HAVE FUN WITH POETRY

Sugeng Purwanto
Anyone can be a poet whenever he/she is emotionally touched. So touch the emotion!! You will be a great poet.

Good luck. Never say die, my love.

Dr. Sugeng Purwanto, MA

2008
Day 1/2

Topic: What is Poetry?

Instructional Objectives:
Upon completion of this topic, the students are supposed to be able to:

1. know the definition of poetry, poem
2. know some literary terms used in the analysis of poetry

OVERVIEW
To know what is poetry, let us have a look at ‘A Handbook to Literature’ (Harmon and Holman 2003:390).

Poetry is a term applied to the many forms in which human beings have given rhythmic expression to their most intense perceptions of the world, themselves, and the relation of the two.

Is that a good definition of poetry? No. There are still some elements that have not been covered in that simple statement. Apart from being rhythmic, poetry is imaginative, in that it requires your imagination(s) in order to understand or to write a single line of a poem. Wow, it is even more confusing. What is poetry? What is a poem?

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In secret we met—
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget
They spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?
With silence and tears.

(9) Death Be Not Proud

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think’st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul’s delivery.
Thou’rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better that stroke; why swell’st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die.

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(8) When We Two Parted

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that our foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow—
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame
I hear the name spoken
And share in its shame

They name thee before me
A knell to mine ear
A shudder comes o’er me—
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well:-
Long, long shall I rue thee
Too deeply to tell.

Poetry is a general term (genre) as opposed to prose. As mentioned before, poetry is rhythmic expressions produced by human beings in response to their feelings; while prose does not have rhythms. It has cohesive devices to tie up words to phrases, sentences and paragraphs, all of which have to form a coherent unity of ideas. Thus, the products of prose can be novels, short stories, essays, or even your sweet letters to your boyfriend or girlfriend.

Now, back to our discussion on poetry. The product of poetry is a poem. Of course then you can read or write poems. But, before we go any further, let us review the elements of poetry outlined below:

- rhythmic, that is, it has rhythm.
- imaginative, that is, it requires both the writer’s and the reader’s imagination(s).
- concrete, that is, it has its own diction to present images concretely, and thus it has its own poetic diction.
- pleasure, that is the chief purpose is to please, it often makes use of the various emotions of love, fear, and appreciation of beauty; whatever the
immediate appeal, the ultimate effect of poetry is the giving of pleasure.

The art of poetic composition, as Harmon and Holman (2003:391) elaborates it, has undergone a long process of change. From its original collective interest it has become intensely individualistic; from the ceremonial recounting of tribal and group movements it has become the vehicle for drama, history and personal emotion. It is, however, still common today to classify poetry into three great type divisions: EPIC, DRAMATIC and LYRIC, each of which will be discussed below.

- **EPIC** is a long narrative poem in elevated style presenting characters of high position in adventures forming an organic whole through their relation to a central heroic figure and through their development of episodes important to the history of a nation or race. The characteristics of an epic include:

  1. The hero is of imposing stature, of national or international importance, and of great historical or legendary significance;

#6 **Not Everything, but Nothing**

She’s not everything
  But everything without her is nothing
He’s not everything
  But everything without him is nothing
Love’s not everything
  But everything without love is nothing
Money’s not everything
  But everything without money is nothing
Sex’s not everything
  But everything without sex is nothing
(Purwanto, 2008)

#7 **The One Supreme**

One, and only one
God ever believed by
Mankind of all time, of all kinds
No son of Him, let alone a daughter
He’s not a son of angels, let alone mankind
He’s alone to govern the universe
And everything in it
He’s the One Supreme

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Inspired by Al Ikhlas of the Holy Koran

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He is meek and he is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.

Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
(William Blake)

(5) A Red, Red Rose

O my Luve’s like a red, red rose,
That’s newly sprung in June:
O my Luve’s like the melodie
That’s sweetly played in tune!

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a’ the sea gang dry.

Till a’ the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi’ the sun
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sand o’ life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile. 
(Robert Burns)

(2) The setting is vast, covering great nations, the world, or the universe;
(3) The action consists of deeds of great valour or requiring superhuman courage;
(4) Supernatural forces—god, angels, and demons—interests themselves in the action;
(5) A style of sustained elevation is used;
(6) The poet (the one who writes a poem) retains a measure of objectivity.

• DRAMATIC; Dramatic poetry that, logically should be restricted to poetry employing dramatic form or some element of dramatic techniques. Another term for this is dramatic lyrics.

• LYRIC is a brief subjective poem strongly marked by imagination, melody, and emotion, and creating a single, unified impression. In other words, lyric is the expression of the emotion of an individual. It is melodic. Thus, the quality of a lyric is determined by its subjectivity, imagination and melody.
RHYTHM

It has been mentioned before that the first element of poetry is rhythm or in other words, poetry is rhythmic. Let us examine the following poem:

**If We Must Die**
If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs
Making their mock at our accursed lot
(Claude McKay 1919)

The above poem, though part of the complete one, has rhythm. We can cut the lines so as to show the rhythm.

