

HOW TO READ POETRY  
MORE PROFITABLY

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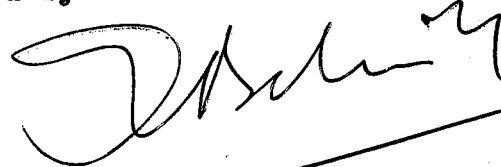


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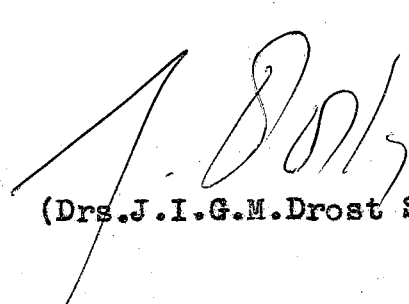
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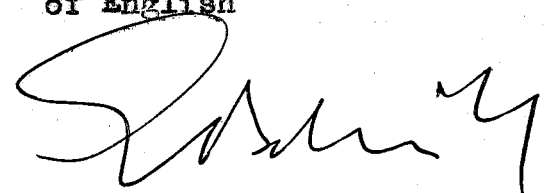
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## INTRODUCTION

The aims of reading poetry might be to increase our emotional intensity, to find factual knowledge or aesthetic beauty through language, or to develop a hitherto undeveloped element of personality. Yet the first aim of poetry-reading should be reading for the sake of pleasure and enjoyment.

So far the result of poetry-reading, generally speaking, has been unsatisfactory. For this poor result there can be found two main reasons. In the first place the average reader has only a little understanding of poetry so that he does not have a sound attitude towards poetry. In the second place his method of reading is incomplete. He is mainly concerned with the poem itself, paying no attention to the background of the poem.

It is to provide some knowledge about poetry and a complete method of analyzing a poem that this paper has been written. Above all it is intended as a guide to read poetry more profitably. The writer is of the opinion that developing one's power to analyze or to study a poem increases one's capacity to enjoy it. It is not enough to read aloud. One must scrutinize it thoroughly. This analysis will then lead to the understanding of the poem, and the understanding is the only means to the enjoyment.

Now our main problem is how to analyze a poem exhaustively. This question of course, cannot be answered in a simple and brief way. Quite a lot of things are needed to undertake the effort. The writer suggests that the first approach is to get some knowledge about poetry,

that is what poetry is, the general aims of poetry-reading, the difficulties in reading it and different types of poetry.

The second approach is to study the poem we are going to analyze from its extrinsic and intrinsic view points. The extrinsic study of a poem starts from its external causes, that is the life and the philosophy of the poet, the social and historical backgrounds of the poem. Although this external approach has often become a "casual" explanation, it frequently illuminates the understanding of a poem. The theory of studying poetry from its external causes constitutes the main point in this thesis.

Practically speaking the methods mentioned above cannot always be applied. If they can, they cannot be used simultaneously. A particular poem might be made clear by the poet's philosophy only, whereas another one by his life. Almost all poems by Wordsworth or Coleridge can be illuminated in this way. Some poems written by W.B. Yeats have a historical background, some others have a philosophic background.

Although the extrinsic approach might be useful, the appreciation of a work of art goes mainly through the work itself. A poem, as a work of art, can be appreciated from its intrinsic elements, the rhythm, the images including metaphors, similes and personifications, the diction, the tone and also the theme.

The extrinsic and intrinsic approaches to analyze a poem seem to be a complete method. By doing so, we will get a complete understanding of a particular poem, i.e. we will find a full enjoyment.

In this the writer is, in some way, against the opinion of Coleridge and A.E. Housman. Coleridge says that poetry gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood. A.E. Housman emphasizes that meaning is of the intellect, poetry is not; and that perfect understanding will sometimes almost extinguish pleasure. To a large extent the statements of these two poets cannot be agreed upon. In our own experience, when we read some kind of reading material and we do not know what it is about, we get nothing from it. It is the understanding that constitutes the main point in any kind of reading. The enjoyment, on the whole, depends on the understanding. To ignore the understanding when we read poetry cannot be admitted. From psychology, we know that the mind, the feelings, the will and also all other faculties cannot be separated from one another. When one faculty works, it is spontaneously helped by and related to the others. Poetry can be understood and enjoyed through the workings of the mind, of the feelings and emotions, of other faculties working together.

But since poetry is by nature obscure a perfect understanding of it is practically impossible. Perfect understanding when we refer to poetry is a relative thing. The personal reactions and impressions of one reader of a poem are quite different from those of others.

After we have read the poem, we should be able to give our value-judgement. To evaluate a poem does not mean to give a positive verdict, it may also be a negative one. In this evaluation we can use our own experience as the norm, or we can compare the poem with oth-



er poems on the same subject, written by different poets. It is not an easy task to give a value-judgement to a work of art. We will not be punished if we don't. But as people who are interested in poetry, it would be better to have some ability of how to evaluate a poem.

Reading poetry cannot be done instinctively, that is without using our mind, feelings and imagination, and without a gradual development towards perfection and consciousness. Reading of any kind needs a lot constant practice in order to acquire the utmost profit. Especially in poetry-reading, which seems to be more difficult than any other kind of reading, we must make a greater and more serious effort. A certain skill of reading poetry is indispensable.

The writer suggests different types and themes of poems by many writers, which might be a challenge for the readers to scrutinize, to understand and finally to enjoy. It is up to the reader to choose which of those poems are of interest.

Finally the writer sincerely hopes that this paper might be of a help for those who want to possess the skill of analyzing poems thoroughly and that "it will win new hearts and minds to both the pleasure and the profits in the reading of poems".

## Chapter 1

### WHAT IS POETRY

There is no satisfactory definition of poetry. Several poets and critics have tried to define poetry but their definitions are not satisfactory. Each definition is very often concerned with one aspect of poetry, so that the essence of poetry is not touched. But although each definition has its deficiencies, it is never useless.

One thing that makes poetry difficult to define is that it is very complex. It has many forms and levels, therefore to have a complete definition is impossible. In our approach to get the best description of what poetry is, we will work in two ways, first, describing what a poet is and second, studying some definitions or descriptions of poetry given by poets and critics.

#### I. WHAT IS A POET

S.T. Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria*, says that the question what is poetry is so near to the question what is a poet, that the answer to the one is involved in the answer to the other.

In the "Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*", Wordsworth has said that a poet is "a man speaking to men". This is true, but it does not bring us to the main point of what a poet is. This definition is too general and too vague. Of course, a poet is, in some degree, not more than the average man. He is a man living in Society, endowed with body and soul and certain faculties. But

like the individuals differ from one another in their talents, intelligence, and artistic feelings, so the poet is superior to them all, in seeing more vividly and feeling more intensely things that the average man sees and feels only vaguely and obscurely. Furthermore, he has the ability of expressing his thoughts and feelings in a way intelligible to others. Thus the poet has a better sensibility and a greater gift of communicating his experience to his fellow men.

The poet has a twofold nature, as a man and as an artist. As a man he does not differ so much from other men, as an artist he has more sensibility, more tenderness and more gifts for expressing his feelings and ideas. As an artist, the poet resembles a painter and a Composer. The three are very much driven by the urge of self-creation. It is a kind of need that not all human beings share. Man's basic needs are food, clothes, shelter and sexual fulfilment.

Paintings as the work of the painter, music as the product of the composer and poems as the work of the poet, belong to the Fine Arts. Among the arts, poetry has an important role in human life. In short a poet is really an artist of language.

## II. THE DEFINITION OF POETRY

The writer has already pointed out that there is no successful definition of poetry. The poets and critics talk about it in such very different ways that we sometimes believe that they do not talk about the same thing.

According to Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), poet-

ry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason. This definition shows two main thoughts of poetry, pleasure and truth. Pleasure is considered to be the result of poetry, whereas truth is the object of poetry. The poet should be able to combine the two elements by the help of reason and imagination. Thus, in the process of making poetry reason is indispensable, imagination should help the reason. We come to truth by reason and not by imagination. This definition is too rationalistic.

W. Wordsworth (1770 - 1850) says : "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". Or "poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge". What is meant by Wordsworth by his first definition is certainly a statement about the role of feelings in poetry. Reason, which is considered important by Dr. Samuel Johnson, is ignored by Wordsworth. Wordsworth's poetry seems to be individualistic. In the second definition Wordsworth gives a vague and an abstract description. It is too philosophical for the common people.

When Matthew Arnold (1822 - 1888) says : "poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life - to the question : How to live," he is of course defining the relation between poetry and life, and ignoring the other elements of poetry.

T.S. Eliot (1888 - 1967) defines poetry as "a superior amusement". To this definition he explains further "I do not mean an amusement for superior people. I call it an amusement, ....., not because that is a true definition, but because if you call it anything

else you are likely to call it something still more -  
false". Thus T.S. Eliot himself finds it difficult to  
give a true definition of poetry.

From those four definitions, it is enough to  
show that each poet has his own view and interest. The  
four poets look at poetry from different angles, result-  
ing in their definitions being different from one an-  
other. All of those definitions or descriptions have  
their deficiencies. In general, the essence of poetry  
is not touched. They deal with the effect of poetry  
(pleasure), the role of feelings in poetry or the rela-  
tion between poetry and life. The essence of poetry,  
meaningful organized thought and musical patterns of  
sounds are not properly considered.

We have quoted different kinds of definitions be-  
longing to different periods. Dr. Samuel Johnson, who  
lived during the age of reason, stresses the role of  
reason in poetry. Wordsworth, who lived in the early  
romanticism, emphasizes the feelings as the main element  
in poetry. Matthew Arnold, who lived in the late of  
romanticism notes the relation between poetry and life,  
whereas T.S. Eliot, who belonged to the modern age,  
touches poetry from its point of view of value.

Though the four poets do not share the same views,  
their definitions are of great value to us. From them we  
get some understanding about poetry and finally realize  
that poetry is not easy to define or to describe. There  
are quite a lot of things involved in it, form or struc-  
ture, meaningful words, musical patterns, truth etc, so  
that a satisfactory definition is impossible.

The following description of poetry might give

an easier understanding about poetry, or rather a poem.

"A poem is a form of expression in which an unusual number of resources of language, are concentrated into a patterned organic unit of significance."<sup>1</sup>

Poetry or rather a poem is the expression of the poet's thoughts and feelings, using the power of language as its medium. The language is structured and organized so that it will become meaningful. This last definition touches different elements of poetry, a poetic form of expression, language and significant patterns. Although this definition is not the most perfect one, for the common people it can be more easily understood and grasped. Furthermore it serves our purpose that is to know the essence of poetry, structure, language and meaning. These three elements should always exist in any poem and are considered to be the main elements.

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<sup>1</sup>A textbook definition, see Elizabeth Drew: "Poetry", p.19.

## Chapter 2

### THE GENERAL AIMS OF POETRY - READING

Reading at any level and at any time must have a certain aim. When one reads a newspaper or a weekly magazine, one has a certain aim. This is also true when one reads books on physics or chemistry. We shall not mention the aims of reading in general instead we shall limit ourselves to poetry-reading.

Before we come to the main points, it would be better to know the purpose of the poet writing poetry. Is it to teach or to delight people? Is it to inform things scientifically? Is it to write a poem only for the poem's sake? It would be a bit queer to say that poetry is written only for moral propaganda. Even the best religious poetry never preaches. It would be a pessimistic view of poetry if it is written solely for the poem's sake. Edgar Allan Poe in 'The Poetic Principle' writes as follows :

"We should immediately then discover that under the sun there neither exists nor can exist any work more thoroughly dignified - more supremely noble than this very poem - this poem per se - this poem which is a poem and nothing more - this poem is written solely for the poem's sake."<sup>1</sup>

If the intention of the poet is such, it seems to be useless to read poetry. Poetry is only the overflow of

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Allen, Writers on Writing, p.31.

the poet's urge for aesthetic experience. Poetry is considered as an end in itself. It is not communicable to others.

Poets have different aims when they compose poems. From the earliest times onwards the main objects of poetry are to delight and to teach. Hesiod stresses that poetry should add to the happiness of human beings. All arts, including poetry, are dedicated to joy and there is nothing more noble than to make man happy. Believing that poetry is meant for such purposes, we can now state the aims of poetry-reading.

1<sup>o</sup>. Poetry is read for entertainment or pleasure. This is the main aim of reading poetry. Although when we read novels or short stories we also find pleasure, the pleasure of reading poetry is quite different. It is a deeper and more lasting pleasure and it is quite manifold too. There is an enjoyment in the mere rhythm, in the rhyme, in the sound of words, in the regular verbal patterns. There is also an enjoyment in the organization of ideas, in the beautiful and vivid images such as metaphors, similes or symbols.

John Press, in his book "The Chequer'd Shade", says that one of the pleasures we derive from poetry is precisely the cross-word-puzzler's delight in working out a problem, and for certain people the pleasure is peculiarly intense. He emphasizes that the chief delight is found in interpreting the meaning of the words, phrases or sentences in poetry.

That poetry is read for pleasure is endorsed by some critics or poets. We find : The seventeenth century view :



"Delight is the chief, if not the only end of poesy, instruction can be admitted but in the second place, for poesy only instructs as it delight."

(John Dryden : 'Defense of the Essay on Dramatic Poetry').

The nineteenth century view :

"Poetry or rather a poem is a species of composition ....., as having intellectual pleasure for its object"

(S.T. Coleridge : 'Literary Remains').

The twentieth century view :

"Poetry as a superior amusement : I do not mean an amusement for superior people".

(T.S. Eliot : 'Preface to The Sacred Wood').

In general we can distinguish pleasure in two ways, viz. immediate and hard-won pleasure. Immediate pleasure can be obtained easily, and of course it is easily lost too. It is a transitory and particular pleasure. We find this kind of pleasure when we play cards, basket-ball or ping pong. It seems that the enjoyment occurs only when the play itself is going on.

When we read poetry, we will find something more. The enjoyment is the fruit of hard-won pleasure. Its characteristics are permanent, durable and universal. My own experience is that poetry-reading gives a permanent enjoyment. Without having re-read the poem of the An-

cient Mariner by S.T. Coleridge there is still a vivid memory in my mind, some lines as follows :

"The ice was here, the ice was there

The ice was all around"

"Below the Kirk, below the hill

Below the light house top".

"Alone, alone, all, all alone

Alone on a wide, wide sea".

or Wordsworth's lines:

"The child is father of the Man

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety."

"Rolled round in earth's Diurnal course,

With rocks, and stones, and trees."

These lines quoted above always haunt my memory and I hope they will remain doing so. As for me, there is a special, particular beauty in those lines, which I cannot describe exactly, but which is quite convincing. I have read a lot of books written in prose, but not a single line does haunt me like those lines above.

In poetry-reading for the sake of enjoyment Wordsworth suggests that it would be better to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. The powers of poetic language are not limited, so that it is possible for poetry to give other enjoyments of a purer, more lasting and more exquisite nature. Although the subject matter of a poem seems to be familiar and common to us, there is always a sense of novelty and freshness in it. It is the art of the poet to harmonize things old and familiar

with things novel and fresh.

2°. Poetry can be used not only to entertain, but also to confront reality and human problems in a direct and economic way. Poetry is considered as the earliest and the most concentrated and intense form of communication among the arts of language. Consequently the nature of poetry is compact and intense. There is no other medium which can describe reality and truth about the world in a more economical way than poetry.

#### Family Matters

In our museum - we always go there on Sundays  
 they have opened a new department  
 Our aborted children, pale, serious embryos  
 Sit there in plain glass jars  
 and worry about their parents' future.

Günther Grass.

This modern poem is concerned with abortion which has become a serious problem at present. Through this short poem the poet wants to inform us about the religious and social life of the modern world. Although the poem is very short, there are a lot of things implied in the poem. If the poet had written in prose, he might have written it in a hundred lines or pages. By means of poetry we can find reality in human problems directly and economically.

3°. Another aim of poetry-reading is to increase our emotional intensity. We already know that a poem

is composed in the mind when a particular object or situation strikes the feelings of the poet. It is what is usually meant by inspiration. Therefore a poem is especially a description of the feelings of the poet towards certain objects or situations. This is also true when we refer to the classical poems which might be rational rather than emotional. In general when human beings try to reveal their emotions and feelings, they refer to the most beautiful verbal expression there is - poetry. It is not surprising that some people define poetry as the expression of emotions.

Consequently when we read poetry we especially use our emotions and feelings. The other faculties such as our intellect, memory, fantasy and imagination only help to feel and to understand a particular poem and so to increase our emotion. Even though the classical poets like Dryden and Pope use reason as the source of all knowledge, they do not ignore the feelings.

On the whole, poetry is an emotional description, not an intellectual one. Reading poetry is an exercise for our emotions, so that each time we refer to poetry, they are exercised. Such training will deepen and enlarge our range of feeling and perception. In short - poetry - reading is a good exercise to increase our emotional intensity because poetry itself is full of emotional description.

For modern people what is expressed by Günther Grass in 'Family Matters' is not completely new and strange, but by reading the poem our factual knowledge is increased and deepened. We will also get new insight and understanding. We will find that there is some truth

in the poem that will give us a feeling of satisfaction.

4°. Finally by poetry-reading we obtain a more balanced outlook on life and a healthier all - round development.

F.L. Billows, in his book 'The Techniques of Language Teaching', on page 231, writes as follows :

"The study of poetry gives a further opportunity for those elements of the personality to develop which may remain undeveloped in a narrowly intellectual curriculum. It can help us to integrate them into the process of development of all-round, mature people."

