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## Editor's Note

Dear Readers and Contributors,

Welcome to the first issue of the fifth year.

We have in literature section, interesting articles on various texts ranging from *The Colour Purple* to *Hullabaloo in Guava Orchard* and films ranging from Bollywood's *Vivaah* to Hollywood's *Harry Potter*. The reading goes from articles on science fiction to the animated film, and a personal favourite *Wall -E*. The language teaching section has articles of using music to teach phonetics, using folk tales and using traditional techniques for language acquisition.

We always call it a rollercoaster ride!

Happy Reading and Sharing!

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju  
Chief & Founding Editor



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## ENGLISH CREATIVE SECTION

### Straight from a Daughter's Heart

*Ansulika Paul*

Every time I look into the mirror,

I see an image behind.

A love supreme,

A shadow very well defined.

I am the very being of you.

You in everything I do,

You in everything I am,

And you in everything I will be.

You are so prominent in my life,

My very existence is through you.

As you nurtured, loved and fussed over me,

You brought me more alive.

You are my King,

You are perfect,

You are definite,

And now you are absolutely infinite.

You are my father,

You are my love that will never die,

You will live forever in me to the extreme of the sky.



## **My Relationship with 'Thakur'!**

**Rimni Chakravarty**

Since four and a half decade 'am in this beautiful planet called 'Earth', where every day, early morning I wake up by the twittering of the birds. Music slowly stirred my soul as these harbingers of dawn entertained me with their songs which I can never understand, but feel the gush of love that spread my whole being and still now when I listen to the birds pouring out the music I jump out from my bed. Music is my passion and I am grateful to these birds who I perceive await for the night to end and welcome the gorgeous sun that arises majestically on the eastern horizon to flood every home, streets with light all over. Going down the memory lane I visualize a small girl of five or may be six jumped up from the bed as the music of chirping birds forced her up to lay down. All she knew was to rush to her mother and express her joy when sang the birds .Her mother was nowhere. She ran from one room to the other 'Ma...Ma where are you?' Her father would get concerned why early morning the daughter is looking for her mother? May be she is feeling uneasy? Why she is bare footed and dressed only in a half sleeves frock made out of thin linen? If she catches cold as it is early morning and the cool breeze blows not comfortable for a child? She will surely catch cold and start sneezing? Her father usually woke up early morning to enjoy his bed tea and begin the day with a pen and a writing pad where poured out at length about the daily affairs that touched Siliguri and the other districts of North Bengal. Her father was a staff correspondent by profession in a leading Bengali news daily all over India as well as Bangladesh and even in UK, USA where the *prabasi* Bengalis smell their motherland when touch the news daily he belonged whole heartedly.

The small girl who I visualize is me after so many years, memories remain so intact and fresh; every morning with the chirping of the birds I felt a new lease of life and was overjoyed at it which yearned to share with *Ma* as soon as I could. *Ma* for me resembled the Goddess Durga who was so beautiful and powerful, very energetic and warm. I knew she would have been in two places: garden plucking flowers for her daily worship humming the songs of kali or in the prayer room where the fragrance of the incense and the burning of the lamp provide an ambience of divinity in every corner. A small girl of five knew nothing of life or death only knew her mother very strong and powerful as she is blessed by kali. The little girl that is me and I always loved to hug ma whenever she sat for meditation. 'ki go ma ki karo'? *Ma* would at first show the signs of annoyance, but actually she with a smile used to tell me '*amar sona ma, age puja ta kori tarpor prasad diye tomake adar karbo.*' Yes the fruits delighted me which *ma* distributed as 'prasad' after she blew the conch shell. My mother would weave garland for her gurudev Paramahansa Sri Ramkrishna and sing '*khandana bhabo bandhana jaga vandana vandi tomay...*' I never understood the meaning of the song, only felt *Ma* can sing so well. My *Baba* never worshipped Thakur as he had his own set of values. Many times both *Ma and Baba* would engage in a debate regarding the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Were they quarrelling or just for the sake of fun engage in argument and that too connected with Thakur and his philosophy! I could not understand their intellectual discussions, but very subtly my parents introduced me to his holiness Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa and his consort Sreema or Sarodamoni along with their devoted disciple Swami Vivekananda for whom my *Baba* had enough reverence. She often used to talk to me of the ideals



of srima's who urged the followers to worship '*mone, bone, kone.*' I think now at the age of 45 I can little bit understand how one should worship in silence. One can find the Almighty in every atom of the creation who is a bondless joy where can find solace to sleep in eternity.

