



THE POET'S ROLE

A poet is one who is bound to deal with a kaleidoscopic range of themes underlying life: mainly society, time, life, nature, love, nature, autobiographical elements, the essence of poetry, etc. in distinctive ways. He is unique in his approach to the genre of poetry. He cannot imitate others in the genre as it comes to him automatically and spontaneously as it is 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.' His poetic objective is to amuse his audiences or readers, enabling them to concur with him.

A poet is one who can notice anything under the sun. He can see what the sun is not able to do so. He with the sense of commitment composes a poem, trying to give an account of his findings, observations, feelings, and experiences in a realistic manner with snapshot details. He expresses or records his feelings, observations, and experiences honestly both for himself and for the readers. The delight of a poem is like that at the sight of a beautiful flower, a pretty butterfly, or the radiant rainbow.

The poetic process begins in the mind of a poet when he experiences something appealing to him by means of his sensuous contact with the objects in nature or some other that leaves an indelible impression on his mind. When he listens to the sweet song of a nightingale or the song of a solitary reaper, he gets engrossed into its beauty. So is the case when he beholds pretty daffodils or some other appealing to the senses, he revels their beauty in them. The poetic process transforms into an imaginative poem in the way the rugged caterpillar transforms into the pretty butterfly. The idea or thought born in mind is crude and rough like the rugged caterpillar naturally transforms into a beautiful musing in the composition of a poem like the butterfly to attract the viewer by its charms.

The composition of a poem is like the creation of a pretty butterfly. A poet composes a poem with beautiful poetic expressions in the way a painter paints a picture exquisitely with the colours of his choice. It is so natural like the rainbow to shine when the sunrays pass through raindrops. The goal of a poem is to amuse its readers for their enlightenment.

The responsibility of a poet is to present ideas in his 'form and structure' in the composition of a poem. He is free to add creative flavor and literary luster to a poem and express the reactions and responses to the happenings and events experienced in his observations in life to make it readable and enjoyable. A piece of writing, especially a poem transforms the raw idea into a ripe poem in the way nature transforms the dreaming bud into a beautiful flower in the process of blooming.

Poetry must be appealing to the readers for its thematic concerns. The poet has the positive attitude towards the reader. He enlightens the reader in the right way. As Robert Frost opines, "a poem begins in delight and ends in wisdom". Readers like poetry for its essential qualities. William Wordsworth's 'Daffodils', T.S. Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi', Robert Frost's 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening', Rabindranath Tagore's 'Thy Gifts', Nissim Ezekiel's 'Night of the Scorpion', Emerson's 'The Squirrel and a Mountain' and Martin Niemoller's 'A Plea for Action' are the poems to excel the poetic essence to be appealing to the readers. Why do the readers like these poems? The most suitable answer is that those poems are the representations of actual experiences, ground realities and life truths in the language of common people rather than that of scholars. Their theory of poetics is that poetry must have accessibility and comprehensibility besides the qualities of transparency and simplicity for the reader.



A poet or creative writer's bounden responsibility is to observe the events, experiences, incidents, happenings, etc. only to record them with the sense of honesty and sincerity to his observations only for the readers of his generation and forthcoming generations as Philip Larkin comments on poetry:

"I write poems to preserve things I have seen/thought/felt (if I may say indicate a composite experience) both for myself and for others, though I feel that my prime responsibility in the experience itself which I am trying to keep from oblivion for its own sake. Why I should do this, I have no idea, but I think the impulse to preserve at the bottom of all art."

While focusing on the merits of poetry, the poet attempts to grapple with the contemporary dilemmas and uncertainties, abnormalities, and absurdities. He is concerned with the decline of values and downfall of standards. He should have social consciousness to make the reader aware of the society in which the poet lives. A poem with the concept of social awareness is therefore complete and the poet who deals with the society he lives in is complete. He points out faults in present society to hold mirror to them and make the reader aware of the findings in his observations and experiences. The reader in the forthcoming generations should cross the barriers of time and the boundaries of space to participate in the poetic scene and share the poet's observations and experiences.