It seems that without having contact with poetry man's life is not complete. The aesthetic and intuitive sides of the personality are very much nourished when we read poetry. Poetry can give shape and integration to the introverted personality. Poetry-reading can be considered as a guide to right living. Without poetry the emotional side of the personality remains underdeveloped or suppressed. It is true that other works of art nourish our emotional side as well, but they work in quite different ways. Above all poetry-reading can make people more mature.

## Chapter 3

### POETRY-READING IN COMPARISON

#### WITH PROSE - READING

The average man prefers reading prose to reading poetry. One or two out of ten persons prefer to read poetry. Students in the various schools are taught how to read poetry but after they have finished studying, I am sure, that they never open their books on poetry again. When they have leisure time they are inclined to read novels or short stories. What might be the reasons why prose-reading has a wider scope than poetry-reading?

1<sup>o</sup>. In the first place there are many easy books that can satisfy everyone's natural craving for aesthetic experience, the comic strips, the weekly magazines, the detective stories, etc. Aesthetic experience can also be obtained by having a trip in a car, going to the movies or listening to the radio. All of these activities are easier to undertake than poetry-reading. Furthermore we must realize that we have little practice "in taking in through the eye and ear aesthetically ordered words". To have aesthetic experience through poetry needs a certain ability, patience and constant practice. We should scrutinize and study a certain poem thoroughly.

2<sup>o</sup>. In the second place poetry-reading is really more difficult than prose-reading. As an enjoyment poetry-reading is not easy to undertake. This difficulty might be result of the nature of poetry, its obscurity,

intensity or compactness, and complexity. Because poetry is so intense, so condense and so complex, it will need a strenuous effort to enjoy it. We must do it seriously, concentrating our feelings and emotions, our minds, our imagination and fantasy. This kind of reading of course, is not suitable to people after a hard day's work. It is not easy to concentrate our mental faculties in a bus or a train, or in other busy places. To read poetry more profitably we must consider the place and atmosphere around us.

Accordingly poetry does not lend itself to rapid reading. We are impatient when something demands close scrutiny like reading poetry. If we try to get full enjoyment from poetry, we must know it intimately - we should read it several times, so that we are almost able to recite it by heart. Any poem, however short, demands a close and careful study. We should study it word by word, line by line, stanza by stanza and at last we will achieve something. There can be no skipping of words or lines. In prose-reading, sometimes, we can skip the unimportant parts without affecting so much the understanding of the books we are reading.

Of course, there are certain poems which can be read more rapidly than others. Epic or narrative poetry, according to their nature, can be read faster than lyric poetry. Ballads like "The two Corbiers" and "Sir Patrick Spens" can be read faster than Keats's lyric poems "Ode to a Nightingale" or "Ode on a Grecian Urn". To understand and to enjoy these two lyric poems we should read slowly, carefully, concentrating all our mental faculties.

Another reason why poetry-reading is more dif-

difficult than prose-reading is that a particular poem expresses a certain mood and attitude. To understand the mood and the attitude we must identify ourselves with them. There is a certain mood and attitude in "The Windhover" by G.M. Hopkins, in "Ode to a Nightingale" by John Keats or in "Batter my heart" by John Donne. We must know the right mood and attitude that are involved in those poems. This kind of effort seems to add to other kinds of difficulty in poetry-reading.

On the whole poetry-reading as an activity to find pleasure is really difficult, whereas prose-reading is much easier to undertake. Speaking about the difficulties in poetry-reading we should remember what T.S. Eliot says :

"The difficulty of poetry (and Modern poetry is supposed to be difficult), may be due to one of several reasons. First, there may be personal causes which make it impossible for a poet to express himself in any but an obscure way; ..... Or difficulty may be due just to novelty; ..... Or difficulty may be caused by the reader's having been told, or having suggested to himself, that the poem is going to prove difficult. And finally there is the difficulty caused by the author's having left out something which the reader is used to finding ....."

(The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See T.S. Eliot : Selected Prose, ed. John Hayward, pp. 92 - 3.



When the poet is unable to convey his thoughts in a clear way, the product, of course, is also obscure. The fact of thoughts being obscure and novel in poetry is understandable enough. A reader who comes to a poem, convinced that it presents a challenge to his skill in reading, may destroy the meaning of the poem and do a lot of damage in the process. The fourth reason might be made clear by John Press's explanation.

"When a man says 'that's not my idea of poetry, he is usually expressing resentment or disgust, rather than a delighted surprise at having discovered something new. The person who goes to church, in order to get from it a certain experience or a particular satisfaction, is likely to feel cheated if his hopes are dissatisfied."<sup>1</sup>

It is man's desire to cling to familiar certainties that makes man irritated and bewildered when he confronts with original poetry.

What is mentioned by T.S. Eliot above is only some part of the difficulty. There are still other important causes of difficulty that he leaves out. Poets are men who have a degree of mental alertness and general culture, which the average reader does not possess. Consequently poetry of the highest quality demands great ability and knowledge on the part of its readers. Some of the modern poets want to restrict their audience and some of them are snobbish. They do not bother about the audience. The difficulty of modern poetry is also caused by the special problems of the modern world. The life

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<sup>1</sup>The Chequer'd Shade : pp.83-4.

of the modern world, socially, economically and political-ly, is so complex that the poets are unable to describe it in any but an obscure way. Cleanth Brooks has said that "a great deal of modern poetry is difficult for the reader simply because so few people, relatively speaking, are accustomed to reading poetry as poetry."<sup>1</sup>

Still Elizabeth Drew, in her book called 'Directions in Modern Poetry' mentions other causes of difficulty in poetry-reading. In order to understand poetry, the reader needs an actual knowledge of the image used by the poet to communicate his thoughts. Or the difficulty lies in the reader's ignorance of the whole symbolism on which a poem is built as in Yeats's Byzantium or Gerald Manley Hopkins's 'The Windhover'. Many of G.M. Hopkins's poems cause great trouble because of the extreme compression of syntax and the invention of new words. Metaphysical poems offer another kind of difficulty.

Our discussion of the difficulty in reading poetry is not meant to warn the readers against reading poetry, but just to encourage them to read poems, for it is possible to overcome the difficulty. By knowing the difficulty in poetry-reading, we can do what we should do. What is difficult can be prepared beforehand, so that the difficulty can be tackled easily. We should also realize that poetry-reading is more difficult than prose-reading. Thus, when we read poetry we must be better-equipped than when we read prose. We need not begin to read poems which according to their nature are

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<sup>1</sup>American Critical Essays : p. 260.

difficult. We can choose those which are easier.

Poetry-reading gives a different effect from prose-reading. Because poetry is more memorable, more rhythmical, sometimes after we have read a piece of poem, there is still a vivid memory of some features of the poem. This memory will survive for a long time and cannot easily be lost. Wordsworth in "Preface to Lyrical Ballads", says that a piece of poem will be read a hundred times without feeling bored, while a piece of prose is read once. The musical tone of poetry makes it easier to memorize and not to produce a feeling of boredom. Poetry is like a top-hit song repeated several times by boys and girls.

Prose is the language of the understanding whereas poetry is the language of the emotions or J.H. Francis might say "prose speaks to the head, poetry to the heart."<sup>1</sup>

Compare two types of writing as follows :

'The bear'

by : William Faulkner

"It ran in his knowledge before he ever saw it. It looked and towered in his dreams before he even saw the unaxed woods where it left its crooked print, shaggy, huge, red-eyed, not malevolent but just big - too big for the dogs which tried to bay it, for the horses which tried to ride on it, too big for the very country which was its constricting scope."

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<sup>1</sup> A course of English Poetry, p.64.

'Snake'

by : D.H. Lawrence

"A snake came to my water-trough  
On a hot, hot day, and I in pyjamas for the heat,  
To drink there.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great  
dark carobtree

I came down the steps with my pitcher  
And must wait, must stand and wait, for there be  
Was at the trough before me."

When we read an 'impression' in prose, as the impression of a bear written by W. Faulkner above, we use our imagination and intellect in particular. Generally speaking if we speak of 'imagination and intellect', we refer to our mind or our head. But with the poem 'snake' by D.H. Lawrence for example, in order to grasp what is about we must especially use our emotions and feelings. The emotions and feelings are closely related with our heart, rather than our mind.

## Chapter 4

### TYPES OF POETRY

Knowing the different types of poetry will be of great value when we read poetry. Any poem must belong to a certain type of poetry. Each type has different characteristics. J. Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" belongs to a type of poetry called "lyric". The lyric poem according to its nature is very subjective. It is mainly concerned with the feelings and the imagination of the poet. We must read the lyric poem slowly and carefully, studying word by word. "The twa corbies", for instance, belongs to another type called narrative poetry, more exactly, the ballad form. In this case we can read faster than with the lyric. There is no need to equip and prepare ourselves as hard as when we read the lyric. An understanding of the various types of poetry will reveal some aspects of the poem we are reading, for it can clarify and illuminate the mood, the spirit and the form of a certain poem.

#### I. NARRATIVE POETRY

The ballad "Sir Patrick Spens" (anonymous) and "Out, Out" by R. Frost belong to narrative poetry. The main object of each is to tell a story and in each the personality of the speaker is hidden in the background. What is told is not the surface facts of human events like in news stories. The superiority of a good narrative poem over a news story is that the poem provides the insights of human relationships and deep human feelings. The business of the newsman is to tell the

news, that of the narrative poet to express his own insights and feelings. Therefore the poet must use figurative language such as : symbolism, metaphor, association, or simile. The ballad and the romance, perhaps, were the most popular forms of narrative poetry in the middle-ages.

The ballad is a very brief folk story meant to be sung, simple in plot and metrical structure. What is told is only the climatic episode of a highly dramatic action. Usually it is not concerned with the beginning of a series of events, but rather with the further happening. Since it is not a complete story, there is no room for character development. Thus we are provided with little or no character development, with no gradually built-up plot.

The popular or the authentic ballad is an anonymous story handed down by oral transmission among generations of people. It is not surprising that during the development the ballad undergoes many changes, either in content or form. The singer of the ballad sometimes changes the wording of the ballad to suit both his own and his audience's interest. This might be the reason why there are dozens of versions of the same ballad.

Ballads flourished among the lower middle class in medieval times. The audiences learned the ballads from the singers and joined in the singing. Usually the ballads are concerned with the life of the nobility: Lord Randal, Sir Patrick Spens. The tone is usually mocking, ironical or sad.



Lord Randal

Anonymous

"O where hae ye been, Lord Randal, my son ?

O where hae ye been, my handsome young man ?

"I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down.

"Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randal, my son ?

Where gat ye dinner, my handsome young man ?

"I dine'd wi my true-love; mother, make my bed soon  
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down.

"What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randal, my son ?

What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome youngman?

"I gat eels boiled in broo, mother, make my bed soon.  
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down.

"What became of your blood hounds, Lord Randal, my son?

What became of your blood, my handsome youngman?

"O they swell'd and they died, mother, make my bed soon.  
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie down.

"O I fear ye are poisond, Lord Randal, my son !

O I fear ye are poisond, my handsome youngman !

"O yes! I am poisond, my mother, make my bed soon.

For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie down.

The ballad is a dialogue between mother and son; both belong to the Scottish high classes. It appears that the son, Lord Randal, has been poisoned by his love while staying out in the woods. His dog died of the poison too. The main theme of the ballad is the feuds that always obtain among the Scottish clans. As

to the reason why Randal is poisoned there is no further information. At least we can conjecture that he may have done something wrong too to his "true love".

There is no development of its characters, no description of the previous happenings. It tells only the climactic event and reaches its climax in stanza 5. Some characteristics of a ballad that we find in Lord Randal are :

1. Simple and incremental or cumulative repetition. The repetition is not only limited to words, but phrases, sentences and structures. The significance of this repetition is to increase the intensity, to help the ballad to grow, to reach its climax, to help the singers to memorize it easily. The incremental repetition sticks to the same words and lines but increases the reader's curiosity.
2. There is a balance of lines, words and structures throughout the poem. There is also a balance in the speech of the mother and Lord Randal. In each stanza two questions are asked by the mother and two answers are given by Lord Randal.
3. Use of dialogue. Conversation in ballads also constitutes an important element. In "Lord Randal" the conversation is between Lord Randal and his mother.
4. General absence of figures of speech. In "Lord Randal" we find plainness and simplicity of language. As I have mentioned before the narrative poet must use figurative language to



express his insights and feelings, but in "Lord Randal" we find an exception.

#### 5. Anonymity of authorship.

"Lord Randal" belongs to a type of ballad called authentic ballad. It is not literary, it is popular. There is another type called imitative or literary ballad. The literary ballad is the product of an identifiable poet. Many of its characteristics, its formal features, its narrative teaching, resemble the ballad of tradition. The literary ballad is not handed down orally and is not meant to be sung. Its diction and imagery are much more elaborate and individual. "The ballad of father Gilligan" by W.B. Yeats, is an example of the imitative ballad.

The popular ballad seems to lack the elements of poetry, because of its popularity in origin. But we must remember that poetry is more a matter of feeling than of form. The simple stories are enough to reveal a keen sense of wonderment about heroism in human life. To appreciate an ancient ballad, we must approach it in the right spirit.

## II. DRAMATIC POETRY

When we read "Hamlet" or "King Lear" we find that "verse" is used as the medium of the plays. At first it seems unusual that plays for entertainment are written in verse. J.H. Francis in his book "A course of English Poetry" explains that "the use of verse on the stage was a tradition dating back to the time when the drama was an instrument in the hands of religion. In

England stage plays originated in the wish of the clergy to illustrate Bible history and stories of the saints. It was natural that plays with such a serious object in view should be clothed in language of the greatest possible beauty and dignity."<sup>1</sup> The second reason might be that verse is more memorable than prose, so that an actor can recite the wording of the verse faster than if it had been written in prose. The third reason is that the use of verse on the stage seems both fitting and natural to author as well as audience.

Dramatic poetry is of two kinds, dramatic monologue and soliloquy. Mc. Namee, in his book "Literary Types and Themes" p. 293, explains that dramatic monologue is a short poem in which a single person, other than the poet himself at some critical moment of his life, reveals a great deal of his own character and the characters of the person or persons he is addressing in the poems, merely by what he says and does.

Robert Browning has been successful in his dramatic monologue "My last Duchess".

#### My last Duchess

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,  
 Looking as if she were alive. I call  
 That piece a wonder, now : Fra' Randolf's hands  
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.  
 Will't please you sit and look at her? I said  
 'Fra Randolf' by design, for never read  
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,

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<sup>1</sup>A course of English Poetry: p.35.

The depth and passion of its earnest glance,  
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by  
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)  
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,  
 How such a glance came there; so, not the first  
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not  
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot  
 Of joy into the Duchess' Cheek : perhaps  
 Fra Randolf chanced to say; "Her mantle laps  
 Over my lady's wrist too much, "or" Paint  
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
 Half - flush that dies along her throat : "such stuff  
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough  
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had  
 A heart-how shall I say? - too soon made glad  
 Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er  
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere  
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,  
 The dropping of the daylight in the west,  
 The bough of cherries some officious fool  
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule  
 She rode with round the terrace-all and each  
 Would draw from her alike the approaching speech,  
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men, - good!  
 but thanked  
 Somehow - I know not how - as if she ranked  
 My gift of a nine - hundred - years - old name  
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame  
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill  
 In speech - (which I have not) - to make your will  
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this

Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,  
 Or there exceed the mark" - And if she let  
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set  
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse  
 -E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose  
 Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,  
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without  
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;  
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands  
 As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll must  
 The company below, then I repeat,  
 The Count your master's known munificence  
 Is ample warrant that no just pretense  
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed  
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go  
 Together down, Sir. Notice Neptune, though,  
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,  
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

The speaker of the poem is the Duke, probably Alonzo II of Ferrara. He intends to marry the daughter of a count, who will become his second wife. The count sends a messenger to the Duke. On the wall of the Duke's home there is a portrait of his first wife. The portrait is a wonderful painting made by Fra Randolf. The Duke asks the messenger to sit down and to look at the beautiful picture. We can imagine how dramatic the speech of the Duke is.

"That's my last Duchess painted on the wall".

The speech of the Duke is like a speech of an actor in a play. The messenger, the man that the Duke

is addressing to, is considered as the other actor. The speaker tells about the character of his first wife. According to him, "She is too soon made glad and too easily impressed". Everything that she looks at, always attracts her. Above all, "her looks go everywhere". It is not decent for a woman to have such looks. Such behaviour is not liked by the Duke. The revelation of his first wife's character is made by means of his own voice.

" she had  
 A heart - how shall I say? - too soon made glad  
 Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er  
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere."

(line 21 - 24)

The speech of the Duke is very dramatic and lively; The Duke, at some highly significant and critical moment, speaks frankly to the messenger, a complete stranger, about an unknown conflict between the Duke himself and his wife. For the messenger the news may be very exciting and interesting. The dramatic sense is also found in the use of the word "I", standing for the Duke and the word "you", standing for the messenger. The revelation between the Duke and the messenger is like an actor speaking to another one.

Indeed, the Duke is actually in a critical and dramatic mood. The critical mood is of course, caused by his dislike to the behaviour of his first wife.

Both soliloquy and dramatic monologue are spoken by one person. In soliloquy the speaker is alone; He does not speak about other persons, but about himself. Thus he reveals his own thoughts. The soliloquy is

usually found in the Elizabethan plays. In Act I, scene 2, in the play of Hamlet, we find a soliloquy:

"O, that this too too solid flesh would melt  
 Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!  
 Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd  
 His canon' gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!  
 How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable,  
 Seems to me all the uses of this world!  
 Fie on it! Oh fie, fie! 'Tis an unweeded  
 garden,  
 That grows to seed ....."

