

Introduction of Theories and Philosophies of Poetry

Dr. Kamalakar Baburao Gaikwad

Assistant Professor (English),
Associate Research Guide & NAAC Coordinator
Mahatma Gandhi Vidyamandir's
Arts and Commerce College, Vinchur Road,
Yeola, Dist-Nashik

Abstract:

Poetry is considered as one of the basic actions of human beings. It is the praiseworthy fact that all cultures rehearse it and take pleasure in poetry's universal high repute. The main objective of the researcher is to introduce the multidimensional facets of poetry and to acquaint the readers and poetic lovers to deal with the key concepts of poetry such as its definition, nature, types, technical elements and poetry over the ages. In a nut shell, defining poetry is quite complex and disputed matter. In connection with this, the researcher tries to highlight the idea of poetry, language of poetry and its practicality to mankind in a real sense.

There is no necessitating defining poetry. We experience the charisma of poetry everywhere. Our ancient ancestors used poetry as a means of communicating their spiritual, chronological and edifying awareness through hymns, mantras, invocations and descriptive poems. In fact, poetry is a prehistoric mode of expression and the main form of languages themselves. It has enormously popularized and developed due to its twofold function and twin appeal of emotion and imagination. In poetry, words are arranged in such a way that their meaning, sound and rhythm evoke different kinds of imaginative associations in the reader. Poet makes direct appeal to the reader's emotions and imaginations of the readers.

Keywords: Definition, nature, types, technical elements, poetic terms, developments in poetry

Introduction:

Poetry is an antique mode of expression and the principal form of languages themselves. It has immensely popularized due to its twofold function and twin appeal of emotion and imagination. In poetry, words are arranged in such a way that their meaning, sound and rhythm evoke different kinds of imaginative associations in the reader. It also makes direct appeal to the emotions and imaginations of the reader. Poetry consists of complex poetic language. Folk songs and nursery rhymes are exceptional cases.

Poetry is one of the most sophisticated of all arts. Words can have implications and different shades of meaning. They can rouse our minds and emotions both consciously and unconsciously. Words, as a powerful weapon, can convey multiple feelings. The poet can share his / her ingenious experience of the world with the reader. Images of sight and sound, impart to the reader something of the vision of the poet. Poetry can be of various forms such as lyric, elegy, epic, satire, narrative, dramatic, festive, descriptive and moralizing. Poetry can be of

various techniques like blank verse with a single unrhymed line, the rhymed couplet, the rhymed stanza of four lines and the fourteen line sonnet. *The basic conventions of meter and rhyme and techniques like metaphor and simile enhances the quality and richness of poem.*

Kinds of Poetry:

Narrative poem offers either a simple or complex story. The poem may be brief or it may run into many pages. These poems tell a story and they may belong to any one of these genres: ballad, epics and metrical romances.

The ballad deals with folk cultures and makes use of dialogues, simple stanzas and repetition. It is meant to be sung and narrates a single memorable episode. The origins of the ballad form may be traced to oral traditions. It is absolutely free from literary influences. Ballads have certain refreshing simplicity. The ballad stanza consists of four lines (quatrain) in which the second and fourth lines rhyme.

An epic is a lengthy descriptive poem. It is one of the most popular genres in the cultural history of any race. It tells us of a great man, a hero, who crystallizes in his personality, the most enviable

qualities in human beings. In this sense, he comes to represent the values and appreciated ideals of a race or nation. Its style is supercilious or elevated, keeping in the mind the nature of the subject.

In **metrical romance**, from a hero of condescending physique, we move on to kings, knights and despondent maidens. Religion, faith, love and the desire to explore the mysterious are all brought together in a metrical romance. A long romantic tale in verse, a metrical romance actually lacks consistency due to its impulsiveness. A narrative of escapade coming from a narrator, a metrical romance, true to its theme, holds the reader in anticipation.

Dramatic Poetry employs the features of drama in order to achieve certain lyrical effects. Here we witness one speaker. The word 'mono' means single and 'logue' means conversation. The speaker himself reveals certain features of his life and personality. Progressively he develops the rhythm of the poem, leading to the pinnacle.

The word '**lyric**' derives from the 'lyre' which refers to a melodious instrument. It was intended to be sung to the accompaniment of a lyre. Lyric is the words of a song. It uses features of drama in order to attain certain rhythmical effects. Its musical quality originates from the minimalism of its stanzas, its tuneful rhyme scheme and a marked rhythm. It gives expression to the poet's personal passionate emotions. It is marked by strong thoughts, melody and feeling. Hymn, ode, sonnet, elegy and eclogue are comes under the rubric of expressive poetry.

