

Poetic Rhetorical Techniques-II

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Poetic Devices-Introduction

- ▶ A POET IS LIMITED in the materials he can use in creating his works: all he has are *words* to express his ideas and feelings. These words need to be precisely right on several levels at once:
 - ▶ they must *sound* right to the listener even as they delight his ear
 - ▶ they must have a *meaning* which might have been unanticipated, but seems to be the perfectly right one
 - ▶ they must be *arranged* in a relationship and placed on the page in ways that are at once easy to follow and assist the reader in understanding
 - ▶ they must probe the depths of human thought, emotion, and empathy, while appearing simple, self-contained, and unpretentious
- ▶ English language contains a wide range of words from which to choose for almost
- ▶ Every thought, and there are also numerous plans or methods of arrangement of these words, called
- ▶ *Poetic devices*, which can assist the writer in developing cogent expressions pleasing to his readers.
- ▶ Even though most poetry today is read silently, it must still carry with it the feeling of being spoken aloud, and the reader should practice “hearing” it in order to catch all of the artfulness with which the poet has created his work.

➤ **Allegory**

▶ A representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning. Sometimes it can be a single word or phrase, such as the name of a character or place. Often, it is a symbolic narrative that has not only a literal meaning, but a larger one understood only after reading the entire story or poem

➤ **Allusion:**

▶ A brief reference to some person, historical event, work of art, or Biblical or mythological situation or character.

➤ **Apostrophe:** Speaking directly to a real or imagined listener or inanimate object; addressing that person or thing by name.

▶ *Example:* O Captain! My Captain! our fearful trip is done...

➤ **Ambiguity:** A word or phrase that can mean more than one thing, even in its context. Poets often search out such words to add richness to their work. Often, one meaning seems quite readily apparent, but other, deeper and darker meanings, await those who contemplate the poem.

▶ *Example:* Robert Frost's 'The Subverted Flower'

➤ **Analogy:** A comparison, usually something unfamiliar with something familiar.

▶ *Example:* The plumbing took a maze of turns where even water got lost.

- ▶ **Cliché:** Any figure of speech that was once clever and original but through overuse has become outdated. If you've heard more than two or three other people say it more than two or three times, chances are the phrase is too timeworn to be useful in your writing.

Example: busy as a bee

- ▶ **Connotation:** The emotional, psychological or social overtones of a word; its implications and associations apart from its literal meaning. Often, this is what distinguishes the *precisely correct* word from one that is merely acceptable.
- ▶ **Pun:** Word play in which words with totally different meanings have similar or identical sounds.

Example: Like a firefly in the rain, I'm de-lighted.

- ▶ **Euphemism:** An understatement, used to lessen the effect of a statement; substituting something innocuous for something that might be offensive or hurtful.

Example: She is at rest. (meaning, she's dead)

- ▶ **Irony:** A contradictory statement or situation to reveal a reality different from what appears to be true.

Example: Wow, thanks for expensive gift...let's see: did it come with a Fun Meal or the Burger King equivalent?

- ▶ **Metonymy:** A figure of speech in which a person, place, or thing is referred to by something closely associated with it.

Example: The White House stated today that... *Example:* The Crown reported today that...

- ▶ **Symbol:** An ordinary object, event, animal, or person to which we have attached extraordinary meaning and significance – a flag to represent a country, a lion to represent courage, a wall to symbolize separation.

Example: A small cross by the dangerous curve on the road reminded all of Johnny's death.

- ▶ **Synecdoche:** Indicating a person, object, etc. by letting only a certain part represent the whole.

Example: All hands on deck.

- ▶ **Enjambment:** The continuation of the logical sense — and therefore the grammatical construction — beyond the end of a line of poetry. This is sometimes done with the title, which in effect becomes the first line of the poem.

- ▶ **Line:** The line is fundamental to the perception of poetry, marking an important visual distinction from prose. Poetry is arranged into a series of units that do not necessarily correspond to sentences, but rather to a series of metrical feet. Generally, but not always, the line is printed as one single line on the page. If it occupies more than one line, its remainder is usually indented to indicate that it is a continuation.

