

A Means to Culmination Poetry to Education

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ABSTRACT: Poetry pedagogy is a postmodern educational revival that tends to utilize this genre in promoting the standard of education in many countries including USA, UK, Canada and Ireland. It emphasizes retrieving the role that poetry played, in line with other genres of literature, in keeping nations' traditions and history alongside with its role in developing students' informative capacities due to the pleasure it fosters in listeners and readers mixed with zealous feeling for better production and immediate and permanent reaction as far as its ascendancy on all senses is concerned.

The present study explores the role of poetry in the above domain and demonstrates its ability in bypassing intellectual rigidity, idleness and the robotizing of the students that afflicted educational systems all over the world. It highlights that poetry is a double-edged sword in establishing a strong linguistic foundation, and its brevity appropriates people's occupations as far as intensity and abundance of meaning are concerned. The study also shows the role of poetry in deepening thinking and transforming it from extrinsic to intrinsic as well as promoting the standard of language in students concerning structure and vocabulary. In addition, texts of different themes indicate that the emotional interaction with poetry can repel monotony and consolidate interest and intensification. Moreover, the accompanying sense of enjoyment is not yet complete and satisfactory unless the covenant is consolidated by a sufficient teacher. Therefore, the present study describes the successful teacher intended to teach poetry and the way with which he tackles this activity.

KEYWORDS: pedagogy, poetry, permanent reaction, promotion, enjoyment, covenant.

INTRODUCTION

It can be impressively said that words of poetry are capable to instill unforgettable perceptions in the minds for the aesthetic pleasure they have which brings about immediate interaction that continues beyond the boundaries of communication. Judith Oster states that according to Robert Frost poetry enables students of different levels to think and open many doors in order to elevate the rungs of the ladder up to the tower of knowledge. Such an achievement depends upon a thorough grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the figures of speech used in poetry especially the metaphor (Oster 156). The effective metaphor creates a state of ponder and transfers the receiver from a state of limited thinking that has one meaning to another multiple one capable of giving life meaning and dynamism.

Poetry is considered a highly participatory approach to teaching and learning. It allows "students to take an active role in interpretation" (Halperin 5) for the latitude it donates to them which should be commensurate with their level of education. Adolescents, although unable to catch the meaning of the lines they learn by rote, entertain their music and keep in touch with them even to adulthood as Seamus Heaney, the contemporary Irish poet, said about some lines he and his friends chanted on their way to the primary school in northern Ireland: "I know now that it is about initiation but as I trailed along the Lagan's Road on my way to Anahorish School it was something that was good for a laugh" (Preoccupations 24). The lines read:

'Are your praties dry

And are they fit for digging?'

'Put in your spade and try,'

Says Dirty-Faced McGuigan. (Preoccupations 24)

Teaching by the use of poetry offers many entrances to knowledge more than any other field. It transfers the student from the superficial or academic propensity in dealing with knowledge, even in achieving the utmost of results, to the actual intermingling that calls all senses to participate in the process. It "helps to stimulate creativity and it encourages the development of a student's intellectual faculties- imagination, thinking, and interpretation" (qtd. in Spence 127). At last, poetry enables students to evaluate what they read and hear from others and imparts special flavor to the material they deal with.

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Transformation by Poetry

It is certainly a fundamental fact that no one can ignore the role of poetry in our lives to an extent it makes sense of ourselves. Irrespective of its ability to evoke our emotions for the matchless potentiality of its words, it can deepen our understanding of ourselves and others and help us probe in the essence of matters by calling all our senses for this purpose. There are commonplace things which are boring to be dealt with ordinarily, but with the use of poetry they become interesting because they are looked at from a new perspective. So, for the process of teaching, poetry "is helpful because it works well as a catalyst over mind" (Mittal 21). The beautiful arrangement of words, rhythm and musicality, and the ability it has which enables students draw images in their imagination are active factors that imprint what they read in their minds. In this case it displaces monotony which makes a crevice between reading, and understanding and creation.

A purposeful programme in treating and adapting certain selections of poems definitely of a great significance to students at intermediate and secondary stages. Such a task is not tiring for "what we have to do is to adapt the selections by means of simplifying syntactic structures and by means of vocabulary control" (Verghese 115). In such a case students will not lose interest in reading these selections by frequently going back to their dictionaries to check difficult words. In addition, these selections are helpful to make students at different stages and cultures stuck with each other because what these poems tend to convey is not vulnerable to change. But what is to be taken into consideration is the kind of poems that are to be tackled. They must arouse interest and evoke permanent attention so that they can engage students' minds to be aware of the structure and vocabulary that must constitute the poetic lines. The burdensome task of this process is to create a teacher who must be competent enough to carry out this duty, and highly active to achieve a mutual interaction. His appropriate and influential reading of the poem must play the part of a catalyst to their growing anxiety.

