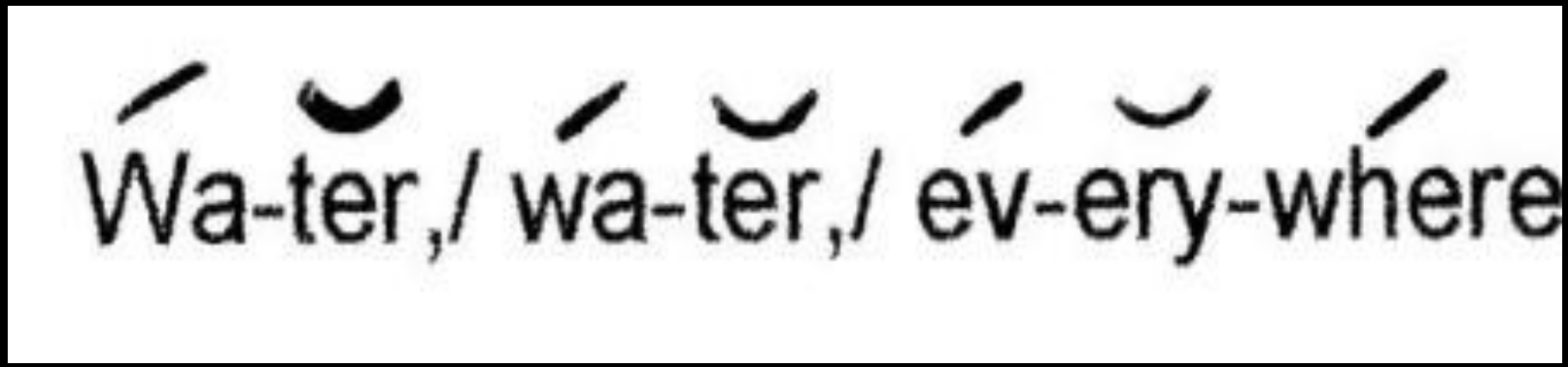
- a combination of vocal speeds, rises and falls, starts and stops, vigor and slackness, and relaxation and tension

- Rhythm is significant because poets “invite” the readers to change speeds while reading—to slow down and linger or pass rapidly over some words and sounds or to give more or less vocal stress or emphasis on certain syllables.

- All these are related to emotions that are charged in the poem.

Scansion

- the act of scanning a poem to discover how the poem establishes a metrical pattern—which syllables are accented (receive stress) and which are not (receive no stress).
- the accented syllables are usually indicated by a prime mark or acute accent (/)
- the unaccented ones are marked with a bowl-like half circle called a breve (˘)

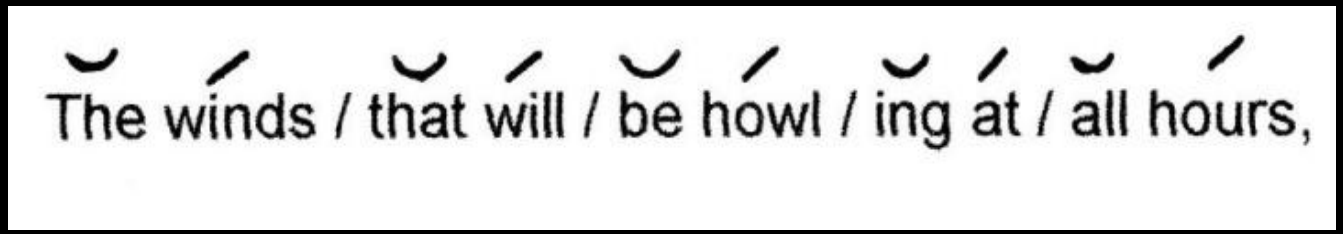

Wa-ter,/ wa-ter,/ ev-ery-where

Metrical Feet

- Poetic foot → a line of a poem seems to be divided into a number of repeated units combining the same number of accented and unaccented syllables.
- A pattern of one foot is repeated or varied in the entire poem, the pattern for the poem is established
- To separate one foot from another, a slash (/) is used.

The Iamb

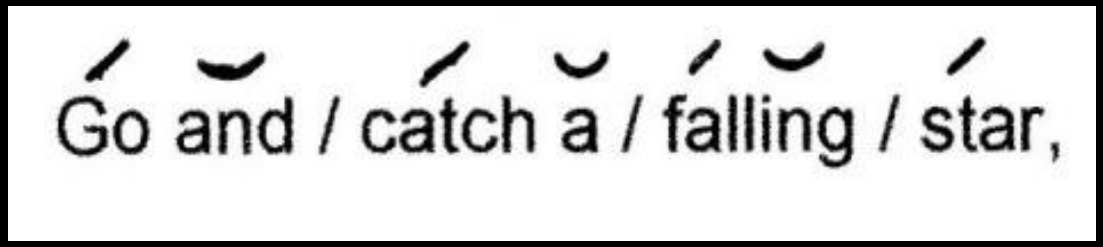
Adjective: iambic; consisting of 1 unaccented syllable followed by 1 accented syllable



(Wordsworth, *The World Is Too Much with Us*)

