

Chapter 2 : How It Is Done

This is the first step to understanding how a poet expresses himself . "Literary Appreciation "is no more than this .Finding the meaning of a poem and the intentions of the writer are simply the means .

It is hard to define exactly what a poem is and to state why it gives us pleasure . The subject –matter of a poem is not necessarily the most important thing about it . Any poem sets out to convey a great deal than an idea and it is this that distinguishes it from prose. The delight we get when we read poetry often comes from its musical qualities , or from the striking way a poet uses words . If we are to appreciate poetry , it is necessary to learn how to recognize these " special qualities " . They are called devices and can be found when we analyse a poem . For the sake of convenience , devices may be divided into three groups : structural , sense , and sound .

A. Structural Devices

1. Contrast : It occurs when we find two completely opposite pictures side by side . Sometimes the contrast is obvious and sometimes implied.

Contrast is used in "***The Ancient Mariner*** " The contrast is between the motion of the ship which was travelling so quickly that it "*burst into that silent sea* " and the complete lack of motion which immediately follows : "*Down dropt the breeze , the sails dropt down* "

The contrast is implied between life and death as it is found in "**Break , Break , Break** " and "**Lucy** " .

2. Illustration : It takes the form of a vivid picture by which a poet may make the idea clear.

Illustration is used in "***Break , Break , Break*** " , there are pictures of the fisherman's boy , the sailor lad , and the stately ships . It is by these means that the poet stresses the fact that life goes on when someone dies or suffers .

3. Repetition : Poets often repeat single lines or whole stanzas at intervals to emphasize a particular idea . Repetition is to be found in poetry which is

aiming at special musical effects or when a poet wants us to pay very close attention to some thing.

Like :

Water , water , everywhere ,

And all the boards did shrink ;

Water , water , everywhere

Nor any drop to drink.

The poet makes us feel how vast the ocean is by repeating the word " water" over and over again . At the same time he helps us to understand how thirsty the sailors are. For them , water is something that is everywhere and at the same moment nowhere .

B. Sense Devices

1.Simile : It is a direct comparison and can be recognized by the use of the words like and as .

Like :

As idle as a painted ship

Upon a painted ocean . (from The Ancient Mariner)

2. Metaphor : It is rather like simile except that the comparison is not direct but implied : the words like and as are not used.

Like:

A violet by a mossy stone

Half hidden from the eye. (from Lucy)

Lucy , in these lines , is a violet . It represent a girl of a rare beauty who lived unknown .

3. Personification : It occurs when inanimate objects are given a human form or when they made to speak .

Like :

Ten thousand saw I at a glance

Tossing their heads in sprightly dance . (from I wander lonely as a cloud)

The poet personifies the "daffodils ", as if they are girls who dance.

C. Sound Devices

1. Alliteration : it is the repetition of the same sound at frequent intervals .

Like :

The fair breeze blew , the white foam flew ,

The furrow followed free . (from The Ancient Mariner)

2. Onomatopoeia : it occurs in words which imitate sounds and thus suggest the object described: words like *cuckoo , hum , buzz , swish , crash , jangle ,* etc.

3. Rhyme : it usually occurs at line endings in poetry and consists of words which have the same sound ; the letters preceding the vowel , must , however be unlike in sound . For example : "*night* " and "*sight* " are true rhymes while "*night*" and "*knight* "are not.

4. Assonance : it occurs when a poet introduces imperfect rhymes . Like "*grind*" and "*ground* " .

5. Rhythm : it is a pattern of sounds which a poet imposes on the language he uses.

Like :

Day after day , day after day ,

We stuck , nor breath nor motion ; (from The Ancient Mariner)

In these lines , the poet uses rhythm to express that the ship stops.