In a critical and unhappy moment of his life, Hamlet speaks aloud to voice his bitterness. He thinks of committing suicide because he is fed up with the world. But he realizes that such behaviour is against the law of God. The dramatic convention is intended to express some aspects of the inner motives of Hamlet as the main character in the play. In this way, the audience will gradually get to know more about the inner conflicts and the character of Hamlet.

### III. LYRIC

Literature which has to do with outward things, not with the thoughts and feelings of the speaker, is called "objective". It is not completely impersonal, for a work of art cannot be separated from its creator. The personality of the creator or author is indirectly reflected in his creation. An objective poet describes things outside himself, he does not tell us directly what he thinks and feels.

Literature can also be "subjective". The chief interest lies in the thoughts and feelings of the writer. The outside world is important only as subject matter. The primary purpose of writing subjectively, according to Mc. Namee, is "to build a little patterned world of words that will suggest to the reader some of the thoughts and feelings of the author himself."<sup>1</sup> The subjective writer might compose a lyric poem. Thus a lyric poem is very subjective.

Literary approaches, the objective and the subjective, are deeply rooted in the human instinct. The former has a tendency to be sociable, the latter to be individual. As a social being man must tell about his experience to others. The individual person tends to seek an outlet for his thoughts and feelings, possibly by means of writing a lyric poem. A lyric poem, therefore, is an expression of human feeling.

The characteristic of a lyric is that it is short, united, meaning to say that it deals with one subject, and in structure, as a rule, composed of three parts, the motive, the emotion and the thought. Very often in dealing with the subject matter the lyric poet treats it systematically and explores it in philosophy. Therefore in lyric poetry we learn how the lyric poet organizes the subject matter and also what it means to him. The organization and meaning are quite distinctive and individual. Other lyric poets might treat it differently, although they work on the same subject matter. It is the philosophy of the individual poet what plays an important role in treating the subject matter.

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<sup>1</sup>Literary types and themes : p. 539.

There are three kinds of lyric: sonnet, Ode and Elegy.

A. The sonnet

The sonnet originally came from Italy. This form then developed in England and in some other countries in Europe. It was taken over from Dutch into Indonesian by Moh. Jamin in 1922 and introduced into Indonesian literature. The Indonesian poets imitate the structure of the sonnet but not precisely in its original form.

J.H. Francis in his book "A course of English Poetry" (p.116) says that the sonnet might be compared to a charming little frame ready for a painter to compose a picture dainty enough to fit it. It consists of fourteen lines (of eleven syllables in Italian, generally twelve in French, and ten in English) and has a rhyming system. The rhyming system is arranged according to one or other of certain definite schemes, of which the Petrarchan and the Elizabethan are principal. In the Petrarchan sonnet the rhyming patterns are abba abba, followed by two, or three, other rhymes in the remaining six lines, with a pause in the thought after the 'Octave'. The English imitators, such as Milton and Wordsworth do not always observe such division of thought. The Elizabethan sonnet has a rhyming system : abab cdcd ef ef gg.

Nuns Fret not at their  
Convent's narrow room

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room,  
And hermits are contented with their cells;  
And students with their pensive citadels;



Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,  
 Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,  
 High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,  
 Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells :  
 In truth the prison, into which we doom  
 Ourselves, no prison is : and hence for me,  
 In sundry moods, 'twas pasture to be bound  
 Within the sonnet's scanty plot of ground;  
 Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)  
 Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,  
 Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

(W. Wordsworth)

In the first eight lines, the poet follows the rhyming of the Petrarchan sonnet, namely abba abba. In line 11, the poet realizes that the sonnet is a 'scanty plot of ground'. It seems impossible to express one's thought in a poem consisting of only fourteen lines. As a lyrical poem it is not really too short. The poet must be able to develop his thought in a form of such brevity and formal strictness. The sonnet is a challenge for the poet to test his ability to express his theme in these concentrated lines.

A great deal of the English sonnets were written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The sonnet declined in the eighteenth century, but during the time of W. Wordsworth, Keats and Hopkins it flourished again.

#### B. The Ode

The Ode is a lyrical poem usually in varied or irregular metre, in celebration of some person, event or

thing. The themes will be restricted to those which provide beauty in a noble and sublime degree. English Odes may be divided into two classes. The Ode in which the stanza corresponds with other stanzas is called regular; whereas the Ode in which the stanza and line vary in length as they follow variations in thought and feeling is said to be irregular. Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" for instance, belongs to the regular form. It is written in a 'monostrophic form', meaning to say that the whole poem is built up by a repetition of the same stanzaic pattern.

Ode to a Nightingale

by : John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,  
 But being too happy in thine happiness -  
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,  
 In some melodious plot  
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,  
 Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been  
 Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,  
 Tasting of Flora and the Country green,  
 Dance, and Provencal song, and sunburnt mirth!  
 O for a beaker full of the warm South,  
 Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,  
 With beaded bubbles winking in the brim,

And purple-stained mouth;  
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,  
And with thee fade away into the forest dim :  
  
Fade faraway, dissolve, and quite forget  
What thou among the leaves hast never known,  
The weariness, the fever, and the fret  
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;  
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,  
Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies,  
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow  
And leaden-eyed despairs,  
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,  
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.  
  
Away! away! for I will fly to thee,  
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,  
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,  
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:  
Already with thee! tender is the night,  
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
Clustered around by all her starry Fays;  
But here there is no light,  
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.  
  
I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet  
Wherewith the seasonable month endows  
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;

Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;  
 And mid-May's eldest child,  
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time,  
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
 Called him soft names in many a mused rime,  
 To take into the air my quiet breath;  
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die;  
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
 In such an ecstasy!

Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
 No hungry generations tread thee down;  
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
 The same that oft-times hath  
 Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self,  
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades  
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,  
 Up the hillside; and now 'tis buried deep  
 In the next valley glades;

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music - Do I wake or sleep?

John Keats, while sitting in his garden one morning, listened to the Nightingale's song and took great pleasure in it. The song of the bird is beautifully described in lines 1 to 10. Then he longs very much for a draught of vintage (a drink of wine) that will take him out of his sorrow and pain, into the world of happiness (That I might drink, and leave the world unseen). Later on such an escape is made by means of writing poetry (see line 33). In his imagination Keats follows the Nightingale to its forest of delight. He longs for death to take him in such a moment of ecstasy listening to the beautiful singing of the bird (I have been half in love with easeful Death, line 52), but suddenly he realizes that the Nightingale is not born for death (Thou was not born for death, immortal Bird!) It has been heard by generations before him. Finally, as the Nightingale flies away, Keats awakes from his reverie (Fled is that music, Do I wake or sleep).

"Ode to a Nightingale" by John Keats is a truly lyrical poem because it is the spontaneous overflow of the intense feelings of the poet. It has a meditative, reflective tone.

### C. The Elegy

The Elegy is a lyric poem of a sad or mournful nature in celebration of a dead person. Its nature has been developed so as to include not only a direct personal loss, but also poems of a serious and sad nature. Gray's famous Elegy for instance, is not the

result of the death of his friend or someone else, but a result of a philosophic meditation suggested by the tombs in a village church yard. Pastoral elegy was very popular in the past. It takes place in rural areas where the shepherd spends his time singing and listening to a story.

On a child who lived  
one minute

"Into a world where children shriek like suns  
sundered from other suns on their arrival,  
she stared, and saw the waiting shape of evil,  
but could not take its meaning in at once,  
so fresh her understanding, and so fragile.

Her first breath drew a fragrance from the air  
and put it back. However hard her agile  
heart danced, however full of the surgeon's satchel  
of healing stuff, a blackness tiptoed in her  
and snuffed the only candle of her castle.

Oh, let us do away with elegiac  
drivel! Who can restore a thing so brittle,  
so new in any jingle? Still I marvel  
that, making light of mountainloads of logic,  
so much could stay a moment in so little.

by X.J. Kennedy.

This poem is divided into two scenes. The first scene consists of the first two stanzas, whereas the second one consists of the last stanza. In the first stanza we find the description of the birth of a child

and of the coming of death. The child concerned comes into the world like all other children but the difference is that it has no chance to live for as soon as it is born, death approaches it. Whereas other children "shriek", this child can only "stare". It can enjoy just its first breath. In the meantime a surgeon is working hard trying to cure the child's illness, but death comes abruptly and puts an end to its life.

The second scene is concerned with the reaction of the poet himself. According to him foolish sentimental talk with a mournful tone in respect of this death is of no value. He realizes that the death of the child cannot be avoided. But he admires the short life that there has been, so beautiful, and so wonderful, notwithstanding the logical fact that it could not last long.

### III. IMPRESSIONISTIC AND DESCRIPTIVE POETRY

It seems that there is no marked difference between impressionistic and descriptive poetry. These two types of poetry, in a large sense, are concerned with the description of a particular object or event. Their difference lies in the fact that the impressionistic poetry is content with the exact and vivid impression, whereas the other kind goes further; the impressions and insights are a symbol of something else. Compare the two following poems :

#### Fog

by Carl Sandburg

The fog comes  
on little cat feet

It sits looking  
 Over harbor and city  
 on silent haunches  
 and then moves on.

This is a good example of an impressionistic poem. The poet's impressions are described vividly by means of exact images. The first thing that most impresses the poet is the coming of the fog.

The fog comes very silently and slowly. Usually a cat walks very silently and slowly especially when it is going to catch a mouse. The coming of the fog is identical with the walking of a kitten. It is a suitable comparison.

The fog is personified. It seems to be able to sit and to look over the harbour and the city. After a few moments it moves on and leaves the harbour and the city. The whole poem is the impression the poet gets when he sees the fog. A very short poem, using vivid imagery is enough to reveal the poet's impressions. The element of description is only indirectly found in the poem.

### The Eagle

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands  
 Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
 Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls,  
 He watches from his mountain walls,  
 And like a thunderbolt he falls.



This poem is descriptive rather than impressionistic. The eagle is universally recognized as a bird of power. It is not surprising that the Indonesians have used the eagle on the Coat of Arms. We all agree that the bird concerned is considered to be the symbol of power and protection.

In six lines, the poet has been successful in describing how the bird acts starting from the perching to the swooping down. The poem, however short it is, is full of imagery, helping to create the tone and to emphasize the theme. The bird is substituted with the pronoun 'he' instead of 'it'. The use of the word 'he' instead of 'it', and also 'hands' instead of 'claws' is called personification. To achieve a vivid description the poet also applies an alliteration as we find in the first line (He clasps the crag with crooked hands). The bird is perching on a high mountain, surrounded by the blue sky.

The second stanza describes the sea below the bird. The sea is wrinkled because of the waves. The bird watches the wrinkled sea from above, and then he falls down like a thunderbolt. A thunderbolt has a very strong power and seems full of mystery. It is, in some way, identical with the eagle. In this we find a comparison which is called simile.

The eagle, as the symbol of power or protection, is vividly described with the help of the use of alliteration, personification and simile.

## Chapter 5

### THE EXTRINSIC APPROACH

#### TO ANALYZE A POEM

##### I. THE BIOGRAPHICAL AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

From the extrinsic point of view, a work of art is determined by its internal and external factors. Therefore it might be wrong to say that a poem is just the product of the internal factors without paying any attention to the external factors. The biography and the philosophy of the poet are considered as the internal factors, whereas the economic, social and political conditions are considered as the external factors. A work of art can be said to be produced by any and all environmental factors.

The description of the personality and the life of the author or poet can be a great help in poetical study. Seen in this light, biography or the written story of a person's life plays an important role in tracing back some aspects of a poem. This is also true for understanding the poet's philosophy. The biography will reveal something of the poet's personality and life which might be at the background of his poetry.

We must be conscious of the fact that the relation between the private life of a poet and his creation is not a simple relation of cause and effect. It is completely wrong to say that poetry is simply the transcription of personal feelings and experience of the poet. If we find that there is a close relation between his life and his poetry, the latter should be considered as

a 'mere' copy of life. The poet's experiences very often are conventionalized in the form of the poem.

Biography is an ancient literary genre. It makes no difference between a poet, a dramatist, a nobleman and a man of no social importance. Biography can be studied as a means to reveal, in a certain poet, the actual production of poetry. As a science it has an interest in itself and as a systematic study it can help to explain the poetic process. For our purpose we take the first value : that it can help to explain and illuminate the actual production of poetry.

It is of no value for us to know all the details in the biography, say the poet's documents, letters, reminiscences, autobiographical statements. We are only concerned with some aspects which have something to do with his work of art. This biographical study will help us to know his philosophy, character, interest and also his critical notes on poetry. Sometimes his autobiographical statements and also his criticisms on poetry throw a light on his poetry.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, besides writing poems also wrote "Biographia Literaria" which is considered as his criticism on poetry. In his "Biographia Literaria" we find a statement like this :

"I have used the narration chiefly for the purpose of giving a continuity to the work, in part for the sake of the miscellaneous reflections suggested to me by particular events, but still more as introductory to the statements of my principles in Politics, Religion and Philosophy, and an application of the rules, deduced from philosophical prin-

principles, to poetry and criticism."

(Biographia Literaria :  
Chapter I).

S.T. Woleridge has written in prose something which can be a guide to analyze and to enjoy his poems. From reading the "Biographia Literaria" or "Biographical Sketches of his literary life and Opinions" we know the poet's principle in politics, religion and philosophy and their application to poetry and criticism. Reading the Biographia Literaria is the same as reading some aspects of his biography.

We can draw the conclusion that biography may explain and illuminate a great deal of allusions or even words in a poet's work, and helps in studying the literary development of a certain poet, the growth, maturing and decline. Here are some examples of its advantages :

When you are old

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,  
and nodding by the fire, take down this book,  
and slowly read, and dream of the soft look  
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep,  
How many loved your moments of glad grace,  
And loved your beauty with love false and true  
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you  
And loved the sorrows of your changing face  
And bending down beside the glowing bars,  
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled  
And paced upon the mountains overhead  
And hid his face amid the Crowd of stars.

(W.B. Yeats).

When we read this poem, the first thing that might come up in our mind is the question whom does the word "you" refer to? The whole poem is actually dominated by the relation between the speaker, in this case the poet himself, and the person he is addressing. Without knowing whom the word "you" refers to, we might fail to understand the poem. The person he is addressing constitutes an important element in the poem. How can we identify "you" in the poem? The answer is simple. It can be explained by reading the biography of the poet.

From several resources, especially from the many biographies and critical studies, we know that during his lifetime, W.B. Yeats fell in love with a lady called Maude Gonne. Unfortunately that love was never to find physical fulfilment. According to George Moore, all Yeats's best poems had been inspired by such a condition. In this poem W.B. Yeats is musing about what would happen if his beloved should grow old. She would sit and sleep all the time. Thus the word "you" refers to Maude Gonne.

Each time when we read his poems, we frequently find some words or sentences or even the whole poem referring to his love for Maude Gonne. Some examples might clarify this fact.

"My mind, because the minds that I have loved,  
 The sort of beauty that I have approved,  
 Prosper but little, has dried up of late,  
 Yet knows that to be choked with hate  
 May well be of all evil chances chief"

(A prayer for my daughter)

W.B. Yeats.

"Helen being chosen found life flat and dull  
 And later had much trouble from a fool  
 While that great Queen, that rose out of the spray,  
 Being fartherless could have her way,  
 Yet chose a bandy-legged smith for man."

(A prayer for my daughter  
 W.B.Yeats).

"That the topless towers be burnt  
 And men recall that face,  
 Move most gently if more you must  
 In this lonely place  
 She thinks, part woman, three parts a child  
 that nobody looks, her feet."

(Long-Legged Fly : by W.B.Yeats)

In these three quotations we find some lines concerning Maude Gonne. Sometimes the poet does not refer directly to her, instead he describes something about "Helen". Helen is considered the most beautiful woman in the world and is used as the image of Maude Gonne. There are some similar characteristics between the two women. Therefore if the poet refers to Helen, he implicitly refers to his beloved. In the third quotation the poet seems to mock her by saying "she thinks, part woman, three parts a child". Maude Gonne is considered as a child rather than a grown-up woman.

Some people frequently consider poetry as "ideas" having a formal arrangement. Other people are of the



opposite view; They do not believe in any philosophical relevance to poetry. One thing that we should bear in mind is that however philosophical a poem is, it is still a poem and not philosophy. Poetry which is full of ideas should be judged not by the value of the material but by the degree of its artistic beauty.

In "T.S. Eliot : Selected Prose" (edited by John Hayward), T.S. Eliot says :

"The poet who thinks is merely the poet who can express the emotional equivalent of thought. But he is not necessarily interested in the thought itself".<sup>1</sup>

Poetry is not a substitute for philosophy or theology or religion. It has its own function which is the emotional expression of the thought rather than the thought itself.

Dr. Wellek, in his book "Theory of Literature" p. 111, says : "To be sure, literature can be treated as a document in the history of ideas and philosophy, for literary history parallels and reflects intellectual history. Frequently either explicit statements or allusions show the allegiance of a poet to a specific philosophy, or establish that he has had some direct acquaintance with philosophies once well known or at least that he is aware of their general assumptions."

Thus Dr. Wellek is of the opinion that there is some philosophical relevance to poetry; although he has an objection to the excessive intellectualism of the phi-

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<sup>1</sup>T.S. Eliot : Selected Prose, ed. John Hayward, p. 53.

losophical approach.

Since there is no close integration between philosophy and poetry, we must not be deceived by the excessive use of the philosophical approach only. The relation between philosophy and poetry can be seen in some of the works of the English poets. Hardy reflects the pessimistic atheism of the time, while Hopkins shows the effect of his study of Duns Scotus.