However I am very ordinary, so lose connectivity very often. As a result from the worldly mind engulfed by the dark clouds springs unrest, sadness. Tears flow down the cheeks very often as my ignorance float on the surface, borne out of desires that find obstruction, pride gets hurt and anger steals the knowledge, then the depression and time is wasted in laziness. These are all diseases that turn me away from the path of light to the dark where I grovel. I meet death as die every moment My eyes burn, heart swells up and helpless I stand in front of the large photo frame of *Thakur* set in the wall for healing my wounds receive from the society I live or exist? I don't know. My parents have left me forever. They have evaporated from this earth to the large cosmos. Their memories haunt me and every moment I am tormented by their everlasting absence which has to endure till the time I breathe my last. When will that day come? Now? No I cannot die in this way. Rather a thought spring within me which would like to share with them who love *Thakur*? I wish had *Thakur* showered his blessings and guide me to pour out the music that is hidden within me to the world and leave in a dignified manner.

I am 45 and still in the period of celibacy. Society is very inquisitive of me; no friends no relatives, no husband, no boyfriend! In recent one of my colleagues advised me '*aeka achen? Biye ta shere phelun?*' He meant to say to marry soon just like going out for a shopping to purchase goods. How can I make others understand that a lady who wants to lead a dignified life can never go out into the matrimonial market and wish to get sold to the highest bidder or vice versa? She used to tell me '*purbe nari urbe chai tabei narir gun gai.*' She meant that a woman is endorsed only after her ashes fly into the five components of nature after death. She was very true. My single-dom will not allow me to be appreciated in this world and I therefore prostrate before *Thakur* to take care of me. Destiny had offered me to select either of the two: wedding bells or education. I chose the latter and was satisfied that my mother supported me. My father on the other hand grew furious. He cursed me: '*tor kichu habe na.ami na thake sheyal kukur toke khabe.*' My father was a bit mistaken I did not find the jackals or foxes; the dogs on the other hand reciprocate love by wagging their tails. It is the human beings who goes at length to derive sadistic pleasure by inflicting pain on others when in this modern society full of electronic gadgets flooding the market people have ample time to utilize their energy as they don't have to sweat much. Every woman wants a happy home with a loving, caring husband, children who would bring name to their parents and make them proud. I too was no different as a woman.

But again I say destiny is not the same. Once upon a time was *jagatjanani* for my parents and later for my father was hopeless, but for Ma I always remained her precious jewel. Ten years back on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2005 my father left. Maybe he has been assigned by the Almighty for some other work and hence he had to part. Our family triangle broke Ma became crestfallen as a widow parting with the vermilion and her conch bangles life became meaningless for her. Finally within ten years of my father's demise Ma left me forever on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015. She was not only my mother but my best buddy, friend philosopher and guide who showed me how to bear the endless



suffering and pain to reach God. My mother had a sharp memory, but she forgot my pet name during her last stay. She never used to rest for a while, yet became paralyzed before she parted. So neat and clean she was, yet bed sores struck her whole being! I wish had been a medical student, but alas only ran helter skelter to the doctors in vain. Our family physician Dr S.K Sharma only told me these are the symptoms of the last stage which doctors can do nothing. Dr Sharma understood my feelings, tried his best to make me face reality 'why don't you understand? This is her last stage. She has lost her productivity. You just have to take care. That's all.' Still I could not bear to see my Ma suffer. I went to other doctors underwent all the tests as advised yet no hope to see my mother arise and hug me All I could is to stand in front of the photo frame of *Thakur* and worship or rather plead him either cure my *Ma* or take her away in his heart. It was unbearable for me to see my mother suffer. Or rather I suffered to see such a miserable plight. At times became very angry with *Thakur* 'Why will my Ma suffer such pains? Why will she leave in such an undignified manner? Why will the guru not take care of his disciple? No I don't have the answers.

