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Poetry: An Imitation, Imagination And Passion Of Man's Nature

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ABSTRACT

Poetry is an imitation of Nature but the imagination and the passions are a part of man's nature. We shape things according to our wishes and fancies, without poetry; but poetry is the most emphatical language that can be found for those creations of the mind 'which ecstasy is very cunning'. Neither a mere description of natural objects, nor a mere delineation of natural feelings, however distinct or forcible, constitutes the ultimate end and aim of poetry, without the heightening of the imagination. Poetry puts a spirit of life and motion into the universe. Poetry does not define the limits of sense, or analyse the distinctions of the understandings, but signifies the excess of the imagination, beyond the actual or ordinary impression of any object or feelings. Poetry is the high wrought enthusiasm of fancy and feeling. The storm of passion lays bare and shows us the rich depths of the human soul: the whole of our existence, the sum total of our passions and pursuits, of that which we desire. For poetry idea is everything the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea is the fact. The strongest part of our religion today is its unconscious poetry.

Keyword: Poetry, imagination, imitation, language, passion, feeling and idea.

INTRODUCTION

Man is an emotional creature. Every human being has emotions. Everyone is over-whelmed by his or her emotions at one time or other of life. Poetry is the aesthetic art which deals with these emotions in an un-obstructive way. Human beings feel absolutely enraptured and transplanted to an entirely different world. In this emotional state their faculties of perception and imagination are deepened and intensified. But this habit and this quality of imaginative experience of poetry is inherent in men. It is never brought about by training and education. Even today, in our country, we find this beautiful phenomenon of poetry flourishing, not only among the most literate and backward people, the rustics, but among those uncivilized tribes which are still in an aboriginal state. They compose exquisite songs, full of sheer beauty. They may be devoid of external ornamentation, but their claim to poetry no one can deny them. To quote Wordsworth: "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge", or this one all art, and poetry is an art too, that "it is the expression of the invisible by the visible." We can feel it because all poetry primarily deals with emotions and the contact which the feelings of the poet establish with ours, and the effect which they produce on us, stir our imagination and make us know and feel that it is poetry. Impassioned poetry is an emanation of the moral and intellectual part of our nature, as well as of the sensitive of the desire to know, the will to act and power to feel. Poetry is only the highest eloquence of passion, the most vivid form of expression. Poetry is the perfect coincidence of the image and the words with the feeling we have

and of which we cannot get rid in any other way, that gives an instant 'satisfaction to the thought'. Poetry is the language of the imagination and passions. For poetry idea is everything and the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea and the idea is the fact. According to Wordsworth the principal object in the poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, through as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men, and of the same time, to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, where by ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing them, truly through not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature. Humble and rustic life was chosen, because the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more empathetic language. Because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated.

DESCRIPTION

All poetry proceeds originally from sense-impressions, and all poets are more or less sensuous. Impressions of the senses are in fact the starting point of the poetic process for it is what the poet sees and hears that excites his emotion and imagination, and his emotional and imaginative reaction to his sense-impressions generates poetry. Wordsworth's imagination was stirred by what he saw and heard in nature- what he calls "the language of the eye and the ear", and then he passed beyond his sense-impressions and constructed his poetic view of life and nature. Miltons was not less sensitive to the beauty of flowers than Keats.

Poetry is the language of imagination and the passions. It relates to whatever gives immediate pleasure or pain to the human mind. Poetry is the universal language which the heart holds with nature itself. He who has a contempt for poetry, cannot have much respect for himself, or for anything else. Many people suppose that poetry is something to be found only in books, contained in lines of ten syllables, with like endings: but wherever there is a sense of beauty, or power, or harmony, as in the motion of a wave of the sea, in the growth of a flower that 'spreads its sweet leaves to the air, and dedicates its beauty to the sun', there is poetry in its birth. If history is a grave study, poetry may be said to be a graver. Its materials lie deeper, and are spread wider. History treats, for the most part of the cumbrous and unwieldy masses of things, the empty cases in which the affairs of the world are packed, under the heads of intrigue in different states and from century to century. Man is an emotional creature. Everyone is over-whelmed by his or her emotions of one time or other of life. Poetry is that aesthetic art which deals with these emotions in an un-obstructive way. Human beings fed absolutely enraptured and transplanted to an entirely different world. In this emotional state, their faculties of perception and imagination are deepened and intensified. But this habit and this quality of imaginative experience and of poetry is inherent men.