Therefore what is necessary in studying the poems belonging to the Romanticists is first to study the philosophy of the individual poets, which they certainly have. Just like in the case of the biography of the poet, we can illuminate a certain word, line or a poem by studying the philosophy of the poet.

#### Heredity

I am the family face.  
 Flesh parishes, I live on,  
 Projecting trait and trace.  
 Through time to times anon,  
 And leaping from place to place  
 Over oblivion.

The years-heired feature that can  
 In curve and voice and eye  
 Despise the human span  
 Of durance - that is I  
 The eternal thing in man  
 That heeds no call to die.

Thomas Hardy.



It seems that this poem conveys more thoughts than feelings. It has only one main thought. To a certain degree we can study and enjoy the poem without referring to the poet's philosophy. But if the aim is to analyze the poem thoroughly, a little knowledge about the philosophy of the poet will be of great help.

Thomas Hardy is interested in the past. He believes in the fact that whatever has lived, will live forever in one form or another. The body has its resurrection in trees and flowers. The hands of the dead-person hover over the knock of the old furniture. He also believes in incarnation; that is "being clothed with a body of flesh," such as the devil can incarnate in the forms of animals.

This thought may be relevant to the poem quoted above. The meaning of heredity is the tendency of living things (plants, animals, etc.) to pass on their characteristics to the following generation. According to Mendel, heredity is the characteristic that correlates between a living thing and either its former generation or its off-spring. It is an essential part of a living thing. It shows the distinguishing characteristics of a plant or an animal.

Thomas Hardy considers heredity as the "family face". The face is that part of the body that is essential in differentiating between one person and others. Although our body perishes, heredity will live on for good, as it is said in the last line "that heeds no call to die".

The poem above is actually connected with the philosophy of the poet. Therefore to approach it we

need an understanding of his philosophy.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Part 1.

It is an ancient Mariner,

And he stoppeth one of three.

"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,

Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,

And I am next of kin;

The guests are met, the feast is set :

May'st hear the merry din".

(S.T.Coleridge).

In "Biographia Literaria" Coleridge says that he directs his poem "to persons and characters supernatural or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith."<sup>1</sup> In short, Coleridge was to describe the incredible in such a way that it would seem real. How far can we apply this thought to the poem quoted above?

The ancient Mariner is considered to be a man of "supernature", having a long gray beard and glittering eyes. For us it is an incredible story. We do not believe that this is a true story. Yet the poet is able

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<sup>1</sup>S.T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria Ch.XIV.

to describe it in such a way that the story seems to be real.

The subject matter of the poem is in accordance with the philosophy of the poet. The long narrative poem can be analyzed better by some understanding of the poet's thought.

## II. THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL APPROACH

Usually when we speak about history, we do not refer to a particular person or thing but to the people and society of a certain country viz : The history of England, A new history of Scotland. The historical approach for analyzing a poem is in close connection with the social approach, for it is the society that makes the history of a people.

The relation between society and poetry is not at the same time a simple relation of cause and effect. There is great poetry which has little or no social relevance. Social poetry is not just one kind of poetry. Poetry is not a substitute for sociology or politics. It has its own justification and aim.

Since each poet is a member of society, his works of art reflect some aspects of the society he lives in, from the social and political point of view. What are the opinions of the modern writers about the relation between society and poetry?

John Wain says :

"Broadly speaking it can be taken as true that every serious artist is engaged in wrestling the problems that face the civilization he happens to live on."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The London Magazine, May 1957 vol.4, No.5, p.52.

Roy Fuller gives another comment :

"So, too, the precise direction of political or social orientation seems to me less important than its depth. In other words, the writer's work (as distinct from the journalist's) is to transform the political and social world into the moral world."<sup>1</sup>

Philip Larkin's account :

"I am quite happy to agree with the implication for instance that good writing is most likely to deal with present-day situations in present-day language"<sup>2</sup>

John Wain and Philip Larkin are, in some way, of the opinion that good poetry should represent the situation and life of the society he lives in. Roy Fuller specifies a bit more in saying that what is important is not the political or social orientation, but rather the transformation of the political and social world into the moral world.

The writer believes that a particular poem should represent the society in which the poet lives. Therefore, sometimes the social background can illuminate the meaning of a word, of a phrase, or even of a whole poem.

How far is poetry actually determined by the social change and development? Wellek is of the opinion that it is false to say that poetry, at any given time, mirrors the current social condition correctly and precisely. Of course, a poet inevitably expresses his experience and his total conception of life; But it is not

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<sup>1</sup>The London Magazine, May 1957, vol.4, no.5, p.43.

<sup>2</sup>Id. p. 46.

true to say that he expresses the whole life of a given time completely and exhaustively; The relation between society and poetry, to some extent, is determined by the sociology of the poet and the influence of poetry on society. According to Wellek "the social origins of a writer play only a minor part in the questions raised by his social status, allegiance, and ideology; for writers, it is clear, have often put themselves at the service of another class", (Theory of Literature p. 97). Thus a poet belonging to the lower class must not necessarily describe the social conditions of his class. Above all, the poet is a citizen. He has spoken on questions or issues of social and political importance happening in his time.

Some of W.B. Yeats's poems are inspired by the revolutionary spirit of his time and by the social conditions.

#### The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
 The falcon cannot hear the falconer  
 Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;  
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,  
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere  
 The ceremony of innocence is drowned;  
 The best lack all conviction, while the worst  
 Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand  
 Surely the second coming is at hand  
 The second coming! Hardly are those words out

When a vast image of Spiritus Mundi  
 Troubles my sight: Somewhere in the sands of the  
 desert

A shape with lion body and the head of a man,  
 A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun  
 Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it.

Reel shadows of the indignant deserts birds  
 The darkness drops again, but now I know  
 That twenty centuries of stony sleep  
 Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle  
 And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,  
 Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born!

(W.B.Yeats).

This poem was written possibly because of the social and political chaos in the twentieth century: W.B. Yeats was an Irishman. Long before Ireland got its freedom, it was dominated by the English. The dominated people, of course, always expected someone who would save the people and their country. In like manner, when Indonesia was still under the domination of the Dutch, the Indonesians dreamed of a Saviour, either a king or a Statesman who would set their country free and bring them to a better life. In such a bad condition W.B. Yeats, as the mouth-piece of the Irish, expected the coming of Christ for the second time. The poet believed that it was only Christ who was able to save his people, or even the human race. In this poem the poet spoke directly to his people so that they recognized what was happening in Europe. We look upon the poem as a memorable expression of the poet's times. W.B. Yeats who was

very patriotic and energetic felt horror at the cruelty of the governments in Europe, the Communist, the Fascist, the Nationalist or even the Clerical and anti Clerical. In "The Letters of W.B. Yeats" we find :

"as my sense of reality deepens, and I think it does with age, my horror at the cruelty of governments grows greater ..... Communist, Fascist, Nationalist, Clerical, anti-Clerical, are all responsible according to the number of their victims. I have not been silent; I have used the only vehicle I possess - verse. If you have my poems by you, look up a poem called 'The Second Coming'. It was written some sixteen or seventeen years ago and foretold what is happening. I have written of the same thing again and again since .... I am not callous, every nerve trembles with horror at what is happening in Europe, 'the ceremony of innocence is drowned'.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Yeats felt the cruelty of the modern world and the meaningless horror of the modern world with such intensity that he could endure to contemplate them only by writing a poem. The whole poem symbolizes the "destruction" of the world (the ceremony of innocence is drowned). The destruction is precisely and vividly described in the first stanza.

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot hold the falconer"

The confusion and the chaos of the world is in-

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<sup>1</sup>Quoted by John Press in the 'Chequer'd Shade' pp 130-1.

creasing. Such a condition makes that the falcon cannot hear the falconer. This figure of speech means that the world is really in chaos. In Ireland people are used to go hunting with a falcon. There is a complete confusion in the mind of the falcon that causes it being unable to recognize its master or the hunter.

"Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold  
 Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world  
 The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere".

If the principal falls down, the others certainly will be in ruins. Because the governments in Europe cannot hold their people, everything goes to destruction. Everywhere we find anarchy, i.e. an action against the formal rule or government. The result of the anarchy brings society into confusion. Everywhere the blood of the anarchist flows.

"The Ceremony of innocence is drowned  
 The best lack all conviction, while the  
 worst  
 Are full of passionate intensity."

All the etiquette and decent things in the world are destroyed, so that the pious people lack conviction, whereas the worst people are full of passion. The first stanza, in fact, pictures the destruction of the whole world as W.B. Yeats saw it in Europe.

The second stanza tells us that in such a bad condition the poet feels for sure that our Lord will come for the second time and will give comfort to the world. It seems that there is no human-being who is capable enough of bringing the world into happiness.



The prospect of the revelation suddenly vanishes when he catches an immense image of Spiritus Mundi :

"Surely some revelation is at hand  
 Surely the second coming is at hand  
 The second coming! Hardly are those  
 words out  
 When a vast image of Spiritus Mundi  
 Troubles my sight: "

The spirit of the world is found walking in a deserted county, in the sands of the desert. Its body is like a lion and its head a man. Thus, although the poet has a prospect, the destroyed world seems irreparable, as it is shown by the walking Spiritus Mundi, as a symbol of destruction.

The last stanza tells us that the Spiritus Mundi is surrounded by the shadows of the deserts birds. The shadows will certainly cause darkness, and this is metaphorically the darkness of the world. At last the poet realizes that since the coming of Christ the world has peacefully existed. Unfortunately it goes into destruction in the twentieth century. There is no other than just waiting for Christ as it is stressed in the last line : "slouches towards Bethlehem to be born."

## Chapter 6

### THE INTRINSIC APPROACH TO ANALYZE A POEM

Many things have been discussed concerning the external approach to analyze a poem. But the most natural starting point for poetic analysis remains the poem itself. The main elements of poetry consist of the sounds of poetry, the meaning, the colour<sup>1</sup> and finally the form. The sounds of poetry include the rhythm, alliteration, the rhyme and also the sound of the individual words. The meaning of poetry is really what the poet is saying about the subject matter. The colour of poetry consists of the imagery and figures of speech. The form refers to the structure and development of thought.

The poet should be able to build a unity and harmony of sound, thought and tone. In a complete analysis of a poem we should observe as carefully as possible those elements separately and also the speaker, the person addressed, the setting in time and place, the tone and diction, and finally give our value judgement.

These topics are important since they serve as a guide in the analysis of a poem. The average student systematically follows the order, starting from the speaker until the evaluation. Here are some important points when we deal with each topic.

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<sup>1</sup>a term used by W.B. Yeats.

### 1. The speaker

Who is the speaker of the poem? Are there any hints with regard to his character? The speaker might be the poet himself or one of the characters in the poem.

### 2. The person addressed

Is the poem addressed to a particular person or to a general audience? What characteristics can be drawn from the speaker as to the character of the person he is addressing? How does the speaker look at the person addressed? His attitude can be revealed through what he says and what he does. If the poem is only addressed to a general audience, there is no need to write about this topic.

### 3. The setting in time and place

The setting in time and place is not always described. Very often the setting is indirectly revealed. We must try to find out within the poem itself. Usually it is put in the beginning of the poem. Find out if there is more than one setting in time and place.

### 4. The theme

What the poet is saying about the subject matter. Or what the poem is about. In the beginning we can state the general theme of the poem. By stating the theme we have a guide which is of a great help in our task. It is very important to know the exact theme of the poem because a sound evaluation depends on the exact understanding of what the poet is saying.

5. The structure and development, including the division of thought

How does the poet organize his thoughts ? What are the divisions of the poem? Does each division have one main thought? How is the relation between one division and the others? Give an account of the content of each division and how it is related with the others.

6. The tone

What does the writer feel about the subject? Is the tone sad, mocking, humorous, majestic or ironical ? It is particularly important to know whether there is a change of tone in the poem. Try to find out the tone of each division.

7. Imagery and figures of speech

Sound, colour and form, according to W.B. Yeats are three essential elements in poetry. If these three are in musical relation to one another, they become as if one sound, one colour and one form, above all one emotion. The colour of poetry is mainly determined by the use of imagery and figures of speech.

"Imagery in poetry is an appeal to the senses through words. Through the senses the emotions and intellect of the reader can be swiftly stirred. Consequently poetry makes much use of imagery."<sup>1</sup>

Imagery in poetry plays an important role. A poet

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<sup>1</sup>S.H. Burton: The Criticism of poetry, p. 97.

does not employ images just in order to decorate his poems. The imagery is to generate poetic meaning. Images can be classified according to the senses : sound; sight (colour or shape images); taste, smell, touch (thermal or tactual images); movement (kinaesthetic) images. The phrases "twinkle on the milky way", "all bright and glittering in the smokeless air", and "of golden daffodils" provide good examples of the sight image. "A roaring in the wind", "with a soft inland murmur", "up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll", are phrases that make an appeal to the sense of hearing.

Imagery, in a restricted sense, is the synonym of "figurative language" or figures of speech. Figurative language is a language which expresses an idea in an imaginative way, by using words or phrases out of their ordinary meaning. The most usual figures of speech are : simile and metaphor. Figures of speech are applied to generate poetic meaning and also to make concrete the poet's experience. Without them, poetry remains abstract lifeless, cold and colourless. Figures of speech make poetry memorable and beautiful. They can reanimate the ordinary words.

#### a. Simile

A simile is the figurative use of language in which two things are compared. The comparison is always explicit and indicated by such words as "like" or "as".

"He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls"

(The Eagle : by A.L.Tennyson)

"..... Our dried voices, when  
 We whisper together  
 Are quiet and meaningless  
 As wind in dry grass  
 Or rats' feet over broken glass  
 In our dry cellar ....."

(The Hollow men:T.S.Eliot).

In the first quotation we find a simile, using the word "like" and in the second one we find the word "as". Between the eagle and the thunderbolt and also between the voice of the hollow men and the wind in dry grass, there is some essential likeness. The likeness may be in qualities or actions. The action of the eagle is in some respect alike with the thunderbolt. The quality of the sound of the hollow men is alike with the sound of the wind in dry grass or rats' feet over broken glass.

The function of a simile is to make a vivid picture, to beautify and to adorn poetry. Although the comparison is explicitly described, there is always the charm of novelty and freshness.

#### b. Metaphor

A metaphor is a way of speaking or writing in which a word or phrase is used to mean or describe something quite different from what it usually expresses. The essence of metaphor is also comparison but in an indirect way. It is more potential and powerful than simile.

It seems that metaphor does not bring clarity but

rather obscurity. The use of metaphor is actually to bring clarity and also exquisite beauty. The comparison will still have the charm of novelty for the poet will never choose one which is obvious and commonplace. Metaphor is really the best means to obtain compactness and emotional intensity in poetry.

"We and the labouring world are passing by  
 Amid men's souls, that waver and give place  
 Like the pale waters in their wintry race  
 Under the passing stars, foam of the sky  
 Lives on this lonely face."

(The rose of the World: by W.B. Yeats)

There is an implied comparison in this quotation. The stars are considered as the foam of the sky. The word "foam" means frothy mixture of many tiny bubbles, such as that form on a liquid by shaking, constant movement or fermentation. There is some similarity between the stars and the foam; The stars appear to be very small particles like the tiny bubbles and occupy this lonely face or the sky. The indirect comparison between the stars and the foam is called metaphor.

"And I shall have some peace there,  
 for peace comes dropping slow,  
 Dropping from the veils of the morning  
 to where the cricket sings"

(The Lake Isle of Innesfree by  
 W.B. Yeats).

The word "drop" is used in connection with the word "rain". If "drop" is used with the word "peace", the poet uses a metaphor. The veils of the morning are actually the mist. The mist is compared with the veils. The mist and the veils have some equality. The function of the veil is to cover the face, and the mist covers the world.

### C. Symbol

A symbol is a sign of some kind (a word or thing) that suggests something outside and beyond itself. W.B. Yeats mentions two kinds of symbols : emotional and intellectual. Emotional symbols are those that evoke emotions alone, whereas intellectual symbols are those that evoke ideas alone, or ideas mingled with emotions. The word "rose" usually symbolizes beauty. The "sun" can be a symbol of "light".

"..... Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more .....

(Macbeth: Act V.SC.V.by W.Shakespeare).

"Out, out, brief candle", refers to the flickering and the instability of life.

There are still other kinds of figurative language besides simile, metaphor and symbol. Personification is a metaphor in which some abstract thing or inanimate object is given a human nature or personality. Euphemism is the use of indirect words or phrases in-



stead of those that are strictly required by truth, or of mild words and phrases instead of unpleasant ones. Examples : "This road is a bit bumpy" - meaning that this road is very bad; "There were some differences of opinion" - meaning they did not agree at all. So the word "mad" is very often replaced by the word "odd" etc.

The function of imagery in poetry is to express things clearer, and to give an accurate presentation of the intellectual, emotional and imaginative experience of the poet. Imagery shows an accurate perception. Figurative language provides the pleasure of surprise in the recognition of hidden resemblances between the things compared.

#### 8. Diction

Diction means the choice of words in speaking or writing. Poetic diction means the choice of words and phrases for use in poetry. The diction in poetry should get special attention for it serves an important element in poetry.

The poet should be able to choose the right and exact words to express his thoughts and feelings. Painters, composers and poets are always trying to explore the potentialities of their medium, painters with their colours, composers with their notes and poets with their language. New combinations, shapes and meanings must be produced by means of their material. As poetic material, words are used in a different way and serve a different purpose.

In poetry the value of words depends, partly on their sound and partly on associations they have. In fact

the latter are more important than the former. The associations are determined by the denotation and also the connotation of the words. The denotation is the most precise possible meaning of the words. The connotation is the additional meaning of the word. It is really the connotation that constitutes the poet's chief tool.