- ▶ There is a natural tendency when reading poetry to pause at the end of a line, but the careful reader will follow the punctuation to find where natural pauses should occur.

- ▶ In traditional verse forms, the length of each line is determined by convention, but in modern poetry the poet has more latitude for choice.

- ▶ **Verse:** One single line of a poem arranged in a metrical pattern. Also, a piece of poetry or a particular form of poetry such as *free verse*, *blank verse*, etc., or the art or work of a poet. The popular use of the word *verse* for a stanza or associated group of metrical lines is not in accordance with the best usage. A stanza is a *group* of verses.
- ▶ **Rhetorical Question:** A question solely for effect, which does not require an answer. By the implication the answer is obvious, it is a means of achieving an emphasis stronger than a direct statement.

Example: Could I but guess the reason for that look?

Example: O, Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

STANZA

- ▶ **Stanza:** A division of a poem created by arranging the lines into a unit, often repeated in the same pattern of meter and rhyme throughout the poem; a unit of poetic lines (a “paragraph” within the poem). The stanzas within a poem are separated by blank lines.
- ▶ Stanzas in modern poetry, such as *free verse*, often do not have lines that are all of the same length and meter, nor even the same number of lines in each stanza. Stanzas created by such irregular line groupings are often dictated by meaning, as in paragraphs of prose.
- ▶ **Stanza Forms:** The names given to describe the number of lines in a stanzaic unit, such as: *couplet* (2), *tercet* (3), *quatrain* (4), *quintet* (5), *sestet* (6), *septet* (7), and *octave* (8).
- ▶ Some stanzas follow a set rhyme scheme and meter in addition to the number of lines and are given specific names to describe them, such as, *ballad meter*, *ottava rima*, *rhyme royal*, *terza rima*, and *Spenserian stanza*.
- ▶ Stanza forms are also a factor in the categorization of whole poems described as following a *fixed form*.

► **Rhyme Scheme:** The pattern established by the arrangement of rhymes in a stanza or poem, generally described by using letters of the alphabet to denote the recurrence of rhyming lines, such as the ababbcc of the Rhyme Royal stanza form.

► Capital letters in the alphabetic rhyme scheme are used for the repeating lines of a refrain; the letters *x* and *y* indicate unrhymed lines.

► In quatrains, the popular rhyme scheme of abab is called alternate rhyme or cross rhyme. The abba scheme is called envelope rhyme, and another one frequently used is xaxa (This last pattern, when working with students, is generally easier for them to understand when presented as *abcb*, as they associate matched letters with rhymed words).

1 That time of year thou mayst in me behold ^A
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang ^B
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold, ^A
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang. ^B

2 In me thou see'st the twilight of such day ^C
As after sunset fadeth in the west, ^D
Which by and by black night doth take away, ^C
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest. ^D

3 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire ^E
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, ^F
As the death-bed whereon it must expire ^E
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by. ^F

To love that well which thou must leave ere long. ^C

DIFFERENT RHYME SCHEMES

My long two pointed ladder's sticking through a **tree**
 Toward heaven **still**,
 And there's a barrel that I didn't **fill**
 Beside it, and there may be two or **three**
 Apples I didn't pick upon some **bough**.
 But I am done with apple-picking **now**.
 Essence of winter sleep is on the **night**,
 The scent of apples: I am drowsing **off**.
 I cannot rub the strangeness from my **sight**
 I got from looking through a pane of **glass**
 I skimmed this morning from the drinking **trough**
 And held against the world of hoary **grass**.
 It melted, and I let it fall and **break**.
 But I was **well**

A
 B
 B
 A
 C
 C
 D
 E
 D
 F
 E
 F
 G
 H



"Jack and Jill" by Mother Goose

Jack and Jill went up the hill ----- A
 To fetch a pail of water; ----- B
 Jack fell down and broke his crown, --- C
 and Jill came tumbling after. ----- B
 Up Jack got, and home did trot, ----- D
 As fast as he could caper, ----- E
 To old Dame Dob, who patched his nob, F
 With vinegar and brown paper. ----- E