/ If we must die // let it not be like hogs /
/ Hunted and penned // in an inglorious spot , /
/ While round us // bark the mad and hungry dogs /
/ Making their mock // at our accursed lot /

Let us not worry about the meaning of each word, but take a look at the rhythm in which each line is conveniently divided into two parts, though it does not necessarily applies to all poems. The sound ending in each in each line rhymes with the next but one. Thus, [hogs] rhymes with [dogs] and [spot] rhymes with [lot]. This kind of rhyme is called a-b-a-b.

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(3) **The Sick Rose**
O Rose, thou art sick.
The invisible worm
That flies in the night
In the howling storm
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy
(William Blake)

(4) **The Lamb**
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o’er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I’ll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I’ll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he called himself a Lamb,
4. If you have any problems or questions, you may consult your lecturer or anybody else you feel confident with.

APPENDIX

POEMS TO CHOOSE FOR YOUR ANALYSIS

(1) My love is in Her Attire

My love in her attire doth show her wit,  
I doth so well become her:  
For every season she hath dressing fit,  
For winter, spring and summer.  
No beauty she doth miss,  
When all her robes are on;  
But beauty’s self she is,  
When all her robes are gone  
(Anonymous)

(2) A Whisper of Love

Never do I feel so lonely  
As you’re gone with another guy  
Of your Mom’s choice  
My heart breaks and so does yours  
But, none we could do  
A week before the wedding of yours,  
The two of us lay exhausted, you whispered  
‘I love you’ and, left me in bed, alone.  
(Purwanto 2008)

We have discussed this in our ‘Introduction to English Literature’, haven’t we?

Here is another poem.

I am not the one you can forget  
In a minute date,  
Nor the one you will have to let  
Know the room rate,  
(Purwanto 2008)

Now, you divide the lines to show the rhythm. What is the rhyme?

The poem goes on:

I love you with all my heart and soul  
Never will a single day go as a whole  
Without thinking of pleasing you,  
From your hat down to the shoe,  
From your lip down to the hip,  
But, I always worry about the tip.

IMAGINATION

The second element is imagination. We have to use our imagination in order to understand a poem. Now, consider the following poem. Use your imaginations as far as possible to understand it.
Hold me tight, and never let me cry
So I can feel the heat of your heart
Beating on and off, up the sky we fly
Neither life nor death shall do us apart

United like a two headed snake,
My face turns left and right
To feel the joy of being awake,
With you day and night.
(Purwanto 2008)

According to your imagination, what do you understand about the poem? Some of you may think that it is a romantic poem. The poet is in love with ‘you’ (the reader). Look at the first line, how romantic the poet is, asking you to hold him tight in order for him not to be sad (cry), and to enjoy every breath you take up to the nicest point of joy (up the sky we fly). Nothing can separate ‘love’, neither life nor death.

The second stanza continues with a metaphor of a two-headed snake. The poet’s face even turns left and right for the joy of being with you day and night. Maybe the poet was trying to reflect himself when he was in honeymoon with his wife, but wanted to share the joy with you, the readers. Therefore, it does not apply for male readers.

2. The attitude of the poet towards the subject matter of the poem
3. Your commentary about the poem. This is where you demonstrate your understanding of the poem. Included here is how you manage to relate the poem to a special aspect of life you have stated in the introduction.

D. Conclusion
Describe what you have learned in the poem with respect to your present situation.

E. Bibliography
Write the bibliography according to formal bibliographical entry format.

NOTES
1. You have to use a good English-English dictionary in order to understand the poem. You may also use Encarta software program personally installed in your laptop or notebook.
2. You may also access information from the Internet. Make use of UNISBANK Hot Spot to save money.
3. Use good and acceptable English in your paper. Poor Grammar is considered as ‘a shame’ and will not be tolerated, thereby affecting your final score.
FINAL ASSIGNMENT / TEST

There will be no written test. Instead, the students are supposed to write a paper of at least 10 pages in length or 3500 words, with the following format.

A. Introduction (2 paragraphs)

State clearly why it is important to study poems to reflect the social life. Also, state to what particular aspect of life you would relate your analysis, for example, the past or present social condition, the past or present political condition, the psychological condition (of the poet when writing the poem or yourself when reading the poem), your background experience, etc.

B. The Poem

For your analysis, quote one of the poems in the Appendix of the handout. Or you can also find a poem elsewhere (library, internet, etc)

C. Analysis and Discussion

Your analysis shall include the following issues:

1. The theme of the poem

But wait! Some of you may have another imagination. The poem is very religious (Islamic in nature). The poet simply asks God to protect him from unhappiness so that he can be closest to God with the climax of forgetting his life and death. This means that he is happy in the world (life) and the world after (death). The poet and God are united a two headed snake. They are two but one. In Javanese, we have a famous phrase of ‘manunggaling kawula gusti’ (master-slave unity).

The poet’s face turns left and right. This is a common practice in Islam when a Moslem pronounces his or her faith to God, saying ‘La Illaha illa Loh’ usually up to hundreds or even thousands times. When doing this, a Moslem feels to be aware (awake) of the existence of God, the Almighty, day and night.