The word **hymn** comes from the Greek word 'hymnos' which means a song of honour. St. Ephraim, a 4th century Mesopotamian deacon, poet and hymnist is called the father of Christian hymnody. Hymn is a devotional song in praise of gods or great souls. It is imbued with deep sacred emotions. It is purposely written for the rationale of adulation or prayer. It is a metrical composition adapted for singing in a religious service. Praising songs and hymns assist Christians to worship god and thank him for the good things he has done for them.

The Ode is a type of lyric poetry. It is an convoluted lyric which uses many literary devices within the structure of the poem. It appeals more to the intelligence. It conveys dignified and stimulated

emotions. It is expressed in a language that is inventive, distinguished and truthful. Odes are structured poems praising or glorifying an occasion or individual, describing nature intellectually as well as sensitively. A classic ode is classified in three major parts, strophe, anti-strophe and epode. Greek odes were initially poetic pieces performed with musical accompaniment. There are three typical forms of odes, the Pindaric, Horatian and Irregular. Pindaric odes follow the form and styles of Pindar. Horatian odes follow conventions of Horace.

The sonnet is derived from Italian word 'sonetto' which means 'a little song'. The sonnet has an unrefined attractiveness that depends on the balance of regular and irregular form and melody. Love is the main theme of sonnet. It is a graceful form that originated in the poetry composed at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II in the Sicilian city of Palermo. It is fixed verse form of Italian origin consisting of fourteen lines that are typically five foot iambics, i.e. of iambic pentameter and follows a fixed rhyme scheme, line one rhyme with three, line two with four, line five with seven and so on, which is usually indicated by letters. It reflects upon a single idea. It usually takes a turn called a Volta, about 8 lines in and then resolves the issue by the end. Petrarch is the father of sonnet. Sonnet is brought to England by Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey in the 16th century. Sonnet reflects upon a single feeling with a amplification or turn of thought in its concluding lines. Shakespeare uses the sonnet form to highlight his message about his beloved and their brilliant appearance. Shakespearean sonnet has a rhyme scheme of abab, cdcd, efef, gg. The poet observes a certain attitude towards his lady love. Sonnet is a lyrical poem, a poem with a kind of musical flow that is easy to read and adapts to some musicality. These compositions convey the emotions of the author imaginatively.

The word '**elegy**' comes from the Greek word 'elegos' which means 'song'. It is a formal and thoughtful lyric poem wherein the poet contemplates on a solemn theme such as a death or loss. It is the grief for the dead. It also explores the themes of deliverance and comfort, anguish, praise and consolation are the three parts of elegy. The Roman poet Propertius, the 1st century B.C. is called as the

father of nation. The Latin elegy of prehistoric Roman literature was most often erotic or legendary in nature. The elegiac couplet was also used by both Greek and Roman poets for witty, humorous and sardonic subject matter. Elegy is a form of poetry natural to the philosophical mind. Elegy represents very thing as lost and gone or absent and future.

Eclogue is a short countrified poem and is usually in dialogue. It is on the subject of rural life and the society of shepherds, depicting rural life as free from the intricacy and dishonesty of more cultured life. The eclogue is first appeared in the idylls of the Greek poet Theocritus. The anxiety of the eclogue is to rejoice the simplicity and gorgeousness of rural life and the ways of shepherds.

• **Technical Elements / Literary Devices of Poetry:**

Poetry is a fine art. Following aspects are the technical elements of poetry.

The science of versification is known as **prosody**. It is the study of rhythm and sound effects in a poem. It has certain rules and laws. It concerns itself with the grouping of syllables, number of syllables in the line and rhyme at the end of a line. It is the study of the elements that give the poem its rhythm, its musical quality. These elements include: pitch, reverberation, assonance (repetition of vowels), alliteration (repetition of consonants) and cadence (breathe pauses).

