

Musical Devices



Poetry is MUSIC OF LANGUAGE

- A poet chooses words for sound as well as for meaning, and uses sound as a means to reinforce meaning.
- Musical elements may be just for the sake of creating “verbal music”, but in first-rate poetry it is adjunct to the meaning of the entire poem.
- The essential element in music is repetition poets repeat certain sounds in certain combinations.

The Purpose of Repetition

- To please the ear
- Emphasize words and reinforce meaning
- Give structure to the poem
- Words or sound repetitions are common in poetry
- Syllable- a vowel sound that may be preceded or followed by a consonant sound
- Refrain- repetition in a fixed pattern

Repetition of Sound

- Alliteration- repetition of initial consonant sounds.
- Assonance- repetition of vowel sounds “mad as a hatter” or “free and easy”
- Consonance- repetition of final consonant sounds. “first and last”, “odds and ends”
- These repetitions can be used alone or in combination “time and tide”, “thick and thin”
- “The viol, the violet, and the vine”

Rhyme

- Masculine Rhyme- rhyme involves one syllable.
Ex: support and retort
- Feminine Rhyme- rhyme involves two or more syllables. Ex: turtle and fertile, spitefully and delightfully
- Internal rhyme- one or more rhyming words are within one line.
- External rhyme- rhyming words at the end of a line. (most common b/c of musical effect)
- Slant rhymes- substitute imperfect rhymes at end of lines in order to achieve musical effect.

“That night when joy began”

- What has been the past experiences with love of the two people in the poem? What is their present experience? What is the tone of the poem?
- What basic metaphor underlies the poem? Work it out stanza by stanza. Point out three personifications.
- Describe the rhyme pattern. Work it out, considering alliteration, assonance, and consonance.

The Waking

- What is the refrain, and what does it MEAN? Initially? Throughout the poem?
- Explain the attitude toward emotive experience versus intellectual knowledge expressed in Line 4. How is that attitude the basis for the refrain? Support line 10?
- How should people live their lives?
- Identify and explain the paradox and personification in the poem
- What is the tone of the poem? What purpose does the refrain serve in establishing that tone?