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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, content, write words. He is, for the most part, devoid of dimension, those sideboards of common, and so enjoyable in the written prose. Thus, his use of language is direct, intense, evocative, as a word, terse. Within the core of poetry lies the electrification of language.

What makes poetry lie what it is—the essence, if you will—is the uses of a visualized language with a vibrant tone.

Poetry defines definition in that it is more than an artistic form or a mere sounding heard from which to expanse. Rather, it is an emotional 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 intelligent (emotional) 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 allow these seeming restrictions to mold his voice in a far more profound, interior, exposition manner.

"Somehow" how does the poet triumph? Language is the key.

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 "subject" in their writing, as do who could read James Joyce with not realizing the complexities of imagery within? And if a writer is without mood, whether it be Poe or Henry James, it is known for Flaubert, the value of tone. These elements—the very stuff of which are too important. But the language of poetry of imagery, when at this point quality, due to the extent that the dimension, comed stores; the greatest; the meaning of every word, every action, but as the playwright is not so solely dependent upon language as the purpose with the additional poem of distnce technique, accents, phrasing, and other elements, he cannot be considered to use language one would call "electric."

Matter, 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 "sense" of the poem. If the substance can be equated to the body of the poem, then the meter is the personality of the spirit of the sense, for it makes the intangible reader or listener come alive in the fantasy of the poet's mind, whether he knows it or not. The tone underlying a serene tempo, a cosmic presence, or a combination of all to transcend the hearer (for one really hears poetry) onto the roller coaster of its emotions.

Thus, this combination of the component meter coupled with the interpersonal 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 conventions? 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 poetically?

The answer, ambivalently enough, is yes and no. But he could be much more and heard as a newspaper reporter, or factual, frank and profound as Faulkner. No, because the poet, as he does not have a character, a commentator, and need only envision the concept through the eyes of the reader. He leaves the final language to the beholder to uncover. He transforms his imagination, his vulnerability to that of the reader. To this latter, may enjoy the freedom of the expression, a new sanction. In short, he makes the reader an active participant—the aesthetic becomes, or must become, a vector of the truth and, the mystery to the poem.

Today's poet is fortunate, for a genre that his audience is "high-brow", whereas the novelist for the most part must appeal to the middle-brow or mass-culture group. For the poet the smaller audience knows a sanction, because his readers are by choice and a support is immediately established. He does not seek an audience; rather, he is joined by one in an overall quest for perception and wonder. The poet is the guide and one of the party, and not an isolated poet. But what 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 whole meter, but it is also dependent upon what the poet is and to 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—one that of the reader. Poetry lies in the mind and spirit of the reader as well, for poetry, ideally at least, engulfs him and/knows his imagination for its sheer imaginative power. It is for seeking alone.

Poetry, as was stated earlier, defies definition. For Poe it was "the rhythmic creation of beauty." For another is the execution of the ineffable by association; it is also the electrification of language. It may be that poetry cannot be defined poetically—a jolt of Divine origin. Coleridge said that the power of poetry is "to instill such energy into the human mind so as to compel the powers of imagination to produce the picture" and whose vital power "dissolves, dissolves, dissolves, dissolves, dissolves, in order to restore, to produce musical delight." His words echo one's own feelings: the combination of intangible language and sound, enveloping meter, Archibald MacLeish materializes this theme perfectly: "The poem must not merely say. But be."

Robert Rossi

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