

Literature 3rd lecture

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Literature 3rd lecture "Ballad" The characters in the epic according to Aristotle should be consistent. The ballad is the second kind of the narrative verse. (The 1st is the epic). 2 examples were discussed 1st example is an old one in the medieval ages (Sir Patrick Spence) 2nd in the 20th century (Ballad of the Landlord) What is the ballad? "Definition" It is a poem but it should be written in verse, it's meant to be sung, even if it's a tragedy. For example, in Ireland it is still sang in pops even if it's tragic. The theme can be about love, friendship, hatred, loyalty, honor, and sometimes you can find supernatural or many different themes, it is a popular story about everyday life. The 1st example Sir Patrick Spence (S. P.) is very tragic. The 2nd example it is tragic when we think of the human situation and state in the 20th century specifically when we think of minorities such as the black minority in America. Characteristics of the ballad: 1. Narrative poem written in verse. 2. Simple language and plot, tells a story 3. The ballad often has refrain (repetition of two lines sometimes 3 lines) because a) To emphasize sometimes the main idea, characters or the main theme. b) The ballad usually sang by one assisted by a chors. 4. It uses concise dialogue (dramatic from drama) 5. It uses the 3rd person objective narration, because it doesn't tell the experience of the narrator it tells a story. The narrator wants to be objective not subjective, he distances himself from the events so that he doesn't show any emotions towards anybody in the story. Sometimes the narrator is the man himself just like the second example, so when the narrator is involved he cannot be objective because he is part of the story and he is showing emotion when he uses (I) the first person singular. 6. Traditional ballad stanza is quatrain (4 verses). The rhythm is usually iambic

(when we are talking about iambic we are usually talking about stressed and unstressed) 7. Style is simple that's why we don't find so many images, metaphor or simile so it could be understood by everyone, and everyone can relate to it because it is popular. * When we say that these characteristics are the characteristics of the ballad we don't mean that every single ballad must have these characteristics, these are the general rules and there are some others that out side the rules Ballad | Oral | Written | 1. Writer usually unknown. 2. There is more than one version because of the number of tellers especially if it was old. 3. Simple because it is meant to be sung. | Writer known | | Primary | Secondary | | Simple, and easily handled because it is from everyday life. | Complex and intricate theme and style. Not easily handled. Written by highly literary people. | * What is the difference between simple and complex plot? Complex has subplots that are related to the main plot. Also it doesn't necessarily start from the beginning it could start in the middle or at the end. The characters are complex also, they are round dynamic characters they are not static. In the simple plot the characters are flat and static they do not actually develop, they follow a straightforward line. The plot is linear not cyclic it goes from one event to next event and next event. If the plot is simple the characters are simple too, we cannot have a simple plot with complex characters. So, all characters in ballads are simple. * Analyzing the 1st seven stanzas from Sir Patrick Spence: In the reign of Alexander III of Scotland, his daughter Margaret was escorted by a large party of nobles to Norway for her marriage to King Eric; on the return journey many of them were drowned. Twenty years later, after Alexander's death, his granddaughter Margaret, the Maid of Norway, was heiress to the

Scottish throne, and on the voyage to Scotland she died. The ballad; which exists in several versions, combines these two incidents. * 1st Stanza The king seats in Dumferling drinking the blood red wine.. The narrator could say he was drinking red wine but he used the word (blood) metaphorically because when we talk about something very red we said blood red. Also blood let us think or give us a hint that something bloody, cruel, hard is going to accrue in the poem. So, bloody here is anticipating the tragic event that is going to take place in the poem. So, when we said that the style or the language are simple we don't mean that every single word is said without any images at all because we cannot think of poems without images. The king of Scotland is sending his own daughter Margret to get married to king Eric of Norway, in the return journey many of those in the ship were drowned. Here we have a story of fate, that fate is taking revenge upon the king. His own daughter got to Norway and she got married to the king of Norway and she got a daughter of herself that she called her also Margret and this Margret on her way to Scotland she died. Fate is taking revenge of the king because he knew very well that is the sea was not calm and he knew that sailing in that weather wasn't possible at all and it was very risky. Nevertheless, he wanted his daughter to get married and he insisted on sending her to get married. So the story is simple we don't find complex plot or many subplots with so many events in it. The storyteller here introduces many things from his imagination, we see the king is talking in the 3rd line his speech between commas, it means that is a direct speech. We have got two kinds of discourse the 1st two lines are indirect speech that is by a narrator and the 3rd and 4th lines are direct speech, the actual words from

