

Motivated for the Cause

By R.S. Pearson

Preface

I would like to find a way through my writing to save the true spirit of poetry by what I call the anti-novel. I didn't invent the term anti-novel, but it is seldom heard. It basically means a literary form that has none of the conventions of the novel (a definition from Webster). In a best-case scenario, excitement about the novelty of the word "anti-novel" would sell copies of poetic books, and thus give poetry more of a chance of becoming popular. The anti-novel can read like a novel, but it elicits a *ponderance* of statements that is usually only reserved for poetry. These books can be actually composed of poetry, but poetry that has been taken out of verse form and put into paragraphs.

Fusing poetic language into prose gives us not just the benefit of both, but a synergy. This prose can even be rewritten as non-fiction essays in new vital

directions. For those not aware of the extraordinary value of poetry, I suggest looking at the theory of the Romantics such as Novalis. Poetry used to have the value that disciplines like psychology has today, and it was often like a religion to the people. We face a time today when fewer and fewer people read poetry. Often the lyrics of the modern music we listen to have restricted subject matters. Some believe poetry is in a sad state, because of the lack of sales of books by serious poets. By hiding our poetry in the form of the novel, we may begin to rescue poetry, and in some way, rescue and enhance some of the best in society.

From age to age, the documents we pass on from generation to generation are very different in the literary forms they morph into. Even poetry can be said to be ten different literary forms within the one form known as "verse." The dialogs, such as those of Plato, are in a way a literary form unique for us, passed down twenty-five hundred years. The speeches of political leaders change in rhetoric and the formats they use over time. Who is to say because anti-novels seem so unusual today that they will not resemble a standard literary form in the future? This form seems to strip artifice away from the conventions of fiction and non-fiction alike. And there is always non-fiction in our fiction: each novelist is a philosopher of life. In such a form as the anti-novel, this novelist or poet as philosopher is given a free reign.

We should look for writing that is really outside the realm of what is currently popular. Most are somehow fitting into the popular fashion, except a very small core of yearning and experimental souls. To those exposed to the experimental in art and have a valuation of traditional spiritual values, there is no charm for ideas that seem to lead so many to an early death or their vague disempowerment. Many experimental artists are too late to be shocking, thinking that by exploring obscenity, blasphemy, misanthropy, or addiction they are making some kind of statement. Sadly, this artistic statement was made over 125 years ago and has been made far too often since then. We need something to free the spirit again, not paint portraits of the spirit in shackles.