Course: Literature of the Language (L.L.)
Level: 2nd year
Semester: second
Compiled and presented by: Dr. LEBBAL

Brief Presentation of the course:

The course of Literature of the Language (L.L.) in its entirety is designed to make second year students acquainted with the different movements which characterized the development of western arts and literature, and the extent to which (some of) these literary movements impacted the way Authors presented their ideas and works.

The course is divided into four main sections: The first section constituted and introductory chapter in which theoretical background was presented, concepts and notions related to literary studies were explained, in addition to a historical sketch of how literary movements developed from the old English period up to the twenty-first century.

As to the second section, five prose fiction works were suggested, each shedding light on the main properties of a chosen literary movement.

Similarly, the present section (Semester II) is designed to familiarize students with some of the most conventional properties of Poetry and poetic expression met in the works of some representative poets from each suggested literary movement.

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Department of English
Level: 2nd year
Unit: LL
Teacher: Dr. Lebbal

Introduction to English Poetry

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit,
Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb,
Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown
A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds.

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs,
Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees,
Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind—
A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs.

A poem should be equal to:
Not true.
For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf.
For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea
A poem should not mean
But be.

Archibald MacLeish,
"Ars Poetica" from *Collected Poems (1917-1982)*

The history and development of English poetry stretches over a large period of time, from around the middle of the 7th century to the present day. Over this period, English- speaking poets have produced some of the most exquisite literary works of

Western Culture, and the language and ideas vehicled through this poetry have evolved though the centuries to produce some of the craftiest examples of human achievements.

It is commonly known that in the case of English literature (just as it is the case of other old European cultures) , the earliest surviving examples of English poetry were likely passed on orally, since people did not have the means to do otherwise. The very few written works did not survive the tribal assaults and raids of the Germanic and the Vikings' attacks. Thus, giving an exact date to the earliest English poems remains difficult and often controversial. However, the earliest "surviving" manuscripts written in Latin, Brythonic (a predecessor language of Welsh) and Old Irish date back to the 6th century. The earliest surviving poetry written in Anglo-Saxon, the most direct predecessor of modern English, may have been composed as early as the seventh century.

Defining Poetry

According to The *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, poetry is an "elevated expression of elevated thought or feeling in metrical or rhythmical form". Differently put, it is a piece of literature written in meter or verse. Poetry is the best form of literary expression to convey feelings and emotions, and this is achieved through the use (and oftentimes the overuse) of variety of rhetorical devices and techniques such as imagery, metaphors, similes and others.

The predominance of the aesthetic devices and aspects of language is precisely what distinguishes poetry from prose. An equally interesting description provided by William Wordsworth is his account of poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, recollected in tranquillity". Poetry is also known for being the most condensed and concentrated form of literature, saying most in the fewest number of words. In other words, it could be defined as a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language.

Some Forms of English Poetry (in their chronological order)

1. Alliterative Poetry

It is commonly known that the most predominant structuring device which unifies the lines in a poem is the rhyme. However, in the old conception of English poetry, alliteration was the form employed in poems. Many examples of alliterative poetry are found in the oldest manuscripts of many Germanic languages.

Example the epic of *Beowulf*:

Đá wæs on burgum	Béowulf Scyldinga	Then was in boroughs,	Beowulf the Scylding (Beaw),
léof léodcyning	longe þráge	beloved king of the people	a long age
folcum gefraége	fæder ellor hwearf	famed among the folk	his father having gone elsewhere,
aldor of eared	oþ þæt him eft onwóc	elder on earth--	until unto him in turn was born
héah Healfdene	héold þenden lifde	high Half-Dane,	he ruled so long as he lived
gamol ond gúðréouw	glæde Scyldingas·	old and battle-fierce,	the glad Scyldings;
ðaém féower bearn	forðgerímed	to him four sons	in succession
in worold wócun	weoroda raéswan:	woke in the world,	the leader of the legions:
Heorogár ond Hróðgár	ond Hálga til·	Heorogar and Hrothgar	and good Halga;
hýrde ic þæt Ýrse	wæs Onelan cwén	I heard that Yrse	was Onela's queen,
Heaðo-Scilfingas	healsgebedda.	the War-Scylfing's	belovèd embraced in bed.
Þá wæs Hróðgáre	herespéd gyfen	Then was to Hrothgar	success in warcraft given,