The Trochee

Adjective: trochaic; consisting of 1 accented syllable followed by 1 unaccented syllable



(Donne, *Song*)

The Spondee

Adjective: spondaic; consisting of 2 accented syllables

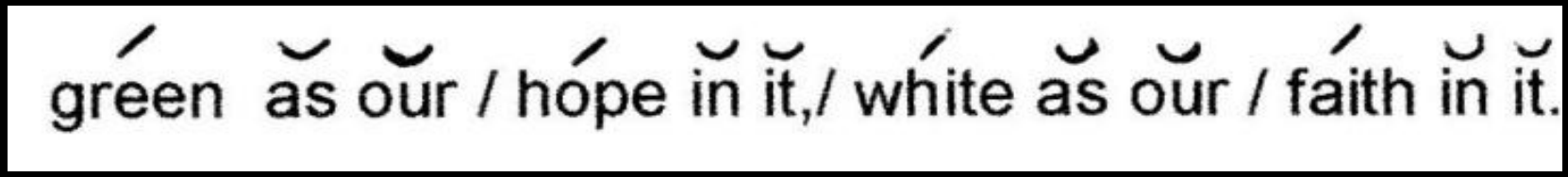
The Anapest

Adjective: anapestic; consisting of 2 unaccented syllables followed by 1 accented syllable

(Key, *Defence of Fort McHenry*)

The Dactyl

Adjective: dactylic; consisting of 1 accented syllable followed by 2 unaccented syllable



(Swinburne, *Songs before Sunrise*)

The Pyrrhic

2 unaccented syllables

(Tennyson, *In Memoriam*)

The Metrical Line

the number of feet contained in a line

Number of feet in a line	Name of line
1	Monometer
2	Dimeter
3	Trimeter
4	Tetrameter
5	Pentameter
6	Hexameter
7	Heptameter
8	Octameter

The Caesura

- The pause in a line, which is often best discovered by reading the poem aloud. The pause is not necessarily punctuated. The caesura can be marked with (//).
- Example:
- *Milton! // Thou shouldst be living at this hour.* (Wordsworth, *London, 1802*)

End-stopped line

- A line of poetry that naturally pauses at the end of the line (when it shows a complete clause or sentence)
- It is the opposite of run-on line, where readers should not stop but read through to the next line.

End-stopped line:

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun.
Coral is far more red than her lips red.
(Shakespeare, *Sonnet 130*)

Run-on lines:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds
Or bends with the remover to remove. . . .
(Shakespeare, *Sonnet 116*)

Rhythm exercise 1

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun.

Coral is far more red than her lips red.

Iambic Pentameter

v / v / v / v / v /

My mis/tress' eyes/ are no/thing like/ the sun.

v / v / v / v / v /

Coral/ is far/ more red/ than her/ lips red.

Rhythm exercise 2

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments. Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds

Or bends with the remover to remove…

Iambic Pentameter

v / v / v / v / v /

Let me/ not to/ the ma/rriage of /true minds

v / v / v / v / v /

Admit/ impe/diments. /Love is /not love

v / v / v / v / v /

Which al/ters when/ it al/tera/tion finds

v / v / v / v / v /

Or bends/ with the/ remo/ver to/ remove…

Rhythm exercise 3

Double, / double / TOIL and / trouble;

fire / BURN, and / caldron / bubble.

(Macbeth by Shakespeare)

Trochaic Tetrameter

/ v / v / v / v

Double, / double / toil and / trouble;

/v / v / v / v

Fire / burn, and / caldron / bubble.

Rhythm exercise 4

Half a League, Half a League

(The Charge of the Light Brigade by Tennyson)

Dactyl Dimeter

/ v v / v v

Half a League,/ Half a League

Rhyme

- the identical final syllables of words
- may appear in two successive lines, in alternating lines, or at intervals of four, five, or more lines
- if rhyming sounds are too far away from each other, they lose their immediacy and effectiveness.

- Functions:
  - delight
  - strengthens a poem's psychological impact
  - support memorization on the poem

- How to describe rhyme scheme:
  - the first sound at the end of a line "a",
  - the next is "b", then "c", "d", and so on.
  - when a sound reappear → use the same letter to label the sound

- Rhyme is determined by **sound**, not **spelling**.

- Which of these two pair of words rhyme?

puff / enough

through / though

- The pronunciation of words has changed greatly since the Renaissance.
- Give some thought to how a word *might* have sounded before you decide "That doesn't rhyme" and throw the book down in disgust!
- Word meanings have changed, too, and the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the suggested best place to look up words and figure out what they meant at the time a particular author was writing.

Can you decide the rhyme scheme?

I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away. -Vain sympathies!
For backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall not cease to glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish; -be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

(Alfred Lord Tennyson – After Thought)

Variations of Rhymes

- Perfect rhyme and half rhyme
  - Perfect rhymes

    → the stressed vowel following sounds are identical

    → *slow - grow, fleet - street,* or *buying –crying*
  - Half rhymes

    → the final consonant sounds of the words are identical, but the vowels are different, creating similar but not identical sounds

    → *quietness - express*

- Masculine and feminine rhyme
  - Masculine rhyme

    → the final syllables of the rhyming words are stressed

    → *inquired – desired*.
  - Feminine rhyme

    → the rhyming of stressed syllables followed by identical unstressed syllables

    → *flowers – bowers*.

