

UNIT-8

POETIC FORMS AND DEVICES

Structure

8.1 Sonnet

8.2 Ode

8.3 Dramatic Monologue

8.4 Rhythm and Rhyme

8.5 Alliteration

8.6 Simile

8.7 Metaphor

8.1 Sonnet

The word sonnet is derived from the Italian word “sonetto”. It means a small or little song or lyric. It is a poem of 14 fourteen lines, written in iambic pentameter. The rhymes of a sonnet are arranged according to a certain rhyme scheme. The rhyme scheme in English is usually abab-cdcd-efef-gg and in Italian abba-abba-cde-cde.

Types of Sonnet

Sonnets can be categorized into six major types:

Italian Sonnet

Shakespearean Sonnet

Spenserian Sonnet

Miltonic Sonnet

Terza Rima Sonnet

Curtal Sonnet

Examples of Sonnets in literature

Let us take a look at the examples of sonnets in Literature based on its different categories:

Italian or Petrarchan Sonnet

Italian or Petrarchan sonnet was introduced by an Italian poet Francesco Petrarch of 14th century. The rhyme scheme of Petrarchan sonnet has first eight lines called *octet* that rhymes as abba -abba –cdc-dcd. The remaining six lines called *sestet* might have a range of rhyme schemes.

Shakespearean Sonnet

A Shakespearean sonnet is generally written in an iambic pentameter, there are 10 syllables in each line. The rhyme scheme of Shakespearean sonnet is abab-cdcd-efef-gg and this is difficult to follow. Hence only Shakespeare is known to have done it.

Spenserian Sonnet

Sir Edmund Spenser was the first poet who modified the Petrarch's form. The rhyme scheme in this sonnet is abab-bcbc-cdcd-ee which is specific to Spenser and such types of sonnets are called Spenserian sonnets.

8.2 Ode

An Ode is derived from a Greek word *aeidein*, which means to chant or sing. It is highly sombre and solemn in its tone and subject matter, and usually is used with elaborate patterns of stanzas. A significant feature of ode is its uniform metrical feet, but poets generally do not strictly follow this rule though use highly elevated theme.

There are three type of Odes

Pindaric Ode

This ode was named after an ancient Greek poet, Pindar, who began writing choral poems that were meant to be sung at public events. It contains three triads; strophe, antistrophe and final stanza as epode, with irregular rhyme patterns and lengths of lines.

Horatian Ode

This ode was named after a Latin poet, Horace. Horatian ode is informal, contemplative and personal dealing with exciting subject matters that were simple and gave pleasure to senses. Since Horatian odes are informal in tone, they are devoid of any strict rules.

Irregular Ode

This type of ode is without any formal rhyme scheme and structure such as Pindaric ode. In this kind of ode the poet has great freedom and flexibility to try any types of concepts and moods. William Wordsworth and John Keats were such poets who extensively wrote irregular odes, taking advantage of this form.

Many renowned poets like John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Thomas Gray, S.T Coleridge, William Wordsworth and Edmund Spencer, etc. have written popular odes.

8.3 Dramatic Monologue

Dramatic monologue refers to a poetic form. These lyrical poems are dramatic having a theatrical quality. The poem is meant to be read to an audience. In a dramatic monologue there is only one solitary speaker with no dialogue coming from any other characters.

In it poets express a point of view through the words of a character. The great Victorian poet, Robert Browning is considered to be the master of this type of poetry. His poem, "My Last Duchess" is considered to be one of his best dramatic monologues.

8.4 Rhyme

A rhyme is used for a specific purpose of rendering a pleasant effect to a poem which makes its recitation soothing. It is a repetition of similar sounding words occurring at the end of lines in poems or songs.

In poetry various types of Rhyme is employed

Perfect Rhyme

In a perfect rhyme, two words rhyme in such a way that their final stressed vowel and all following sounds are identical e.g. dope and hope, cloak and clock etc. In general rhyme there is a variety of phonetic likeness between words displaying a similar sounding last syllable but without a stressed vowel For example, cleaver and silver, patter and pitter etc. Imperfect rhyme is between a stressed and an unstressed syllable. For example, Wing and caring, sit and perfect, reflect and subject etc. In Slant rhyme, words having the same vowel sound are used e.g. kill and bill, wall and hall, shake and hate etc.

8.5 Alliteration

Alliteration is a stylistic device in which a number of words, having the same first consonant sound, occur close together in a series.

Consider the following examples:

But a better butter makes a batter better.

This is an alliterative sentence because the same first letter of words (B) occurs close together and produces alliteration in the sentence. Alliteration does not depend on letters but on sounds.

Best Buy

Coca-Cola

For example in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,

The furrow followed free;

... Into that silent sea."

Here alliteration ("b", "f" and "s") is used in the phrases "breeze blew", "foam flew", "furrow followed", and "silent sea".

8.6 Simile

A simile is a figure of speech that makes a direct comparison, showing similarities between two different things. Unlike a metaphor, a simile draws resemblance with the help of the words "like" or "as".

For example:

Torres is as fast as a Cheetah.

Cheetah is known for its speed and Torres is compared to that speed of a Cheetah.

For example

Robert Burns uses a simile to describe the beauty of his beloved.

"O my love is like a red, red rose"

The poet here says that his love is a fresh red rose that blossoms in the spring.

8.7 Metaphor

Metaphor is a figure of speech which makes an implicit, implied or hidden comparison between two things that are unrelated but share some common characteristics. In other words, a resemblance of two contradictory or different objects is made based on a single or some common characteristics.

For example

“Raju is the black sheep among the teachers” is a metaphor because Raju is not a sheep and is not even black. But, we can use this comparison to describe an association of a black sheep with that person. A black sheep is an unusual animal and typically stays away from the herd, and the person you are describing shares similar characteristics.

William Shakespeare’s famous sonnet “Sonnet 18,” also known as “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day,” is an example of literary metaphor. Here, the poet has used a metaphor to highlight the love of the speaker and the fairness of the summer season. He writes that “thy eternal summer,” here taken to mean the love of the subject, “shall not fade.”