As long as poems are considered vehicles or certain forms of language which have the ability to take us "to the heart of states of knowing and feeling that are unavailable in any form" (Clarke 324), it becomes a compelling need to be read aloud and understood for the most part as an audible product. The first poems in the history of almost all nations have not been written beforehand for most of them tackled different purposes and composed by their poets on the spur of the moment as far as their status quo was concerned. What preserved them to the age of writing is the beauty of the words, intensification and their appeal to the minds and feelings in spite of the brevity of their lines as compared to other genres of literature. Some poems helped to keep the traditions of certain countries and peoples; others show the credo or the moral commitment of that nation towards others; therefore, they remained as anthems or national songs on the tongues of those peoples. This is the third stanza of the German's poet August Heinrich Hoffman (1798- 1874) which was embraced from early twentieth until the end of the same century. German people continued singing:

Over nations, borders and Zones
Echoes a call, the simple will.
Everywhere where Germans live,
The oath resounds to the heavens:
Never will we bend,
Never take force as justice,
Germany, Germany above all
And the Reich will rise again! (Hermand 262)

Another example of the potentiality and survival of poetry is the poem written by the Palastinian poet Ibrahim Tuqan (1905- 1941). Ibrahim wrote this poem in 1934 at a time the Palastinians were in revolt against British occupation. In 2003 the Iraqi government adopted it as the official national anthem which is still going on. In most occasions Iraqi people chant

My homeland
My homeland
Majesty and beauty
Splendor and sublimity
In your hillocks are.

Life and salvation,
Bliss and expectation
In your air are.

Shall I see you
Luxurious and Unimpaired,
Successful and revered?

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Shall I see you
In your highness
Go as far as Arcturus?

My homeland
My homeland

The primary target in making students familiar with poetry is to move from extrinsic to intrinsic impulses in language learning. Much time and effort and patience should be spent in order to achieve this aim. According to Margaret Falvey, the "emphasis throughout is on using poetry and rhyme to foster the meaningful use of language" (29). That is to say it helps students to be very much identified and integrated with the language that they tend to use and to be much concerned with instilling the words in their minds and to look at this familiarity and continuation as part of culture to see into things rather than to look at them externally. Poetry is universal as far as its themes are concerned. It almost deals with love, death, childhood, nature, etc. So, it appropriates different nations at different times all over the world.

Poetry differs from other genres of literature for the exactness and limitation of its words which cannot be substituted for some reasons. The poet who writes a poem is not like any other person. He is very meticulous in choosing the words of his poem which, according to him, go in line with the situation he passes through. So, when a poem passes from one generation to another it does not change. It is unlike tales and stories which are vulnerable to changes as they transfer from one tongue to another depending on the standard of education of communicators. Literate and illiterate people memorize the poem as it is without any moderation except for old poems which were put into modern languages by great poets such as *Beowulf* which was translated by Seamus Heaney- a noble prize winning poet. In this regard poetry and memory are part and parcel for the organization of its words that has a special magic to influence all sensitive minds and can instigate in others a state of contemplation regardless of the ages when readers live and the span of time which separates them.

Poetry plays a great part in establishing a belief or refuting another. In this case, the option of the kind of poetry that is to be taught to students, especially those at the primary level, should be appropriate to their age regarding the themes which do not confuse their minds and the meter whose music creates a permanent interaction in them. So, educationists, according to Dennis Carter, had and have to reconcile between children's needs and nature. As a starting point that helps to shape their minds which are highly tuned at this particular stage is to make them familiar with short- lined poems that are recited to them rhythmically and have the ability to develop and enrich their linguistic and syntactic repository (Carter 2). A four- line stanza suffices the need as an Anonymous said:

As a rule man is a fool
When it's hot he wants it cool,
When it's cool he wants it hot,
Always wanting what is not. (qtd. in Kumar 95)

Learning and memorizing poetry at an early age has psychological and spiritual effects at the long term. It has a great significance in soothing and comforting the individual from certain spiritual crises which may overtake him at difficult times. It makes the individual feel that he is not the only one who suffers from his pain and there are many who take part with him. This condition strengthens the potential of introspection which enables choosing poems that have common denominators between him and others. Such a transformation from external to internal interaction and interest targets at giving education a gravitational touch in which the student and the teacher consider themselves part of an exalted process. In addition, when knowledge acquisition becomes autonomous that does not depend on rewards as the main motivation, success becomes the most favorite ally for all.