the king. Here we have two levels of speech each one of them asserts the other, and it asserts the integrity of the narrator, when I tell you about something and I use the exact words told by that person it means that I want to assert my integrity assert that I'm telling the truth and that I was there when these things happened. Even though, we know that the whole thing is imagined, he may not be one of the court members but he heard what the king said in order to assert oneself. * 2nd stanza: There was a knight that is one of the court members who were there and he is an old one (Eldern). Why did he assert on the word (eldern) and the word knight? He could say one of the presidents or one of the members? What are the eldern knights usually for? Because they considered to be wiser and to give advices to the kings, they are councils to the king, so according to this they are always expected to give and find answers or solutions to anything or any problem the king wants to solve. When we go on and think of what did he mean in his advice when he said, " Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor that ever sail the sea"? can we say that he is quite innocent? The fact that is the weather is too bad and he is an old knight which makes him knows that no good sailor can risk his life in such weather, and he's thinking of S. P so we understand that there must be something between him and S. P. S. This is probably some kind of grudge between them and he maybe wants to get rid of him because he sounds like if S. P. was popular and loved by the king or maybe he was very close to the king. From the second line we can understand that the knight is very close to the king and he was sitting at his right, and we know that the right one means in fact the closest one. When we say that he is my right hand it means that he is the support and the one I trust. When the knight

said about S. P. he was telling the truth that he is a good sailor, but there is something behind this truth because he knew very well that however skillful the sailor can be, he cannot sail in such weather, and if he is a very skillful sailor he won't put himself in danger because he knew very well how the sea will be in such weather. The knight doesn't show any emotions towards S. P. but the reader can smell it from his words. * 3rd stanza: Sometimes there is something omitted and this in fact is done to create a certain affect. Here when he said the king has written a broad letter but he means in fact a letter, which he wants to inform S. P. that he's the only sailor that can take this mission and his mission was given by the king and in the middle ages the kings control every body's life and every body's existence and that anything comes from the king it means that you cannot refuse! He doesn't give you a certain choice but you have to take it. So he wrote this letter to tell him about his mission and about many good things about S. P. S. In the 2nd line, the king sign the letter with his own signature to make it more valid, so the letter wasn't sent from a secretary but directly from the king, and if something sent directly from the king it means the mission should be taken. In the last line, here we find the omission, which makes us realize that while S. P. S was walking on the sand the mission came to him suddenly and it took him by surprise, he didn't have enough time to express his words and feeling or enough path to talk about what is happening. Because it has taking him over wind then he doesn't try to choose his words or even to give a whole sentence, and this in fact just to struck the kind of the surprise, to express starkly that the letter came to him as a surprise." Walking on the sand" gives us also a hint about S. P. S.'s characteristics and the situation 1/

that as a sailor he likes the sea even though he's not sailing so it tells us how a sailor loves and enjoys sitting by the sea. 2/ about the situation it tells us that he wasn't thinking about anything and he was enjoying his time and walking. * 4th stanza (the letter): " To Norway" is mentioned 3 times, repeated 3 times. Repetition is to emphasize an important idea. Norway is farther off Scotland towards the north so to going from Scotland to Norway you are going from the north to farther north through a sea and this sea is usually risky to sail in it because of the bad weather especially in the winter. Also the repetition gives us the feeling of something speedy is going to happen, something that it should be taken at once, and something that cannot wait. He says " over the foam" it means over the sea, and when he says that it means that the sea is foamy. " the king's daughter ..." he is going to fetch the daughter of Norway to Scotland. So he is going to Norway and then he's coming back with the princess. When the king says " that is vow" he means it is " You" who must do it and you have no choice, the king for that mission has chosen you. So it is a duty and becomes an order. * 5th stanza: The 1st line S. P. read he was shocked! It was unbelievable he laughed hysterical laughter, it wasn't a laughter of happiness. He didn't believe how such mission was taken at that time. He was looking at the sea and he was surprised of such a mission. He understood that it must be a trick that is played over him. The 2nd line he read the tear blinded his eye so he cried not only because the sea was dangerous but also because that he knew that someone is tricking against him. He understood that the king didn't take the choice alone but there should be someone who gave that advice to the king. * 6th stanza: He is wondering who is the conceal who did

this to me? He knew that the king doesn't know him and doesn't know that he is a skillful sailor so there must be someone who advice the king to chose me to sail at this time of the year. * 7th stanza: Here he said whatever the weather is and however the weather is whether it is wind or wet! Whether it is hail or sleet there is no way to say no to the king. And he also emphasizes the fact that it's " we" who must fetch the daughter's king! Nobody else but we. Also here we have cumulative again where he said, " be it... be it... be it... be it..." we use cumulative style when we have different situations but all of them are risky, so we cannot say that one of them is better than the other but all of them are dangerous and lead to the same consequences which is drowning, and the choice here whatever it is! Is not a good choice. We have two musts here in this stanza " must sail — must fetch" it means the obligation is very strong and it comes from the highest ruler of the land who is the king. # As much as we read we can find things that couldn't be found easily on the style but it can be understood by the reader. We find hints and the effects that we found in the poem called a cumulative effect, which means that the effects are beat on and on and on until the tragedy comes to the end. So the reader understood that it would come to that tragedy and he is waiting for that tragedy to happened because he's prepared for it by hints and he will be ready when it comes to the climax. The tragic effect is built in the reader mind little by little. # So however simple the style could be sometimes it becomes complex because it is not really an open effect, and the effect sometimes given by many different literary words, either by using metaphorical language, building this cumulative effects, hints, or omissions within the style. All these things build up to a certain complex style. *

