

A Few Actual (typos and all) Posts About Poetry

A: Last week we all had to find a definition of poetry. Most of the definitions that people sent in stated that poetry had more to do about the emotion it invoked rather than the dictionary definition of the form and structure of a poem. Now that we are starting the poetry section of the class, we have to analyze and over-analyze and then re-analyze, taking every word and analyzing it by itself, something that we've been doing ever since grade 1. Now... if we analyze and over-analyze and then re-analyze, what feeling or emotion is left of the original poem? In over-analyzing, we have stretched the words to find a meaning to the poem that perhaps the poet didn't even think of him/herself. If we do that then it defeats the whole purpose of poetry. The only emotion that we are left with is either confusion, annoyance or dissatisfaction. To me, poetry is about the initial emotion.

B: Poetry has never really been my strong point, probably because it is completely raw, leaves you vulnerable, revealing reality not what we necessarily want to see. We interpret it as a reflection of our own values and beliefs. An example is Emily Dickinson's, "The bee and his burnished carriage". The way in which I interpreted it was a negative portrayal of the relationship between a man and a woman; one could go as far as saying this was the description of a rape. The image I got from reading it was men are similar to hunters and women are the gatherers/nurturers. That human nature is for men to chase woman and dispose of them when they have "caught" the prey and the woman is expected to accept this. This is extremely negative and I am sure there is a much more positive outlook on it; just this was the first image which came to mind.

C: I agree with Sophie. By analysing a poem and reading it over and over, we "destroy" the initial effect and emotion that the poet wanted to transmit through his/her poem. I think, the initial effect that a poem has on us is the most important and the "truest". A poem is suppose to reflect emotions, so the most important part of a poem is between the lines. An analyse focuses our attention on the lines, instead of between them. Therefore we feel less and less the feeling that is supposed to be felt.

P.S: maybe we could understand more a poem if we analyse it a little, but certainly not over-analyse it, word by word.

D: The problem is not that we analyse every word over and over again, because each and every word could have several hidden meanings that could be interpreted in different ways and that could change the entire poem.

The problem is such : firstly, with most poems, no matter how many times we read a poem and how many hours we spend studying it, we can never be completely sure of the original meaning the author sought to make us understand. Secondly, the significance of a poem is something that is very personal, two people reading a poem could understand very different things. That is why we should analyse poems to find the different meanings and feelings they can reveal to us, but we shouldn't impose our understanding of a poem to others, because that ruins it for them.

This made me think of the quote :

"Poetry is so vital to us until school spoils it." -**Russell Baker**

That is exactly what school does, they impose on us a meaning for a poem that could possibly have an endless amount of meanings and thus remove all the magic from the poetry.

E: I personally hate poetry because I'm not very good at finding out what the author is trying to tell us... Therefore, when you don't understand the poem, it's not very interesting! I mean, some

poems are really obvious but others are quite complicated to understand and there can be so many ways to interpret a poem. Some people like that but I prefer when things are clear.

F: I was just curious to know if there are any poets within our classroom. I myself write occasionally and I was just curious to know if any others do, and what ideas or thoughts do you have on poetry. What's your inspiration to write? Why poetry? Whether you are an amateur or a professional writer, there has to be something behind it. We can't exactly ask Dickenson, so what's wrong with another poets opinion?

G: I suppose i semi-agree with what Anna's saying about not enjoying poetry if you can't understand it, but that is why i find it all the more interesting that we study it in english with our classmates. It helps reveal all the meanings, and different interpretations where otherwise we would be completely lost! This way we have a complete new found appreciation for poetry, and possibly can become interested in creating our own. Because i find (personally, and so it seems from all the definitions) that poetry is extremely related to emotions, everyone at some point is probably able to create their own poetry from their own experiences. The only problem is that we often don't see this as an outlet. Hopefully this presentation, and working with our group, will help us to realize this and possibly enjoy poetry/musical lyrics a great deal more.

H: Hi! Ive read a lot of the discussion forums about poetry and I must say I'm one of the few that like it. Many say that they hate overanalyzing and I think they're right. I think poetry is nothing analytical..it's just a way of expressing emotions, just like music. It's true that a lot of them are really complicated and hard to understand and maybe that's why we tend to analyze each word to get some meaning. Yet, I think it's the first impression and emotion while reading the poem that we should keep. Maybe poems are not made to be understood because no one will ever be able to say exactly the emotion conveyed, except the author of the poem. Anyway people who already wrote a bit of poetry just for fun know that words are just tools for deeper thoughts. The only person who will ever know they're true meaning is you! So for me poetry is something really personal. Good luck to all of those who present on tuesday!! 😊

I: That is the image/emotion Dickinson wanted us to see/feel apparently, it is a very negative image of relationships and maybe there isn't a more positive outlook hidden in the poem. That doesn't mean relationships are like that, it just means that is how Emily Dickinson felt at the time, maybe things weren't going great for her relationship wise, maybe she felt that, like in the poem, she was being used, and we have to remember the time in which this was written, things were different between men and women : women couldn't do much if they were in a bad relationship and were in a way the prey of men. When we interpret a poem, we have to not only think of it with our values, beliefs and background, but try to look at it with the author's values, beliefs and overall background.