In short, understanding or interpreting a poem depends very much on ‘imagination’. It is all about what you think, how you think. Similarly, one poem can be interpreted differently from one person to another. The most important thing is of course your arguments that follow your analysis. There are always three answers to a problem, my answer, your answer, and the correct answer.
The jungle is out there. It applies to your philosophy of life. Something which is good today is not always good tomorrow, even was bad yesterday. We, human beings, have only relative truth. The absolute truth belongs to God, the Almighty.

**CONCRETE**

The next poetic element is ‘concrete’. A poet must try very hard to make the poem concrete. A professional poet can separate his ‘real’ emotion and ‘imagery’ emotion. Examine the following lines of a poem.

Fly up your bras, all hookers\(^1\)
Young and old alike,
For all parliamentary lobbies shall be on hold,
Without your funky faces and services around
For all business lobbies shall not run on,
Without your funky faces and service around (Purwanto 2008)

Look at how the poet manages to make imagery things to be concrete and logical. First, it is impossible to really ask all prostitutes to fly up their bras. It will be ridiculous. Normally we can only fly a kite / a plane / a flag.

\(^1\) Inspired by WS. Rendra

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Of course, in order to interpret the poem, we have to link it to the social condition, to the normal discursive practice. Look at how people think of prostitution. Normally people think that it is a dirty profession. How many preachers of all religions on earth condemn such a profession? But, condemnation will not work. So, Titik Puspa is correct in her song:

Ada yang benci dirinya,
(Some hate her)
Ada yang butuh dirinya
(Some others need her)
Ada yang bertekuk mencintainya
(Some others kneel down to love her)
Ada pula yang kejam menyiksa dirinya
(Some others are cruel enough to torture her)

Thus, the sentence ‘Fly up your bras, all hookers.’ should not be taken literally. You have to make it concrete, namely ‘Be yourself, do not let others make you their slaves. You are not slaves, and you are not that bad.’ Why? Why does the poet think that way? Look at his arguments (1) For all parliamentary lobbies shall be on hold; (2) For all business lobbies shall not run on.
Stop!! Don’t protest!! Let us make it more concrete, shall we? The word ‘hookers’ does not necessarily mean ‘women who serve men with sex for money’. The poet may mean ‘the use of beauty for success’. The social condition has told us about this very clearly. We have SPG (Sales Promotion Girls) for a particular product; we have beautiful bank tellers; we have beautiful gossip presenters on TV; even we have female gas station attendants in some of the newly-built gas stations.

In short, the poet wants to express his concern that ‘beauty’ is being used for almost any social encounter. It has also something to do with the behavioural psychology in which people’s behaviours are very much dependent on the stimuli of others. Is this what they proclaim as “women’s emancipation”? Or “women’s liberty”? This is a very complex social problem. Some women are very proud of being that way, without realizing that they are being used for the benefit of others. Some career women, so proud of their positions, forget their basic responsibilities as the mothers to their children and the wives to their husbands.

Dr. Sugeng Purwanto, MA
Back to our discussion on the concrete expression of poetry, it is we, who have to make the poem concrete and meaningful, not the poet. The poet makes the poem based on imagination; and we try to interpret the poem to be concrete; to be socially applicable. There are a few things to consider in interpreting poems, namely:

1. Never rely heavily on the lexical meaning of each word;
2. Always link the poem to the social condition when it was possibly written;
3. Link the poem to your own experience, and background knowledge;
4. Do not make judgments on the first reading of the poem, as you will likely make mistakes. Read it more than twice, feel it and get involved in it.

**PLEASURE**

This is the last element of poetry. The poet has tried hard to create the poem based on his or her imagination, employing particular patterns of rhythm, employing varied rhymes to avoid being tedious, selecting the most appropriate
words for particular meanings. All what the poet has done is to
give pleasure.

As readers, or analysts, you are challenged to give
emotional responses to the poem, it is all up to you to respond
to it. You can read it aloud on the stage for others to listen.
You can analyze it to broaden your horizon of thoughts, by
relating it to the current social condition. It is true that social
conditions always reoccur without regard of the moment
when a poem was written. Better still, you can write it up your
analysis in a thesis for completion of your degree. Most
importantly, you have to enjoy the poem, make it part of your
hobbies. You will learn the world out there, by reading poems.

ASSIGNMENT 1 (To be submitted prior to the date of Mid-
term Test)
• Get one simple poem.
• Analyze it in terms of rhythm and rhymes (if any),
imagination, concreteness, and pleasure.
• Define the following literary terms. You may want to
consult different resources.
  o Poetry
  o Poem

ideational, interpersonal and textual. Most significantly, the
interpersonal domain of meanings has now been developed
into its own theory called the Appraisal.

A linguistic approach to literary analysis? Why not? It is
worth trying. Halliday (1994), the most distinctive figure in SFL
also includes several issues on the possibility of employing a
linguistic approach to poetic analysis.

One possibility is to analyze transitivity, thematic
structure, mood of poems, just to justify how meanings are
expressed ideationally, interpersonally and textually. This type
of analysis yields more in-depth findings with respect to the
field, tenor and mode of the poems.

Another possibility is to analyze poems based on
Halliday’s sub-heading on ‘Beside the clause: intonation and
rhythm of Systemic Functional Grammar (1994) in which he
discusses foot and tone group, tonicity, tonic and pretonic, etc.

