

# Poetry

Beitrag von „Meike.“ vom 16. Dezember 2007 16:41

LK - für GK stark kürzen... 😊

## Zitat

### Critical Analysis of Poetry

The process of analyzing a poem

It is difficult to give a prescription, as different poems call on different aspects of poetry, different ways of reading, different relationships between feeling, images and meanings, and so forth. The general advice, however, is this:

1. look at the title
2. read the poem for the major indicators of its meaning -- what aspects of setting, of topic, of voice (the person who is speaking) seem to dominate, to direct your reading?
3. read the ending of the poem -- decide where it 'gets to'
4. divide the poem into parts: try to understand what the organization is, how the poem proceeds, and what elements or principles guide this organization (is there a reversal, a climax, a sequence of some kind, sets of oppositions?)
5. pay attention to the tone of the poem -- in brief, its attitude to its subject, as that is revealed in intonation, nuance, the kind of words used, and so forth.
6. now that you've looked at the title, the major indicators of 'topic', the ending, the organization, the tone, read the poem out loud, trying to project its meaning in your reading.

### Elements of analysis

Here then are some questions to apply to your analysis in order to see how the poem is making its meaning:

#### 1. What is the genre, or form, of the poem?

Is it a sonnet, an elegy, a lyric, a narrative, a dramatic monologue, an epistle, an epic (there are many more). Different forms or genres have different subjects, aims, conventions and attributes. Look them up in "google" or a dictionary of literary terms.

#### 2. Who is speaking in the poem?

Please remember that if the voice of the poem says "I", that doesn't mean it is the author who is speaking: it is a voice in the poem which speaks. The voice can be undramatized (it's just a voice, it doesn't identify itself), or dramatized (the voice says "I", or the voice is clearly that of a particular persona, a dramatized character).

Identify the voice. What does the voice have to do with what is happening in the poem,

what is its attitude, what is the tone of the voice (tone can be viewed as an expression of attitude).

### 3. What is the argument, thesis, or subject of the poem

What, that is to say, is it apparently 'about'? Start with the basic situation, and move to consider any key statements; any obvious or less obvious conflicts, tensions, ambiguities; key relationships, especially conflicts, parallels, contrasts; any climaxes or problems posed or solved (or not solved); the poem's tone; the historical, social, and emotional setting.

### 4. What is the structure of the poem?

There are two basic kinds of structure, formal and thematic.

Formal structure is the way the poem goes together in terms of its component parts: if there are parts -- stanzas, paragraphs or such -- then there will be a relation between the parts (for instance the first stanza may give the past, the second the present, the third the future).

Thematic structure, known in respect to fiction as 'plot', is the way the argument or presentation of the material of the poem is developed. For instance a poem might state a problem in eight lines, an answer to the problem in the next six; of the eight lines stating the problem, four might provide a concrete example, four a reflection on what the example implies.

### 5. How does the poem make use of setting?

There is the setting in terms of time and place, and there is the setting in terms of the physical world described in the poem.

In terms of the physical world of the poem, setting can be used for a variety of purposes. A tree might be described in specific detail, a concrete, specific, tree; or it might be used in a more tonal way, to create mood or associations, with say the wind blowing mournfully through the willows; or it might be used as a motif, the tree that reminds me of Kathryn, or of my youthful dreams; or it might be used symbolically, as for instance an image of organic life; or it might be used allegorically, as a representation of the cross of Christ - consider this a spectrum, from specific, concrete, to abstract, allegorical:

concrete --- tonal -- connotative -- symbolic --- allegorical

### 6. How does the poem use imagery?

"Imagery" refers to any sort of image, and there are two basic kinds. One is the images of the physical setting, described above. The other kind is images as figures of speech, such as metaphors. These figures of speech extend the imaginative range, the complexity and comprehensibility of the subject. They can be very brief, a word or two; or they can be extended analogies, such as Donne's 'conceits' or Milton's epic similes.

### 7. Are there key statements or conflicts in the poem that appear to be central to its meaning?

Is the poem direct or indirect in making its meanings? If there are no key statements, are there key or central symbol, repetitions, actions, motifs (recurring images), or the like?

8. How does the sound of the poetry contribute to its meaning?

Pope remarked that "the sound must seem an echo to the sense": both the rhythm and the sound of the words themselves (individually and as they fit together) contribute to the meaning.

9. Examine the use of language.

What kinds of words are used? How much and to what ends does the poet rely on connotation, or the associations that words have (as "stallion" connotes a certain kind of horse with certain sorts of uses)? Does the poem use puns, double meanings, ambiguities of meaning?

10. Can you see any ways in which the poem refers to, uses or relies on previous writing?

This is known as allusion or intertextuality. When U-2's Bono writes "I was thirsty and you kissed my lips" in "Trip Through Your Wires," the meaning of the line is vastly extended if you know that this is a reference to Matthew 25:35 in the Bible, where Jesus says to the saved in explanation of what they did right, "I was thirsty and you wet my lips."

11. What is your historical and cultural distance from the poem?

What can you say about the difference between your culture's (and sub-culture's) views of the world, your own experiences, on the one hand, and those of the voice, characters, and world of the poem on the other? What might this work tell us about the world of its making?

13. What is the world-view and the ideology of the poem?

What are the basic ideas about the world that are expressed? What areas of human experience are seen as important, and what is valuable about them? What areas of human experience or classes of person are ignored or denigrated?

Alles anzeigen