Enjoyment Vs Monotony

Undoubtedly, students of different levels search for knowledge in a traditional way to pass from one stage to another. This unhealthy state compels educational institutions to search for a variety of activities which can attract student's attention and enrich their intellectual garner from top to toe with meaningful conceptions about the way they deal with knowledge and its acquisition. English as a foreign language suffers from a state of stagnation and monotony in the primary, intermediate, and secondary levels. In order to get rid of this monotony poetry is presented as a good means that helps enrich and strengthen individual and communal abilities. The close- knit relationship between poetry and emotions can make students have ample opportunities to develop their skills and put the plan of implementation into effect.

Throughout this paper the main task is to spellbind students' minds and to engage them with the very interpretation and concepts of the poem. This engagement through an attracting approach creates an immense interest whose duty is to kick out monotony and be a springboard to other developments. An interesting and effective poem is considered a useful tool for instigating personal intentions to strengthen capability of vocabulary, structure, and pronunciation. An eight- line song by Robert Herrick (1591-

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1674) gives an impression of the afore-mentioned standard. It depicts a situation where a seller publicly declares to sell his goods which is in fact a declaration of the source of cherry-ripe that is Julia's lips when she smiles. So, he raises his voice saying:

Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones; come and buy.
If so you ask me where
They do grow, I answer: there
Where my Julia's lips do smile
There's the land, or cherry-isle,
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow. (qtd. in Halperin 8)

The theme of the song can, for the most part, ascertain universality and non-triviality to the students irrespective of their ages and stages. Consequently, this condition deepens the understanding and realization of the different aspects of culture and instills in the minds love of the language and curiosity to know much about the intrinsic intentions out of the extrinsic form- the text. This appealing idiosyncrasy of poetry makes inevitable and impressive the learning of new words, revision of the rules, amelioration of pronunciation and uplifting of creativity. Texts differ from one another in influence and authority and on top of which are those emotional ones because they are public to all people who respond to them according to their ages and their personal experiences.

The above lines, for example, play on different levels. The early stages- the primary and the intermediate before fourteen- interact mostly with the rhyme and rhythm as well as vocabulary without paying attention to the intended meaning behind that. Whatever the case, "poems are written with the idea of heightening the readers' perception of not only what is trivial but of what is not as well" (Dzhukelov 9). Consequently, they arise a state of enjoyment in the students due to rhyme and rhythm which lead to memorizing and then repeating the lines individually and chorally. Thereafter, they begin asking about the images, symbols, and other figurative usages of the words and the intended meaning besides the poet's cognitive capacity in making the lines readable and accessible as far as the standard of education and cognition of readers is concerned.

Compactness and exactness of poetry have a great significance and a pivotal role in forming the student's mind. Instead of going into irrelevant details and even run-of-the-mill information the student starts delving into the very core of matters and learns how to be emotionally intelligent in order to impart a flavor of interest that enhances continuation to the material. What happens later on as a contingent state upon enjoying poetry is the consciously perceived experience of the details of language learning. In order to read the poem rhythmically, students should be accurate in vocabulary and pronunciation. Knowing about vocabulary helps them concentrate on the stressed syllables and expressions the poet wants to emphasize which leads to knowing the inner feelings of the poet himself resulting in full identification with him and the teacher who teaches his poetry. Pronunciation is a paramount prerequisite that underpins the process of enjoyment by keeping on the musicality of the lines as far as the decided meter is concerned.

Poetry has a great significance in promoting the standard of education due to the accessibility and readability. It arises pleasure in readers of all levels even those students who are considered reluctant to education. "Rhythm in particular, together with rhyme and repetition, were named as an aid to beginner or struggling readers" (Maynard 11). Concentration and condensation of poetry and the aesthetic flavor that characterizes the poetic lines in spite of the simplicity and familiarity of the words evoke readers' anxiety to go beyond the apparent meaning and dig deep into the hidden and vague. It arouses interest in identifying with the addressee rather than the addressor and, to some extent, makes a spiritual connection between the two. The romantic poet William Blake (1757- 1827) in "Introduction" – one of his *Songs of Innocence* which apparently seems very simple and clear- shows a piper as he meets a child who asks him to "pipe a song about a lamb" (Zamani 19). The action moves from a melody to words as the child asks the piper to sing instead. Finally, the child writes the words in a book "that all may read" (Zamani 19). The piper relates that as he was

Piping down the valleys wild
Piping songs of pleasant glee
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me,

"Pipe a song about a lamb",
So I piped with a merry cheer.