What words are the best for poetic language? W. Wordsworth stresses the use of the real language of men, that is men of low and rustic life. The language of these men is adopted because such men "hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived, and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborate expressions. Personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur and are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style and raise it above prose."<sup>1</sup>

However, Coleridge objects to the word "real" and replaces it with the word "ordinary" or *lingua communis*. Furthermore Coleridge says that the language of poetry should not limit itself to the language of men of low and rustic life. According to him every one's language varies according to the extent of his knowledge, the activity of his faculties, and the depth or quickness of his feelings. It is therefore not wise to adopt the real language of rustic people.

Keats prefers to use concrete diction. He is

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<sup>1</sup>W. Wordsworth: Preface to the Second Edition of Lyrical Ballads.

always tasting and feeling. He also sees the sparrow  
 as a sparrow, he smells the smell of the wild flower  
 he feels the grass. His language is more concrete and  
 more physical. Everything in Keats's poems can be  
 "eaten" i.e. physically experienced.

"To one who has long been in city pent  
 'Tis very sweet to look into the fair  
 And open face of heaven, to breathe a prayer  
 Full in the smile of the blue firmament."

(To one who has been long in  
 city pent by J. Keats).

The word "sweet" usually refers to the taste  
 of fruit or food. J. Keats tries to taste everything.  
 The beautiful scenery is not to be looked at, rather  
 to be tasted. The beautiful scenery is open to the  
 "face" of heaven. Heaven is an abstract thing but he  
 makes it concrete by adding the word "face" which is  
 concrete because we can see it.

G.M. Hopkins suggests that poetic language should  
 be the current language heightened, to any degree height-  
 ened and unlike itself, but not obsolete. He doesn't  
 like too modern or too archaic language. If we read  
 Hopkins's poems, we find that his language is difficult.  
 He has created some new words and combinations of words  
 which are strange to us.

From those several opinions about the language of  
 poetry, we can draw the conclusion that the poetic lan-  
 guage used by one poet differs very much from that used  
 by another. Poets choose their words largely in accord-

ance with their interests. However, the words should be connotative, concrete and specific. A sense of novelty and surprise should also be maintained in poetic language.

## 9. The Sounds of Poetry

### a. Rhythm

Rhythm can be defined as the regular repetition of anything. This regular repetition when it is heeded, gives enjoyment. The desire for rhythm is universal. The recognition of it is instinctive.

Rhythm in poetry can be suggestive and help to create a feeling of significance. It has a special effect on the emotions and it may give pleasure in itself. Rhythm constitutes one difference between poetry and prose. This does not mean that prose does not have rhythm. The difference lies in the fact that poetry has a more regular rhythm than prose. In poetry we find what man expects, that is the rhythmical patterns of sounds. It is one element that all poets, from all parts of the world, at any period, must pay attention to. People prefer smooth and rhythmic performances to jerky ones.

Rhythm becomes a means of expressing emotion quite independent of other elements, such as imagery. Different kinds of rhythm communicate different tones; Quick light rhythm suggests an exciting or cheerful tone; Slow measured rhythm suggests sadness or solemnity.

#### 1. Non metrical rhythm in poetry

Non metrical rhythm in poetry includes the regu-

lar repetition of single words, phrases or clauses or whole sentences. Repetition of phrases and clauses usually is a device to emphasize something.

Alliteration is the repetition of similar or like-sounding consonants at the beginning of words coming in close succession to one another, for example, "he clasps the crag with crooked hands". In old English poetry, alliteration was a basic element, in modern poetry it still serves as an integral element. J.H. Francis, in his book "A course of English Poetry" p. 3, says that this early attempt at artistic design or pattern in sound was an effective application of the principle of recurrence. This principle of recurrence or rhythm, in some form or another, is the basis of all verse. It is not surprising that Hopkins for instance, uses the device of alliteration so plentifully that it becomes one of the most characteristic features in his style. In modern poetry, however, alliteration is considered as an important element since it adds the rhythmic element which is not metrical; though it is not necessarily applied always.

Non metrical rhythm includes consonance, assonance pitch and onomatopoeia; Each of which can be studied from many sources.

## 2. Metrical Rhythm

Metrical rhythm or metre is the rhythm which is most specifically poetic. "Metre" usually means measure. It is measured in poetry. The regular repetition forms a pattern.

The effect of metre is to increase the vivacity and susceptibility both of the general feelings and of

the attention. The metre is closely linked to the thought and mood of the poem. The metre, then, also measures the accent of the thought. If there is a poet who employs various metrical patterns in a poem, he does not only want to break the monotony but to add to the forcefulness, propriety and expressiveness of his verse.

G.M. Hopkins did not always apply "Running Rhythm" or "Common English rhythm". The "Sprung Rhythm" is built up on the common, actual speech. What is remarkable is that the scanning runs on without break from the beginning of a stanza to the end. In the next chapter we will deal once more with Sprung Rhythm.

#### b. Rhyme

"Rhyme is a sound pattern in which the last accented vowel and all the sounds following it are identical, but in which the consonantal and vowel sounds preceding the last accented syllable are different."<sup>1</sup> Thus the word "sing" is rhyming with the word "ring" and "partake" with "mistake".

Although rhyme is powerful enough to give pleasure of recognition and of surprise, in modern poetry it is more freely used, inner as well as outer rhyme. Poets in these modern times do not feel so bound to the romantic rule that required rhyming lines. But the modern poets will use it like all other poets anywhere in the world, for rhyme is a general poetic device.

Milton, in the "Preface to Paradise Lost" says that rhyme is being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of a poem or good verse, in longer works especially.

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<sup>1</sup>McNamee: Literary Types and Themes, p. 682.

There are different kinds of rhyme, masculine and feminine; end and internal; perfect and imperfect or slant rhyme. Traditional poetry uses rhyme as a means to build the stanzaic patterns that form the structural framework in the sound pattern.

We can analyze a poem by following the systematic order described above, starting with the speaker and going on until the evaluation. There is still another way of analyzing a poem which according to the writer, is more interesting. This is the so-called "free analysis"; However, at the same time this analysis uses the topics mentioned above as tools for the analysis. An example will be given in the next chapter.

## Chapter 7

### A SAMPLE OF AN ANALYSIS

#### I. THE ACTUAL PROCESS OF POETRY-READING

The first step when we analyze a poem is, of course, to read the poem thoroughly. If the poem happens to be new for the readers, it might be possible to listen to it being recited by a skilful reader or the poet himself on a record, if there is any. The first introduction to a new poem or especially a new poet, is best done through the ear, even to those who know the language well. The reading aloud will help us a lot. The poem will be clearer to the mind. The underlying thought is that poetry is speech and sound, rather than patterns on paper.

When we listen to a poem being read aloud, we pass over things which are not immediately understandable, because there is no time to think about them and each impression is shattered by the following words. We grasp what we can. Our ear selects the familiar forms and patterns in the mind and puts aside the rest. Finally, after we have read the whole poem, we have a series of impressions, some clearer than others. We should concentrate on what we have grasped. At the end the series of impressions will find their shape and form, uniting into an incomplete whole.

Very often it is impossible to listen to the poem being read aloud by others. Then we can read it aloud ourselves. In the first instant we will see the whole poem at a glance and therefore it is advisable to read



it through first. As we are proceeding, we will frequently be puzzled by what is unfamiliar and this will at first discourage us. The unfamiliar words and ideas force us to work hard so that the poem gets dull long before we find the unified pattern of sound and thought.

After we have heard the poem clearly, rhythmically and impressively read in class for instance, we can read it silently. But we must read with due care and attention. In the first reading we should try to catch the main outline of the poem, by paying attention to the most important words and expressions. The first reading is to achieve a general idea of the poem, its sounding and meaning. This preliminary grasp will prepare the mind for detailed understanding afterwards.

As we read a poem for the first time, impressions and reactions are constantly forming in the mind. In the second reading the general impressions from the first reading become clearer and more detailed and the internal relations are understood better. The details can now contribute to the impression of the whole. Both in the first and the second reading we must follow what the poet is trying to convey. Therefore we must accept it as it is. We must keep ourselves open to the experience of the poet.

Full understanding of the poem is the main aim of our reading. It can be achieved by reading the poem again and again. Careful and thorough reading accompanied by enthusiasm and imagination should always be maintained. Before we get to a full understanding, we cannot give a true appreciation, and finally a true judgement. When we read, therefore, we are not allowed to contra-

dict what the poet is saying, although we have different ideas. A judgement before a full understanding is not a sound judgement.

After we have read the poem through several times there may be words, phrases or sentences which have not yet been grasped completely. It is then advisable to look up their meanings in the dictionary. Each difficult word should be understood completely, if we do not want to get a complete misunderstanding of the poem as a whole.

"Ribblesdale"

G.M.Hopkins

"Earth, sweet Earth, sweet landscape, with leaves  
 throng  
 And louchèd low grass, heaven that dost appeal  
 To, with no tongue to plead, no heart to feel;  
 That canst but only be, but dost that long -  
 Thou canst but be, but that thou well dost; strong  
 Thy plea with him who death, nay does now deal,  
 Thy lovely dale down thus and thus bids reel  
 Thy river, and o'er gives all to rack or wrong.  
 And what is Earth's eye, tongue, or heart else,  
 where  
 Else, but in dear and dogged man? - Ah, the heir  
 To his own self bent so bound, so tied to his turn  
 To thriftless reave both our rich round world bare  
 And none reck of world after, this bids wear  
 Earth brows of such care, care and dear concern."

We will use this poem as an example for our analysis. As has been said before, in order to analyze such a poem thoroughly it is not enough just to read the poem. In this the extrinsic approach might be of great help. Furthermore, Hopkins asks more attention from the reader; and not only more attention, but the reader should also be more than usually well-equipped, more than usually sensitive to language, more curious in matters of rhythm, more sympathetic to theological and metaphysical implications, more patient with obscurities which are fundamental to the understanding of the poem.

## II. THE EXTRINSIC APPROACH TO ANALYZE THE POEM ENTITLED 'RIBBLESDALE'.

### 1° THE LIFE AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF HOPKINS

G.M. Hopkins was born in 1844 and died 1889 at the age of forty-five. When he was nineteen years old he went up to Oxford, which he left in 1867. Then he entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus and put aside the writing of poetry. A poetic silence terminated in 1875 by his famous work "The Wreck of the Deutsc hland". However, his poetry was unknown in his lifetime, and was first published in 1918 when its fineness was at once recognized.

Thus Hopkins had two vocations, as a priest and as a poet. As a Jesuit priest he had the idea that man was created to praise, revere and serve God our Lord, as pointed out by St. Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises which form the basic spirituality in the Society of Jesus. The significance of nature is that it speaks

of God, its creator; therefore, to enjoy nature's beauty is a proper thing to do.

Human beings are always interested in the beauty of the physical world. G.M. Hopkins who has more sensitive feelings than the average human-being, is also impressed by the beauty of his surroundings, but, it is not the general beauty which impresses him, but the individual, distinctive, and utterly unique beauty, as we see in the poem of "Pied beauty".

"Pied Beauty"

G.M. Hopkins

Glory be to God for dappled things -  
 For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;  
 For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
 Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;  
 Landscape plotted and pieced-fold, fallow, and  
 plough;  
 And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.  
 All things counter, original, spare, strange;  
 Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
 With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
 He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change: Praise  
 him.

In "Pied Beauty" G.M.Hopkins is very much impressed by beautiful things that are distinctive for their "pied" beauty, things variegated in colour.

We have seen that nature is significant because it speaks of God. The poet begins the poem by honouring God for His "dappled creation and ends it by praising

Him. The creation of nature by God is closely observed in things of "pied beauty". The word "dappled" is almost synonymous with "pied". "Dappled" means variegated in colour, but in a special configuration. "Pied" is an unusual word, meaning variegated or motley in colour.

The poem shows the importance of God in natural beauty. Hopkins mentions the skies, the rose-moles, the chestnuts-falls, the finches' wings, the landscape and all trades. These things have something in common i.e. the "dappled colour and at the same time constitute parts of nature. Thus Hopkins has used "nature" as his subject matter in order to recognize the grandeur of God and finally to adore Him.

Hopkins uses nature as subject matter only in order to think of sublime and noble things. He does not adore nature itself but adores God in nature. This may be the reason why his poems can only be called "nature poetry" in a sense. Among the Romanticists, W. Wordsworth can be called the first poet whose poems are called "nature poetry". Like Hopkins, W. Wordsworth is also interested in natural beauty. But to W. Wordsworth nature does not only serve as subject matter, but is also considered as his "God". In "Tintern Abbey" Wordsworth expresses his faith in nature :

"..... Therefore am I still

A lover of the meadows, and the woods,

And mountains, and of all that we behold

From this green earth, of all the mighty world

Of eye, and ear, - both what they half create

And what perceive; well pleased to recognize

In nature and the language of the sense,

The anchor of my purest thoughts the nurse  
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
 Of all my moral being."

(line 102 - 111).

From these lines we see that W. Wordsworth believes in nature as the guiding principle of his life. He is really a nature-worshipper. His religion is called the religion of nature.

Both Hopkins and Wordsworth see grandeur in natural beauty. To Hopkins, beauty has an ethical function, meaning that beauty must be correlated with God, its Creator. Thus it has a moral significance, for it brings us to think of God. We recognize the existence and the glory of God just with the help of His creation.

On the other hand the Romanticists treat beauty as if it has no ethical function, meaning that it has no special purpose in relation to morals or ethics. For them, beauty is a means of forgetting the worries of this world. The beautiful song of the Nightingale that J. Keats listens to, is a means to forget the difficulties in life ("That I might drink, and leave the world unseen, And with thee fade away into the forest dim"). Beauty, then, is significant for its own sake.

Moreover G.M. Hopkins is interested in the individual, distinctive and utterly unique beauty. Possibly he is influenced by Duns Scotus's philosophy "Of the philosophy of Duns Scotus", says Dr. Leavis, "it must suffice to say here that it lays a peculiar stress on the particular and actual, in its full concreteness and individuality, as the focus of the real."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.R. Leavis : The Common Pursuit, p. 48.

The particular and the individual beauty, of course gives us more meaning than the general beauty because the particular and the individual touches our heart more. In "Pied Beauty" he mentions "skies of couple colour as a brinded cow." It is really a particular and distinctive colour, and not just any colour. His next reference is on the "rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim". The fish is swimming in the river; It has a particular, a pale pink colour (silver-grey), mixed with pink coloured-spots (rose-moles). Those colours are mixed and form the "stippled" pattern.

From these two examples, it is enough to show that Hopkins is impressed by particular and distinctive beauty. What makes the things particular and distinctive? In his "Letters to Robert Bridges", Hopkins explains :

"Now it is the virtue of design, pattern or inscape to be distinctive, and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer."<sup>1</sup>

The distinctiveness of things is determined by the design, pattern or inscape. The distinctiveness itself makes the things unique. The "skies" and "trout" that Hopkins refers to, are unique. Their uniqueness is because of the virtue of the design or inscape of the colours.

If we look at the work of an artist, say a statue or a picture, we will see that there is something strange, something specific. The strangeness and specialty are caused by the design of the things themselves. That the statue is strange may be caused by its form and appearance, and that the picture is strange, unique may be

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by John Press in "The Chequer'd Shade", p. 24.

caused by the combination of colours.

So with Hopkins it is the unique pattern that counts, the individuality of an object - what he calls "inscape". This is what he above all aims at expressing in his poetry. Inscape concentrates on the particular and individual rather than the general and universal. As the individual things have inscape they are capable of showing God's beauty. Hopkins sees God in nature, not limited to the superior creation only, such as man.

From the noun "inscape", we derive the verb "to inscape". This word means the activity of the poet to give individual characteristics to the poetic object.

"I caught this morning morning's minion, Kingdom  
of daylight's dauphin, dapple - dawn - drawn  
Falcon, in his riding  
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air,..."

(The Windhover).

In the description of the Falcon, the poet tries to inscape it by qualifying the bird. The poet is not concerned with any Falcon, but with the Falcon which he saw that very morning, furthermore the bird becomes his favourite; it has many colours and it is flying above the steady air.

"Nothing is so beautiful as spring -  
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and  
lush;  
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush  
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring  
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him  
sing."

(Spring).



Here again, the poet inscapes "the weeds" and the "eggs". The weeds are bundled in circles. They are just growing and look long, lovely and lush (fresh and green) The eggs are also inscaped. They are thrush's eggs and not other birds' eggs. They look like little low heavens meaning that they are of a soft blue-white colour. So it is particular eggs that he refers to.

Inscape is closely related to "instress". Instress is the sensation of inscape or of any vivid mental image. It is the force that is inherent in a person or thing, the force that has a dynamic power, while inscape is static. Inscape and instress go hand in hand. Inscape without instress is meaningless. G.M. Hopkins in the "Journal" edited on February 23th, 1872 wrote like this:

"I could not but strongly feel in my fancy the odd instress of this, the moon leaning on her side, as if fallen back in the cheerful light floor within the ring, after with magical rightness and success tracing round her the ring, the steady copy of her own outline."<sup>1</sup>

On December 12th, 1872, he again wrote :

"I saw the inscape though freshly, as if my eye were still glowing, though with a companion the eye and the ear are for the most part shut and instress cannot come."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>W.H. Gardner : Poems and Prose of G.M. Hopkins , p.127.

<sup>2</sup>W.H. Gardner : Poems and Prose of G.M. Hopkins , p. 127.