According to Edgar Allen Poe, poetry is the elegiac formation of beauty. **Rhythm** is created by the reappearance of similar units of a pattern of sound. Rhythm can be divided into four parts.

i. Quantitative rhythm:

The deliberation is the length of time it takes to utter a syllable, with regular series of long and short syllables

ii. Accentual Rhythm:

The thought is the occurrence of a stressed or accented syllable

iii. Syllabic Rhythm:

The number of syllables, stressed or unstressed, is fixed in a line

iv. Accentual-Syllabic Rhythm:

The number of syllables and the number of accents are fixed in a line

Meter is the number of cadenced units in a line and the process of determining this is called scansion. Each rhythmic unit is called a foot and it come in various kinds- iambic, trochaic, anapestic and dactylic

The **sound structure** of poetic language is the crucial factor. A poem makes the sound and echo and it also determines our poignant and ingenious response. A poem creates its sound effects by convinced interlocking word sounds within a line or among lines (**rhyme**) : born-corn, fight-might, gate-late etc. In **alliteration**, the initial sound of two or more words is repeated, for ex. full five, rapid rattle etc. When there is similarity in vowel sounds but not between the succeeding consonants, it is called **assonance**, for instance, lake, fate, light, lives

Poetry is about creating **form**. The word 'poem' is derived from the Greek word 'poiein' which means to make or create. Poetry makes new forms of words. One can perform the task of creation by putting together pieces (assembling), arranging similar things into a structure (patterning) and then deciding if the parts are so associated that they form an inseparable whole (unifying).

Poetic language is generated out of images or pictures; even structures of images are created by the poet. **Imagery** refers to the images created in the minds of the readers by a work. Images appeal to your senses-sight, sound, touch, taste, smell. A mixture of these generates a particular emotional rejoinder in the reader. Images are the means by which sensory experience is communicated. In fact, emotion is the very life of a poem. The essence and meaning of the poem lies in its imagery. The poet can uses two momentous techniques under imagery- the simile and the metaphor.

Simile is overt evaluation which uses the words such as like and as. For example, 'My love is like a red, red rose'. It tells you the supremacy of the word as a symbol. It is the aspect of figurative language. It brings together in a sentence, in either verse or prose, two very unlike things and calls upon the reader's imagination to see this unlikely relationship. With the use of a simile, one would write, 'Harry trudged along like a snail.'

A **metaphor** conveys a certain meaning by comparing two or more dissimilar objects or themes to bring out an inventive link between the two. It is

an implied comparison without the words: like and as. For instance, the evening's dewy veil. It is the indirect comparison between two things, objects or ideas.

Symbol is a sign that represents something. Ex. Sun, moon, rose, dove etc. Here word or object represents something other than its literal meaning. For example, *a white dove* represents the idea of *peace* and *a flag* is the symbol of *nation*. In literature, a symbol may be used by an author to convey ideas, emotions and to create an atmosphere. Symbols may be public or cultural. Their worth is widely conventional within the fastidious cultures.

Euphemism is introduced by John Lily in his works 'Euphues: *The Anatomy of Wit*' (1578) and '*Euphues and his England*' (1580). It is a distasteful expression used in place of one that is considered horrible. For example, one says, 'he passed away.' Instead of 'he died'. The purpose is to lessen a harsh statement. 'He was relieved of his money' meaning 'he was robbed'.

Oxymoron is a figure of speech that fuses two opposite ideas that is seemingly incompatible, for example, 'freezing fire' or 'happy grief'. In '*Paradise Lost*' Milton uses the oxymoron 'darkness visible' when describing hell. Shelley describes poetry inspired by the skylark as 'harmonious madness.'

Tone conveys a particular mood by a speaker in a literary text. It is the voice which is presented through characters, their speech and mode in which the events of a story are presented. This voice of the author reveals his approach towards the reader of the literary text as well as towards the subject matter dealt within the text. The tone of the author depends on 'how it is said' and not on 'what is said'.

Refrain is phrase or line or a single word that is repeated at certain intervals throughout a poem. It is used for poets and performers to memorize poems. They also helped readers and listeners to grasp the rhythm of the poem. Sometimes it is used to enlarge an argument. It is usually employed at the end of a stanza. For example, the refrain in Spenser's '*Prothalamion*', 'Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song'.

Motif refers to storyline elements such as a character type, an image, an incident, an idea, a reference, or even a verbal or musical pattern that recurs in literary works. A motif can act as a symbol.

The visions in *Macbeth* are symbols of the culpable scruples of Macbeth and his wife. The recurrence of a motif in a work helps to set up the work's theme. A motif that is frequently used within an imaginative work is referred to as a 'leitmotif', for example, the act of rejection in Tennessee Williams '*The Glass Menagerie*'.

Diction is the procedure of choosing words and arranging them in scrupulous ways in a piece of writing. It is chosen in accordance with the type and form of writing. A story written for children should be in simple words and with short sentences. The ancient Greeks and Romantics gave minor treatment to diction whereas the Neoclassicist, the Formalists and New critics gave major significance to diction.

The rhythmic flow of a succession of words or sentences in a text is called its **cadence**. It is derived from the Latin word 'cadentia' which means 'to fall'. The imagists like Ezra Pound, T. S. Hulme and W. C. Williams believed that cadence should be replaced for meter. For example, Allen Ginsberg's poems like 'Howl' and 'Kaddish'.