2. The Ballad

A ballad is one of the simplest forms of verse. It is typically a British and Irish popular poetry, often a narrative story, meant to be sung during public meetings and market gatherings. Ballads were very popular in the medieval period, when Literature in general was brough down to the level of commoners, until the nineteenth century. From the eighteenth century onward, it extended to the lyrical ballads, and in the twentieth century's jargon, it took on the meaning of a "slow form of popular love song".

3. The Sonnet

The sonnet is usually described as "the most regular type of English poetry". The term itself "sonnet" derives from both the Occitan word "sonet" and the Italian word "sonetto", which mean "little song".

Starting from the thirteenth century, and during the Renaissance, the sonnet had come to signify a very specific poem made up of fourteen lines, and following a strict rhyme scheme and specific structure.

Similarly, the conventions associated with the sonnet have evolved over time, and from one place to another. One of the best-known sonneteers is William Shakespeare, who wrote 154 sonnets, and who was at the origin of the English form of sonnet bearing his name. (see Sonnet 19 elaborated in the next lesson)

The Shakespearean sonnet consists of 14 lines, each line contains ten syllables (five iambic meters). The rhyme scheme in a Shakespearean sonnet is ABAB CDCD EFEF GG (three quatrains and a couplet).

4. The Blank Verse

The blank verse (or the unrhymed iambic verse) is one of the best known and most widely used metrical patterns in English poetry, probably because it is so close to the natural rhythms of English speech and so easy to adapt to different levels of language. As an example, in many Shakespearean plays, the shift to blank verse generally change in voice, tone and mood of these (and other) characters.

Poems written in blank verse are often divided into "verse paragraphs" of varying lengths, as distinct from stanzas, which usually have regular lengths and are defined by their rhyme scheme and metrical pattern.

5. The Free Verse

As its name suggests, it is the type of poetry which is primarily designed according to the cadences of speech rather than according to a regular metrical scheme. The format this type of poetry adopts is based on the conventional elements of speech (sounds, words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs) rather than on the units of metrical feet. Therefore, Free verse reduces much of the artificiality, complexity, and elitisms of poetic expression. It became current in the early 20th century.

Prosody in English Poetry

Prosody is the general word describing the study of poetic sounds and rhythms, common alternative words are metrics, versification, and mechanics of verse...etc. Most readers when reading poetry aloud, interpret the lines and develop appropriate speed and expressiveness of delivery- a proper rhythm. It is this musicality produced by the beat that makes the speaking and hearing of poetry dramatic, exciting or inspiring.

In considering prosody, we should recognize that poets, being specially "attuned to language", blend words and ideas together so that the sound becomes "an echo of the sense" (as coined by Pope, an essay on Criticism). The consequence of this idea is that prosodic technique cannot be separated from the poem's content. For this reason, the study of prosody aims to determine how poets control their words so that the sound of the poem complements its expression of emotions and ideas.

To understand and discuss prosody, one needs to be able to explain the various sounds of both speech and poetry (vowel sounds, diphtongues, consonants, ...)

Poetic rhythm

Rhythm in speech is a combination is a combination of vocal speeds, rises and falls, starts and stops, vigour and slackness, and relaxation and tension. In ordinary speech as in prose, rhythm is not as important as the flow of ideas. In poetry, rhythm is significant because poetry is emotionally charged, compact and intense. Poets invite us to change speed while reading- to slow down and to linger over some words and sounds and to pass rapidly over some others. They also invite us to give more than ordinary vocal stress or emphasis to certain syllables and less stress to others. The more intense syllables are called heavy-stress (or stressed) syllables, and it is the heavy stress that determines the accent or beat of a poetic line. The less intense syllable receives light-stress (unstressed). In traditional verse, poets select patterns called feet, which consist of regularized relationships of heavy stresses to light stresses.

