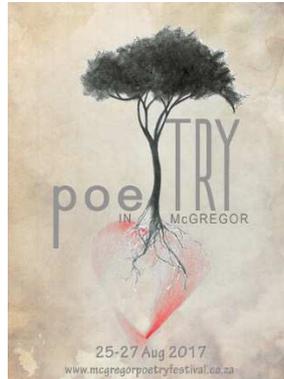


The Taste of Poetry

A Presentation by Peter Vinton



Synopsis of Presentation:

In the modern era of marketing, we often refer to the “personality” of a brand. With the proliferation of television programmes dedicated to cooking, taste has taken on a new importance in popular culture. And when a wine connoisseur describes the taste of a wine, they use colourful and very emotively descriptive terms to describe the experience.

Poetry, as a genre of creative art is no different to tasting a fine wine. It transcends sensory barriers and the experience of the poetry reader is no different than when sharing a great meal or a great wine. Similarly, as a total sensory experience, are we able to describe the “taste” of a poem or indeed of poetry? Peter Vinton attempts, with this presentation, to begin to build a “taste vocabulary” for poetry.

Peter takes the audience through a journey where lovers of poetry can begin to build their own “vocabulary” of the sensory experience that writing or reading poetry brings. He argues that unless, as a poet, you are able to awaken the same sensory brain centres as does a great wine or other deep sensory experience, a poet’s work may not be as broadly accepted as hoped for.

Peter makes the presentation an interactive session by inviting and facilitating debate around the ability of poetry to elicit the same sensory experiences that we typically find with other taste sensations, and even from the so-called “sin products.” This is a fun presentation aimed at stimulating thinking around the building of a comprehensive “taste vocabulary” for poetry. Because it is so enjoyable, we may even find that poetry is potentially classified as a “sin product.”

Presentation Notes:

The Taste of Poetry

We are told that we live in a “consumer” society. And the modern enterprise see us simply as consumers of their products. One of the products or services that we consume is media. Very few people go through their day without consuming some form of media or another.

- As poets, we have a message. And we want that message “consumed” by our readers. In my Workshop on Emotiverse I detailed how important brevity is to allow our audience to access and assimilate our material. Especially if we want the message to be consumed over many “devices.”
- And that is how the “Taste of Poetry” was born. Our audience likes to consume something that is to their taste. If they like the taste, they will come back for more.
- Exercise: Taste Test. Let’s taste something and try and describe the taste of it.
 - What are the dominant tastes? Sweet, bitter, minty?
 - Describe in one sentence the “taste” of what you have tasted.
 - Example – “*Sweet nectar tantalising my taste buds.*” Or “*Bitter sweet surprise.*”
- We live in an era where food is such an important part of our daily lives. It has spawned television shows such as Nigella Lawson, Jamie Oliver (and many, many others) as well as “cooking programmes” such as My Kitchen Rules and so many more.
- In these programmes, the judges are presented with a plated dish, prepared by some aspiring chef. Contestants are scored on presentation and taste. Have you noticed how the judges go into fine detail about the tastes they are experiencing and the taste centres it unlocks.
- Poetry is no different. Our consumers also want to “taste” our poetry.
 - Does your poetry tantalise their senses?
 - Can the reader “taste” the emotion?
 - And, remember, too much of one component can ruin a dish. Similarly, too much of one raw emotion may also ruin your poem.
 - If you rooted your poetry in your heart, can the reader taste that heart, served with fried onions and a side salad? That is poetry!
 - If not, then you are missing the mark with a bland offering.
- Poetry-Wine or Poetry-Whiskey Pairing.
 - Which wine or Whiskey goes best with your poetry?
 - Can your reader settle in with your poetry and enjoy a taste experience complemented by the wine or Whiskey?

- This shows us very clearly that “angry poetry” tastes like a burnt offering and we cannot expect our readers to find it palatable.
 - Homer’s Odyssey is best served with a heavily-peated (full-bodied) Whiskey or an aged red wine with a woody taste.
 - Let’s discuss.
 - Peter Vinton’s Odyssey is best served with a lightly-peated, ocean breeze scented Whiskey or lighter-style wine. Or, then again, the more tempestuous verses need something with more fortitude!
- Word-choice and word-order are essential components to adding flavour to your poetry.
- Exercise:
 - Write one Stanza describing a deep emotion. E.g. love / anger / betrayal / etc. in words that describing taste.
 - Example – *“The bitter grapes of wrath flooded through me...”*
 - Example – *“The sweet nectar of his love soothed my parched soul....”*
 - Non-example – *“I was very happy to see him / I was very angry with her for...”*
- The above has taken you through a number of techniques for crafting your poetry to impart a distinct taste. And like Jamie Oliver, it has to be unique.
 - “Emotiverse, quite simply, is poetry where you can taste the emotion. It is clear and not ambiguous.
- Exercise:
 - Can you add tastes to your own poetry? Which tastes? E.g. love / betrayal / sweet / etc.
 - Give us some examples – *“The bitter grapes of wrath flooded through me...”*
- Discussion:
 - How do we allow our readers to “taste” the emotion, the pain, the ecstasy and everything in-between in our poetry?
 - Without it being “angry poetry”
 - Will Rhyme allow us more freedom in readers being able to taste our poetry?

Thank you for attending this session and I wish you every success with your own work.

Peter Vinton.