- Internal rhyme
  - the rhyming words are found within the line,
  - often a word in the middle of a line rhyming with the last word or sound of the line.

→*Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,*

(Browning, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*)

- Alliteration
  - the identical consonant sounds that start several words that are close to each other

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
(Swinburne, *Chorus from Atalanta*)

- Slant Rhyme
  - Assonance

  →the repetition of identical vowel sounds in different words that are close to one another

  → *bird* and *thirst* → identical */er/* sound

  - Consonance

  →words have the same consonants but not the same vowel sounds

  →*pat* and *pit*

- Onomatopoeia
  - a blend of consonant and vowel sounds designed to imitate or suggest a situation or action
  - the use of word which sound suggests its meaning

  → *buzz*, *crackle*, *hum*, etc.

- Blank verse
  - unrhymed iambic pentameter
  - Shakespeare's plays and Milton's *Paradise Lost*

- Free verse
  - free of the traditional patterns of lines and meter
  - the rhythm is based on the stress resulting from the meaning of the line and its natural and punctuated pauses

An example of free verse

After the Sea-Ship—after the whistling winds;
After the white-gray sails, taut to their spars and ropes,
Below, a myriad, myriad waves, hastening, lifting up their necks,
Tending in ceaseless flow toward the track of the ship:
Waves of the ocean, bubbling and gurgling, blithely prying,
Waves, undulating waves—liquid, uneven, emulous waves,
Toward that whirling current, laughing and buoyant, with curves,
Where the great Vessel, sailing and tacking, displaced the surface;

(***After the Sea-Ship*** **by Walt Whitman)**

Friendship is a rosebush that blooms beautiful
When nutured with love it grows stronger
Take away it's petals, they shall regrow

As a rosebush, it contains thorns
Needles that prick the unaware heart
Leaving a bleeding scar that needs to be healed

As a rosebush it will die
When kept out in the harsh winter
It will wither and fall

Friendship is a rosebush that blooms roses
Small blooms of love that is shared by all
But if not loved, they shall wither in the winter

Friendship is a Rosebush *by* Katherine Sessor

Stanzaic Forms

- a stanza is a group of lines in a poem
- ordinarily, each stanza follows a particular rhyme scheme

Some common stanzaic forms:

- Couplet → a stanza of two lines which usually rhymes
- Triplet/tercet → a stanza of three lines
- Quatrain → a stanza of four lines
- Sestet → a stanza of six lines
- Rhyme royal → a stanza of seven lines written in iambic pentameter and rhyming *ababbcc*
- Octave → a stanza of eight lines

- Sonnet → a stanza of 14 lines

  perfect example of close relationship of form and content in poetry

  - Italian sonnet

    → an octave (rhyming *abba,abba*) and a sestet (rhyming *cde, cde* (or its variations) or *cd,cd,cd*).
    → the octave → 1 idea, the sestet → the example

    → octave → a problem, the sestet → the solution

  - English/Shakespearian sonnets

    → 3 quatrains and 1 couplet (*abab, cdcd, efef, gg*).
    → three arguments concerning with its theme in the three quatrains and draw a conclusion in the couplet

- Spenserian stanza → Edmund Spenser
  - 9 lines → the first eight are iambic pentameter followed by a single alexandrine, a twelve-syllable iambic line.
  - the final line typically has a caesura, or break, after the first three feet
  - the stanza rhymes *ababbcbcc*
  - the Spenserian stanza is regarded as "one of the most remarkably original metric innovations in the history of English verse" (Preminger 807)

A gentle knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruell markes of many a bloody fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield:
His angry steede did chide his foaming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly knight he seemed, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly jousts and fierce encounters fitt.

(Spencer, The Faerie Quenne)

- Ottava rima
  - an Italian form that originated in thirteenth-century religious and minstrel poetry
  - 8 lines of iambic pentameter
  - rhyme scheme "abababcc"
  - Let’s check the example in your book on page 12

Analysing "**Daffodils**"

- Written in 1804
- First published in 1807 in *Poems in Two Volumes* → revised version in 1815
- Inspired by the moment when William Wordsworth was strolling along Glencoyne Bay, Ullswater in the Lake District with his sister, Dorothy in April 15, 1802

I wandered lonely as a cloud

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host, of golden daffodils;

Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

v / v / v / v /

I wan/dered lone/ly as/ a cloud

v / v / v / v /

That floats/ on high/ o'er vales/ and hills,

v / v / v / v /

When all/ at once/ I saw/ a crowd,

v / v / v / v /

A host/, of gol/den da/ffodils;

v / v / v / v /

Beside/ the lake/, beneath/ the trees,

v / v / v / v /

Fluttering/ and dan/cing in/ the breeze.

- Four six-lines stanzas
- Iambic tetrameter
- ABABCC rhyme scheme