English poetry employs for basic rhythms of varying stressed (¯) and unstressed (˘) syllables. The meters are iambs, trochees, anapests and dactyls. Each unit of rhythm is called a "foot" of poetry.

Any group of lines forming a unit is a stanza: Stanza of 3 lines is a tercet, 4 lines is a quatrain, and a stanza of two lines is a couplet.

The meters with two-syllable feet are:

- IAMBIC (˘ ¯) one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable.
- TROCHAIC (¯ ˘): the reverse of the iamb, one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one.

Meters with three-syllable feet are

- ANAPESTIC (˘ ˘ ¯): is a metrical foot of three syllables, two short (or unstressed) followed by one long (or stressed). The anapaest is the opposite of the Dactyl.
- DACTYLIC (¯ ˘ ˘): the Dactyl is a metrical foot of three syllables, one long (or stressed) followed by two short (or unstressed), as in 'happily'.

Each line of a poem contains a certain number of feet of iambs, trochees, dactyls or anapests.

A line of one foot is a monometer, 2 feet is a dimeter, and so on : trimeter (3), tetrameter (4), pentameter (5), hexameter (6), heptameter (7), and octameter (8). The number of syllables in a line varies therefore according to the meter.

The Rhyme

Plainly put, the Rhyme is the structural device which involves matching sounds of words. As melody is to music, so is rhyme to poetry. Vowels are what create most rhymes as they have sounds that are (somewhat) analogous to different musical notes.

In order to decide for rhyme scheme of a poem, one should assign a single alphabetical letter to each end sound, starting with (a). If the next word has the same vowel sound, then the next line should be marked also (a), but if it has a different vowel sound, the it should be marked (b). Lines with the same end vowel sound, the same rhyme, get the same letter.

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Unit: LL

Representative work of Renaissance English Poetry
Sonnet 19 by William Shakespeare

Introduction

Throughout history, many artists and writers have been fantasizing about the idea of immortalizing themselves through their art. In antiquity, Horace and Ovid were the first to utterly declare this fantasy of creative immortality, and then Shakespeare, many centuries later, also subscribed to this idea, and made it the central idea of many of his poems.

In a number of sonnets, Shakespeare expresses his infatuation with not one, but seemingly three persons of different genders, and praises their beauties in different ways. In Sonnet 19, more particularly, the poet desires that his beloved one never ages. The poem addresses Time, beseeching it to spare him, and then, after acknowledges that, no matter how cruel time will be, his love will live on in his poetry (yes, cheesy I know 😊 !)

Historical Context : Renaissance and Sonnets

The sonnet, as earlier explained in the previous lesson (see introduction to English poetry) has its roots in the Italian Renaissance, and is closely associated with the name of Francis Petrarch (1304–1374) whose poems, and more particularly, their structural disposition, inspired many of his contemporaries and lasted even for centuries in Western poetry. The Petrarchan sonnet consists is a fourteen lines poem, wherein the first Octave (eight lines) the topic is introduced, described and developed, and then the remaining sestet (six lines) the idea takes a turn before the easing of the problem is addressed.

In England, however, many sonneteers (in addition to Shakespeare, such as Sir Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard, the Earl of Surrey, to name only a few) opted for different versions of the Petrarchan sonnet, but eventually a new sonnet form was suggested as the English sonnet.

The English sonnet (also called the Shakespearean sonnet) comprises three quatrains where the idea is introduced and elaborated, and then resolute in a concluding couplet.

Many of Shakespeare's sonnets address to a mysterious young man who appears to belong to a higher social class than the poet himself. Others are destined to the Dark lady who is not regarded as a woman of sound moral character. On the contrary, the poet presents her as promiscuous and untrustworthy, unlike the usual chaste and virtuous sonnet lady (who is also another addressee of some of his sonnets).