"water"
 "after"
 near-rhymes
 (slant rhymes)

Types of Rhyme Scheme

SAMPLE RHYME SCHEME



The Germ by Ogden Nash

A mighty creature is the germ ,	a
Though smaller than the pachy derm .	a
His customary dwelling place	b
Is deep within the human race .	b
His childish pride he often pleases	c
By giving people strange diseases .	c
Do you, my poppet, feel inf irm ?	a
You probably contain a germ .	a

December Leaves

by Kaye Starbird

The fallen leaves are cornflakes **A**
That fill the lawn's wide dish, **B**
And night and noon **C**
The wind's a spoon **C**
That stirs them with a swish. **B**

The sky's a silver sifter **A**
A-sifting white and slow, **B**
That gently shakes **C**
On crisp brown flakes **C**
The sugar known as snow. **B**

Here in your **arms**
is where I **belong**.
The beating of your **heart**
is like a beautiful **song**.

A
B
C
B

Poems-Robert Frost and Robert Browning

ROBERT FROST

- A *The people along the sand*
- B *All turn and look one way.*
- A *They turn their back on the land.*
- B *They look at the sea all day.*
- C *As long as it takes to pass*
- D *A ship keeps raising its hull;*
- C *The wetter ground like glass*
- D *Reflects a standing gull.*
- E *The land may vary more;*
- F *But wherever the truth may be---*
- E *The water comes ashore,*
- F *And the people look at the sea.*
- G *They cannot look out far.*
- H *They cannot look in deep.*
- G *But when was that ever a bar*
- H *To any watch they keep?*

Two in the Campagna by Robert Browning

I wonder do you feel today A
As I have felt since, hand in hand, B
We sat down on the grass, to stray A
In spirit better through the land, B
This morn of Rome and May? A

For me, I touched a thought, I know, C
Has tantalized me many times, D
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw C
Mocking across our path) for rhymes D
To catch at and let go. C

Form

- ▶ The arrangement or method used to convey the content, such as *free verse*, *ballad*, *haiku*, etc. In other words, the “way-it-is-said.” A variably interpreted term, however, it sometimes applies to details within the composition of a text, but is probably used most often in reference to the structural characteristics of a work as it compares to (or differs from) established modes of conventionalized arrangements.
- ▶ **Open:** poetic form free from regularity and consistency in elements such as rhyme, line length, and metrical form
- ▶ **Closed:** poetic form subject to a fixed structure and pattern
- ▶ **Blank Verse:** unrhymed iambic pentameter (much of the plays of Shakespeare are written in this form)
- ▶ **Free Verse:** lines with no prescribed pattern or structure — the poet determines all the variables as seems appropriate for each poem
- ▶ **Couplet:** a pair of lines, usually rhymed; this is the shortest stanza
- ▶ **Heroic Couplet:** a pair of rhymed lines in iambic pentameter (traditional heroic epic form)
- ▶ **Quatrain:** a four-line stanza, or a grouping of four lines of verse

BALLAD

- ▶ **Fixed Form:** A poem which follows a set pattern of *meter, rhyme scheme, stanza form, and refrain* (if there is one), is called a *fixed form*.
- ▶ **Ballad:** a narrative poem written as a series of quatrains in which lines of iambic tetrameter alternate with iambic trimeter with an *xaxa, xbx b* rhyme scheme with frequent use of repetition and often including a refrain. The “story” of a ballad can be a wide range of subjects but frequently deals with folklore or popular legends. They are written in a straight-forward manner, seldom with detail, but always with graphic simplicity and force. Most ballads are suitable for singing: “Barbara Allen” is an example.
- ▶ Many of the oldest ballads were first written and performed by minstrels as court entertainment. *Folk ballads* are of unknown origin and are usually lacking in artistic finish.
- ▶ Because they are handed down by oral tradition, folk ballads are subject to variations and continual change. Other types of ballads include *literary ballads*, combining the natures of epic and lyric poetry, which are written by known authors, often in the style and form of the folk ballad, such as Keats’ ‘La Belle Dame sans Merci.’