Poetry is an imitation of nature, but the imagination and the passions are a part of man's nature. We shape things according to our wishes and fancies, without poetry. But poetry is the most empathetical language that can be found for those creations of the mind which ecstasy is very cunning in'. Neither a mere description of natural objects, nor a mere delineation of natural feelings, however distinct or forcible, constitutes the ultimate end and aim of poetry, without the heightening of the imagination. The light of poetry is not only a direct but also a reflected light, that while it shows us the object, throws a sparkling radiance on all around it. The flame of the passions, communicated to the imagination, reveals to us, as with a flash of lightening. The inmost recesses of thought, and penetrates our whole being – poetry represents forms chiefly as they suggest other forms, feelings. Poetry puts a spirit of life and motion in the universe. It describes the flowing, not the fixed. Poetry is not merely inspiration, it is also organization. The maturity of the artist is seen in his ability to organize "disparate experiences" into a single whole. In mature art there is 'unification of sensibility' of the intellectual and the emotional,, the creative and the critical. This can be achieved only by an exercise of the powers of the intellect.

Eliot's poetry marks a complete break from the 19th century tradition. He rejected the romantic theory that all art is basically an expression of the artist's personality and that the artist should create according to the dictates of his own inner voice without owing allegiance to any outside authority. He advocated his famous theory of the impersonality of poetry. He recognized the dangers of such an unrestricted liberty, and felt that, granted such license, there would be only, fitful and transient bursts of literary brilliance. "Inspiration alone cannot be safe guide. It often results in eccentricity and chaos." Reacting against the romantic insistence on poetry being a spontaneous overflow of powerful passion, Eliot advances his theory of

impersonality of poetry. He observes, “poetry is not a turning loose of emotion but an escape from emotion, it is not an expression of personality but an escape from personality.” The greatest art is objective: “the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in his will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates.” As a matter of fact, the poet has no personality, he is merely a receptacle, a shred of platinum, a medium which fuses and combines feelings and impressions in a variety of ways. So poetry is not concerned with personal emotion. Even imagined experiences will do. The poet’s imagination can work as well upon what he has experienced as on what he has read. Further, he points out that it is wrong to suppose that poetry is concerned with the beautiful.

Yeats’ poetry is a little more than a marginal comment on the main activities of his life. In literature, it is written partly from the lack of that spoken word which limits us to the normal man, that has lost in personality in our delight in the whole-blood, imagination, intellect, running together – but have found a new delight in essences, in states of mind, in pure imagination, in all that comes in to us most easily to elaborate music and is found remarking how a small fragment of our own nature can be brought to perfect expression, nor that even but with great in a much divided civilization. Yeats elevates private grief into a general sorrow and exposes the intensity of personal emotion without vulgarity. He was gifted with a rich myth-making imagination. Yeats’s poetry reflects his deeply felt conviction that man’s life is governed by a system. For him, imagination is a kind of creative principle, it is like an Almighty divine God. The ultimate aim of imagination is to create a paradise in this world from now to eternity. It is, however, too difficult to make such images, as we wish to do so. Yeats praises human souls that overcome such conditions, with full arduous life. As he awakens mentally, he comes to find the concept of taking pains-labor- he needs to make constant efforts to realize the imagination as he wants it, wholeheartedly.

The poetical impression of any object is that uneasy, exquisite sense of beauty or power that cannot be contained within itself. Poetry according to Lord Bacon, “has something divine in it, because it raises the mind and hurries it into sublimity, by conforming the shows of things to the desires of the soul, instead of subjecting the soul to external things, as reason and history do.” It is strictly the language of imagination; and the imagination is that faculty which represents objects, not as they are in themselves, but as they are moulded by other thoughts and feelings into an infinite variety of shapes and combinations of power. Our eyes are made the fools of our other faculties. This is the universal law of the imagination. We compare a man of gigantic stature to a tower: not that he is anything like so large, but because the excess of his size beyond what we are accustomed to expect, or the usual size of things of the class, produces by contrast a greater feeling of magnitude and ponderous strength than another object of ten times the same dimensions. The intensity of feeling makes up for the disruption of the objects. Things are equal to the imagination, which have the power of affecting the mind with an equal degree of terror, admiration, delight or love. For poetry idea is everything. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea and the idea is the fact. We see the things ourselves, and show it to others as we feel it to exist, and as, in spite of ourselves, we are compelled to think of it. The imagination by thus embodying and turning them to shape, gives an obvious relief to the indistinct and importunate cravings of the will. We do not wish the thing to be so; but we wish it to appear such as it is. For knowledge is conscious power; and the mind is no longer.

Modern poetry has been treated as ‘eccentric, wayward and puerile’. According to A.C.Ward, “When the 20th century opened, Tennyson had been dead nine years, and there was a wide spread impression that English Poetry had died with him.” He further added, “The poetry of the period shows distinct decline, not in the general level of execution but in genius and breadth of range. The great emotion, especially in the emotion of romantic love, are avoided by most poets. They see the world as children see it, and are content with the mere external appearances of things. They seldom seek to interpret: they aim merely at communicating in the most simple language possible, their delight in sheer physical beauty or their discovery that much that is conventionally regarded as common place or ugly has a real beauty of its own.” The poets apparently have no theory of the universe to offer us, no great ideal to set before us. In the face of modern industrialization, they solace their souls by retiring in the country and celebrating the beauties of unspoiled Nature.