In addition to their special form, Shakespearean sonnets are known for their psychological complexity. Nevertheless, by the time these sonnets were published in 1609, the sonnet fever was over.

Sonnet 19 Text

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
And make the earth devour her own sweet brood;
Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
And burn the long-lived phoenix in her blood;

Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
To the wide world and all her fading sweets;
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:

O, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen;
Him in thy course untainted do allow
For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.

Yet, do thy worst, old Time: despite thy wrong,
My love shall in my verse ever live young.

Overview

Sonnet 19 is one of the 154 Shakespearean sonnets which are acknowledged as the finest in English Literature. This sonnet particularly is appreciated because of the complexity and amount of emotions it contains (appreciating and longing to make beauty permanent; affirming of the transcendent power of art; and other emotions such as jealousy, sorrow and guilt) and which are aroused by the intense love the poet has for his beloved one.

The central theme of Sonnet 19 is the destructive power of time which consumes everything in its path. The Poet acknowledges that he can do nothing to keep it from destroying the beauty of his friend, but defies it by asserting that he can make him live forever through his poetry.

Structure, Language and Style

By definition, the Shakespearean sonnet is a fourteen-line (in an iambic pentameter format) poem that follows a well-established conventions in its rhyme scheme (abab cdcd efef gg). However, this sonnet includes many variations on this basic metrical layout, something which resulted in a counterpoint between the fixed metrical base and what we actually have. The variations create subtle emphases and effects that would not otherwise be present.

To explain these metrical variations, we can state many examples: In the third foot of line 1, instead of an iambic meter, the poet used a trochee, and consequently, it is the word “blunt” which is emphasized. This is explained by the sought effect, and which is to give more force to the actions of time. Another inversion is found in line 3, and for the same reasons (emphasizing the destructing power of time), once more a trochee replaces an iamb, resulting in the word “Pluck” standing out strongly against the metrical base. Interestingly enough, “blunt” and “pluck” are further linked by another poetic device: assonance, the repetition of vowel sounds.

The second foot of line three ("keen teeth") is a spondee (two successive stressed syllables). Following so soon after the inversion that emphasized "pluck," the effect is both at the level of sounds and concrete: pronouncing the assonance of the long vowel sounds, the teeth are bared, and this gives a powerful effect to the meaning addressed.

In the third quatrain, the rhythm settles down into an iambic meter. And this is because the poem comes back to the initial static situation and there is no need for "harsh consonants". The only inversion encountered is at the beginning of line 11, a trochee in "Him in," which clearly brings out the importance and significance of the poet's beloved one.

In addition to this metrical inversion, Alliteration is used in the poem not just as a sound device but also as a meaning device. To give only some examples: line 4 encompasses the repetition of the "b" sound (in "burn" and "blood"), and this serve to mark the tight link between the destructiveness of time and life. Similarly, the "c" sound in "crime," (8th line) and "carve" (9th line) express the fact that carving lines on someone's face is a crime of time. A last example is the alliteration of the "b" sound in "beauty" (line 12) and "burn" and "blood," (line 4), which serves to underline one of the sonnet's main themes: the transience of beauty.

Major Themes

1. **Time**

In Ovid's Metamorphoses, the poet speaks about "Time the devourer destroys all things". It seems that Shakespeare was inspired by this ancient Roman reference because Sonnet 19 is entirely about the destructiveness of sonnet Time (same goes for 15,16, 59 and 60). Shakespeare develops this universal theme inexorably through most of the poem's lines. This theme (which is also known as the theme of mutability) was common during the Renaissance era.