▶ **Lyric:** derived from the Greek word for lyre, lyric poetry was originally designed to be sung. One of the three main groups of poetry (the others being narrative and dramatic), lyric verse is the most frequently used modern form, including all poems in which the speaker's ardent expression of a (usually single) emotional element predominates. Ranging from complex thoughts to the simplicity of playful wit, the melodic imagery of skillfully written lyric poetry evokes in the reader's mind the recall of similar emotional experiences.

▶ **Ode:** any of several stanzaic forms more complex than the lyric, with intricate rhyme schemes and irregular number of lines, generally of considerable length, always written in a style marked by a rich, intense expression of an elevated thought praising a person or object. "Ode to a Nightingale" is an example.

SONNET

- ▶ **Sonnet:** a fourteen line poem in iambic pentameter with a prescribed rhyme scheme; its subject was traditionally love. Three variations are found frequently in English, although others are occasionally seen.
- ▶ **Sonnet Sequence:** a series of sonnets in which there is a discernible unifying theme, while each retains its own structural independence. All of Shakespeare's sonnets, for example, were part of a sequence.
- ❖ **Shakespearean Sonnet:** a style of sonnet used by Shakespeare with a rhyme scheme of *abab cdcd efef gg*
- ❖ **Italian (Petrarchan) Sonnet:** a form of sonnet made popular by Petrarch with a rhyme scheme of *abbaabba cdecde* or *cdcdcd*
- ❖ **Spenserian Sonnet:** a variant of the Shakespearean form in which the quatrains are linked with a chain or interlocked rhyme scheme, *abab bcbc cdcd ee*.

- ▶ **IMAGERY** The use of vivid language to generate ideas and/or evoke mental images, not only of the visual sense, but of sensation and emotion as well. While most commonly used in reference to figurative language, imagery can apply to any component of a poem that evoke sensory experience and emotional response, and also applies to the concrete things so brought to mind.
- ▶ Poetry works its magic by the way it uses words to evoke “images” that carry depths of meaning.
- ▶ The poet’s carefully described impressions of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch can be transferred to the thoughtful reader through imaginative use and combinations of diction.
- ▶ In addition to its more tangible initial impact, effective imagery has the potential to tap the inner wisdom of the reader to arouse meditative and inspirational responses.

- ▶ **Synesthesia:** An attempt to fuse different senses by describing one kind of sense impression in words normally used to describe another.

Example: The sound of her voice was sweet.

Example: a loud aroma, a velvety smile

TONE AND MOOD

- ▶ **Tone, Mood:** The means by which a poet reveals attitudes and feelings, in the style of language or expression of thought used to develop the subject. Certain tones include not only irony and satire, but may be loving, condescending, bitter, pitying, fanciful, solemn, and a host of other emotions and attitudes.
- ▶ Tone can also refer to the overall mood of the poem itself, in the sense of a pervading atmosphere intended to influence the readers' emotional response and foster expectations of the conclusion.
- ▶ Another use of tone is in reference to pitch or to the demeanor of a speaker as interpreted through inflections of the voice; in poetry, this is conveyed through the use of connotation, diction, figures of speech, rhythm and other elements of poetic construction.

- ▶ Related images are often clustered or scattered throughout a work, thus serving to create a particular *mood* or *tone*. Images of disease, corruption, and death, for example, are recurrent patterns shaping our perceptions of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Examples:

- ▶ **Sight:** Smoke mysteriously puffed out from the clown's ears.
- ▶ **Sound:** Tom placed his ear tightly against the wall; he could hear a faint but distinct thump
- ▶ thump thump.
- ▶ **Touch:** The burlap wall covering scraped against the little boy's cheek.
- ▶ **Taste:** A salty tear ran across onto her lips.
- ▶ **Smell:** Cinnamon! That's what wafted into his nostrils.

REFERENCES

1. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*

By M.H Abrams, Geoffrey Galt Harpham