"Piper, pipe that song again"

So I piped, he wept to hear. (qtd. in Zamani 19)

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The lines are very impressive that they stick to the students' minds through and after reading. Through their musicality and pleasant story the reader moves slowly and carefully from line to line repeating and advancing to know the consequences of the child's demand through his conversation with the poet- the piper. The sympathy is peaking when the child asks the piper to

"Drop thy pipe thy happy pipe
Sing thy songs of happy cheer",
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear. (qtd. in Zamani 19)

Students notice that the "music of moment's pleasure changes into written lyrics" (Zamani 20). Their pleasure prompts them to be contemplative and curious as the child weeps with the process of singing. They ask themselves a question about the kind of the song and to what extent it is important and pleasant that makes the child compelled to write it in a book in order to be read by generations. The last request was:

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read"-
So he vanished from my sight
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear. (qtd. in Zamani 19)

In line with enjoyment goes curiosity which helps students enhance and deepen their knowledge of the intended meaning of the poem. They may go beyond memorizing and repeating the lines to stand by the gate of criticism knocking to know the difference between "wild" and "rural" and this movement between these two situations. This deep identification with the words of poetry makes it clear that these words acquire a new significance and ascendancy when they are strung together in lines and form a new entity- the poem. Alongside with the deep understanding and the wide knowledge poetry can give to students, it enhances their fluency as far as the meter is concerned. Students of low levels try their best to develop their reading by repeating the words and the lines many times in order to keep on musicality as much as possible.

The accurate and unfamiliar structure of poetry has a great connection with creativity for the anxiety it stimulates in students to "broaden their existing vocabulary and grammar, combine familiar words in unfamiliar ways and develop complex grammar" (Kirkgoz 395). This means that the poet gives precedence or priority to specific words at the expense of others for specific purposes, and, sometimes, prolongs the poetic line to include the whole stanza. In such a case, the student pays much attention to every word and every punctuation mark in order to glean the hints and hunt the meaning of the stanza. Students, in such a case, start enriching their capabilities in structure, words, and discourse utilizing from the inner emotional motive behind the multiple expression of discourse as far as explicit and implicit meaning of words is concerned.

Poems are the utmost manifestation of creativity. Through the pregnant meaning of the words can learners discover new things about language and about themselves? Consequently, their improvement of the different skills will depend on how deep their understanding and how diverse their digestion of the poems are. The universality of the poems' themes give students more opportunities to develop their skills depending on the mutual interaction and the strong response arising from them. The emotional hegemony of poems on learners through the themes they tackle encourage them to contemplate on their private experiences and, at last, try to own them. Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806- 1861) in "Life and Death" depicts her own experiences with darkness at the beginning of her life before she meets Robert Browning and loves him then marries him. She says:

Fast this Life of mine was dying,
Blind already and calm as death,
Snowflakes on her bosom lying
Scarcely heaving with her breath. (Buckley 395)

She considers sickness as death as it paralyzes her hopes in life
And hinders activeness at an early age when she is supposed to be productive and prolific on all scales. Students observe the fine grammatical structure of the lines as the poet brings the adverb of manner forward in order to strike on the idea of transience of this

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material life. So is the case with "Blind" in the second line with which she emphasizes blindness of her early life before she experiences love with her would be husband. It was not long until this condition is superseded by hope and light as

Love came by, and having known her
In a dream of fabled lands,
Gently stooped, and laid upon her
Mystic chrism of holy lands;

Drew his smile across her folded
Eyelids, as the swallow dips;
Breathed as finely as the cold did
Through the locking of her lips. (Buckley 395)

In their explicit and implicit implications, the lines indicate the fine and accurate treatment of Elizabeth's relationship to an extent she imparts to it sanctity and holiness as love comes nearer and lays upon her "Mystic chrism of holy lands". This long sentence which consists of two stanzas encourages students to be much attentive to the use of punctuation marks as the poet tries to elaborate by using the comma, then she moves to the use of the semi-colon in order to mention the merits that love did to change her life. But learners- deep learners- absorb in asking about the conclusion of that experience. Such a state of mind consolidates the idea of thinking more than reading. In the last stanza the poet sets the answer in a question preceded by a premise by saying:

So, when life looked upward, being
Warmed and breathed on from above,
What sight could she have for seeing,
Evermore . . . but only love? (Buckley 395)

Elizabeth Barrett Browning signals at the divine management in her life by putting an end to her sufferings. She emphasizes love as the only thing she has to look at and embrace in exchange of that favour. In other words, her love should extend to include all directions gushing from all parts of her soul. With this inclusion and conclusion of emotional and spiritual tendencies, students can mix informative knowledge with their emotional and spiritual one and come up with a vivid sensational learning that gives them progression and prosperity.