Finally, in front of the large photo frame of *Thakur*, *Ma* breathed her last. The earth within an hour trembled under the feet. It was earth quake outside as also within me. I will never listen to my ma calling out my name, can never talk to her, hug her, and kiss her. Moments have faded away, but the memories have stayed back. My *Ma* was very fond of srima. She told me srima's thoughts '*apana te theko mon jeyo nako mon karo ghare*'. I realize better to stay confined within my boundaries and know it *Ma* also discussed with me what *Thakur* says '*pakal macher matan chalo*'. My father would get cross when *Ma* had suggested him to accept the theory of the '*pakal mach*'. My father believed in attachment in his opinion one must perform his duties whole heartedly and feel comradeship with all. He believed in the theory of '*vasudeve kutumbukam*'. *Ma* on the other hand believed one should maintain a distance when we interact with others. It is not that we will ignore them, but never get so close that receive pains afterwards as we expect from our dear ones that may be harmful for ourselves.

I blindly copied my father and wanted to be like him in every respect. No not a typical Bengali lady, but a global citizen who would know the unknown and see the unseen to be matured and graceful in every respect. At this juncture when have lost my vitality, my hair turns grey vision gets marred realize had I practiced detachment would have been much better. I would not have fallen in love nor would have lost.

I have not taken any *diksha*; that is to say no sacred ceremony of attaining guidance from a spiritual leader or a guru. So thought the photo frame of Sri Ramkrishna Paramahansa would better be with the monks of Ram Krishna ashram where devotees throng in thousands. But on the day of my *Ma's shraddh* ceremony I perceived the call of my soul not to part away with *thakur's* photo frame ,but this frame is my only guide, seer, friend with whom I communicate all alone and detoxify myself. The sky of my mind gets clear, where luminous clouds like patches of white cotton sail through the blue glistening with the radiant sunshine. My mind travels on the vast stretches of the lush green as the catkins blossom and the drum beaters welcome the arrival of the Goddess to remove all the sorrows from our lives. She spreads a celestial light after a dark period of '*amabasya*' or a no moon night. As I write remember the Rabindra Sangeet "'*andhakarer*



*utsa hote utsarito aalo.shei to tomar aalo...shab phuralei baki rahe adrisha jei dan shei to tomar daan ...sabai niye sabar majhe lukie acho tumi shei to amar tumi” The song goes on to say: “O the Divine! From the debris of darkness emits the light which is you...after everything ends up perceive an unseen grant which is from only you.”*



## ENGLISH LITERATURE

### Truncated Gender in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

E. Anita

'Womanism' is a feminist term coined by Alice Walker. She suggests in her definitions of 'Womanism' that, the 'womanist' or black woman is stronger and superior to the feminist or white woman. As Walker says,

*A 'womanist' is to feminist as purple is to lavender (qtd. in Ray 90).*

She refers primarily to African-American women, but also for women in general. Johnson remarks,

*Womanism precedes feminism in its external manifestations because it advocates a state of being that is natural to women unlike feminism which is contrived and forcefully assertive (27).*

'Womanish' is a term which is commonly used in the daily language of black by their mother's to describe their daughter who acts usually outrageous audacious, courageous, or wilful behaviour and grown-up, in contrast to 'girlish'. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered good for one.

Walker defines womanism as,

*A woman who loves women, sexually and or non-sexually. Committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally Universalists as in "Mama, why are we brown, pink and yellow and our cousins are white beige and black? (qtd. in King 238-239),*

She further explains that the term would be need to express the "spiritual and the concrete and it would have to be organic, characteristic, not simply applied. A word that said more than that they choose women over men . . . than that they choose to live separate from men". The word would also affirm "connectedness to the entire community and the world" (qtd. in King 234).

The slave black women are not given proper medical care. This is because black women are assumed to be less fragile; who give birth easily and therefore they need less care than white women. Both men and women are made to work hard on plantations. There is no distinction as woman's work or so. Women are made to work like men. By the end of the nineteenth century numerous clubs and organizations are found, to support woman suffrage and gave priority to social and political issues that affects black community as well as black women specifically. But the condition of the black women remains the same. They face problem of sexism within their own community and racism on the whole. So the 'womanist' has put in great efforts to change this condition of black women in their community. Molaria Ogundipe Leslie, a self proclaimed womanist, explicates three main features of womanism,

*Firstly there are three operational flora for womanism and these are the home, the work place and the society; secondly, the motivation for self-expression and independence lies in the quest for fundamental human rights; and thirdly love underlines the interest in the fundamental rights as well as the interactions at home, in the work place and in the society at large. (qtd. in Johnson 31)*



Womanism addresses the racist and classist aspects of white feminism and actively opposes separatist ideologies. The 'womanist' include the word 'man' by recognizing that black men are an integral part of black women's lives as their children, lovers, and family members. The black women serve as tool for understanding their relationship to men which is different from the white woman's accounts and in many ways the black women's support and empower black men. Womanism is unique because it does not necessarily imply any political position or value system other than the honouring of black women's strength and experiences.