Still another possibility to analyze poems by means of
linguistic approach is to analyze them in terms of their syntactic
constructions or in ‘beyond the clause of Halliday’s
Normally, analyzing poems is always related to the social condition where they were written. Or, it is also possible to analyze a poem based on the psychological state of the poet. Some other literary analysts may want to analyze the poet’s intentions or rationales for writing the poem. This is normally called ‘critical analysis’. It should be noted, however, our interpretation is just one of thousand possible interpretations out there. We should realize that only the poet has the most correct form of interpretation.

The most important thing in interpretation of literary work is that we have to be open-minded, knowledgeable in the subject. Only experience will teach us to be the best interpreter of a literary work; but experience would never come by itself until we start to work it out.

A LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO LITERARY ANALYSIS

A linguistic approach has proven effective to be used in literary analysis. One of the approaches is under SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) in which it is argued that language is used to make meanings (Eggins 1994). When we use a language, at the time we make up three domains of meanings:

- Poet
- Rhythm
- Rhyme

- Visit a website, download the biography of one of the poet you are mostly interested in.
MAKING CONNECTION

It is arguably true that either archaic or contemporary poems use difficult words both in terms of forms and meanings. The poets had tried hard to select those words to fit the meanings they wanted to express and at the same time they were also governed by the poetic rules of patterns (rhythm, rhymes, syntax, etc.). However, as students of the English Department, you should not be discouraged. The lexical meanings of difficult words can be consulted with a good dictionary; while we have learned the rhythms and rhymes of English poems.

PRINCIPLES OF POETRY INTERPRETATION

There are several points to consider when we interpret poems. Firstly, it is the language form which consists of diction, imagery, figurative language, and symbolism. Next are the verse forms which are characterized by rhythm and rhymes. Then, we need to consider the attitudes (of the poet) towards the poem, the readers, and the context.

All of the above principles will lead to the discovery of the central theme on the basis of which we can interpret the poem according to our belief (about the world around us), and context (where the poem was written Vs where the poem is being interpreted).
Can I just say
That only you I love?
Though I mean nothing to you,
You are everything to me.
(Purwanto, 2008)

**A Morning Attack of Joy**

I was
Half awake,
When he asked for
Another round
Of heaven’s joy
  “Again?” asked I,
  No answer I heard
He mounted me
And rocked to come
Thanks, didn’t wake the baby up.
(Purwanto, 2008)

**The Grounds for Love**

The ground for love,
Is not wealth nor beauty
Only the hearts would make
Once lost, one found.
So easy as it is,
So hard as it may be,
That no money can buy
(Purwanto, 2004)

Actually, the most difficult part to understand any type of poem lies in how you make connection between the poem you are involved in and your background knowledge or experience. Once you can link the poem to your experience, you are in the right track to understand it.

Consider the following poem:

**ADVICE TO MY SON**

—for Tim

The trick is, to live your days
as if each day may be your last
(for they go fast, and young men lose their lives in strange and unimaginable ways)
but at the same time, plan long range
(for they go slow: if you survive the shattered windshield and the bursting shell you will arrive at our approximation here below of heaven or hell).
To be specific, between the peony and the rose
plant squash and spinach, turnip and tomatoes;
beauty is the nectar
and nectar, in a desert, saves—
but the stomach craves stronger sustenance than the honeyed vine.
Therefore, marry a pretty girl
after seeing her mother;
speak truth to one man;
work with another;
and always serve bread with your wine.
But, son,
always serve wine.
(Peter Meinke b.1932)

From the title, we know that the poem is an ______________ from a father to his son, Tim. There are three things that the father wants his son to do in order to live a good life. What are they?

1. ____________________________
2. ____________________________
3. ____________________________

And what is the reason for each item?

(1) ____________________________
(2) ____________________________
(3) ____________________________

Now, link the poem to your experience. Have you ever had the same experience? Write your experience below. (same / different).

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Something there is that doesn’t love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have to come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made
But at spring mending-time we find them there.

Finally, free verse is a verse which is not constrained by an imposed form. It does not have a rhyme scheme or regular rhythm. It is, however, not formless but relies on its own words and content to determine its best form. Free verse was introduced by Walt Whitman (1819-1892). This kind of verse is mostly adopted by contemporary poets.

Here are some for you to enjoy.

To an Angle with Love,

I know that
I am a man of fact who
Has nothing to be proud of
Who had suffered a lot
During his childhood
Of contempt and
Mocks.
Though wise men at their end know dark is right, 
Because their words had forked no lightening they 
Do not go gentle into that good night. 
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright 
Their frail deeds might have dance in a green bay, 
Rage, rage against the dying of the light

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight, 
And learn, too late, they grieve it on its way, 
Do not go gentle into that good night

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight 
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay, 
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height, 
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray. 
Do not go gentle into that good night 
Old age should burn and rave at close of day; 
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Answer the questions

1. Who is the speaker of this poem?
2. What advice does the poem give?

Meanwhile, blank verse is unrhymed but follows a regular verse form, usually iambic pentameter. An example is taken from Robert Frost’s 11 lines out of 45 lines as follows:

ZIMMER IN GRADE SCHOOL

In grade school I wondered 
Why I had been born 
To wrestle in the ashy puddle, 
With my square nose 
Streaming mucus and blood

Now, write a similar poem as above, by continuing the following part (Purwanto, 2008) that has been written for you to help.

