

Versification--Poetic Analysis Terms

Scansion: the art/act of scanning a line to determine metrical feet

Feet: the patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables in a line of poetry

Meter: the unit of feet, (how many feet per line)

Types of Metrical Feet:

Iambic/iamb: two syllables with the stress on the second syllable

example: Whose woods these are I think I know.(iambic tetrameter)

Trochaic/trochee: two syllables with the stress on the first syllable

example: Double, double toil and trouble,(trochaic tetrameter)

Fire burn and cauldron bubble.

Anapestic/anapest: three syllables with the stress on the last syllable

example: With the sheep in the fold and the cows in their stalls. (anapestic tetrameter)

Dactylic/dactyl: three syllables with the stress on the first syllable

example: Love again, song again, nest again, young again.(dactylic tetrameter)

Numbers of Meter:

monometer: one foot line, - Thus I (trochaic monometer)

dimeter: two foot line, - Workers earn it.(trochaic dimeter)

trimeter: three foot line, -The idle life I lead. (iambic trimeter)

tetrameter: four foot line, Whose woods these are I think I know.

pentameter: five foot line, Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May. (iambic pentameter)

hexameter: six, - To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.(iambic hexameter)

heptameter: seven

octometer: eight, - Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary.(trochaic octometer)

Rhyme: identical repetition between two different words

-position: end rhyme, internal rhyme

-kinds of rhyme:

-masculine: one syllable rhymed words, blend/send

-feminine: a stressed the unstressed syllable, lawful/awful

-triple: three syllable rhymed word, quivering/shivering

Rhyme scheme: exact correspondence of rhyming sounds, identified by the first end rhyme represented by an "a," the next variation by a "b," etc.

Verse Forms:

Blank verse: lines of unrhymed iambic pentameter

Free verse: no regular meter and no end rhyme, although possible repetitive patterns

Rhymed verse: end rhyme and generally regular meter

-couplet: two lines of verse coupled by rhyme

-tercet: three lines of verse linked by a single rhyme

- quatrain: a stanza of four lines, rhymed or unrhymed
- Ballad Stanza: only one set of rhymes in four lines: most abcb
- quintet: five line stanza
- sestet: six line stanza
- septet: seven line stanza
- Rhyme royal: seven line iambic pentameter rhyming ababbcc
- octave: eight line stanza
- Ottava rima: eight line stanza rhyming abababcc
- Spenserian stanza: nine lines, first eight iambic pentameter and last line an iambic hexameter (alexandrine), rhyming ababbcbcc
- sonnet: fourteen lines of iambic pentameter with intricate rhyme scheme
- Italian (Petrarchan): octave and sestet, typical: abba abba cde cde
- English (Shakespearean): three quatrains and a couplet
- limerick: five line poem in aabba (often bawdy) with two lines of eight syllabus, two lines of five syllabus, and a final line of eight syllabus

Visual (concrete poetry) --related to the visual look of a poem on the page

Other "figures of speech" and poetic terminology and language:

- alliteration: repetition of initial consonant or vowel sounds
- assonance: similar vowel sounds repeated in successive or proximate words containing different consonants:
A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. --Matthew 5:14b (KJV)
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. --Matthew 5:16 (KJV)
- consonance: ending verse words in which the consonant sounds agree but the vowels that proceed them differ (add-read, bill-ball, begun-afternoon)
- onomatopoeia: use of words which in their pronunciation suggests their meaning (hiss, slam, buzz, whirr, sizzle)
- simile: a comparison directly expressed using "like" or "as"
- metaphor: an implied analogy between two things
- conceit: fanciful intellectual idea; a striking parallel between two dissimilar things
- oxymoron: rhetorical antithesis, bringing together two contradictory terms
- allegory: objects/persons/actions are equated with meanings that lie outside the narrative itself
- symbol: often something physical which stands for or represents something larger or more abstract
- allusion: a reference to a famous historical/literary figure or event
- ambiguity: ability to mean more than one thing
- connotation: what is suggested by a word, apart from what it denotes (the American flag: patriotism, honor, veterans, American values)
- denotation: the direct and specific meaning of a word (the American flag: denotes a piece of colored cloth in a particular pattern)
- personification: treating an abstraction/nonhuman as if it were a person, with human qualities
- precision: exactness, accuracy of language or description
- syntax: the formal arrangement of words in a sentence