From these two quotations, it is clear that "instress" is produced by the "inscape". The individual, distinctive beauty gives the poet a feeling of oddity and instress. In the "Journal" edited on July 13th, 1879, he explained about "instress": "I felt a certain awe and instress, a feeling of strangeness".

However the existence of "inscape" is not always followed by the existence of "instress". As we find in the quotation above, although G.M. Hopkins saw the inscape freshly and the eye and ear worked actively, he did not find any "instress". The reason of this is that he was hindered by human company.

"Instress" that is inherent in a person can be achieved by the work of our senses and also our mind. As in the poem "Pied Beauty" the poet himself feels the oddity and strangeness of the dappled things through his own observation i.e. by his senses. The readers will also find the same feelings when they read the poem, but their instress is achieved with the help of their imagination.

"Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow and plough".

G.M. Hopkins saw the "inscape" of the landscape. He saw the field of random size, shape and colour - "some used as sheep fold, green and nibbled smooth; some lying fallow, rougher and gone to rank growth; and still others brown and ribbed with the furrows of the plough"<sup>2</sup> The readers will get the same "instress" as the poet got

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<sup>1</sup>McNamee: Literary Types and Themes, p. 543.

it, but the difference lies in the fact that they achieve it by means of their imagination and not by their eyes.

W.H. Gardner in the Introduction of "Poems and Prose of G.M. Hopkins" explains :

"Instress is not only the unifying force in the object; it connotes also the impulse from the "inscape," which acts on the senses and through them actualizes the inscape in the mind of the beholder (or rather 'perceiver', for inscape may be perceived through all the senses at once). Instress, then is often the sensation of inscape ....., a sudden perception of that deeper pattern, order and unity which gives meaning to external forms."

(Introduction XXI)

Instress according to the explanation quoted above does not only exist in the subject matter but it also exists in the "perceiver" or the "beholder". Instress existing in the subject matter has "a unifying force" and also acts upon the beholder so that he realizes the pattern, order and unity of the subject matter.

## 2° HOPKINS'S MAIN THOUGHTS ABOUT POETRY

We have observed that to Hopkins familiar objects do not often give the feelings of awe, strangeness and instress. Based upon this fact in poetry he has adopted new means and techniques in order to strengthen such feelings. This means that he has to put aside the familiar ways of expressing thoughts and feelings that the Romanticists used.

What is new in Hopkins's poetry is only his technique of writing, for his subject matter is still Romantic. Wordsworth and the other Romanticists strengthen poetry by a return to simplicity of diction. They throw off the clumsy periphrases and stilted idioms that have hindered poetry so much at the end of the eighteenth century. They show how glowing, how moving, and how imaginative the use of the simplest words can be in the right context.

G.M. Hopkins, however, "does not hold the Wordsworthian view that the language of poetry should not differ from the language of prose."<sup>1</sup> He stresses the use of the creative language. He maintains that poetical language should be the "current language heightened to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not .... an obsolete one."<sup>2</sup> Thus he is not content with the ordinary words.

The Windhover

To Christ our Lord

G.M. Hopkins

I caught this morning morning's minion, king -  
 dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon,  
 in his riding  
 Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and  
 striding

<sup>1</sup>W.H. Gardner : G.M. Hopkins, Vol. I, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>W.H. Gardner : Poems and Prose of G.M. Hopkins,  
 Introduction xxxiii.

High there, how he rung upon the rein of a whimpling  
wing

In his Ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,

As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend :  
the hurl and gliding

Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding  
Stirred for a bird,- the achieve of, the mastery of  
the thing !

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride,  
plume here

Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a  
billion

Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it : sheer plod makes plough down sill-  
lion

Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,

Fall, gall themselves, and gash-gold-vermilion

When we read this poem we find that a large number of words seem to be strange and odd. They are not found in daily speech. The word "minion", for example rarely occurs in daily conversation; Instead the words "favourite" or "pet" are commonly heard. Also the word "dauphin" is really a French word, meaning "crown prince". One of the Key words in the poem, namely the word "Buckle" is surprising to us. It may mean "to give way to" "to fasten the belt with a buckle" or "to prepare to work". There are still many unfamiliar words such as "a bow-bend", "sheer plod", "sillion", "blue-bleak embers" and "gash gold-vermilion". In fact

the use of the word "caught" in "I caught this morning morning's minion," though it appears simple, practically is a bit heightened. The usual meaning of "to catch" is to stop the movement of a thing or person by getting hold of it or by holding something into which it may come. The poet, in this case, does not really so as such but he only catches the bird with his eyes.

From the examples above, it is clear now that Hopkins is not content with ordinary words. Instead he looks for the individuality, the distinctiveness of words, so that the instress is freshly achieved and thereby strengthened. Words as universal symbols are not powerful enough to produce the instress. According to Hopkins poetry is "an exploration of the possibility of language".

The deviation of poetic language from the common words produces "a salutary shock, a redoubled attentiveness in the reader". Hopkins's diction also produces an air of strangeness, oddity or queerness, because the aim of poetry is to move, to excite the reader. As to Hopkins's diction John Press gives a comment as follows:

"It is precisely this departure from the commonplace language of daily speech that lays a poet open to the charge of being wilfully obscure."<sup>1</sup>

A poem may be obscure because of the choice of words. Words which are not commonly used will produce "obscurity". This is especially true for Hopkins. The individuality of Hopkins's vocabulary is made up by coinages, compounds, archaisms and provincialisms. He

<sup>1</sup>John Press : The Chequer'd Shade, p. 11.

also borrows from other languages, French, Greek or Latin.

The word "louched" in "louched low grass" as we find in the poem "Ribblesdale", is a coinage of his. The word simply means "slouched or slouching". He compounds words by unhyphenated adjectival groups.

"For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim"  
(Pied Beauty)

"Of the rolling level underneath him steady air."  
(The Windhover)

"There lives the dearest freshness deep down things"  
(God's Grandeur)

or by means of a hyphen :

"For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow".

"Landscape plotted and pieced-fold, fallow and plough." (Pied Beauty).

"Dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon"

"Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear"  
(The Windhover)

or by fusion

"World of wanwood leafmeal"

(Spring and Fall)

The phrase means "pale dead wood and leaves which mixed up". The prefix "wan" indicates "deficiency" as in "wanworth," it also means dark or gloomy. The fusion of "wan" and "wood" means "pale dead wood". "Leafmeal" means "one by one the leaves fall, and then rots into mealy fragments".

or by the application of the "compound by substitution."

Thy river, and o'er gives all to rack or wrong".

(Ribblesdale)

We have never heard before the phrase "to rack or wrong", instead we often hear the expression "to rack and ruin", meaning to "destruction". Hopkins's compounds words make a new and distinctive whole.

The old words or the archaic words he revives are mostly from Shakespeare and other Elizabethans, but he does not borrow so freely. The word "brinded" in the expression "For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow" is an archaic word. The word means "brindled" or "having streaks of lighter colour on black". And also the word "sillion" in the sentence "sheer plod makes plough down sillion", means strip of arable land, furrow.

"Low-latched in leaf-light housel his too  
huge godhead".

(The Bugler's first communion)

In the quotation above we also find an archaism. The word "housel", has the meaning of "the consecrated species of the Eucharist". As in his more numerous archaism, Hopkins adopts a few dialect words of peculiar force or appropriateness.

"Degged with dew, dappled with dew

Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads  
through,"

(Inversnaid)

The word "degged" is dialect, meaning "sprinkled."



And also the word "fashed" in :

"O why are we so haggard at the heart, so  
Gare-coiled, care-killed, so fagged, so fashed,  
so cogged, so cumbered, ....."

(The Golden Echo)

is also a dialect word, meaning "troubled or vexed".

Something worthwhile which remains to be said is concerned with Hopkins's syntax, imagery and rhythm. "Grammatical structure of Greek and Latin poetry suggested to Hopkins as 'esemplastic'<sup>1</sup> syntax which would combine greater freedom with a more compelling unity, concentration, and distinctiveness or 'inscape'<sup>2</sup>. The syntax will be treated in accordance with the rhythm, because the various elements of style must be strictly integrated. To serve his purpose he adopts a kind of "Sprung syntax", "an arbitrary system in which words (like stresses), instead of falling into their conventional positions, are placed where they are required to express the shape and movement of individual thought" (Read "G.M. Hopkins" by W.H. Gardner Vol. I about syntax, p. 142).

"It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil  
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?"

(God's Grandeur)

The word "Crushed" is put in the beginning of the

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<sup>1</sup>"Moulding into one"- a word coined by Coleridge for the Imagination, the "esemplastic power".

<sup>2</sup>W.H. Garner : G.M. Hopkins, Vol. I, p. 142.

new line, although it is closely related to the preceding line. The effect of such a position is that the word must draw the special attention of the reader.

The Repetition and parallelism in syntax are remarkable and so are the accumulation of images to illuminate one central idea. They also give emphasis to the rhythm, and intensity, preciseness to the diction. In short Hopkins breaks up the placid normality of conventional grammar.

Hopkins's imagery ranges from the simple child-like up to the "metaphysical". The use of imagery to Hopkins is not only to generate poetic meaning and also to make concrete the poet's experience, but also to produce the individuality, distinctiveness or inscape. The imagery we find in "Thrush's eggs look little low heavens", is really a simple imagery and it is considered childlike.

"I caught this morning morning's minion, King-  
dom of daylight dauphin, ....."

The word "dauphin" in this context belongs to his mature imagery. In this case the word "dauphin" becomes the symbol of Christ. When the poet says that the dauphin is the King of daylight, certainly he refers to Christ being the king of "light". Dauphin is used as the image of Christ, therefore it belongs to his higher and sublime imagery.

Lastly we must comment on the kind of rhythm that Hopkins has adopted i.e. "Sprung Rhythm". In his letter to R.W. Dixon, October 5th 1878, he wrote :

"I had long had haunting my ear the echo of a new rhythm which now I realized on paper. To speak shortly, it consists in scanning by accents or stresses alone, without any account of the number of syllables, so that a foot may be one strong syllable, or it may be many light and one strong."<sup>1</sup>

Further he gave some instances :

Ding, dong, bell.  
 Who put her in ?  
 Who pulled her out?  
 Little Johnny Thin.

Usually, Sprung Rhythm is measured by feet of from one to four syllables, and for particular purposes any number of weak syllables may be used. In "Poems and Prose of Gerald Manley Hopkins" (p.9), W.H. Gardner explains that Sprung Rhythm "has one stress, which falls on the only syllable, if there is only one, or, if there are more, . . . . ., on the first and so gives rise to four sorts of feet, a monosyllable and the so called accentual Trochee, Dactyl, and the First Paeon".

The running rhythm or the common rhythm, as the opposite of Sprung Rhythm, according to Hopkins, does not come to life. Running rhythm is measured by feet of either two or three syllables and never more or less. Every foot has one principal stress and the syllable on which the stress falls may be called the stress of the foot and the other part, the one or two unaccented syllables, the Slack.

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<sup>1</sup>W.H. Gardner : Poems and Prose of G.M. Hopkins , p. 184.

## Examples :

I wanted to know what had happened  
 A bit boring is the end of the book  
 Across the road there stands a house

Verse written strictly by the running rhythm will become same and boring. A departure from the running rhythm is the use of the "Counterpoint Rhythm". This is a means to give a particular stress or interest to particular word. Counterpoint Rhythm means "the putting the stress where, to judge by the rest of the measure, the slack should be and the slack where the stress, and this is done freely at the beginning of a line and, in the course of a line, after a pause; only scarcely ever in the second foot or place and never in the last, unless when the poet designs some extraordinary effect; ...."<sup>1</sup>

## Example :

Thou mástering me Gōd  
 And thē gilded cār of dāy

If we counterpoint throughout, then we have "Sprung Rhythm". If we read the poem "The Windhover" once again, we will find that it seems we are not allowed to take a rest in the middle of the poem. Instead we are forced to read the whole poem from the beginning to the end. Thus in "Sprung Rhythm" the scansion runs from the beginning of a stanza to the end.

Since to Hopkins poetry should be read with the ear and not with the eye, he also pays very much attention to the sound-texture; for it cannot be separated

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<sup>1</sup>W.H.Gardner: Poems and Prose of G.M. Hopkins, p. 8.

from the rhythm. Alliteration, assonance, internal full- and half rhyme will give richness to his language, and also bring out subtle relationships between ideas and images and guide to the rhythmical stresses.

### III. THE INTRINSIC APPROACH TO ANALYZE THE POEM ENTITLED "RIBBLESDALE"

#### 1. THE MEANING OF THE INDIVIDUAL WORDS AND THEIR GRAMMATICAL FUNCTION

Before we start analyzing or explaining the poem, it will also be better first to deal with the meaning of the individual words and their grammatical function. We are sure that without knowing the exact meaning of the individual words and their grammatical function, we might explain in the wrong way. Especially to explain Hopkins's poems we must be careful and well-equipped, for the choice of the diction, including the meaning of each word, seems to be "strange".

Ribblesdale : It is the title of the poem. It is the valley of the Ribble. The river flows in Lancashire. The word begins with a fricative sound and the second syllable begins with a plosive followed by a lateral. The pattern of a plosive accompanied by a lateral is the poet's favourite sound. Such a pattern can be observed in the words : dappled, buckle, plead, plough, etc.

Earth: 1. this world : the planet on which we live.

2. land and sea (contrasted to the sky)

sweet: 1. having the taste of sugar

2. fresh and pleasant

## 3. pretty, charming, beautiful

sweet earth : the earth is pretty or beautiful. The  
 "beauty" of the earth is the manifestation of  
 God's beauty.

landscape : a piece of land scenery. It is Ribblesdale  
 that the poet refers to. Being a part of the  
 earth, Ribblesdale is also charming.

leaves : the plural form of "leaf". It is one of  
 the flat, green parts of a plant.

throng : a crowd, a gathering.

louched : slouched, slouching. The noun "slouch"  
 means a careless, bent, stooping attitude. The  
 word refers to the grass. The phrase "louched low  
 grass" means "the grass is stooping so low".

heaven : the state of perfect happiness, "God's a-  
 bodē".

dost : the archaic form of "do" and when transi-  
 tive the present tense singular second person :  
 I do, thou doest or dost.

appeal :

1. attract
2. ask earnestly for something

that : a relative pronoun. In the phrase "heaven  
 that dost appeal to", the word "that" functions  
 as a relative pronoun.

plead :

1. entreat, ask earnestly
2. advance reason for a cause.

canst : can. "I can" but "thou canst".

plea : 1. an excuse, an argument  
 2. an appeal

him : man. "Thy plea with him who dealt" means "Earth's argument to man who managed".

deal : manage, settle or arrange

nay : 1. old use "no"; reinforcing something  
2. not only that, but also

thus : 1. in this way  
2. to this extent

reel : 1. a lively dance  
2. a reeling or giving round movement

bid : invite

rack : destruction. The phrase "rack or wrong" may have the same meaning as the phrase "rack and ruin".

or else : if not, otherwise

dear : 1. loved, lovable  
2. expressing sorrow, wonder, impatience  
3. expensive

The word "dear" qualifies "man".

dogged: 1. stubborn, obstinate

to dog: to follow close behind as a dog does. The phrase "dear and dogged man" means the man is loveable and stubborn.

heir : a person who receives, who has the right to receive, the title, the property, etc. of another person on the latter's death.

self bent : self-interested or obstinate. Other compounds with "self" illustrates Hopkins's great debt to Shakespeare in the matter of diction. Shakespeare speaks of "self-affairs, self-breath, self-bounty.

bound : to bind-bound-bound : fasten together, tie

thrifless : wasteful, extravagant.

reave: take away by force.

is a good example of the use of provincial words.

His coinage of expression can be found in line two in the word "louched". The word has the same meaning as the word "slouched" which is more common to us. Maybe it is only Hopkins who uses the word "louched" instead of "slouched". The auxiliary verb "dost" in "that dost appeal" is also rarely used. It is an old-fashioned word. The word "reave", meaning "to take away or spoil", is an archaic word. It is presumed that the word derives from Spencer. "Thy", meaning the possessive pronoun of the second person in the singular, is also an old, poetic or religious word. Those words are good examples of his use of old or archaic words, if they fit his inscape.

As for the compound expression the phrase "to rack or wrong" is probably derived from the more colloquial "to rack and ruin". This type of compound is called compound by substitution, one element in some familiar compound is replaced by another, just as a weaker acid is displaced by a stronger in the composition of a salt. Another example of compound, we find in the words "self" and "bent", combined together, forming the word "self-bent", meaning self-interested or obstinate.

These devices of forming new expressions produce a salutary shock, a redoubled attentiveness in the readers. It is very typical of Hopkins to apply words which sound queer such as the title of the poem itself "Ribblesdale" and also the words "throng", "reel", etc. Such sounds are not only found in the poem of Ribblesdale, they are also found in other poems, such as the words "dappled", "buckle". Those words sound alike.



Other features of Hopkins's diction need a further explanation. We still observe some words which have more than one meaning. Very often one meaning reinforces and intensifies the other, and thus gives more meaning to the sentence expressed. We find the word "sweet" in the phrase "sweet earth". The word "sweet" usually means "having the taste of sugar", but in the poem it means either "beautiful" or "pleasant". Actually we do not find much difference between the two meanings, even they refer to the same idea. Something which has the taste of sugar is pleasant to us.

The word "dear" in the phrase "dear and dogged man" is also considered to be a word which has more than one meaning. The word may be interpreted either "beloved" or "expensive". It means also "expressing sorrow or wonder". Which of those meanings is the right or the exact meaning? The answer would be right if we say that those meanings go together, one meaning go together one meaning intensifying the other.