The term '**caesura**' comes from the Latin word 'caesurus' meaning 'to cut'. A caesura is a pause between two lines or phrases in a stanza of a poem. It is signified by two parallel vertical lines. The caesura was used in Old and Medieval English poetry in the works of Beowulf. The caesura is initiated from choral poetry. There is a brief pause between lines so that singers could catch their breath. It also served to break a line into two logical parts. For example, Homer's 'Iliad': 'Sing, o goddess, the rage of Achilles, the son of Peleus.'

Chorus is a group of people who function as storytellers and observer on the action. They serve as the link between the performer and the audience. In poetry, chorus refers to a set of lines that are repeated after every stanza. For example, James Joyce's '*The Ballad of Persse O' Reilly*'.

A chorus may also be used for emphasis or to create drama. Walt Whitman used refrains in his poetry like in '*Song of the Redwood Tree*' which employs the refrain:

*'Farewell, my brethren,
Farewell, o earth and sky-farewell, ye adjacent waters,
My time has finished, my tenure has come.'*

Stress or accent is the stress that we give to certain syllables within a word. It is a occurrence that is explicit to the English language. When we pronounce words with more than one syllable, all syllables do not receive the identical eminence. For example, when you pronounce 'potato', the middle syllable is stressed whereas the final syllable is stressed in the pronunciation of a word such as 'perhaps'.

- **Developments in Poetry:**

Western poetry deals with ancient, medieval and modern age. Let us study the significant developments in the sphere of poetry.

Classical Greek and Latin poetry consists of **ancient poetry**. Homer's 'The Iliad' and 'The Odyssey' are two great magnum opus of Western literature. These works deal with the lives of the heroes of the Trojan War. These epics are the stimulations for the poets and writers of all age.

Medieval poetry started in middle ages, particularly in the 4th century AD. It witnessed the rise of the Christian church. The feudal structure of society was united with the universal influence of the church. The epic 'Beowulf' (between 675 and 850 AD) was the great work of art of this period in the British literary history. Several lyric and elegiac poems were also written during this period. This period is also famous for vernacular forms of religious, narrative and symbolic poetry. Geoffrey Chaucer is considered as 'the father of English literature' and 'English Homer'. John Gower and William Langland were his contemporaries. They responded principally to French, Italian and Classical literature. In Italy, Petrarch (1304-1374) perfected the sonnet form.

Renaissance period was the new age in the history of Western literature. It began in 15th century. The period witnessed the rebirth or revival of interest in classical (Greek and Roman) culture. The impact of Renaissance appears in England at the close of the 16th century. Fundamentally the 16th century concluded in the Elizabethan period. Queen Elizabeth ascended on the throne in 1558. Poetry flourished in the Renaissance era abundantly. William Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe etc. were the major pioneers of this poetry. The age was one of high standards and of

extreme literary movement. The Renaissance observed the first important anthology of English lyric poetry 'Tottel's Miscellany' (1557). The sonnet was the most accepted Elizabethan lyric form. Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced it into England early in the 16th century. His friend Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey invented the new form 'blank verse'. It was fixed with the rhyme in a sonnet, abab cdcd efef gg.

The Renaissance also brought pastoral tradition into Elizabethan literature. Pastoral poetry praises the simple life of peace loving shepherds. It is highly romantic and synthetic. Spenser's 'The Shepherd's Calendar' (1579) is considered as the best English pastoral. Spenser is also known for his sonnets in 'Amoretti' (1595) and the epic 'The Faerie Queene' (1590-1596).

John Donne, Henry King, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan etc. started **metaphysical poetry** in 17th century England. The term 'metaphysical' was applied to these poets by John Dryden and Samuel Johnson in order to designate that their poems materialized unnatural. John Donne developed an original poetic style uniting thinking and sensation. His truth-seeking and pious poems are also known for their heightened mental scrutiny and sexual practicality. His 'Holy Sonnets' dwell on theology and ethics and contain some of his most memorable poems. Irony and paradox flourished in his poems.