A LOVER’S ADVICE

—for my sweetheart,

To have everlasting love between us, my dear, 
is to say my name every single meal you have every bath you take, and every moment you go to bed, (for I will be around)

Here is another poem.

Dr. Sugeng Purwanto, MA
Dr. Sugeng Purwanto, MA

My knuckles puffed from combat
And the old nun’s ruler
I feared everything: God,
Learning and my schoolmates.
I could not count, spell or read
My report card proclaimed
This scarlet failures.
My parents wrang their loving hands.
My guardian angel wept constantly.
But I could never hide anything.
If I peed my pants in class
The puddle was always evident.
My worst mistakes were at
The blackboard for Jesus and all
The saints to see.
   Even now
When I hide behind an elaborate mask
It is always known that I am Zimmer,
The one who does the messy papers
And fractures all his crayons,
Who spits upon the radiators
And sits all day in shame
Outside the office of the principal
(Paul Zimmer b.1934)

On reading the poem, we will soon learn that it is the reflection of life of the poet during his school days. Answer the following questions.

1. What did you wonder about yourself in grade school?

Dr. Sugeng Purwanto, MA

Day : 11
Topic : Exploring Poetry 8

Instructional Objectives :
Upon completion of this topic, the students are supposed to be able to:
   1. understand more types of verse
   2. be familiar with contemporary poems

OTHER TYPES OF VERSE

There are three other types of verse that we should know, namely the **villanelle**, **blank verse**, and **free verse**.

The **villanelle** has 19 lines. It uses only two rhymes and repeats two of its lines according to a set pattern. Line 1 is repeated as lines 6, 12, and 18; and line 3 is repeated as lines 9, 15, and 19. Lines 3 and as a rhymed couplet at the end of the poem.

Example:

*DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT*

Do not go gentle into that good night
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dr. Sugeng Purwanto, MA
(Edna St. Vincent Millay, 1892-1950)

**SONNET No. 29**

When, in disgrace with Fortune and men’s eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man’s art and that man’s cope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in this thoughts myself almost despising
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven’s gate
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings

Now, answer the following questions.

1. Why are both poems called sonnets?
2. To what extent do you still wonder the same things?
3. Was the poet a lucky or unlucky boy? Why?
4. How does your personality now differ from that of the past?
5. What was good about you in the past?

Here is another poem for you to analyze.

**BALLAD OF BIRMINGHAM**

“Mother dear, may I go downtown
Instead of out to play,
And march the street of Birmingham
In a Freedom March today?”

“No, baby, no, you may not go,
For the dogs are fierce and wild,
And clubs and hoses, guns and jails
Aren’t good for a little child.”

“But, mother, I won’t be alone.
Other children will go with me,
And march the street of Birmingham
To make our country free.”

“No, baby, no, you may not go,
I fear those guns will fire.
But you may go to church instead
And sing in the children’s choir.”
She has combed and brushed her night dark hair,  
And bathed rose petal sweet  
And drawn white gloves on her small brown hands,  
And white shoes on her feet  
The mother smiled to know her child  
Was in that sacred place,  
But that smile was the last smile  
To come upon her face  

For when she heard the explosion,  
Her eyes grew wet and wild.  
She raced through the street of Birmingham  
Calling for her child.  

She clawed through bits of glass and bricks,  
Then lifted out a shoe.  
“Oh, here is the shoe my baby wore,  
But, baby, where are you?”  
(Dudley Randall b. 1914)

The above poem is a tragic poem. It has several symbols to reflect the political situation when the poem was written. Now, answer the following questions.  

1. The word, dogs in line 6 symbolizes particular dogs, what dogs are they?  
2. Whose clubs did the poet probably refer to?  
3. What do hoses symbolize?

**LOVE IS NOT ALL**

Love is not all: it is not meat nor drink  
Nor slumber nor roof against rain;  
Nor yet a floating spar to men that sink  
And rise and sink and rise and sink again;  
Love cannot fill the thickened lung with breath,  
Nor clean the blood, nor set the fractured bone;  
Yet many a man is making friends with death  
Even as I speak, for lack of love alone.  
It well may be that in a difficult hour,  
Pinned down by pain and moaning for release,  
Or nagged by want past resolution’s power,  
I might be driven to sell your love for peace,  
Or trade the memory of this night for food,  
It well may be. I do not think I would.
It is clear that in tetrameter, there exists a different form of lyric, such as a dimeter as a variation. (5) Pentameter

As mentioned before, it is the most common in English poems. Here is an example.

That time /of year /thou mayst /in me /behold
When yel/low leaves/, or none/, or few/, do hang
Upon /those boughs /which shake /against /the cold
Bare ruin/ed choirs/ where late/ the sweet /birds sang

4. “...jails are good for a little child.” What did the poet probably mean?
5. What can you infer from the phrases ‘night dark hair’ and ‘small brown hands’?
6. What does the line ‘Her eyes grew wet and wild.’ symbolize?