If we observe intently the words used in the poem we can draw the conclusion that most words are selected from those that have one syllable or two syllables. The words earth, sweet, throng, tongue, plead, heart, feel, dost, strong and reck, have one syllable. The words landscape, heaven, river, lovely and dogged, consist of two syllables.

Syntax or grammatical structure in order to be accurate should match with the other elements of a poem, such as the rhythm, the diction. The diction applied in the poem is rather "strange" to us. The use of "sprung rhythm" is accompanied by his "sprung-syntax". This is

an arbitrary system in which, like happened with stress sometimes, words instead of falling into their conventional position are placed where they are required to express the shape and movement of individual thought. Let us see if we find any examples of grammatical structures which are typical of Hopkins.

"That canst but only be, but dost that long -

In this line we find some emphatic words such as the words : "only", "dost". Those small particles usually connect some stronger words, but here they are given stress.

Another feature of grammar structure is the use of inversion as we find in lines two and three.

"..... heaven that dost appeal

To with no tongue to plead, no heart to feel"

The word "to" in line three is closely connected with the second line. In the sentence :

"And what is Earth' eye, tongue, or heart else where  
Else, but in dear and dogged man?"

We see the use of abrupt apposition and parenthesis. The word "else" in the phrase "or heart else" is a sudden apposition, while the phrase "where else" is an abrupt parenthesis. In the same sentence above we are still "shocked" by the use of the rhetorical question. It is a question which does not expect an answer. This style of writing is meant to make the readers believe that what is said is right and to emphasize the sentence.

To conclude this chapter we find that the whole

## Chapter 8

### HOW TO EVALUATE A POEM

There is a difference in meaning between "to value" and "to evaluate". To value something is to estimate its worth or price. Thus when we value a poem we consider the positive side of it and ignore the negative side. To evaluate means to assign both positive and negative impressions. In any case when we evaluate we usually pass from the points of interest to those of no interest.

Once more we should bear in mind that a sound judgement can only be produced by a full understanding. Therefore the first step in reading is aimed at a full understanding of what the poet has to say. After we have explored the meaning of the poem and the kind of theme with which it deals, then we come to the second step, that is, to appreciate the literary qualities of the way in which it is expressed (diction, syntax, imagery). Finally we can evaluate the poem we are dealing. It is advisable before making our final judgement to read the poem as a whole once again, so that the detailed knowledge will be integrated into the uniqueness of the poem.

In short, there are two main steps when we evaluate a poem. We should first of all know what the poem is about and secondly we should put forward the impressions or appreciation that we gain from the poem. After this we have the right to state our personal opinion of the poem, for we are sure that we are expressing a true judgement and not a prejudice.

Reading of any kind should not end in the knowl-

edge or information or enjoyment that we get out of it, but it should be developed into appreciation and value judgement. According to T.S. Eliot "the elements of enjoyment in poetry reading should be enlarged into appreciation, which brings a more intellectual addition to the original intensity of feeling."<sup>1</sup>

He also explains in his essay on the "Tradition and Individual Talent" that "no poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance and appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. We cannot value him alone, but we must set him for contrast and comparison among the dead."<sup>2</sup>

From the statements quoted above we can draw the conclusion that a poem can be evaluated by comparing it with other poems written by past poets. It is important to relate a particular poem to other poetry because all poetry that has ever been written constitutes "a living whole". A complete appreciation is not limited to the poem we are dealing with but also includes its relation to other poems.

There are still many ways in which we can evaluate a poem. Rene Wellek suggests that we can evaluate a poem "by reference to a norm, by the application of criteria, by comparison of it with other objects and interest."<sup>3</sup>

We think a particular poem good because it is easy to

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<sup>1</sup>T.S. Eliot, Selected Prose : ed. John Hayward, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>T.S. Eliot: The Sacred Wood, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup>Rene Wellek : Theory of Literature, p. 238.

read, or because the material is vivid or because the poet's theme is congenial to us. But the simplest way for a reader to judge a poem is by noticing its affect upon him. Does it give him valuable information? Does it interest and excite him? If the answers are positive it must be good according to him. Such an evaluation is the simplest way because each knows what he likes. However, we are not satisfied with our personal evaluation because this is only based on subjective criteria. The best way to evaluate a poem, as René Wellek suggests, is by reference to a norm or by the application of criteria. The following topics can be considered as the norms or criteria when we evaluate a poem.

#### 1° Evaluating a poem for its truth

Literary excellence is truth. The truth or falsity of a piece of writing may be tested by considering two questions; Who says it and what is said? G.M.Hopkins for example, as a Jesuit priest and a poet, wrote a lot of poems concerning the relation between God, nature and man. What is expressed in his poems, of course, is more reliable than when an engineer or a doctor writes on the same subject. Some questions worth considering :

1. Discover whether there is any known reason for doubting his integrity ?
2. Find out if the author or poet is an authority in his field.
3. Discover whether there is any reason for the writer's being biased on the subject of the particular work we are reading.
4. Are the facts accurate? The facts are events

or datum upon the nature of which most people in a position to agree.

5. Is the reasoning valid and logic?

## 2° Evaluating a poem in its own term

When we evaluate a poem in its own term we attempt to see how well it does what it sets out to do. We test for its efficiency. Each work is a new and unique problem. The sound evaluation of a poem in its own term depends upon the ability to recognize :

1. the author's purpose
2. the writer
3. the ways in which the context, organization and presentation are adapted to purpose or audience

Men ought to evaluate a poem for being what it is. They ought to evaluate it in terms and in degrees of its literary value. We must value things for what they are and can do, and evaluate them by comparison with other things of a similar nature and function.

## 3° Evaluating a poem as Literature

A poem is an aesthetic object, capable of arousing aesthetic experience. Can we evaluate a literary work entirely by aesthetic criteria or ought we, as T.S. Eliot suggests, to judge the literariness of a poem by aesthetic criteria and the greatness of literature by extra-aesthetic criteria? The answer can be found with the help of numbers 1 and 2.

A literary evaluation depends upon tastes; And tastes, of course, are individual and personal. Each person has his own taste. The criterion which makes a primary appearance in aesthetic evaluation may be novelty

and surprise, as is said by the Russian formalists such as Victor Shklovsky.<sup>1</sup> However, when we return again and again to poems, saying that we see something new in them, we ordinarily mean not more things of the same kinds, but only new levels of meaning, new patterns of association.

When we evaluate a poem as literature we can consider the following items :

1. Organization :

The organization of sentences and thoughts in a poem constitutes one aspect that we can evaluate. Our criterion is inclusiveness, imaginative integration and the amount of material integrated. The tighter the organization of the poem, the higher its value.

2. Style of writing :

This consists of diction, syntax and imagery. Are the words concrete or abstract? Are they emotional or neutral, figurative or literal, homely or learned? We may be interested in the sentences; Are they simple or complex, lengthy or brief, ordered or inverted? We may be interested in the imagery; Is the imagery vivid? Is it too childish?

3. Sounds of words

Are the pattern of sounds rhythmical or not, melodious or harsh? How is the sound of the individual words? Do they reinforce the tone and the theme of the poem?

There are some literary aspects which are worth considering when we give our value-judgement.

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<sup>1</sup> See René Wellek : Theory of Literature, p. 242.

The following is a summary of the writer's evaluation of the poem "Ribblesdale". To a certain extent, the writer is of the opinion that the poem is supremely meaningful.

The poem, as I have pointed out, is full of spiritual teaching. The poet is able to arouse a feeling of reverence to God by looking at the beauty of the natural phenomena. The poet, who is also a priest, has combined his literary capacity and his priesthood to bring God to his fellow human-beings. The truth of the poem can be relied upon, for Hopkins knows a lot about the condition of human courage and endurance. When he wrote something about the condition of human-beings in relation both to God and nature, he gave us valuable reading material. The Christian, after reading the poem, may get new insights into the existence of God, which will deepen his belief and steer him to do more than just acknowledging God's beauty and love. Further man's love for God should be gradually increased and developed. The development includes the increase of the right attitude towards his surroundings. He must be sensitive to them; He must also realize that the humblest things of earth like water, trees and "louched low grass" bear a great testimony to God's goodness. Finally man must not only be occupied with earthly matters, but he must primarily care for his future life.

When we read the poem, we are surprised at the novelty and freshness in the content, imagery, diction and sounds of words. The inscape of the poem is successfully achieved. This poem provides us with a unique and distinctive beauty and experience, quite different from



any other poems. The novelty and freshness in style can be better felt by comparing the poem with poems of other romantics.

To a certain extent the writer dislikes the use of the diction which is too personal and obsolete and which is sometimes too far-fetched. The strangeness in diction is still added to by the use of the sprung-syntax which ~~is~~ also brings us into difficulties. But in spite of these difficulties, the poem is still worth reading, for there are more positive sides than the negative sides to it.

## Chapter 9

### AN ACCOUNT OF THE WAYS OF DEVELOPING ONE'S ABILITY TO READ POETRY

So far we have dealt mainly with the ways of approaching the individual poems. By studying them from the extrinsic and intrinsic points of view we have shown the right and complete methods to read, to understand and to appreciate them. Such methods of approaching poems are suitable to people who have already developed a taste of poetry. Students at the universities or colleges are supposed to approach poems in this way, while students of lower schools cannot approach them in this way. Students attending universities or colleges should have an ability to read poetry more advanced and more difficult than students of the secondary and high schools.

In fact, schools are the places where most people should develop their skill of poetry-reading. The teacher must be able to adapt the materials and the poetry classes to the students' age, ability, interests and country. Though the teaching of poetry to children, to adolescent and to mature people varies so much, however, it should form one unity. Therefore a graded course is really indispensable.

If we look through the curricula of the S.M.P. and S.M.A., we will find that there are no special hours for teaching poetry. The students are taught English so that they master the four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The reading skill is

usually concerned with prose texts, and poetry-reading has no place at all. The reason of this is that poetry-reading does not "really" help in developing the students' ability to acquire the four language skills. Another reason is that the average English teacher is not competent to teach poetry, for he himself does not have enough practice in dealing with it.

However, poetry-reading may not be separated from language learning for it has a contribution of its own to offer. The teacher of English at the secondary and high schools must find a correct approach so that poetry reading can be practised.

Teachers at the S.M.P. can teach poetry in the following way. From the available material they should select those poems that are simple, interesting and of value. Simplicity is stressed here because the students do not know much English. Simple verses, say, folk songs nursery rhymes may form a valuable aid to the understanding of poetic rhythm. If the teacher presents a difficult poem, the students will be discouraged and lose their self-confidence and furthermore will get a false-idea that poetry is too difficult and beyond their reach. Besides simplicity both in diction and structure, the verses must agree with the student's age and interest. Here are some examples of verses suitable for S.M.P. students :

1. Solomon Grundy, born on Monday,

Christened on Tuesday, married on Wednesday,

Fell in on Thursday, worse on Friday,

Died on Saturday, buried on Sunday.

That is the end of Solomon Grundy.

2. One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a  
fish alive.

Six, seven, eight, nine, ten, then I let him go  
again.

Why did you let him go ? Because he bit my finger  
so.

Which finger did he bite? The little finger on  
the right.

3. Jack and Jill went up the hill  
To fetch a pail of water,  
Jack fell down and broke his crown,  
And Jill came tumbling after.

4. Old King Cole was a merry old soul,  
And a merry old soul was he.  
He called for his pipe and he called for his bowl,  
And he called for his fiddlers three.

These children's rhymes are good to begin with  
and can be introduced at the S.M.P. as an initial stage  
to the understanding of poetry. By giving those simple  
verses the students will have a good opportunity to re-  
inforce English rhythm and pronunciation. As to examples  
1 and 2, they are also suitable to introduce to the  
students the names of the days and the numbers from one  
to ten.

In class the teacher can write down the materials  
on the board or distribute books or texts containing  
them. First of all he reads aloud to the class and the  
students are asked to listen carefully. This reading a-  
loud will enable them to catch the pronunciation of the

individual words, the rhythm, the stress and the sense units. Afterwards, unison reading can be adapted. The teacher reads a line and the class repeats after him. This unison reading is done line by line, continuing until the last line. The repetition is also meant to improve the students' pronunciation. While the students are repeating, the teacher must be aware of the mistakes they make. Any mistake must be corrected right away so that they are forced to pronounce the words correctly, to put the stress in the right place, to read with a correct rhythm and intonation. The repetition can be done several times until no mistakes are made.

The unison reading is then followed by the explanation of the difficult words. The teacher reads line by line and explains the difficult words and structures. After the class has understood what the general content of the verse is, the teacher may ask several students to read aloud individually. Before the class ends, the teacher asks the class to learn the verse by heart at home.

Through this kind of poetry-reading the students will find that poetry is an interesting lesson that can help them in mastering the language skills, especially the oral skill. The preliminary course of poetry will be helpful in developing the students' appreciation of poetry. Of course, the teacher plays an important role in conducting the class and he also determines the fruit of his poetry class.

Teaching poetry-reading as discussed above can be given to children up to say twelve or fourteen. According to T.S. Eliot in "Selected Prose" page 48, chil-



dren at that age "are capable of a certain enjoyment of poetry; at or about puberty the majority of these find themselves possessed of a craving for poetry which is wholly different from any enjoyment experienced before"

As has been pointed out before the approach and materials of teaching poetry should vary according to the students' age. For students of the high schools or the first year of the universities or colleges, the teacher can conduct an adolescent poetry course. For them, there must not be confusion between the intensity of the poetic experience and the intense experience of poetry. Psychologically speaking adolescent students will find that "the poem or the poetry of a single poet invades the youthful consciousness and assumes complete possession for a time," as is pointed out by T.S. Eliot in "Selected Prose", page 49. It means that they are unable to separate their own experience from the experience of the poet they happen to be reading. It is as if the poetic experience exists in them as an experience of love. The right attitude towards poetry is that although they feel the same poetic experience as the poet experiences it, there should be a 'borderline' between the experience of the poet and their own experience.

An adolescent course must go a step further than the preliminary stage. For this purpose poems should be chosen that are simple in diction and structure, yet real poetry, that is of interest, usually containing themes about love and patriotism and not about death or old age, and which will also stimulate them to read more books on poetry.

Conducting a poetry class for adolescent students

is done in almost the same way as conducting a poetry class for children. But now the process of teaching can be divided into three steps : preparation, presentation and a great deal of rereading and discussion. In this course we expect that the students must gradually come to grips with the poem. The reading aloud can be done for the enjoyment of the beauty of the poem, and also as a means to grasp the thoughts so that the students can appreciate the poem as a meaningful organization.

The Pasture

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;  
 I'll only stop to rake the leaves away  
 (And wait to watch the water clear, I may)  
 I sha'n't be gone long. - you come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf  
 That's standing by the mother. It's so young  
 It totters when she licks it with her tongue  
 I sha'n't be gone long. - you come too.

by : Robert Frost.

In the preparation stage the teacher tells the class that this poem was written by an American poet, Robert Frost. Being a farmer, he invites a friend, maybe his wife, to go to work in the farm, for he feels that his friend will be unhappy if he leaves him or her. Then the teacher reads the poem aloud without stopping until the end. His way of reciting should convince the students of the friendly and dramatic invitation, accompanied by enthusiasm. The enthusiasm can be communicated through his voice. The natural and honest enthu-

Enthusiasm of the teacher can explain why the poem is beautiful, profound and significant. The voice of the teacher should ring out in the students' ears. Without enthusiasm on the part of the teacher the poetry class will be fruitless.

After the first reading then comes the presentation stage. This consists of a great deal of rereading either by the teacher or by the students. Unison drill can also be put into effect. Little by little the students must be trained to understand what the poem is about. In the discussion stage the teacher explains all the difficult words and structures, which may be useful in grasping the poem. At this stage too the teacher can deal with the elements of the poem by asking questions to the students, i.e. about the theme, the tone, the mood etc.

The theme of the poem is love and it has a friendly tone. The words and the sentence structures are simple and yet these simple lines create a mood and a picture of every day life. Other points of interest may also be discussed.

Robert Frost himself has advised us that the pleasure of the poem is its meaning, vocabulary or structure. It is advisable not to analyze the poem to death but to let the students enjoy the sound and the "feel" of it. As the students enjoy the sound, the meaning will be clear enough to them.

We may conclude that poetry-reading aims at the understanding of the totality of a poem by means of the sound patterns, the rhythm, the images either visual or kinaesthetic and the word-play. An analytical dissection



for adolescent students, though not completely ignored, should not be overdone.

For mature students, however, there must be a balance between the enjoyment of the sound of poetry and the enjoyment of the meaning. It is impossible especially for non-English students to understand a difficult poem just by reading it aloud. If they happen to read poems which are full of ideas, either social or philosophical, they are certainly unable to grasp what the poem is about just by reading it several times. Reading the poem of 'Ribblesdale' for instance needs a correct approach. As the writer has suggested this can be done by approaching the poem from its external and internal points of view. Therefore as a practical application of this method, when he teaches difficult poems say "Ode on the Grecian Urn" by J. Keats, or "Ulysses" by A.L. Tennyson or "God's Grandeur" by G.M. Hopkins, the teacher must give a preliminary explanation concerning the poets. He must explain the things needed to appreciate these poems fully, and this introductory discussion can be considered as an extrinsic help in tackling the poems.

Before introducing a poem written by G.M. Hopkins the teacher first talks about his vocation, his philosophy and biography and his thoughts on poetry. These topics will be helpful later on. After the teacher has given the backgrounds of the poets' works, he can introduce their poems. The procedure is much like the one for the adolescent students, but now the appreciation of poetry should be more complete and mature. Finally they must be able to give a value judgement of the poems, based upon the impressions they have got.

