

# IMPORTANCE OF WALKING IN CREATING POETRY

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## Abstract

Walking is an exercise, for mind and body. But in the modern times walking has confined to a mere physical exercise to keep away from ailments like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. But walking is an art which can not only reduce weight and belly but also can produce marvellous poetry. Walking with active senses, open mind, with sensitivity and sensibility, can evoke thoughts, feelings, emotions, and imagination, inspired by the elegance of nature. It enables man to observe and contemplate on both nature and society. Depending upon the environment of walking and the mental and manual manifestations of the poet different genres of poetry takes its birth. In the post-modern era, there is a need to redefine and rejuvenate both poetry and walking, and to explore the scope of productive mind in the process of walking.

This paper focuses on the influence of walking in poetry and how mind involves in the birth of a poem.

**Keywords:** walking, Poetry, experiences, poetic creation

## 1.0 Paper

Walking is an exercise for mind and body. Modern world is much concerned about the act of walking. Doctors and health specialists advocate and encourage walking as it helps men to be fit and healthy and to keep aloof from ailments like high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, and other innumerable diseases caused by obesity, caged life and uncontrollable diet. The fast-food culture and the materialist attitude towards life ruined man's body and 'bestowed' him with innumerable diseases and ailments which enslaved them to walking. With the prescription and advice of the doctors and proper involvement of the health specialists, walking developed as an essential part of life, both as a precaution and a curative method for diseases. With the development of science information technology enslaved men to be labourers for amassing money neglecting and exploiting his body. This resulted in the degradation of health and the dependence on walking. Those who walk are only concerned about the level of cholesterol, blood pressure and diabetes. Thus walking confined to an exercise concentrating only on individual's body and its wellbeing.

But walking is an art. The modern concept about walking is confined to body alone. But walking is not merely a physical exercise. The benefits of walking must not be confined to the body alone. The mind must also be benefited from the act of walking. Modern day walking is devoid of thoughts, feelings and emotions. The thoughts are only on the amount of sweating, loss of weight and belly and the speed of walking. But walking with active senses and an open mind with sensitivity and sensibility can evoke thoughts, feelings, emotions and imagination to produce poetry. It is a fact that poetic creation is impossible without experiences. For creating literature "... authors cannot rely only on imagination. Direct or indirect experience of ... reality is a must" (45). The vast amount of experience collected from the act walking can be blended with imagination to produce poetry. The raw materials for poetry and experiences can be collected from walking. Thomas Traherne's poem *Walking* discusses the bliss of experiences and intimacy with nature in the act of walking. "To walk abroad is, not with eyes,/But thoughts, the fields to see and prize;" (Traherne)

Walking provides the first-hand experience, which helps much in the production of poetry. "A man is walking. He moves from one place to another, following a path that is always the path of least action. Note here that

poetry would be impossible if it were confined to the rule of the straight line” (Valery 207). The first-hand experience is very important in the production of poetry as it will be pure without any malpractices and will make an imprint on the mind of the poet which will remain for a long time. Travelling by vehicles and riding also give experiences but walking provides the time to stand and contemplate on the situation or the particular experience from both the nature and society. Walking also enables to feel, to enjoy, and to think on both sorrows and happiness, inspired from nature and society.

Depending upon the environment of walking and the mental and manual manifestations of the poet different genres of poetry takes its birth. The environment of walking can be rustic or urban. It is evident that romantic poetry benefits much from the rural or rustic walking. The rural background provides the best raw material for the romantic and nature poets. The first-hand experience helps to feel, touch, and smell the elements of nature. Bare foot walking helps to feel the ground and the earth. The poet can enjoy the kiss of the earth and the softness of the meadows, the scratches and the itches from the bushes, the plants and the spines which gives the painful pleasure. The poet can feel the softness of the flowers with the enchanting fragrance from the breeze from the gardens, bushes and fields. The colour of the flowers and the beauty of the nature can be copied by the poet as a raw material for his poetic creation. The insects and the small animals and their disturbances like the spider web on the way of walking gives the pleasure of enjoying the essence of nature. The hot sunbeams and the rainfall with the rainbow, the caress of the breeze in the morning and the evenings, the moonlit sky with sprinkled stars- all gives inspiration for a romantic poet. Walking not only helps the Romantic poets to portray nature but also to feel the existence of a force which controlled the nature.

The experiences from nature and society help the poet not only to depict the joyous experience but also to portray the pathetic conditions of the individual. The sensuousness of Keats and love for nature in Wordsworth is impossible without walking and first hand experiences. The analysis of the poems of the great poet Robert Frost proves that he cannot produce marvellous poems like the *Mending wall*, *The Road not Taken*, *Stopping by the Woods in the Snowy Evening* without the help of walking. The diverging of the road and the minute and peculiar aspects of the wall in his poems can be analysed on foot.

The benefit of walking is not only confined to the Romantic poetry. It can also produce Realistic poetry. The bliss of meeting men and to have physical contact through shake hands and hugging enables the poet to develop intimacy with individuals and there by sharing the joys and sorrows and to realise the ebb and flow of human conditions. The act of touching increases the intimacy between the individual to read their mind which is precious experience for a poet. The pleasure of meeting men and matters while walking and talking with them relieves and purifies the mind. The sorrows of the mind decrease or diminish and the happiness increases when they are shared in person. The development of science and technology made men to talk from distant places which lacked intimacy. But the poet can benefit more from the meeting and mingling of walking. The experiences with men of different ages and different social, economic and intellectual strata gives the poet different experience. Walking gives the knowledge about the society and practical wisdom which will be away from the reach of the mainstream. So the poet can experience the true life through walking.

Urban walking provides a different kind of “social experience” for the poet (Di Martino 77). There he can witness the pomp of the rich with luxury cars emanating gases to pollute the nature. The hustle and bustle of the busy roads, with men and machines, the irritating smell from the open drainages and pollutants from the factories, the materialistic selfish attitude of the youth and business men in the ivory towers neglecting the hardships of the poor, the flat culture and caged life of the children without emotion, the greedy exploitative mind towards the nature and fellow beings devoid of human values- all this experiences from the urban walking help the poet to realise the difference between the urban and rural men .

The picture of the poor working class in the road sides and the buildings make the poet to realise the sweet sweat of labour and their toil to make both ends meet. The workers in the manholes cleaning human waste and their pathetic conditions will definitely shake the mind of the poet to produce poetry. The conflicts and clashes in the roads and streets and the accidents makes the poet to respond through poetry on the condition of human life and his role in the mortal world.

It is a fact that with the diminishing of Romanticism the literary world had shifted from the mind to the brain. Literature confined to an academic endeavour where the laity had little role in it. The birth of *The Wasteland* and the movements like Structuralism, Deconstruction, New criticism, Formalism kept literature away from the common men. The act of walking can change this condition as the poets and the literary figures can analyse the

human life better and he can be a 'man speaking to men'. The problems of the downtrodden and the laity can be put forward to the mainstream with walking.

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