

Literary Forms

Unit II Stanza Forms

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Why study Literary Forms?

- Helps understanding genres
 - Poetry
 - Drama
 - Prose
 - Criticism

Under Poetry: Poetical Types

- The Sonnet
 - The Epic
 - The Ballad
- etc

Stanza Forms – Unit II

- How are stanzas arranged in a poem?
- How many lines for every stanza?
- Types of Stanzas
 - Couplet
 - Tercet
 - Quatrain
 - Octave
 - Sestet
 - etc

1. What is a couplet?

- Stanza having two lines

What is a heroic couplet?

- Example:

We think|our fa|thers fools|so wise|we grow,
Our wis|ser sons,|no doubt|will think|us so.

-- Alexander Pope

Features of a Heroic Couplet

- Pause at the end of the first line shown by a comma
- Pause at the end of the second line shown by a fullstop
- Couplet is closed – meaning complete
- Single rhyme – ‘grow’ – ‘so’ – single syllables
- Number of syllables – 10
- 5 for each line
- Short followed by long -- Iambic

Variations in Heroic Couplet

- Use varied from time to time and poet to poet
- Alexander Pope himself made changes (three lines)
- Dryden: does not end with full stop, meaning continues, used Alexandrine (a line of six iambic feet) instead of five

History of Heroic Couplet

- First used by Chaucer
- Then by Spenser
- Shakespeare and Ben Jonson in their drama
- Became popular with Waller and Denham
- Pope and Dryden elevated the quality: used for epic, drama, satire and didactic poetry
- Romantic poets changed the couplet into a verse paragraph with four or five lines, since they wanted freedom and not rules
- Now used for narrative verse but has undergone many changes

2. The Terza Rima

- The Terza Rima is a tercet
- Tercet: stanza of three lines
- First and third lines rhyme together
- Second rhymes with first and third of the next tercet

“Ode to the West Wind”--Shelley

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, a
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead b
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, a

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, b
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, c
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed b

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low, c
Each like a corpse within its grave, until d
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow c

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill d
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air) e
With living hues and odours plain and hill: d

Terza Rima

- Shelley, Byron and William Morris: other poets
- This stanza form was first used by Italian poets
- Romantic poets used it with some changes.

3. The Chaucerian Stanza or Rhyme Royal

- Stanza of seven lines
- Each line having five syllables (penta meter)
- Short followed by long (iambic)
- Rhyme scheme: **ababbcc**
- First used by Chaucer
- Suitable for narrative verse
- Used by Shakespeare in his narrative poem
- “Royal”: King James I of Scotland used it in his choir

The Ottava Rima

- Italian Stanza form
- Introduced into England by Thomas Wyatt
- Stanza of 8 lines in iambic pentameter
- 1-6 lines: alternate rhymes
- Final couplet: a separate rhyme
- a b a b a b c c—rhyme scheme
- 1-3-5: fellow-mellow-yellow
- 2-4-6: opinion-dominion-pinion
- 7-8: desk-burlesque
- The couplet brings in a change of idea or mood
- Byron in “Don Juan”
- Used by Shelley and Keats in narrative verses

The Spenserian Stanza

- Nine line stanza used by Spenser in *The Faerie Queene*
- Two linked quatrains in iambic pentameter
- Ending with an Alexandrine
- Rhyme scheme: a b a b
b c b c c
- Ninth line rhyming with eighth but longer by a meter
- Both the stanzas are linked by rhyme as well as meaning
- The Alexandrine adds freshness and completes the stanza.
- Used in narrative and descriptive poems

The Spenserian Stanza

- Disadvantages: 1. stanza encourages the poet to use unnecessary grand words and over-adornment
- 2. One rhyme repeated 3 times another 4 times which reduces the freedom of the poet
- Used by: Spenser, Thomson, Burns, Byron, Keats
- Shelley's "Adonais": 1.gone-3.tone
2.year-4.reappear-5.bier-7.brere
6.brake-8.-snake-9.awake

Schools and Movements

- School: Poets following the same trend are said to belong to a school or movement. They are contemporaries.
- The Metaphysical School : Term first used by Dr. Johnson to refer to Donne. He borrowed from Dryden's phrase, "affects the metaphysics"
- Metaphysics: Expresses something that is not simple in a suggestive manner.
- There is something new and strange in thought and style.