If the three stages of poetry course as we have suggested are applied properly, I am sure that the students will achieve an ability to understand poetry and that this will gradually grow into perfection.

Since English is not the native language of Indonesians usually the words of poetry, by which the thoughts are conveyed, are "bugbears" or something feared or disliked, because they have to be hunted down in the dictionary. Looking up the words of poetry should, however, not be overdone. Besides the words of the poems, the images in poetry might cause problems in different countries. What is romantic and exotic to a certain group may be commonplace to another group, and vice versa.

As a further help in teaching poetry the teacher can show some pictures in connection with the poet or poems. It is good to have on hand a number of pictures of the Lake District and a background talk on the particular aspects of the district if we teach the poems written by Wordsworth. Thus the students visualize the images which might be used by the poet.

If possible the teacher can have good recordings of English poetry. There are a lot of records of readings by W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot and Dylan Thomas and other poets. Their readings, of course, certainly tell us more than any critical description of them. While the records are played, it is absolutely necessary to have the texts available because it seems impossible to follow poems which are not written in the native language of the students. The reading aloud by the native poets will make the meaning clearer to the mind through the ear than our eyes can make it.

Finally the writer must add that a prose translation of a poem into a foreign language is not appropriate as material for a poetry class. It may help a student to clear his mind and grasp what the poem is about, but it will destroy the beauty of the poem as a totality.

## Chapter 10

### CONCLUSION

Once again the writer feels it necessary to stress the nature of poetry which will make us aware of the things needed in poetry-reading. The difficulties in poetry-reading, by and large, are caused by the nature of poetry itself.

1° Poetry is difficult. The difficulties in the reading of poems lead us to the consideration that poetry is "difficult". As we have seen, the reading of poems cannot be separated from the knowledge of poetry. The reading of poems without any understanding of "poetry" itself cannot be called proper reading. This can be compared to a man who is looking at a beautiful picture but who is unable to recognize and to appreciate its beauty. Therefore, some knowledge about poetry, including what poetry is, the difficulties and the aims of the reading of poems and also the different types of poetry is indispensable.

2° Poetry is exact. Poetry is like a person. A generalization about a person is doing harm to his uniqueness. No two persons are identical. Donald A. Stauffer in his book "The nature of poetry" explains that "poetic exactness consists in the unique individuality of each complete poetic expression" (see Literary Types and Themes, Mc.Wamee, p. 523). The unique individuality of a poem may be caused by the individual poets. On the whole, the individuality of the poem is determined by the poet's life, experience, philosophy and thoughts

about poetry. In order to learn about the individuality the extrinsic approach of analyzing of poem may be of great help. The extrinsic approach, as the writer has suggested, is mainly performed by a study of the life and philosophy of the poet, and also by a consideration of the time when the poet lives or lived and where he lives or lived.

Although poetry is exact, it is not like the exactness in mathematics; The exactness in poetry cannot be analyzed and described exhaustively. A poem is like a spring of water; when one digs much more water will come out. The more we think of a particular poem, the more we find ourselves involved in it.

3<sup>o</sup> Poetry is obscure. Complaining of the obscurity of poetry is like bemoaning the wetness of water or the hardness of stone. The obscurity may be the result of the use of unusual vocabulary, or of the departure from the commonplace language of daily speech, or of the unusual syntax. And as happens in some of the modern poems, they are obscure because the poets do not bother much about the reader. Sometimes the obscurity is caused by the difficulty of grasping the sense of novelty and freshness with which old and familiar objects are treated.

In short, poetry is obscure because the vocabulary and syntax have been transformed into the grammar of assent, meaning that ordinary grammar is necessarily changed to suit the poet's intention, and the language of the heart, so that the words have new power.

4<sup>o</sup> Poetry is compact. Because of the limitation of the form, the poet must choose his material with spe-

cial care, applying only powerful language and rejecting all useless verses. There is no room for details, therefore compactness and economy are necessary. This careful selection and shifting results in compactness, and consequently the necessity of thoughtful, careful and sensitive reading. We must read the poem and think it over, word by word, line by line, stanza by stanza, with patient reading, and at last the unity of all the details forms one poetic experience in our mind.

5° Poetry is complex. A piece of poem is the result of the combination of thought, feelings, meaningful words, vivid imagery and rhythm. These elements are organized into a unity of powerful poetic experience above all into one thing. The thought and feelings must be in harmony with the language, either its meaning or sound. Words must be set down in a satisfying order and each must be meaningful. Only figures of speech are selected that will arouse the feelings of wonderment and freshness.

Although a piece of poem constitutes a unity of poetic experience, we cannot analyze the poem unless we divide the poem into its elements. It is impossible for us to analyze a poem profitably by considering all the elements in poetry simultaneously. The division of thinking does not mean that we really differentiate among all those elements, as is usually thought. We only distinguish for clarity's sake. Thus analyzing a poem profitably is also determined by our ability to see the parts from which the poem is formed.

6° Poetry is significant. Since the material for poetry contains the experience or judgements of human-

beings, the poem will be significant for human - beings. Once again we should keep in mind that poetry is also significant because pleasure and happiness can be attained from it.

This thesis is humbly intended to give some ideas and suggestions of the ways how to read poetry properly and profitably. The writer sincerely hopes that this paper will be of value for the general public, especially for students who are interested in poetry.

## APPENDIX

The poems collected here are offered to develop the reader's taste of the English poetry and improve his skill in analyzing poetry. The writer is of the opinion that understanding poetry is a gradual process. In fact the process never ends, but every new insight enriches our poetic experience.

The poems here are more or less arranged according to their compactness. The writer provides different types of poems, with various themes and tones. Since everybody has different tastes, it is up to the reader to choose those which are of interest to him and which will give enough satisfaction. Poems of any kind present an interesting experience that might be worthwhile for our life.

### 1. FOLK BALLAD (NARRATIVE)

#### The Twa Corbies

Anonymous

1. As I was walking all alone,  
I heard twa corbies making a mane;  
The tane unto the t'other say,  
"Where sall we gang and dine to-day?"
2. "In behint you auld fail dyke,  
I wot there lies a new slain knight;  
And naebody kens that he lies there,  
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.



3. "His hound is to the hunting gane,  
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,  
His lady's ta'en another mate,  
So we may mak our dinner sweet.
4. "Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,  
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;  
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair  
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare.
5. "Mony a one for him makes mane,  
But mane sall ken where he is gane;  
O'er his white banes, when they are bare,  
The wind sall blaw for evermair."

From : Mc.Namee : Literary Types and Themes pp.122-3.

## 2. LYRIC

### My Heart Leaps Up

W. Wordsworth

My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky :  
So was it when my life began;  
So is it now I am a man;  
So be it when I shall grow old,  
Or let me die!  
The Child is father of the Man;  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.

From : Robert Shafer : From Beowulf to Thomas Hardy Vol.

3, p. 194.

## 3. NARRATIVE

Richard Cory

Edwin Arlington Robinson

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,  
 We people on the pavement looked at him :  
 He was a gentleman from sole to crown,  
 Clean favored, and imperially slim.  
 And he was always quietly arrayed,  
 And he was always human when he talked;  
 But still he fluttered pulses when he said,  
 "Good-morning", and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich, yes, richer than a king -  
 And admirably schooled in every grace :  
 In fine, we thought that he was everything  
 To make us wish what we were in his place.  
 So on we worked, and waited for the light,  
 And went without the meat, and cursed the bread :  
 And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,  
 Went home and put a bullet through his head.

From : Mc. Namee : Literary Types and Themes, p. 173.

## 4. LITERARY BALLAD

The Ballad of Father Gilligan

W.B. Yeats

The old priest Peter Gilligan  
 Was weary night and day;  
 For half his flock were in their beds,  
 Or under green sods lay.

Once, while he nodded on a chair,  
At the moth-hour of eve,  
Another poor man sent for him,  
And he began to grieve.

"I have no rest, nor joy, nor peace,  
For people die and die,"  
And after cried he, "God forgive!  
My body spake, not I!"

He knelt, and leaning on the chair  
He prayed and fell asleep;  
And the moth-hour went from the fields;  
And stars began to peep.

They slowly into millions grew,  
And leaves shook in the wind;  
And God covered the world with shade,  
And whispered to mankind.

Upon the time of sparrow-chirp  
When moths came once more,  
The old priest Peter Gilligan  
Stood upright on the floor.

"Mavrone, mavrone! the man has died  
While I slept on the chair";  
He roused his horse out of its sleep,  
And rode with little care.

He rode now as he never rode,  
By rocky lane and fen;  
The sick man's wife opened the door:  
"Father! you come again!"

"And is the poor man dead?" he cried

"He died an hour ago".

The old priest Peter Gilligan

In grief swayed to and fro.

"When you were gone, he turned and died

As merry as a bird."

The old priest Peter Gilligan

He knelt him at that word.

"He Who hath made the night of stars

For souls who tire and bleed,

Sent one of His great angels down

To help me in my need.

"He Who is wrapped in purple robes,

With planets in His care,

Had pity on the least of things

Asleep upon a chair."

From : McNamee: Literary Types and Themes, p. 136.

## 5. LYRIC

### Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveler from an antique land

Who said : "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed :  
 And on the pedestal these words appear :  
 'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings :  
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'  
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
 The lone and level sands stretch far away."

From : McNamee : Literary Types and Themes, p. 548.

#### 6. SONNET

The World is too much

with us

W. Wordsworth

The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:  
 Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
 We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
 The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon.  
 The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
 And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
 For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
 It moves us not. - Great God I'd rather be  
 A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn :  
 So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
 Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
 Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
 Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

From : Robert Shafer : From Beowulf to Thomas Hardy

Vol. 3, p. 207.

## 7. LYRIC

Crossing The Bar

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Sunset and evening star,  
 And one clear call for me !  
 And may there be no moaning of the bar,  
 When I put out to see,  
 But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
 Too full for sound and foam,  
 When that which drew from the boundless deep  
 Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,  
 And after that the dark!  
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,  
 When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place  
 The flood may bear me far,  
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
 When I have crossed the bar.

From : Mc.Namée : Literary Types and Themes p. 636.

## 8. LYRIC

Meeting at Night

R. Browning

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 i' the slushy sand.

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

From : S.H. Burton : The Criticism of Poetry, p. 118.

#### 9. Descriptive

##### To a Pet Cobra

Roy Campbell

With breath indrawn and every nerve alert,  
 As at the brink of some profound abyss,  
 I love on my bare arm, capricious flirt,  
 To feel the chilly and incisive kiss  
 Of your little tongue that forks its swift caress  
 Between the folded slumber of your fangs,  
 And half reveals the nacreous recess  
 Where death upon those dainty hinges hangs.

Our lonely lives in every chance agreeing,  
 It is no common friendship that you bring,  
 It was the desert starved us into being,  
 The hate of men that sharpened us to sting:  
 Sired by starvation, suckled by neglect,  
 Hate was the surly tutor of your youth:  
 I too can kiss the hair of men ere t  
 Because my lips are venomous with truth.

Where the hard rock is barren, scorched the spring,  
Shrivelled the grass, and the hot wind of death  
Hornets the crag with whirred metallic wing -  
We drew the fatal secret of our breath:  
By whirlwinds bugled forth, whose funneled suction  
Scrolls the spun sand into a golden spire,  
Our spirits leaped, hosannas of destruction,  
Like desert lilies forked with tongue of fire.

Dainty one, deadly one, whose folds are panthered  
With stars, my slender Kalihari flower,  
Whose lips with gangs are delicately authered,  
Whose coils are volted with electric power,  
I love to think how men of my dull nation  
Might spurn your sleep with inadvertent heel  
To kindle up the lithe retaliation  
And cuper to the slash of sudden steel.

There is no sea so wide, no waste so sterile  
But holds a rapture for the sons of strife:  
There shines upon the topmost peak of peril  
A throne for spirits that abound in life:  
There is no joy like theirs who fight alone,  
Whom lust or gluttony has never tied,  
Who in their purity have built a throne,  
And in their solitude a tower of pride.

I wish my life, O suave and silent sphrink,  
Might flow like yours in some such strenuous line,  
My days the scales, my years the bony links  
That chain the length of its resilient spine:  
And when at last the moment comes to strike,  
Such venom give my hilted fangs the power,



Like drilling roots the dirty soil that spike,  
To sting these rotted wastes into a flower.

From : Mc Namee : Literary Types and Themes pp. 582-3.

10. ODE

Ode on a Grecian Urn

John Keats

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,  
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,  
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express

A flowery tale more sweetly than our rime:  
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape  
Of deities or mortals, or of both,

In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?  
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave  
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;

Bold hover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,  
     For ever piping songs for ever new;  
 More happy love! more happy, happy love!  
     For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,  
     For ever panting and for ever young;  
 All breathing human passion far above,  
     That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,  
     A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
     To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
     And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?  
 What little town by river or sea-shore,  
     Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
     Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?  
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
     Will silent be; and not a soul to tell  
     Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede  
     Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
     Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought  
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!  
     When old age shall this generation waste,  
     Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"-that is all  
     Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

## 11. LYRIC

Spring

G.M. Hopkins

Nothing is so beautiful as spring -

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and  
lush;

Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and  
thrush

Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring  
The ear, it strikes like lightning to hear him sing;

The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they -  
brush

The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush  
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their  
fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the be-  
ginning

In Eden garden - Have, get, before it cloy,  
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with  
sinning,

Innocent mind and May day in girl and boy,

Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy  
the winning -

From : The Pocket Poets : G.M. Hopkins. p. 13.

## 12. LYRIC

Leda and the Swan

W.B. Yeats

A sudden blow : the great wings beating still  
 Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed  
 By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,  
 He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push  
 The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?  
 And how can body, laid in that white rush,  
 But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there  
 The broken wall, the burning roof and tower  
 And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,

So mastered by the brute blood of the air,  
 Did she put on his knowledge with his power  
 Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

From : The Penguin Book of Contemporary Verse p.45 ed.  
 by Kenneth Allot.

## 13. DESCRIPTIVE

On the Move

'Man, you gotta Go.'

Thom Gunn

The blue jay scuffling in the bushes follows  
 Some hidden purpose, and the gust of birds  
 That spurts across the field, the wheeling swallows,

Have nested in the trees and undergrowth.  
Seeking their instinct, or their poise, or both,  
One moves with an uncertain violence  
Under the dust thrown by a baffled sense  
Or the dull thunder of approximate words.  
On motorcycles, up the road, they come:  
Small, black, as flies hanging in heat, the Boys,  
Until the distance throws them forth, their hum  
Bulges to thunder held by calf and thigh  
In goggles, donned impersonality,  
In gleaming jackets trophied with the dust  
They strap in doubt - by hiding it, robust -  
And almost hear a meaning in their noise.

Exact conclusion of their hardiness  
Has no shape yet, but from known where abouts  
They ride, direction where the tyres press.  
They scare a flight of birds across the field:  
Much that is natural, to the will must yield.  
Men manufacture both machine and soul,  
And use what they imperfectly control  
To dare a future from the taken routes.

It is a part solution, after all.  
One is not necessarily discord  
On earth; or damned because, half animal  
One lacks direct instinct, because one wakes  
Afloat on movement that divides and breaks.  
One joins the movement in a valueless world,  
Choosing it, till, both hurler and the hurled,  
One moves as well, always toward, toward.

A minute holds them, who have come to go:  
 The self-defined, astride the created will  
 They burst away; the towns they travel through  
 Are home for neither bird nor holiness,  
 For birds and saints complete their purposes.  
 At worst, one is in motion; and at best,  
 Reaching no absolute, in which to rest,  
 One is always nearer by not keeping still.

From : The Penguin Book of Contemporary Verse : p. 375  
 ed. by Kenneth Allott.

#### 14. DESCRIPTIVE

##### Law Like Love

W.H. Auden

Law, say the gardeners, is the sun,  
 Law is the one  
 All gardeners obey  
 To-morrow, yesterday, to-day.

Law is the wisdom of the old  
 The important grandfathers shrilly scold;  
 The grandchildren put out a treble tongue,  
 Law is the senses of the young.

Law, says the priest with a priestly look,  
 Expounding to an unpriestly people,  
 Law is the words in my priestly book,  
 Law is my pupit and my steeple.

Law, says the judge as he looks down his nose,  
 Speaking clearly and most severely,

Law is as I've told you before,  
 Law is as you know I suppose,  
 Law is but let me explain it once more,  
 Law is The Law.

Yet law-abiding scholars write;  
 Law is neither wrong nor right,  
 Law is only crimes  
 Punished by places and by times,  
 Law is the clothes men wear  
 Anytime, anywhere,  
 Law is Good-morning and Good-night.

Others say, Law is our Fate;  
 Others say, Law is our State;  
 Others say, others say

Law is no more  
 Law has gone away.

And always the loud angry crowd  
 Very angry and very loud  
 Law is We,

And always the soft idiot softly Me.

If we, dear, know we know no more  
 Than they about the law,  
 If I no more than you  
 Know what we should and should not do  
 Except that all agree  
 Gladly or miserably  
 That the law is  
 And that all know this,  
 If therefore thinking it absurd  
 To identify Law with some other word,



Unlike so many men  
I cannot say Law is again,  
No more than they can we suppress  
The universal wish to guess  
Or slip out of our own position  
Into an unconcerned condition.

Although I can at least confine  
Your vanity and mine  
To stating timidly  
A timid similarity,  
We shall boast anyway :  
Like love I say.

Like love we don't know where or why  
Like love we can't compel or fly  
Like love we often weep  
Like love we seldom keep.

From : The Penguin Book of Contemporary Verse, ed. by  
Kenneth Allott. p.201.



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