The poet of consciousness deals with the feelings as I, Dr. Katta Rajamouly, express my concept of poetry:

"Every poet lets us listen to his heartthrobs for our heart-responses. It is his primary goal and bounden responsibility to describe events, incidents, experiences, dilemmas, problems, etc., that he glimpses and witnesses in life. Poetry is his medium and spectrum he expresses through, and weapon and organ he fights with for the aimed reforms and desired solutions. It rises from the reality and the actuality of life in the way the plant rises from the ground of truths to bloom the flowers of facts."

To make his poetry interesting, a poet deals with themes interesting and appealing to the readers. He deals with time, the nucleus of all themes, that governs life in its constant reign and brings about changes in life and the life around him. The concept of time is the nucleus of all the themes underlying life. As a result, it serves as a source for discomfort, disruption, and decay. In time's flow, the future turns into the present and the poet finds the present prosaic, dull, dreary, disappointing, and empty as man's promises, expectations, dreams and hopes never become reality in time's flux that shatters them by its destroying forces and disrupting powers. Time in its flux turns the present into the past as a source or store for recollections. Though man wants to forget his past, it keeps lurking in mind and clinging in memory to remind him of it though wanted or unwanted. Man concurs with time's powers as it conquers him in bringing about changes in life against his wishes.

A poet is bound to deal with life as he experiences various changes that time brings about in it. Life initiates with birth, proceeding to growth: childhood, youth, adulthood, manhood and old age ultimately to culminate in death. Time in its movement turns life mortal or ephemeral on one side and futile on the other. Life is with ebbs and tides, and a series of vicissitudes. Man wakes up to the bitter reality that all expectations, hopes, wants and dreams connected to the future are relentlessly shattered to turn life into futility.

Nature is powerful to bestow on the poet comfort and delight when he/she visits it. It never fails to attract his attention. Man in general finds pleasure at the sight for it serves as a benevolent force. For man, nature serves as a source for pleasure. He describes all the natural objects like the sun, the moon, the earth, hills, seas, rivers, birds, animals and so on. There is a clear-cut comparison and contrast between human and nonhuman worlds.

Love is the key theme of poetry. There is a clash between what the lover wishes and what happens to him against his wish in life. He deals with the concept of love in variations. He deals with the love of true lovers and the love of selfish lovers in society today. One dwells in the heart and the other shines in hypocrisy.

Man lives in society. A poet as man lives in society, responding to the events that take place in the society he lives in. He grows socially consciousness as he wishes the welfare of his fellow beings. He is a poet for the welfare of society.

The poet loves all art forms: painting, sculpture, and the beauty in nature to portray them with snapshot details. He is instrumental in making the art long living and ever cherishing. His own life alone leaves an inerasable impact and indelible impression on him to reflect in his poetry. He cannot be away from the portraying of his autobiographical elements in poetry to reflect the past in his life especially his childhood that becomes its integral part.

The role of a poet is multisided and multifaceted as he responds to various events in life. His wisdom is preeminent for the enlightenment of the people. He is to offer delight to the readers. He, at the same time, establishes peace by means of his teachings to the people for violence. He aims at establishing a peaceful society by means of humanistic concerns and relations.

The poet presents a poem in the pedigree texture of rhymes with a message to enlighten its readers. He at the same time fills it with the sweet music of rhythms, imparting beauty to it for the gaiety of its readers. The poem excels the other genres by its distinct qualities of art.

References:

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Dr. Rajamouly Katta, M.A., M. Phil., Ph. D., Professor of English by profession and poet, short story writer, novelist, writer, critic and translator by predilection, has to his credit 64 books of all genres and 638 publications of poems, short stories, articles and translations published in journals, books and anthologies of high repute.

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