Applying the characteristics on the 1st example (Sir Patrick Spence). * The writer is unknown. (When person 1 told person 2 a story and 2 told 3 and 3 told 4 person number 10 will have a different version of the story because everybody tell it the way they want, the narrator adds or takes out words or stanzas whether its because he thinks its not correct or he thinks it doesn't add anything to the plot but the theme is the same). So, sometimes when we have an oral ballad we have many versions of it. * Written in a dialogue form. * It has two level of speech: a) Direct king — S. P. S. b) Indirect narrator

Sometimes the narrator comments in the events himself and he finds himself sometimes involves in some lines for example: " the next line that S. P. read the tear blinded his ee" the narrator here wasn't with S. P. when he read his letter but he imagined, in his imagination he isn't innocent that he is not playing the innocent commentator he involved himself within the conflict and become almost a part of the poem. He gives us idea about the surprise of S. P. and his hysterical situation and laughing and at the same time his sadness when he found out that the whole thing must be a trick by a certain man who was close to the king. So that makes him an intruder narrator not an innocent narrator, an intruder narrator who comments in the events and tells us what he thinks, who tries to built the effects leading the reader to a certain climax, he shows the reader how understand a poem and a ballad. * Its written in quatrain, and written in abcb " the end of stanzas" for example: a) 1st stanza {town, wine, skipper, mine} abcb b) 2nd stanza {knight, knee, sailor, sea} abcb * We find also refrain, for example: " to Norway to Norway" / " tis we must fetch her home" its repeated in two different stanzas. * About the meter in this poem: a) The syllables in the 1st line are 8

(4 feet) and we call this tetrameter. b) The syllables in the 2nd line are 6 (3 feet) and we call it trimeter. We usually use tetrameter when we talk about the movement whether it is fancy movement or any other movement. In the 1st stanza we can see a movement that is calling for speedy action. Because the king is worried and he shows his concern through trying to find somebody for the mission! So, it tells us something about the movement in the theme here. * It's tragic because it will end up with the drowning of S. P. S. and many other soldiers with him and the princess. * It's a poem written in verse. * The style sometimes becomes complex conflict but usually the conflict is simple, the story is straight forward, and it starts from the beginning that is the king wants to fetch his daughter from Norway and in the return journey he drowns with many others including the princess. So the story is developed in a linear way there is no intricacy and there is no smaller conflicts that can come into it, only the conflict of who is the man who has given advice to the king and there must be a grudge between them that's why he wants to get rid of him. That conflict even though it's a sub conflict it doesn't contentious or developed in the poem it is a feeling the reader has. And it is not a conflict that will built up or a conflict that has many sides of it, even the reader is not concern of what happened between the concealer and S. P. even though we feel there must be something but we don't care about what is that thing, because we are more taken by the main story, the main story draw us to it, and it doesn't give us time to think of something else around it. * The writer is unknown, there is many versions of it. It is sung and rounded orally and each singer might has adapted it to his own situation, time and to his own idiosyncratic that is from idiosyncrasy also

to his personal value and taste. * Compare between S. P. S and landlord ...

Ballads | S. P. S | Ballad of Landlord | Writer is unknown — there are many versions | The writer is known — there is only one written version | Simple |

The poem is more complex in situations because it gives us not only the situation of an individual but a situation of the minority who lives in a country and this minority see himself arrested by the majority. | The story talks about a single situation, it means that not every king is like that or the event accrued so many times in history, or there is such a grudge between every sailor or every concealer. So, it's only about one thing that happened at a certain time and it didn't repeated itself at another time. | The story is not a story of single situation or event but it projects something that happened in their everyday life. It is the oppressor (white man) who is aggressing the black man in America. And it gives us an event as an example, and this example is not like the other one, because we know the struggle between black and white people at that time, and the struggle for black man for his independence and against the oppressor who is the white man in America. So, this situation is more tragic because it's not the tragedy of certain man but a tragedy of group of people , tragedy of a race (group of people who are arrested) Its about human tragedy and relationship between racist. |