THE WOULD BE TEACHER AND METHODOLOGY

Education is a complicated process which entails different modes on the part of the teacher to meet the needs of students especially in teaching a foreign language and a highly free, creative and inspirational activity as poetry. Poets do their best to make ordinary things extraordinary and familiar things unfamiliar, and to divulge the hidden beauty by the rhythmical arrangement of words which gives them a special magical taste. So, in order not to make poetry a printed material on a page, teachers must be efficient enough to transform the images of the poem depicted by its writer to new ones that have a vital resonance in the student's imagination. As a significant and a lively domain in life and cultures of all nations, Sue Dymoke confirms that:

If you leave poetry on the page in your classroom
you will be in danger of sounding its death knell: It
is an organic, enriching communication tool, which
taps into all our senses and is constantly renewing
and reinventing itself to afford us new ways to
express ourselves... If poetry is to flourish in any
future English curriculum and in your classroom
and if you are to flourish as a creative English
teacher, then you should embrace the multimodal
experiences poetry can offer. (qtd. in Xerri 509)

In such a case, poetry is divine for it came to existence sufficient as opposed to other fields. All other fields develop with the process of time but poetry is as it is and more. It originates from all senses. So, whenever and whatever you read poetry you feel that it expresses your own feeling and emotion and you are the center of the action. A very important factor that helps fulfill the aim is the time of the lecture. It is recommended for intermediate and secondary stages that there are to be additional lectures specified for teaching poetry. In this respect it becomes possible to tackle a poem that can have the points discussed throughout a week of study.

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With regard to teaching, the teacher is recommended to be a source of creation and vitality. His job is to make them enjoy and entertain the poem he intends to read by attracting their attention to the main objectives behind poetry reading. Poems should be recited appropriately by using different movements, gestures and facial expressions. That is achieved much by memorizing the poem under discussion to become possible for him to be in a perpetual contact and interaction with his students so that he can guess what problems they encounter throughout the experience as far as the understanding of the poem is concerned. Becoming familiar with the teacher means to digest sense, meaning and structure of the poem and, ultimately, the main aims intended to be conveyed.

In "The Little Boy Lost", a poem from the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, William Blake depicts a little child warns his father not to walk quickly; otherwise, he will be lost. Instead of the father's reply, the child goes alone in a deep mire and, as soon as he weeps, the fog scatters and something good is probably going to take place. The little child shouts:

"Father! Father! Where are you going?
O do not walk so fast.
Speak, father, speak to your little boy,
Or else I shall be lost." (qtd. in Zamani 36)

Although the meaning of the poem is far and deep, William Blake uses simple words and simple sentences as far as the age of the speaker is concerned. He gives precedence to innocence as it is the title of the collection. He uses different parts of speech in this stanza. He initiates the first part with a question in the present continuous followed by primitive expressions which aim to attract the father's attention. In addition, the lines are confined by two quotation marks for they are the speaker's exact words. Then the situation turns to include another speaker. He relates that:

The night was dark, no father was there;
The child was wet with dew;
The mire was deep, & the child did weep,
And away the vapour flew. (qtd. in Zamani 36)

The tense of the verb becomes the past and the speaker seems to be the reader. The only grammatical difference in the whole poem is given to "away" whose true place is after "flew". Such a peculiarity in structure should be explained and clarified by the teacher which gives aesthetic value to the line in which it occurs. Then students begin to repeat the lines after their teacher in an exact rhyme and rhythm. This repetition enables them to be familiar with the material of the poem and finally they use these information in their conversations with one another on the spur of the moment. It can be added that chanting is the best way to make students in contact with poetry and its data.

After students memorize the poem which is only an eight lines one they begin to ask about the child's condition after he is left behind by the father. Someone would ask: Is this an innocence or an experience song? So students begin to realize the importance of poetry in their lives in general and their personalities in particular. This student- critic stage came as a result of looking deeply into the social structure of the characters of the poem with reference to the bigger one of society, evaluating the situation from a sociological and psychological vantage point, then identifying the personal feelings with the father's and the boy's.

The above pages demonstrated that poetry pedagogy is vivid and vital in developing students' linguistic abilities and personal experiences. In addition it helps promote their own introspection in any environmental and societal incident and even when dealing with other fields of knowledge other than poetry. Poetry can play the role of a catalyst in accelerating reactions for the purpose that they give positive effects as far as the educational process is concerned. It is useful for all levels for it goes hammer and tongs to pick up students from extrinsic to intrinsic knowledge. At last, poetry has a magical power to strengthen familial and societal ties for it gives precedence to inner introspection as the main source of comprehension.

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