

## First year Licence - 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester

### Lecture Three :

### *Poetry Terminology.*

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#### - Denotation and Connotation :

The average word has three component parts: sound, denotation, and connotation. It begins as a combination of tones and noises, uttered by the lips, tongue and throat, for which the written word is a notation. But it differs from a musical tone or a noise in that it has meaning attached to it. The basic part of its meaning is its **denotation** or denotations: that is, the dictionary meaning or meanings of the word.

Beyond its denotations, a word also may have **connotations**. The connotations are what it suggests beyond what it expresses: its overtones of meaning. It acquires these connotations from its past history and associations, from the way and the circumstances in which it has been used. The word *home*, for instance, by denotation, means only a place where one lives, but by connotation it suggests security, love, comfort, and family. The words *childlike* and *childish* both mean “characteristic of a child,” but *childlike* suggests meekness, innocence, and wide-eyed wonder, while *childish* suggests pettiness, willfulness, and temper tantrums.

Connotation is very important in poetry, for it is one of the means by which the poet can concentrate or enrich meaning—say more in fewer words.

#### - Imagery:

Experience comes to us largely through the senses. My experience of a spring day, for instance, may consist partly of certain emotions I feel and partly of certain thought I think, but most of it will be cluster of sense impressions. It will consist of seeing blue sky and white clouds, budding leaves and daffodils; of hearing robins and bluebirds singing in the early morning; of smelling damp earth and blossoming hyacinths; and of feeling a fresh wind against my cheek. A poet seeking to express the experience of a spring day must therefore provide seeking to express the experience of a spring day must therefore provide a selection of sense impressions. So in “Spring” (below) Shakespeare gives us “daisies pied” and “lady-smocks all silver-white” and “merry larks” and the song of the cuckoo and maidens bleaching their summer smocks. Had he not done so, he probably would have failed to evoke the emotions that accompanied his sensations. The poet’s language, then, must be more sensuous than ordinary language. It must be more full of imagery.

Imagery may be defined as the representation through language of sense experience. Poetry appeals directly to our senses, of course, through its music and rhythms, which we actually hear when it is read aloud. But indirectly it appeals to our senses through imagery, the representation to the imagination of sense experience. The word image perhaps often suggests a mental picture, something seen in the mind’s eye –and visual imagery is the kind of imagery that occurs most frequently in poetry. But an image may also represent a sound (auditory imagery); a smell (olfactory imagery); a taste (gustatory imagery); touch, such as hardness, softness wetness, or heat and cold (tactile imagery); an internal sensations, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, or nausea (organic imagery); or movement or tension in the muscles or joints (kinesthetic imagery).

#### - Stanza:

A paragraph of writing in a poem. These paragraphs are written as clusters of rhyming lines in traditional poetry, such as octaves, sestets and quatrains.

#### - Persona (Speaker) :

The voice used by a poet to speak a poem. The speaker is often a created identity (a made up self) and should not automatically be equated with the author. The speaker is not the same as the author—poets and storytellers make things up (fiction). The speaker does not necessarily reflect the author’s personal voice; however, authors sometimes use speakers as masks to protect themselves when they are writing about controversial ideas and/or criticizing politics or religion.

#### - Tone:

Tone, in literature, may be defined as the writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward his subject, his audience, or himself. It is the emotional coloring, or the emotional meaning, of the work and is an extremely important part of the full

meaning. In spoken language it is indicated by the inflections of the speaker's voice. If, for instance, a friend tells you, "I'm going to get married today," the facts of the statement are entirely clear. But the emotional meaning of the statement may vary widely according to the tone of voice with which it is uttered. The tone may be excited ("I'm going to get married today!"); it may be incredulous ("I can't believe it! I'm going to get married today"); it may be despairing ("Horrors! I'm going to get married today"); it may be resigned ("Might as well face it. I'm going to get married today"). Obviously, a correct interpretation of the tone will be an important part of understanding the full meaning. It may even have rather important consequences. If someone calls you a fool, your interpretation of the tone may determine whether you roll up your sleeves for a fight or walk off with your arm around his shoulder.

In poetry tone is likewise important. We have not really understood a poem unless we have accurately sensed whether the attitude it manifests is playful or solemn, mocking or reverent, calm or excited. But the correct determination of tone in literature is a much more delicate matter than it is with spoken language, for we do not have the speaker's voice to guide us. We must learn to recognize tone by other means. Almost all the elements of poetry help to indicate its tone: connotation, imagery, and metaphor; irony and understatement; rhythm, sentence construction, and formal pattern.