Compare the poem to the one below.

Bang !!!
A plane crashed a building
Storied building
A building where hundreds
Of people were working
For bread to win
And on the ruined ground floor,
Buried dead,
Babies and small children
It was the day-care centre
(Purwanto 2008)

Now, answer the following questions

1. What is the most terrifying view?
2. What would you have done if you had been out of the building for breakfast, leaving your 4 month-old baby in the ground floor of the crashed building?
3. What is a day-care centre in bahasa Indonesia?
4. What do you think of a day-care centre in relation to career women?
5. Give a title to the above poem.

No use to talk to me

Now, continue the rest as above to see how far you understand.

When I was one and twenty
I heard him say again,
“The heart out of the bosom
Was never given in vain;
Tis paid with sighs a plenty
And sold for endless rue
And I am two and twenty
And oh. ‘tis true, Tis true

(4) Tetrameter

Some say /the world /will end /in fire,
Some say /in ice.
From what/ I’ve test /ed of /desire
I hold /with those /who fav/our fire
But if /it had /to pe/rish twice,
I think /I know /enough /of hate
To say /that for /destruct/tion ice
Is al/so great
And would /suffice
I seem
To hear

Good night
Fair one
The day
Is done.

(2) Di-meter

TO DIANEME
Give me/ one kiss
And / no more
If so / be, this
Makes / you poor
To en/rich you
I'll / restore
Fear that / one, two
Thou / sand score

(3) Trimeter

WHEN I WAS ONE AND TWENTY
When I / was one / and twen/ty
I heard /a wise / man say
Give crowns / and pounds /and gui /neas
But not/ your heart/ away
Give pearl /away / and ru/bies
But keep / your fan /cy free
But I / was one /and twen /ty

Day : 4 / 5
Topic : Exploring Poetry 2
Instructional Objectives :
Upon completion of this topic, the students are supposed to be able to:

1. react to poems by making ‘connection’ (connotation & denotation)
2. write a short essay in response to a poem.

DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION

Denotation or dictionary definition of a word can easily be found in a good dictionary. It is also called the lexical meaning of the word. You may be satisfied with it when trying to understand a particular text. However, when you deal with connotations, a good dictionary will not do any good. Connotative meanings are always flavored with personal associations, those that you cannot find even in the best dictionary.

Let us take an example to illustrate. The phrase ‘Dargo Market’ is of course denotatively to mean a traditional market located in Dargo, or whose name is Dargo. However, some people may make personal associations. Dargo market can be associated with a market where rice is sold in a lower price or
prices of groceries are still negotiable. Other people may associate Dargo market to a place of fun where traditional massage is available. Still others (usually Javanese males) may associate it to a place where they sharpen their ‘male weapons’ or a place to test their ‘being males’, or even a place to conduct a comparative study between XXX and XXX back home.

Likewise, the word ‘moon’ is connotatively referred to ‘beauty’, and ‘the ‘sun’ to ‘anger’ or ‘bravery’. It all depends on how you associate the thing to its meaning. Sending roses to a sick person can mean ‘hope you will get better soon’ but in a certain place, it can mean ‘hope you will die soon’.

The use of connotative reference in poems cannot be separated from the use of figure of speech, especially metaphor and simile where things can be personified.

Here is a poem for you, identify the metaphor.

**WOMAN**

she wanted to be a blade of grass amid the fields
but he wouldn’t agree to be the dandelion

she wanted to be a robin singing through the leaves
but he refused to be

5. pentameter (five feet)
6. hexameter (six feet)
7. heptameter (seven feet)
8. octa-meter (eight feet)

However, the most common form of meter in poetry written in English is iambic pentameter, namely the unstressed, stressed pattern of five feet. Here is an example of iambic pentameter.

> Desiring this man’s art
> and that man’s scope
> With what I most enjoy contented least

--William Shakespeare (1609)

Here are some more examples following the number of feet in one line.

(1) Monometer

**GOOD NIGHT**

Good night,
Fair one;
The day
Is done.

The bell
Rings clear
(5) **Spondee**

A spondee pattern is only a variation. It is located somewhere along the line. For example.

Tell me / not, Sweet / I am / unkind

It seems that a spondee is located between trochees and followed by an iamb.

(6) **Pyrrhic**

Similarly, a pyrrhic pattern is also a variation. Take for example.

\[ \_U_U_U_U \]

And I, / the last, / go forth / companionless

It is clear that a pyrrhic is located at the end of the line, which then gives an impression of insignificance.

Meanwhile, the number of feet in each line is described as follows:

1. monometer (one foot)
2. di-meter (two feet)
3. tri-meter (three feet)
4. tetrameter (four feet)

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her tree

she spun herself into a web
and looking for a place to rest
turned to him
but he stood straight
deciding to be her corner

she tried to be a book
but he wouldn’t read
she turned herself into a bulb
but he wouldn’t let her grow

she decided to become
a woman
and though he still refused
to be a man
she decided it was all
good

(Nikki Giovanni 1943)

From the use of the pronoun ‘she’, it is clear that the poet was trying to describe something or someone else. The poet talked about a woman who loved a man but the man did not respond to her love. Finally, the woman decided to let her love break. She may think that ‘to love does not necessarily mean to have.’

