

Principles of Literary Study

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Office hours: Mondays 2:00–3:00 or by appointment

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review: thinking about words

- ▶ diction: why one word and not another of similar meaning?
 - ▶ (for later: *register*)
- ▶ metaphor/simile: why an analogue and not the thing itself?
- ▶ pun/ambiguity: what can multiple meanings at once do?

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- ▶ diction: why one word and not another of similar meaning?
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- ▶ interpretation: does it all fit together, or does it come apart?

lineation basics

end-stopping ending lines at syntactic divisions (usually punctuated)

enjambment ending lines in the middle of syntactic units

lines as sentences

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

lines as sentences

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste;

break it down

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments; love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
Oh no, it is an ever-fixèd mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

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Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

why?

why?

can't stop: Sonnet 129

- ▶ where does the breath go?

more and less: Herbert, “Jordan” (I)

Who says that fictions onely and false hair
Become a verse?...

Is it no verse, except enchanted groves
And sudden arbours shadow coarse-spunne lines?...

Is there in truth no beautie?...

Shepherds are honest people; let them sing:

caesura a mid-line syntactic break (often a rhythmic pause)

less is more: Herbert, “Prayer” (I)

- ▶ what is lacking (grammatically)?
- ▶ what fills the lack?

the rules of Whitman's freedom

- ▶ When does Whitman break lines?

the rules of Whitman's freedom

- ▶ When does Whitman break lines?

When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he lectured with much
applause in the lecture-room...

Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,
As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

*Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.*

(part 14)

discussion: sentences

- ▶ Imagine Wallace Stevens's "The Snow Man" without the line breaks. What difference does it make to meanings and effects?

never ask poets what they meant

I shall explain *The Snow Man* as an example of the necessity of identifying oneself with reality in order to understand and enjoy it.

Wallace Stevens, letter to Hi Simons, April 18, 1944, in *Letters of Wallace Stevens*, ed. Holly Stevens (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 464.

don't think of an elephant/any misery

One must have a mind of winter

don't think of an elephant/any misery

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs...

don't think of an elephant/any misery

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs...

and **not** to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind

don't think of an elephant/any misery

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs...

and **not** to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind

...the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow

Brooks

We real cool.
We left school.

We lurk late.
We strike straight.

We sing sin.
We thin gin.

We jazz June.
We die soon.

anaphora the figure of repeated beginnings

Brooks

We real cool. We
Left school. We

Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We

Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We
Die soon.

anaphora the figure of repeated beginnings

epistrophe the figure of repeated endings

meter introduction

B B B B

B B B B

B B B B

B B B B

....

B B B B

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall

B B B B

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall

B B B B

All the king's horses and all the king's men

B B B B

Couldn't put Humpty together again

B B B B

B B B rest

B B B B

B B B rest

next

- ▶ all readings have *four beats per line*
- ▶ almost all are iambic (offbeat-beat x4)
- ▶ try to mark the beats
 - ▶ sometimes a beat is “unrealized” (musical rest)
 - ▶ note where you’re not sure, and we’ll discuss
- ▶ Focus on:
 - ▶ Newton, “Amazing Grace”
 - ▶ “Sir Patrick Spens”
 - ▶ Dickinson, “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain”
 - ▶ Carroll, “Jabberwocky”
 - ▶ counting to four
- ▶ No exercise due. Stress practice to be combined with next exercise due 2/8.