The Dynamics of Poetry

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The Dynamics of Poetry

Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"The poet does not, cannot, waste words. He is, for the most part, devoid of digression, those sideroads so common, and so enjoyable to the writers of prose. Thus, his use of language is direct, intense, evocative—in a word, electric. Within the core of poetry flashes the electrification of language."

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THE DYNAMICS OF POETRY

The poet does not commitpaltry words; he is, for the most part, devoid of device, those ideograms so common, and so enjoyabe in the written prose. Thus, any use of language is direct, intense, connected, a word, short. Within the core of prose is the electrification of language.

What makes poetry is what it is—the manner, if you will, is the union of a visualized language with a vibrant mood. Poetry differs definition in that it is more than an artistic form or a more sounding sound from which to expand. Rather, it is an emotive experience of an intellectual concept by means of visual, dynamic, structured language. The poet does not differ from the prose writer intellectually, for both have the same ideas to present, and do. Yet the poet has more rules to obey and less space in which to generate his concept to fulfillment, yet he sometimes does above those seeming restrictions to take his role in a far more profound, intense, explanatory manner. "Somehow" how does the poet triumph? Language is the keynote.

It may seem at this point that one ignores the other elements essential to poetry. But theme, substance, imagery, mood, tone, and the rest are also components of prose.

Who can deny that Hemingway or O'Hara have "subtitled" in their writing, or who could read James Joyce with not realizing the complexities of imagery within? And no writing is without mood, whether it be Poe or Henry James; Henry James typifies, as does Flaubert, the value of tone. These "themes" are also that of writing—the omnipotent. But the language of poetry—image, or the must, at this point quality, due to the extent that the dimension, not mind make the greater; use of every word, every action, but as the playwright is not only an audibly upon language is the purpose, with the additional power of dramatic technique, action, dialogue, and other elements, having been considered to use one language one would call "electric."

Mood, in relation to poetry, is analogous to the background music of a good movie. It is not only present, it is necessary. It conveys a mood or a rhythm which is the very "soul" of the poem. The substance can be equated to the body of the poem, then the mood is the personality of the spirit of the same, for it makes the sophisticated reader or listener dive into the heart of the poet's mind, whether he keeps a steady, static undercurrent, a frothy-uppance, or a combination of several to trasnfix the listener (for one really hears poetry) onto the roller coaster of his emotions.

Thus, this combination of the uncountable number coupled with the interrelated electrified language of the poem gives poetry a dimension which prose cannot match. Structurally, this is the nature of poetry.

But what is the function of the poet, given his poetic structure and convention? All art is expression, only the form differs. So what is it about the poet that makes him choose to express his ideas within the confines of his art? Could he not say the same thing proselessly?

The answer, ambiguously enough, is yes and no. Yes, he could be mundane and bound as a newspaper reporter, or facile, facile, and prolonged as Faulkner. No, because the poet specializes; he uses his role as not only a chronicler, a commentator, or a re-evaluator of the codes of society, but also as a pure artist giving objective expression to a theme. This he does by inference, by subtext, by exposing not the concrete but the abstract, not the blur but the white. He begins with a line to the beholder to uncover. He leaves the final legacy to the beholder to uncover. He transforms the imagination, the curiosity, to that of the reader so that the latter may enjoy the fulfillment of expression, a new sanction. In short, he makes the bearer an active participant—the observer becomes, or must become, a seeker of the truth, the beauty, and the mystery in the poem.

Today's poet is fortunate. In a sense that his audience is "high brow", whereas the material for the most part must appeal to the middle brow or mass vulgus. For the poet the smaller audience proves a sanction, because his readers are his by choice and support it is immediately established. He does not seek an audience; rather, he is joined by one in an overall quest for perception and wisdom. The poet is the guide and one of the party, and not an inflated prophet.

Yet other primary facts need to be stated about the nature of poetry. Certainly poetry is what it is because of the electrified language and the middle meter, but it is also dependent upon what the poet is and what extent he fulfills his vision and his vocation. The poet must be explorer and seer. Yet there is another realm distinct from that of the poet and the printed page—that of the reader. Poetry live in the mind and spirit of the reader as well, for poetry, ideally at least, engulfs him and kindles his imagination for its sheer imaginative power, if not for wisdom alone.

Poetry, as we stated earlier, fails definition. For Poe it was "the rhythmic creation of beauty." For another it is the execution of the indefinable by association; it is also the electrification of language. It may be that poetry cannot be defined prosaically—a jest of Divine origin. Coleridge said that the power of poetry is "to instill such energy into the human mind as to enable the perceptive imagination to produce the picture" and whose vital power "dissolves, dissolves, dissolves, dissolves, dissolves, in order to produce the picture." The poet's gift, according to Coleridge, "is to produce musical delight." His words echo one's own feeling: the combination of electrified language and music, enveloping meter, Austell's MarLeish amplitudes this theme perfectly:

"The poem must not merely say;
But be.

Robert Rossi