Now, answer the following questions

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1. What is the connotative meaning of a blade of grass amid the field?

2. What is the connotative meaning of a robin singing through the leaves?

3. What is the connotative meaning of ‘spun herself into a web’?

4. What is the connotative meaning of a book?

5. What is the connotative meaning of a bulb?

6. What kind of woman is she?

7. What kind of man is he?

8. What can you infer from the poem?

9. Now, reverse the situation, a man loves a woman, but she doesn’t. Use whatever metaphor may apply.

10. Publish your poem to Reader’s Digest upon consultation with your lecturer.

pattern and nothing else, it is then a trochee. For example.

_     U     U     _    U U
Should you / ask me / whence these / stories /

(3) Anapaest

The above two patterns involve only two syllables; but an anapaest involves three syllables. For example.

It was many and many a year/ago

Despite the fact that there is one iamb left at the end of the line, it is not dominant. Thus, the pattern is still anapaest.

(4) Dactyl

Similar to anapaest, dactyl also involves three syllables. The difference lies in the patterns. Anapaest uses an unstressed-unstressed-stressed pattern while dactyl uses a stressed-unstressed-unstressed pattern. For example.

_     U     U     _    U U
Take her up / tenderly

Or,

Take her up / tenderly
Let us clarify each of the terms above with example.

(1) *Iamb*

In order to identify an iamb (unstressed-stressed pattern), it is necessary to read the line very carefully to decide the dominant stress pattern. After being confident that the stress pattern is of unstressed-stressed, and nothing else, then we can mark _ and U on each syllable along the line. For example.

\[ U \_ U \_ U \_ U \_ \]

*How small / a part / of time / they share /*

Or,

*How small / a part / of time / they share*

You can use either way.

(2) *Trochee*

The opposite of iamb is trochee in that it has a stressed-unstressed pattern. A similar way of identifying the stress pattern can be used, that is to read the line carefully in order to find out the dominant stress pattern. If it is a stressed-unstressed

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Actually, another figure of speech of significance is called **Simile**, or an announced comparison. The only difference between simile and metaphor is that in simile, we announce or introduce the comparison using the words, *like* or *as*.

State the following sentences whether each of them is a simile or metaphor. Writer S for simile, and write M for metaphor.

1. Dr. Purwanto is a wolf.  
   1.___
2. Agnes swims like a fish  
   2.___
3. They love each other as bread and cheese  
   3.___
4. Hi, you’re a chicken.  
   4.___
5. He is as quiet as a church mouse.  
   5.___

The following poems are for you to enjoy.

**MEETING AT NIGHT**

The grey sea and the long black land;  
And the yellow half-moon large and low;  
And the startled little waves that leap  
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,  
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,  
And quench its speed in a slushy sand.

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Day : 9  
**Topic** : Exploring Poetry 6  
**Instructional Objectives** :  
Upon completion of this topic, the students are supposed to be able to:

1. understand terminologies in metrical patterns of poems  
2. understand terminologies in footing (the feet of poem)

**METER**  
Some rhythm in poetry is described by the word *meter*. **Meter**, as Madden (2002) puts it, refers to the pattern of stressed (in this handout represented in **bold**) and unstressed (represented in *italics*) syllables in a line. The group of syllables making up one metrical unit is called a **foot**. The metrical feet most commonly used are as follows:

1. iambic (**unstressed**, **stressed**)  
2. trochaic (**stressed**, **unstressed**)  
3. anapaestic (two **unstressed**, one **stressed**)  
4. dactylic (one **stressed**, two **unstressed**)
4. Write a 250 word essay in response to any of the two poems.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And the blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Then the two hearts beating each to each.

(quoted from Robert Browning 1812-1889)

THE GUITARIST TUNES UP

With what attentive courtesy he bent
Over his instrument;
Not as a lordly conqueror who could
Command both wire and wood,
But as a man with a loved woman might,
Inquiring with delight
What slight essential things she had to say
Before they started, he and she to play

(quoted from Franches Cornford 1886-1960)

THE HUG

A woman is reading a poem on the street
and another woman stops to listen. We stop too,
with our arms around each other. The poem
is being read and listened to out here
in the open. Behind us
no one is entering or leaving the houses

Suddenly a hug comes over me and I’m
giving it to you, like a variable star shooting light
off to make itself comfortable, then subsiding. I finish but keep on holding you. A man walks up to us and we know he hasn’t come out of no where, but if he could, he would have. He looks homeless because of how he needs. “Can I have one of those?” he asks you, and I feel you nod. I am surprised, surprised you don’t tell him how it is—that I am yours, only yours, etc., exclusive as a nose to its face. Love—that what we are talking about, love that nabs you with “for me only” and holds on.

So I walk over him and put my arms around him and try to hug him like I mean it. He’s got an overcoat on so thick I can’t feel him past it. I am starting the hug and thinking, “How big a hug is this supposed to be? How long should I hold this hug?” Already we could be eternal, his arms falling over my shoulders, my hands not meeting behind his back, he is so big!