It is no exaggeration to describe Yeats as one of the most difficult of modern poets. His preoccupation with the attempt to formulate a philosophical system which could replace the scientific materialism of his age underlies most of his later verse. It is doubtful whether he ever succeeded in crystalizing a completely systematized philosophy, and his most comprehensive exposition of his ideas. Yeats’s philosophy is often

expressed through a carefully devised system of symbols, some purely primate, other drawn from his study of philosophy or his reading in the works of the French symbolists, or of earlier symbolical poets, particularly Blake and Shelley. By means of them he succeeds in expressing those deep emotional experiences which he felt to be otherwise incapable of poetical communication, but sometimes they serve only to accentuate the obscurity of his poems. The readers' difficulties arise mainly from Yeats's use of the same symbol to represent a variety of things; thus the Tower may represent among other things, an intellectual refuge, or the soul's yearning for the world of the spirit. Other of his well-known symbols are moon, the swan, and Byzantium. Few modern poets have been more deeply rooted in the central tradition of English poetry than Edmund Blunden. He is primarily a pastoral poet, seeking inspiration in the sights, sounds and smells of the English countryside, subjects which he has handled with a Shelleyan lucidity and a technical subtlety, which has yet allowed the authentic rural spirit to shine through his verse. A prolific writer, he first came to notice as contributor to the later volumes of Georgian poetry and his popularity has remained unimpaired even though later opinion has reacted against the Georgian school as a whole. As can be seen in some of his more horrific war poems, his experience in the First World War was not without its effect on his verse, but the impact was not sufficient to make any radical change in the nature of his art. His interest in the peace and beauty of nature, the accuracy of his observation, his delight in delicate rhymes, and that fondness for archaisms which aroused the interest of Robert Bridges in Blunden's earliest work, all are still to be found in *Shells by Stream* (1944), which contains many of his finest lyrics.

Modern poetry is the poetry of revolt. In the 19th century, "poetic vocabulary had been drained to its lees." The heaven of romance was already crusting into social philosophy, into democracy, and humanitarianism and propaganda. The revolt was not purposeless. The language had to be rejuvenated. The range of poetic subject matter had to be widened. And yet the revolt must travail amidst angry protests and loud wailings. Alfred Noyes spoke of "a general flood of half-educated mediocrity." Roy Campbell described modern poetry as "an epidemic of intellectual and emotional diarrhea. The timidity, the effort, the querulousness, the thinness of all the best modern poetry" was due to a 'sterile dualism' in the poet, "to a fixture within himself" that corresponds to "the fixture between him and his society." It is true much of modern poetry is experimental and, as such, has only an ephemeral value. Much of its eccentricity is symptomatic of a desire for change and freshness.

In appreciating the use of 'modern' diction, we must remember that language can be either so bare as to be merely real life without poetic inspiration or so artificial as to be too remote from life to have poetic significance. We may add a new vitality.

ARGUMENT

Critics give themselves great labour to draw out what in the abstract constitutes the character of high quality of poetry. It is much better simply to have resource to concrete examples – to take specimens of poetry of the high, the very highest quality. They are far better recognized by being felt in the verse of the master, than by pursued in the prose of the critic. If we are urgently pressed to give some critical account of them, we may safely, perhaps, venture on lying down, not indeed how and why the characters arise, but where and in what they arise. They are in the matter and substance of the poetry and they are in its manner on the one hand, the style and the manner on the other, have a mark, an accent, of high beauty, worth and power. But if we are asked to define this mark and accent in the abstract, our answer must be: No, for we should thereby be darkening the question, not clearing it. The mark and accent are as given by the substance and matter of that poetry by the style and manner of that poetry, and of all other poetry.

CONCLUSION

We live at a time when the history of poetry, if not poetry itself, has reached a resting place. Much good, unexciting, craftsman like writing is being done without any compelling sense of direction or any strong impulse to experiment. It is as if all possible experiments had been tried and further attempts were pointless. The young poet of today has the whole of English poetry to learn from: there is no prevailing style and no taboos. But the anti-romantic revolution of the twenties is still, more or less in progress. Except among poets, amateur or professional, there is no audience for poetry. This is because, by its very nature unspecialized in a world of increasing specialization. The moment a person ceases to be a child, he becomes a specialist. Poetry, which is concerned with the basic common interest of all humanity, adheres specialism, and is consequently regarded as childish- something we have grown out of. Only the lunatic,

the lover and the poet believe otherwise; so that poetry has become a language known only to these three persons. Poetry will survive, because it is in itself a basic human activity – almost as basic as speech.

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