3. Art

Once again, the theme of Art can be found in the works of ancient Roman writers like Horace and Ovid. It was also one of the most favorite themes addressed in Renaissance literature. Shakespeare himself employed it on a number of sonnets including 18, 100-108, and the sonnet at hand (19)

Art, according to the poet, is the only way he could defeat time. In the couplet, the narrator promises that, although time will eventually carve its mark on his lover's face, he will offer him immortality through his poetry ("My love shall in my verse ever live young.") : This gives to art a very high status indeed, and it is one that has been echoed by poets and artists throughout the ages.

Conclusion

Sonnet 19 not only attracted as much comment during the English Renaissance because of its original theme, but it was also considered as a controversial and ahead-of-its-time work of art. Nowadays the sonnet is taught throughout the world as an example of the Shakespearean sonnets, it does not present any interpretive difficulties despite the little complexity either in form or thought. Nevertheless, several critics have commented favorably not only on the exquisite musical effects of its lines, but also on the universal idea that art can transcend time.

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Representative work of Romantic Poetry:
OZYMANDIAS (by PERCY SHELLEY)

Introduction

‘‘Ozymandias’’ is a widely anthologized sonnet which was written in 1817. First published in the Examiner in 1818, it describes what a traveller tells the poet about a broken statue he encountered in the desert, and which was reduced, by time, to a pile of debris.

Although Shelly is known for his Romantic topics such as love, nature and hope, he experiments in Ozymandias a different subject matter: he expresses his political views on fame and leadership, and posits, in the poem, that no matter how hard rulers try to preserve their greatness and political power, they will eventually be forgotten and their ephemerous rule will sink into oblivion.

The Historical Context: the English Romantic Era

As it is widely documented, the beginning of Romantic Movement in England was marked by the publication of Wordsworth’s Lyrical Ballads (1798) and came to an end with the death of Charles Dickens (1870).

This era was characterized by a political turmoil and economic unrest: England was taking part in the Napoleonic Wars with all its financial difficulties, which were only, surprisingly enough, accentuated by the industrial revolution.

At the intellectual scene, new philosophical movements such as Utilitarianism and were gaining ground, this is when the Romanticists emerged to elevate the value of

nature, life and the individual. Romantic writers favour history, mysticism and "imaginary" human experience over the realistic human condition.

One common misconception about Romanticism is that it is an extremely "sensitive" thus, passive movement. Most influential Romantic writers and philosophers found themselves swept up in movement for reform and revolution. A good example to give here is Lord Byron who took part in in the war between Italy and Austria first, then went to Greece to fight against the Turks, where he died from illness.

Nevertheless, compared to other poetic movements, Romantic poetry is viewed as the most accessible and beautiful of the poetic tendencies.

Ozymandias, Ramses II and the Egyptian Civilization

Inspired from the works of the Greek historian Diodurus Siculus (date), Shelly's Ozymandias clearly refers to the ancient Egyptian Emperor Ramses the Great (1302–1213 B.C.E.), who is remembered for his celebrating monuments. In fact, Ramses was determined to make a name for himself by building these monuments, and he went even further as to replace the names of other pharaohs on existing monuments with his own.

According to Archaeologists and historians, Ramses II has always associated himself with Ra, the god of the sun: this is illustrated in the temple of Amun-Ra which comprises four 67 foot tall statues of him, and the‘ ‘Domain of Ramses Great-of-Victories,'' with all its constructions reminding the people of his greatness. Moreover, his defeats were rarely recorded in history as he prohibited it.

It is exactly this self-centred trait of Ramses II, and his belief of his own greatness which incited Percy Shelly to write Ozymandias, referring to the delusion many rulers have, that pride and arrogance will save them from being forgotten.

POEM TEXT

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.

Synopsis and Overview

''Ozymandias'' is a poem told from a "second-hand" perspective, i.e. the reader is receiving information from the poet who, in his turn, receives them from a "traveler from an antique land" who witnesses the scene. From a technical point of view, this is very efficient in increasing the distance (space and also time) between Ozymandias (as a historical figure) and the present-day reader, and decreasing the emotional involvement of the reader as they are not directly looking at the ruins.

