

Yennhi Nguyen

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Defense of Poetry Essay

Poetry at its Best

Poetry has the façade of containing intricate sesquipedalian wording with a repetitive structure of rhyme scheme, or the lack of it thereof, from one stanza after another as if its only purpose is to drive readers into circles that lead to completely nowhere. Although it may appear that way, it's quite the contrary.

Poetry is, in its own way, a type of language. However, different from the every-day language, it is more intense with its careful manipulation of emotion in order to convey meaning through carefully chosen word-choices. Poetry can tell stories, narrate an event, express feelings, or even describe something (criticalreading.com). Whatever type of poem that the author chooses to write about, there is always one similar thing that poems all share: a purpose.

Whether the purpose is to teach a lesson, reminisce on a memory, or even make the readers laugh, it all depends on the author and the purpose that they choose to write about. President Kennedy himself found purpose in the poems that Robert Frost wrote for he mentioned him in a speech that he gave at Amherst College in Massachusetts. Within his speech, President Kennedy said,

“Robert Frost coupled poetry and power, for he saw poetry as the means of saving power from itself. When power leads men towards arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations. When power narrows the areas of man's concern, poetry reminds him of the richness and diversity of his existence. When power corrupts, poetry cleanses for art establishes the basic human truth which must serve as the touchstone of our judgment.”

(www.arts.gov)

The purpose, or theme, that one gets out of poetry may vary from one individual to another. To President Kennedy, poetry is a constant reminder of human truth. When one strays from their path, poetry is a guide that leads the way. In a way, poetry can be compared to a song and its lyrics. The only difference is that poetry strives for a deeper meaning by picking out specific words that best fits the poem and then applies it. Whether one hates or loves poetry, it cannot be denied that poetry's key factor is word choice.

In poetry, there are no words that are wasteful. Poets use the most effective words in order to convey the correct emotion to their readers (dailywritingtips.com). By doing so, mere words can conjure up a lucid imagery of the detailed scene that comes from the paper and text. On top of all this, poetry is inspirational. One cannot deny the fact that poetry elicits strong emotions from its readers. The words itself are powerful enough that it can leave behind a motivational emotion. The response from poetry can lead one to pick up a pencil and just write. Readers that are able to get something—anything—from poetry, are looking past the literary and into the figurative.

When one is able to see what a poem is figuratively talking about, the literal meaning seems dull in comparison. Those who are unable to see pass the literary are usually the ones that find poetry to be a waste of their time. This situation becomes similar to reading an advance book and not comprehending anything from it. One cannot fully appreciate something if one does not fully understand it.

Rhetorical devices such as similes and metaphors are at constant use in poetry (poetry.org). It is an essential tool that poets use in order to get readers to connect with the figurative meaning of the poem and leave behind what is on the surface. Rhetorical devices help

poets drive home the emotion that they try to present. This tool amplifies the words used tremendously by comparing two things for readers to fully understand what the poet is trying convey, using detailed words to capture an image of what is being described, use repetition and rhyming to make the poem flow, and so much more. Every-day words are enhanced into something beyond mundane.

By being able to draw out a theme from a poem, readers become a step closer to understanding what exactly the poem is talking about. The themes in poetry are considered to be universal human truth. A lesson can be learned from poetry and can then enable one to have a better understanding of the world.

In the poem *Terrence This is Stupid Stuff* by AE Housman, a man tells Terrence, a poet, that poetry is stupid. Terrence defends poetry by comparing something that the man is familiar with: alcohol.

Alcohol, Terence says, gives one a false image of the world. It enables one to see what one wants to see, but it will not last forever. When sober, the reality of the world will crash down once again and show the world as it always has been. However, by taking small doses of the truth of the world as it is, one can obtain greater knowledge as the king who took small doses of poison to be immune to those who tried to poison him. Facing the truth will make one stronger than when one chooses to ignore what's there. By understanding the truth in poetry, one can live a long life as the king had done for poetry holds truth that everyone can learn from.

Citations

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