- **Mood:**

Mood is the emotion of the poem, the atmosphere. The predominant feeling created by or in the poem, usually through word choice or description. The feelings created by the poem in the reader; mood is best discovered through careful consideration of the images presented by the poem, and thinking about what feelings those images prompt. For example: if the "rain weeps", the mood is sad; if the "rain dances", the mood is happy. Mood and tone are not the same.

- **Enjambment:** The running over of a sentence or thought from one line of poetry to another.

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## Sound patterns

- **Alliteration:** Sometimes defined as the repetition of initial sounds ("All the awful auguries," or "Bring me my bow of burning gold"), and sometimes as the prominent repetition of a consonant ("after life's fitful fever").

- **Assonance:** Repeating vowel sounds in the middle of words. This device also uses sound to catch the reader's attention. This is a subtle device for which you have to listen carefully.

Twinkle twinkle little star is an example of assonance because of the repeating short "i" sound.

- **Consonance:** Repeating consonant sounds in the middle of words. This device also uses sound to catch the reader's attention. This is a subtle device, although it is less subtle than assonance. If elephants laugh carefully, it is because they are afraid is an example of consonance with the repeating "f" sound. Notice that the 'ph', 'gh' and 'f' letter patterns all make the "f" sound.

- **Cacophony:** Sounds that are unpleasant and harsh to the ear. Usually, cacophony is achieved through repeating "s", "c", "k" or other, similarly harsh sounding sounds. For example: "and squared and stuck their squares of soft white chalk." The opposite of euphony.

- **Euphony:** Sounds that are very pleasant to the ear. The opposite of cacophony.

Ex. John Keat's: "To Autumn"

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;

- **Onomatopoeia:** Words that sound like what they mean are called onomatopoeia. "Buzz", "hiss", "splash" are typical examples of this sound device. Onomatopoeia is also known as imitative harmony.

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## Verse Forms

- **Couplet:** Two lines of poetry that rhyme. The last two lines of an English sonnet work together to make a couplet. The following is an example of a couplet:

Roses are red, violets are blue  
Sugar is sweet and so are you

- **Octave:** Eight lines of poetry that have a rhyme scheme. The first part of an Italian sonnet is an octave.
- **Quatrain:** Four lines of poetry that have a rhyme scheme. Quatrains often have an abab, abcb, or aabb rhyme scheme. The first three verses of an English sonnet are quatrains.
- **Sestet:** Six lines of poetry that have a rhyme scheme.

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## Types of Poems

- **Concrete/ Shape poetry:** Concrete poetry experiments with the very materials of the poem itself: words, letters, format. The final product does what it says in that its words, letters, and format demonstrate the poem's meaning. Concrete poems rely heavily on the visual or phonetic to get across their meaning.
- **Dramatic Monologue:** The words of a single speaker who reveals his/her own personality and the dramatic situation (setting, audience) through his/her words.
- **Epitaph:** Epitaphs are poems about the dead that are written to be on a tombstone; this means they are usually very short.
- **Epigram:** These are very short, witty poems that make a pithy pronouncement about something. Usually they are written as a couplet.
- **Free Verse:** Modern poetry that has no regular pattern of rhythm, rhyme or line length. Free verse poems experiment with words to create images for the reader.
- **Sonnet:** A fourteen-line lyric written in iambic pentameter. Sonnets follow a rigid rhyme scheme. Typical rhyme schemes for sonnets are the Shakespearian or English sonnet (abab cdcd efef gg) or the Italian or Petrarchan sonnet (abba abba cdc cdc OR abba abba cde cde). For more information about iambic pentameter and rhyme scheme, see "Rhythm and Rhyme" below.
- **Ode:** This is a very serious form of the lyric; it is written about a serious topic and is very dignified, if not stately, in tone and style. It is different from a stage soliloquy because there is no play to help the reader understand setting – the poem does it all.
- **Elegy:** This is a particular type of lyric that is written to mourn the passing of something or someone.
- **Epic:** This is a very, very long poem that tells a story. Epic poems are narrative poems that are long enough to be in a book of their own, rather than an anthology.
- **Haiku:**

The Haiku is Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, arranged in three lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Japanese poetry is unrhymed, but English versions sometimes rhyme the first and third lines. The subject matter can be high or low—the Milky Way or the screech of automobile brakes—but usually it is connected with the seasons, and it is described objectively and sharply.

For a start, you may want to take some ordinary experience—tying your shoelaces, seeing a cat at the foot of the stairs, glancing out of a window and seeing unexpected snowflakes, hearing the alarm clock—and present it interestingly. One way to make it interesting is to construct the poem in two parts—the first line balanced against the next two lines, or the first two lines balanced against the last line. If you construct a poem on this principle, the two sections should be related to each other, but they should also in some degree make a contrast with each other.