I put my head into his chest and snuggle in. I lean into him. I lean my blood and wishes into him. He stands for it. This is his and he is starting to give it back so well I know he’s getting it. This hug. So truly, so tenderly we stop having arms and I don’t know if my lover has walked away or what, or

And having perhaps the better calm, Because it was grassy and wanted wear; Though as for that the passing there Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay In leaves no step had trodden black. Oh, I kept the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to a way, I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh Somewhere ages and ages hence: Two roads diverged in a wood, and I— I took the one less travelled by, And that has made all the difference. (Robert Frost 1874-1963)

Answer the following questions
1. What rhyme does its stanza have in Browning’s Meeting at Night?
2. What rhyme does its stanza have in Frost’s The Road not Taken?
3. Read the two poems aloud in front of the class and see if you can perform it well.
Now, identify the rhymes in two previously discussed poems. For ease of reference, they will be rewritten for you.

**MEETING AT NIGHT**

The grey sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed in a slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And the blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Then the two hearts beating each to each.
(Robert Browning 1812-1889)

**THE ROAD NOT TAKEN**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth

Then took the other just as fair,

Dr. Sugeng Purwanto, MA

if the woman is still reading the poem, or the houses—what about them?—the houses.

Clearly, a little permission is a dangerous thing.

But when you hug someone you want it to be a masterpiece of connection, the way the button on his coat will leave the imprint of a planet in my cheek

when I walk away. When I try to find some place to go back to

(Tess Gallagher 1943)

Well, the last poem marks the end of the half term of the poetry course. We will continue our discussion in the next half term after the Mid-term test is over. However, we need to be aware that the above poem offers a contradiction, whether it is a symbol of fooling around or religious contemplation. Or, possibly both depending on your interpretation.

The point is that poems also make use of symbols in expressing meanings. Sometimes, we can only get one meaning out of thousand meanings a poet intents to express.

Let me tell you what. The greatest work of poetry is the Al Qur’an out of which we can have unlimited ranges of interpretation but one interpretation is closest, i.e., that of Muhammad, the Greatest Massager of God, the Almighty.

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What about some other Holy Books? They are all great words of God, but the original versions have decayed over ages. Unfortunately, we have only the translated versions.

However, another type of rhyme looks less obvious, such as in repeated initial consonant sounds (do—die, sink—swim), which is called alliteration. Furthermore, assonance is another form of rhyme in which vowel or consonant sounds are repeated, as in time—line, free—easy, struts—frets.

Look at the following quatrains (units of four lines) from two different William Blake poem. This quatrain has an \textit{ab, ab} rhyme scheme.

\textit{From “London”}

In every cry of every Man (a)
In every Infant’s cry of fear (b)
In every voice, in every ban (a)
The mind-forg’d manacles I hear (b)

This quatrain has an \textit{aa, bb} rhyme scheme.

\textit{From ‘The Tyger”}

In what distant deep or skies (a)
Burnt the fire of thine eyes (a)
On what wings dare he aspire (b)
What the hand dare seize the fire (b)
Day: 8
Topic: Exploring Poetry 5

Instructional Objectives:
Upon completion of this topic, the students are supposed to be able to:

1. react to poems by identifying rhymes and rhythm.
2. write a short essay in response to a poem.

SOUND AND STRUCTURE

Right at the beginning of our course, we were introduced to a few facts about poetry, two of which include rhythm and rhyme. We have learned these two quite thoroughly. We have some more facts of poetry: alliteration and assonance though they still belong to the elements of rhyme.

The most obvious rhymes (Madden 2002:70) come at the ends of lines when the final vowel and consonant sounds in word at the end of one line match the vowel and consonant sounds at the end of another, such as in land—sand, things—kings, bare—despair.

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Day: 7
Topic: Exploring Poetry 4

Instructional Objectives:
Upon completion of this topic, the students are supposed to be able to:

3. react to poems by making ‘connection’ (use of symbols)
4. read a poem aloud

SYMBOLS

A symbol is something that represents more than itself. Madden (2002) elaborates that every word we speak is a symbol. Government flags, religious objects, and logos on college sweatshirts are all symbols. We have personal symbols (meaningful objects, special songs), public symbols (flags), and conventional symbols (a road as the journey of life, seasons to represent the stages of our lives). Symbols are subject to personal interpretation. A nation’s flag may symbolize truth and justice to one person, but deceit and oppression to another.

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The poem entitled THE HUG employs a lot of symbols. Do you still remember? What is your interpretation of the poem?

Here is another symbolic poem.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth

Then took the other just as fair,
And having perhaps the better calm,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to a way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,

And that has made all the difference.

Reading the poem at a glance, we can see that it is a symbolic poem. The problem is that we should identify what symbolizes what, and our reaction to the symbolization.

Now, answer the following questions.
1. What do you think the two roads symbolize?
2. What is meant by a yellow wood?
3. Is the poet democratic? Justify your answer by quoting the lines from the poem.
4. Is the poem political or religious? Justify your answer based on your experience.
5. Why did the poet choose the road less travelled by?
6. Present the poem orally (poetry reading)