This traveler recounts that he encountered in the middle of a desert, pieces of an ancient statue: two huge disembodied legs standing in the sand and just near them, a partially buried broken face (with a frown, wrinkled lip and a "sneer of cold command"). Having chosen these two body-parts (which are the opposite ends of the body) represents a very chaotic and confused image.

Then the traveler sets off to describe the precision of the sculptor in creating such a realistic facial expression, which indicates that he (the sculptor) clearly understood the driving passion and ambition of the King, and strove to present in in his work of art. He comments that this passion ''yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things.'' What was worth noting also is the ''hand that mocked them [the ruler's people], and the heart that

fed.''. These hands and heart are very significant as it incarnates authority, and humanity all at once: "He had a heart that made sure his people were fed".

Most imposing is the pedestal on which the statue once stood: an inscription which reads: ''My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: / Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'', these words reflect the arrogance and pride of the king which he wants to communicate to people coming after him. All the same, these words, read in the physical context the traveler finds them in could also communicate irony, as there is nothing but sand all around; A ''colossal wreck'' of an old statue surrounded by nothingness!

Study of Style

The Idea of writing a poem on ''Ozymandias'' (Ramses II) was originally a competition held between Shelly and one of his contemporaries, Smith. Shelley opted for a sonnet: a traditional fourteen lines of iambic pentameter. However, Shelley breaks from tradition in his rhyme scheme, he adheres to an ABABACDCEDEFEF Rhyme scheme. What is interesting is that this rhyme scheme actually evolves from start to finish. There is not a rhyme scheme separating an octave and a sestet; there is not a change at the end to finish with a neat couplet. Same as the cyclic rise and fall of nations and their great figures (matching format with meaning).

Rhetorical devices

1. **Metaphor**

''Ozymandias'' is a metaphor for all kingdoms, kings or ideologies which will eventually pass out of time to make room for their successors.

2. **Irony**

The setting in which the traveler finds the statue and the inscription evoke a powerful irony to the poem. The inscription reads, ''Look on my works, ye Mighty, and

despair!'', however, nothing remains of these works but a landscape of endless: no monuments, regiments, or palaces! So, Ozymandias's speech seems ill-placed and unwise in this setting. It is also ironic that the works that have survived all these years are not Ozymandias's, but the sculptor.

Central Themes

1.The Theme of Power

From a political and social perspective, ''Ozymandias'' is about the illusion of perpetuity of fame and power. When put side by side with the real life of Ramses II, the king is known for his deep belief that political and military power are an integral part of his own identity; and this is well illustrated in his crave for colossal monuments immortalizing his strength and rulership. The statue as described by the traveler in the poem has a stern and resolute face, and the hand keeps his people under his rule and power. Nevertheless, those same hands are remembered for feeding these people, and it seems that they are unable to do so on their own without his mercy. That being said, the theme of power is only one among others in the poem, and what seems even more important to Shelly is stressing how this great and mighty authority figure is eventually reduced to a wreckage. So power is no longer there and what used to be Ozymandias's great monument is a pile of debris thrown in the desert.

2. The Theme of Pride

According to the description of the traveler, Ozymandias's pride is clearly reflected in the statue. It is evident from the facial expressions the sculptor took time to meticulously reproduce, and also in the assertive statement inscribed on the pedestal. It reads, ''My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!''. Then, ironically, he tells the viewer to look around and contemplate his achievements. Of course, this inscription was intended to last for hundreds of years, which was not the case.

3. The Theme of History (Or Oral Tradition)

The poem ‘‘Ozymandias’’ could be read a historical record, a reminder of a past epoch which was transmitted through a statue. In a way, Oral traditions have kept history alive for hundreds of years. The poem prompts the reader to search for the authenticity of facts. It is also a lesson about the universal reality of cycles of power and the rise and fall of nations.

Readers would also learn the lesson of never allowing pride to seduce them, and never believing that greatness would last forever. The poem also demonstrates that tyrannical rulers are not new, and that the are many examples one could study from history.