Walker's use of black 'womanist' consciousness is characterized in this novel, *The Color Purple* by sexual, racial, cultural, national, economic and political considerations. Use of womanism is clear from the way Walker has sketched the character of Celie. She is a black girl who suffers from self scorn, learns to love her and other black men and women. Also, Celie becomes aware of the 'womanist' tradition of self-reliance and self-esteem. This character is shown in her last letters to Nettie. When Mr. Albert transforms his character and offers to reunite with Celie, she refuses his offer with calm, which happens to be her new acquisition, and offers him friendship, the best that she can give him. As Celie says,

*And then, just when I know I can live content without Shug, just when Mr. – done ast me to marry him again, this time in spirit as well as in the flesh, and just after I say Naw, ... but let's us be friends, ... (CP 230-240).*

King expresses,

*Celie and Albert learn to coexist as friends without interacting sexually (239).*

This reflects Walker's desire to project a positive outcome in life, even under the harshest conditions. Her central character triumphs over adversity and forgives those who have oppressed her. Celie thus celebrates her own genuine and real black 'womanist' self by liberating herself from the patriarchal dictatorship.

Walker's use of womanism can also be seen clearly while analysing the myths. There is an analysis of race relations through her presentation of Olinka narrative. That analysis clearly explores the black and whites real hatred towards each other. This exposes white people's suppression over blacks due to racism. Also, the two sets of letters- Nettie's narration of the Olinka experience and Celie's self-narration intersect to map out Walker's 'womanist' ideology. Both marginalize the historical discourse that will focus primarily on imperialism in Africa and racism in America- the story of the universal oppression of black women.

Though, Walker in this novel *The Color Purple* has presented both feminism and womanism, as the terms are understood she advocates herself more as a feminist if the term has a radical sense. Looking closely at these terms, though Walker prefers the term womanism, both feminism and womanism are almost the same. The only difference is that the feminist focus commonly on the oppression of women and fight for their equality. But the womanist, mainly focus on the black women's struggle and their main aim is preservation of black culture. The women in this novel often converge in taking a feminist stance. They band together to hold each other up, in support and sustenance, even those with interest in the same men.

The black women writers have 'a commitment to the exploration of the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties and the triumphs of black women'. This kind of personal involvement and personal identification with black womanhood give shape and significance to fiction by black



women. All these are echoed in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. The central character unlike Morrison's has cracked the symbol of the patriarchal god. Shug Avery in this novel explains things to Celie desperately. Celie as woman 'muted and silenced' by society, patriarchy, step – father – can write to God only and speak to no one else. Celie's first letter is written when she is fourteen years old. Her mother has just given birth to a child named Licious, but becomes ill following the pregnancy. A man whom Celie calls Pa gets tired of waiting for sex, and so he starts raping Celie. When she writes the first letter:

*"Dear God,  
I am fourteen years old. I have been always a good girl. May be, you can give me a sign lettering me know what is happening to me . . ." (CP 3)*

Celie is a 'suspended' woman. Shug Avery, a black singer broadens her vision by teaching self-worth and love to Celie who develops a lesbian relationship with her. Her experiences as a daughter are not happy. The dying mother had died "screaming and cursing" (CP 4). Following her mother's death, Celie is forced to take care of the other children, including her younger sister, Nettie. Pa remarries, but still rapes Celie, who has become sterile following her second child. Celie has to protect Nettie from Pa who seems to want to rape Nettie as well.

After having thoroughly used as a sexual object by her own father she is given in marriage to another black man. Marriage does not offer safety for Celie. Ironically, she is offered to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ like a slave and Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ is more interested in her dowry than in her.

*Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ say, That cow still coming? Her say, Her Cow (12).*

In turn, Celie's wedding day is equally desolate.

*I spend my wedding day running from the oldest boy. He twelve (13).*

Marital sex is brutal and animalistic, and Celie later equates it with defecation, since it is hardly an act based on love or mutual fulfillment.

*He git up on you, heist your waist plunge in, most times I pretend I ai'nt there. He never know the difference. Never ask me how feel, nothing. Just do his business, gets off go to sleep (68).*

Celie's life is more a death-in-life, a life without hope, joy or any indication of improvement. Nettie comments on this before she leaves

*I sure hate to leave you here with these rotten children, she say. Not to mention with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. It like seeing you buried, she say. It's worse than that, I think. If I was buried, I wouldn't have to work(18).*

Celie watches as Harpo, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_'s eldest son, gets a young girl named Sofia pregnant and then he marries her. Harpo tries to dominate Sofia the way his father dominates Celie, but she is stronger and fights him back. Eventually Sofia gets fed up with Harpo and leaves him to go and live with her sister Odessa. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ brings home his mistress of many years, Shug Avery. Celie takes care of her. Harpo converts his house into a juke joint, but no one comes. Shug sings at his place and draws a huge crowd. When Shug finds out that Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ is beating Celie, she forces him to stop. She learns that Celie does not enjoy sex with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_. She teaches Celie the pleasures of sex. One night she sleeps with her. Celie is unable to fight the world and



reorganizes her life because her personal experience has not yet translated itself into self-conscious, self-counter. Being unaware of the inherent creative power of women, she is made to act as a stereotyped female. She had suffered in life and this is happy when her husband asks Harpo, to let Sofia know “who got the upper hand. Nothing can do better than good sound beating” (34).

Celie’s particular negation arises not only from the fact of rape, effecting her bifurcation into a subject and a subject – made – object – to itself. Rape here only intensifies the negation that grows from the ongoing patriarchal subjugation of woman. Her oppression, as represented early in the novel, circulates around the vulnerabilities that grow from her gender, as constructed with in the social which her ‘pa’ respectably occupies.

In her novels, Alice Walker reveals the oppressions, the insanities, the loyalties and the triumph of black women in their struggle for identity and freedom through disintegrated life-patterns, values and relationships. She expresses their yearning for a future not within their grasp. Walker’s exposure of the black woman’s situation often attains a broader perspective of the women’s situation and the still broader perspective of the human situation. Her black women are often also every woman.

Celie’s awareness of the self is enhanced further by her strange relationship with Shug Avery. Shug is Celie’s husband Mr. Albert’s mistress, a blues singer and is everything Celie always wants to be: confident, sexy, assured, glamorous. Mr. Albert offers Shug refuge when she is struck down by a terrible disease. At first Shug also ill- treats Celie. But a bond gradually forges between them, when Celie’s nursing wins her over from death. This gives rise to a sisterhood relationship between them. Everod Quashie quotes that, “sisterhood is “political solidarity between women – an earned and earning political solidarity between two women who are girlfriends” (“The Other”). Thus, this proves that sisterhood is also an important aspect in the novel. Walker throughout the novel reminds us of the important relationship that exists between sisters as well as between women as individuals. This also signals the fact that, when women are together and united they are stronger and have the courage and boldness to face the oppressive male dominated world. This is a typical ‘womanist’ novel, in that, the novelist shows how a black woman is doubly discriminated on account of being black and a woman.

The three strong women of the narration, Shug, Sofia and Celie come together and each of them brings her personal skill and personal patch to contribute to the necessary development and transformation. This close and productive cooperation helps to demonstrate the role of women in strengthening relationships in order to reconstruct a healthy Black community. It is not incidental that it is during this activity that Celie starts thinking about herself in a broader context: *First time I think about the world. What the world got to do with anything, I think. Then I see myself sitting there quilting tween Shug Avery and Mr \_\_\_\_\_ . Us three set together. For the first time in my life, I feel just right (61).*

The patchwork motive and the activity of sewing subtly elicit Celie’s future activity, which will bring her material independence while living away from her family.