Metaphysical School

Comments made by Dr. Johnson:

- Learned poets who wanted to show off their learning
- They did not imitate life
- Their thoughts are new but not natural
- Totally different ideas are forcefully brought together
- They make comparisons and illustrations frequently but they are not appealing to the reader
- They write without emotion

Metaphysical School

Comments made by Dr. Johnson:

- There is no fondness in their love
- There is no sorrow in their sadness
- Highly intellectual but unnatural

Comments by Dr. Johnson were very harsh

Metaphysical School

Metaphysical Poets: John Donne

- Metaphysical style established by John Donne
- Followers of John Donne: John Suckling, John Cleveland, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan and Abraham Cowley
- Each critic likes one poet from the school

Metaphysical School

Characteristics of Metaphysical School:

1. Delight in novel thought and expression:

-- wanted to say what has never been said before

-- expressed thoughts in their own way

-- played with thoughts

-- playfulness by playing with words

-- It does not appeal to the senses

-- It does not evoke memories

-- It tries to connect abstract and concrete, remote and near

-- lovers-compass

-- tears-maps or coins

-both feeling and thought needed to appreciate metaphysical poetry

Metaphysical School

2. Far-fetched Images:

Wild comparisons

Takes information from all fields of knowledge

Two different ideas are brought together

Functions as a platform to achieve unity

Metaphysical School

3, Affectation and Hyperbole:

Affectation: artificial in order to impress

Hyperbole: exaggeration

Tears-salt seas

Fairness-moon

“more than moon”

“hundred years to praise your eyes and forehead”

“grave is a fine place but none embrace”

Metaphysical School

4. Obscurity:

Difficult to understand

Comparisons are simple for the poets but complex for readers

5. Dramatic Realism:

Use of direct speech

“Busy old fool, unruly Sun”

“For God’s sake hold your tongue”

Arouses the interest of the reader

6. Learning:

Poets are scholarly, one full book can be written on comparisons of Donne alone.

Metaphysical School

'No Man is an Island'

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.

And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

Metaphysical School

Conclusion:

Religious poems and love poems were written by the poets

The poets of the school followed the model of Donne

They remain unique even to this day

2. Cavalier Poetry

- Period: During the reign of Charles I
- Important poets: Robert Herrick, Thomas Carew, John Suckling, Richard Lovelace

Features of Cavalier Poetry:

- i. Poems of love and war
- ii. Intelligent in nature
- iii. Full of enthusiasm
- iv. Show interest in the cosmos
- v. Use of argument and dialogue
- vi. Everyday language
- vii. Influenced by classical poetry

3. Classical Poetry:

- Known by different names
- i. Classical: resembled classical age
- ii. Augustan Age: Emperor Augustus of Rome
- iii. Age of Reason and good sense: Poetry of brain
- Factors that encouraged classical poetry:
Metaphysical poetry became boring; Charles II and his stay in France.
- Who are the original classical writers?

Seneca, Plautus and Terence, Virgil and Horace

- Who are the new classical writers?

Dryden and Pope

3. Classical Poetry:

- Characteristic Features:
 - i. Respect for rules: Drama, epic, satire, ode, pastoral : every form was written by following the rules. They aimed for perfect form
 - ii. Intellectual Quality: Poetry of head than heart
- Poetry of reason
- Poetry of intellect not feelings
- Marked by wit (quick and new way of saying things)
- Pope's lines are the most quoted (next to Shakespeare) : very familiar that author is not known

3. Classical Poetry:

- Characteristic Features:
- iii. Importance for the poetic style: Artificial style
- Words used in everyday language not suitable
- New words not accepted
- iv. Heroic Couplet: Best medium for drama, epic and satire, very suitable for the intellectual mood of the age.
- v. Treatment of town life: London was the city for writers-they found patrons-coffee house, the meeting place(3000 coffee houses in London)-meeting between author-reader and author-author-Dryden and Pope met in coffee house-town life-satire-fashions and controversies of London life dealt with in satire-model: classical and French masterpieces.