The term '**Neoclassical poetry**' is applied to the works of late 17th century and 18th century poets who reproduced the classical Greek and Roman poets. The 18th century is also known as 'the Age of Enlightenment' or 'the Augustan Age'. John Dryden and Alexander Pope emulated Latin poets like Ovid. Horace and Virgil wrote during the reign of the Roman emperor Augustus (27 BC – 14 AD) Hence the term 'Augustan'. These poets personified a group of attitudes towards art and human existence-ideals of order, sense, self-control, respectability and so on. John Milton was the greatest English poet in the early years of the 17th century. He was highly praised for his poems 'Lycidas' (1638), 'Paradise Lost' (1667) and 'Samson Agonistes' (1671). Some of his well-known poems include 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity, On Shakespeare, 'L'Allegro and 'Il Penseroso.' 'Paradise Lost' inspired writers like Alexander Pope, William Wordsworth and John

Keats to write long poems. Dryden wrote '*Absalom and Achitophel*' (1631) a great political satire and an allegory. It uses a biblical framework. His '*The Rape of the Lock*' (1712-1714) is the radiant mock epic. Pope is well known for his ironic verse, his translation of Homer and his use of heroic couplet. Thomas Gray, Oliver Goldsmith, Edward Young and William Collins are the notable writers of this age. Neoclassical poets drew on both classical and modern French models. They subjugated English literature from the reinstatement of realm in 1660 until the end of the 18th century, when the publication of '*Lyrical Ballads*' (1798) by William Wordsworth and S.T. Coleridge marked the materialization of Romanticism.

Romanticism is one of the supreme literary movements of Western poetry. In Britain, Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote '*Lyrical Ballads*' in 1798. It was the first foremost work of English Romanticism. In his '*Preface to Lyrical Ballads*', Wordsworth explains,

'Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge. It is as immortal as the heart of man.'

The ferocious egoism, respect for the accepted world, impracticality and enthrallment for the mystical are the outstanding features of Romantic poetry. P. B. Shelly won great recognition for his '*Ode to the West Wind*' (1819) which was included in this anthology, '*Adonais*' (1821) and '*Prometheus Unbound*' (1820) In America, the Romantic age gave to literary history such great writers as Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Emerson believed that poetry was the artistic form that would play a decisive role in shaping the prospect of America. The 19th century American movement *Transcendentalism* believed in the prospective in man to transcend history and unite himself with the Over soul or God. Since God was in natural world and since nature was seen as an epitome of the self or soul. The transcendentalists concluded that nature, the self and God are one.

Modern Poetry witnessed especially after the 1850's the 'Industrial Revolution', which left their impacts on poets. A.L. Tennyson, the poet Laureate of the Victorian era and Robert Browning, the master of the 'dramatic monologue' are the noteworthy works of this age. Thomas Hardy, a major novelist of the

period, won acknowledgment for his verse drama '*The Dynasts*' (1903-1908). Browning's wife Elizabeth Barret Browning, George Meredith and D.G. Rossetti composed delicate sonnets during this period. Matthew Arnold and Rudyard Kipling justified the faith that British poetry of the second half of the 19th century was outstandingly dazzling and affluent. In America, between 1850 and 1900, two important volumes of American poetry earned gratitude- Walt Whitman's '*Leaves of Grass*' (1855) and Emily Dickinson's '*Poems*' (1890). Walt Whitman writes, '*The United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem.*' Whitman experimented with images and urbanized an original poetic hallucination. He turns away from American avarice to reach out to the spiritualism linked with India.

Conclusion:

Poetry, an artistic and literary genre, now a day has turned out to be a means of encouragement. It is a creative configuration of expression which suggests a message that customary people can relate to. One can inscribe their own emotions and views of legitimacy through poem. Poetry appeals to one's ethical consideration and good sagacity to hark back the implicit and serve like a voice of the worldwide morals. Poetry has the potential to replicate the deepest sensations of heart and soul. However poetry also serves to demonstrate the ingenuity, originality and buoyancy of the human beings. Poetry is a powerful instrument to present universal truths like philosophy. Poetry is superior to history and philosophy. Philosophy, in a real sense, presents only conceptual principles which cannot be comprehended by the young people whereas history deals with tangible facts. General truths of poetry can be easily communicated through examples, and these examples are drawn from a supreme globe and so they are more flamboyant and effectual.

Reference:

1. 'Mirage, An Anthology of English Poetry', Chaskar, Ashok. Board of Editors, Orient Blackswan Private Limited, Hyderabad, 2020
2. 'A Spectrum of Literary Criticism', Board of Editors, Thorat, Ashok. Frank Bros and Company, New Delhi, 2001

3. 'Theories of Poetry', John D. Kirkering. January 2008
4. Poetry. Dictionary.com, LLC, 2013
5. Barfield, Owen. 'Poetic Diction: A Study in Meaning', 1987
6. Abrams M.H. 'A Glossary of Literary Criticism', 10th ed. Jan 2011

