

Senryu and Haiku: A Comparison and Contrast by Thomas Murphy

Senryu and haiku are two short forms of Japanese poetry that share some similarities but also have some important differences. Both genres are typically unrhymed and consist of three lines, with the first line having five syllables, the second line having seven syllables, and the third line having five syllables. However, senryu and haiku differ in their subject matter and tone. Haiku typically focus on nature and the seasons, while senryu focus on human nature and the foibles of everyday life. Haiku are often characterized by their use of juxtaposition and kireji (cutting words), while senryu are more likely to use humor and satire.



Senryu and Haiku - 1 by Thomas Murphy

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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History

The origins of senryu and haiku are closely intertwined. Haiku evolved from a longer form of poetry called renga, which was popular in Japan during the Edo period (1603-1868). Renga were typically composed by multiple poets,

with each poet adding a verse to the poem. Haiku were originally the opening verses of renga poems, and they gradually became more popular as a stand-alone genre.

Senryu emerged as a distinct genre in the late 18th century. The term "senryu" was coined by the poet Karai Senryu, who wrote many poems that satirized the common people of Edo. Senryu quickly became popular, and it has remained a popular genre of poetry in Japan to this day.

Structure

As mentioned above, senryu and haiku both typically consist of three lines, with the first line having five syllables, the second line having seven syllables, and the third line having five syllables. However, there are some exceptions to this rule. For example, some senryu have four lines, and some haiku have only two lines.

In addition to their syllabic structure, senryu and haiku also differ in their use of kireji. Kireji are cutting words that create a sense of separation between the different parts of a poem. Haiku often use kireji to create a sense of juxtaposition, while senryu are more likely to use kireji for humor or satire.

Subject Matter

The subject matter of senryu and haiku is one of the most important ways in which these two genres differ. Haiku typically focus on nature and the seasons. They often use imagery and metaphor to capture the beauty and fleetingness of the natural world. Senryu, on the other hand, focus on human nature and the foibles of everyday life. They often use humor and satire to poke fun at human behavior.

Some common themes in haiku include:

* The beauty of nature * The changing seasons * The transience of life *
The search for enlightenment

Some common themes in senryu include:

* The follies of human nature * The absurdity of everyday life * The search
for happiness * The human condition

Tone

The tone of senryu and haiku is also quite different. Haiku are typically characterized by their use of understatement and restraint. They often leave the reader with a sense of wonder or awe. Senryu, on the other hand, are more likely to use humor and satire. They often make fun of human behavior and leave the reader with a sense of amusement or irony.

Senryu and haiku are two short forms of Japanese poetry that share some similarities but also have some important differences. Haiku typically focus on nature and the seasons, while senryu focus on human nature and the foibles of everyday life. Haiku are often characterized by their use of understatement and restraint, while senryu are more likely to use humor and satire. Both genres are valuable additions to the world of poetry, and they offer readers a unique and insightful perspective on the human condition.

About the Author

Thomas Murphy is a poet, writer, and teacher. He is the author of several books of poetry, including "Walking Through Shadows" (2018) and "The

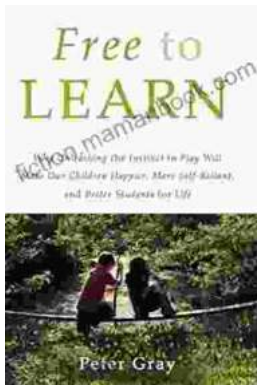
Space Between" (2020). He has also written extensively about poetry and creative writing.



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