4. The Romantic Revival:

Revolt against the Classical School:

- Classical school became boring and had to be replaced
- Change started in 1726 itself
- Romanticism: name given to a new tendency
- Walter Pater, “the addition of curiosity to the desire of beauty”
- Revolt against authority, tradition and convention
- From one direction to different directions
- A movement of liberation: breaking free and moving ahead

4. The Romantic Revival:

- The French Revolution:

The teachings of Rousseau in France: Importance to feelings, love for nature, dignity of the individual man. “ Liberty, Equality, Fraternity”—the motto.

4. The Romantic Revival:

- Characteristic Features:

- i. Reaction against Rule and Custom:

- liberal in nature

- classical poetry-same as if made by machine

- Romantic poetry-endless variety and individualism

- Inspiration from Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton

- Revival and not something new

- ii. Return to Nature and Simple Life:

- Real life of people in country side-ordinary lives of the farm people

- Poets of the Lake School (Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey)—as they lived in Lake district

- Used simple language

- Wordsworth, “a selection of language really used by men”

4. The Romantic Revival:

- Characteristic Features:
- iii. Variety and Individuality:
 - Each poet was different and each poem was different
 - Subjective and full of emotions: “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. Emotions recollected in tranquility”

iv. Return of the lyric:

- Lyric was the most preferred form
- Musical, non-intellectual, sensuous

v. Interest in Middle Ages:

- Poets fascinated by legends of middle ages
- Keats and Scott – picturesque poetry
- Ballad form suitable

4. The Pre-Raphaelites

- Characteristic Features:

- i. Medieval Outlook:

- Followed the style of art before Raphael
- D.G. Rossetti and his contemporaries
- Picturesque, passionate and full of detail
- Though beautiful and interesting like a painting on the wall, poetry was not close to real life

- ii. Art for Art's Sake:

- Art was their religion
- Did not have didactic purpose
- Their aim was to create and exhibit beauty
- Critics have found fault with them

- iii. Vivid visual Presentation:

- Poetry was like a picture

- iv. Sound and Sense:

- Melody: full of music: use of rhymes and alliterations and onomatopoeic effects.

4. The Georgian Poets

- Characteristic Features:
- Beginning of Modern poetry
- Poets who lived between 1912-1922
- Rupert Brooke, John Masefield, Walter de la Mare are the famous poets
- Robert Frost though an American is also considered as a Georgian poet
- Use of images is the main feature
- Brings out the customs and traditions of rural England: “Dining Room Tea” by Robert Brooke
- Though the poets lived during the War they did not talk about it

4. Poets of the First World War

- Characteristic Features:
- In the early years of war starting from 1914, poetry expressed nationalism
- Praised the courage and bravery of soldiers : Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier"
- Later it mourned the loss of young lives
- Pity of war
- Wilfred Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth"

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?

Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

4. Poets of the First World War

- Characteristic Features:
- Owen's "Strange Meeting": A meeting between two enemy soldiers who died in the war
- "I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.
Let us sleep now. . . ."
- Owen influenced many younger poets like W.H.Auden
- Siegfried Sassoon talks about dead bodies piled up and rotting in a trench
- Powerful pictures of the real effects of war
- War poetry marked the start of Modernist Movement

5. The Modernist Movement

- Modernism:
- Influenced by social movements like strikes, women's movements, unemployment and so on
- Influenced by theories of Freud and Marx
- Lack of faith in established institutions
- Revolt against authority

5. The Modernist Movement

- Modernist Literature:
- Started from 1910
- Famous Modernist poems: T.S. Eliot's Waste Land and James Joyce's Ulysses

Characteristic Features:

- i. Break from tradition: Poets wanted to be liberated. Tried new forms of poetry. They got ideas from psychology and cubist painting
- ii. New Subject Matter: They rejected Romanticist ideas. They were interested in realism. Focus on city life.
- iii. Poetic Style: Colloquial use of language.

5. The Modernist Movement

Characteristic Features:

iv. Discontinuous poems: No linking lines or phrases. It is interrupted. It is not a whole but a set of images

v. Free Verse: Did not follow any rhyme or rhythm. They repeated words. They followed the model of Walt Whitman. They wanted poetry to sound like spoken language.

vi. Other Features: It portrayed problems of modern life. Man's rootlessness, lack of identity and lack of confidence.

Poems were sometimes obscure

6. Poetry of the 1930s

- W. H. Auden was the important poet of 1930s.
- Stephen Spender was another important poet
- The poets wrote good poetry in simple style

Poets of the Second World War:

- These poets portrayed that was a terrible waste.