Those who bring their contribution to this archetypal quilt are all strong women, united by sisterly love. Shug and Squeak represent the successful careers open to some Black women who are talented enough to earn fame and fortune while passing the spiritual values of the Black community encoded in folklore; Sofia stands for the toughest women, fighting for their rights, with an unbelievable sense of righteousness and with an indomitable character, Nettie symbolizes



the intellectuals who try to fulfil a deep, almost instinctive desire to find and to help their African sisters and brothers; and there are many other minor characters, such as women who raise the children of their relatives, and women who love each other so much that they are even capable of sharing the love of the same man between them.

It is due to Shug Avery's influence that Celie leaves Mr \_\_\_\_\_, her unkind husband, and becomes an economically socially empowered woman. It is also worth noticing that Celie does not remain with Shug, being enchanted by her newly gained position as independent bread – winner in Memphis, far from her native community. She returns to her family, and what is even more significant, she is able to redeem the esteem of her husband Mr \_\_\_\_\_, and finally to establish a normal human relationship with him.

Celie's economic freedom in *The Color Purple* indicates the turn-around point within her life. It strengthens her life's meaning and gives her a position within society. Moreover, her new business "Folkspants, Unlimited" (19), provides her with the means to go out and discover the world on her own without waiting for others to interpret it to her.

In the light of Walker's observation on the qualities of a womanist, she herself perfectly fits into the category of a 'womanist' as many of the 'womanist' aspects are overtly found in her novels. As a 'womanist' Walker longs for a perfect family life and she is never for any break in conjugal felicity. There are several instances in the writings of Walker that drive home the fact that she is not an ordinary woman, but a woman who has innate strength and potentiality. There are several occasions in her novels where she has retaliated with the oppressors. Even as a young girl, through the character of Celie, she had the rebellious spirit and would revolt against anything that was oppressive.

In spite of her strong character, Walker is basically a Black woman who longs for love and recognition in the society. The radical feminists are hypercritical of motherhood whereas Walker praises it to the sky as one of the noble virtues of woman. As a Black woman, she has endured pain with fortitude and in fact the resilience which she has possessed in abundance emboldens her to swim against the tide. In a nutshell a careful reading of Walker's narratives vindicate that she is essentially a Black woman as idealized by 'womanist' and she is not a feminist as per the real sense of the term.

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## Science Fiction and the Fantastic: Exploring Scientific Debates within the Fantastic *Depthi. S*

Although there is no clear definition of what science fiction is, there is a consensus that there are a few premises which can help one in defining it. We may not be sure about what is science fiction, but we will know one when we see it. SF texts will have space ships, time machines, robots, aliens, and computers etc. as subjects, trappings, themes or props. This paper adds another prop to these existing ones and that is the ghost or the ghostly apparition. Ghostly apparition would be a more appropriate term within this context since an apparition also connotes the sense of seeing or sight and in science, we all know 'seeing is believing'. Through an examination of ghost stories written during the Victorian era, the paper shows how these stories reflect the concerns and beliefs that fashioned the genre of science fiction.

The fact that both science fiction and the ghost story share common ancestry is something that helps one posit the ghost as a prop within science fiction. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* SF writers claim is, if not the origin of SF, a pioneering work in the field of SF. *Frankenstein* is also claimed by gothic fiction theorists as the first gothic novel. The fact that Mary Shelley started writing a ghost story and ended up with a science fiction novel shows the many areas of convergences between these two genres and legitimises the space accorded to the ghost story within the genre of science fiction. (Science fiction slowly replaced the ghost story in the late nineteenth and early 20<sup>th</sup> century)

In her essay on the trouble with ghost-seeing, Smajic argues that although the ghost story was the last place where one would search for evidences of Darwinism, industrialization, colonial expansion or even scientific study, the genre was directly informed by contemporary philosophical and scientific debates about vision and knowledge. It is in articulating these contemporary debates related to science during the century that the ghost story makes itself a part of science fiction. I do not argue that the ghost story in itself is SF but there are ghost stories, which by articulating debates, regarding science and scientific knowledge, function as props for science fiction and this paper looks at those stories.

Fitz-James O'Brien's "What was It?"\* is often found in anthologies of ghost stories. The story has in it all those aspects which place it within the genre of the ghost story. There is no logical explanation of the machinery in the story - a characteristic very crucial to the definition of a ghost story (M.R James). There is fear in it, the perfect setting in a haunted house and an element of suspense till the end. However, it is in the logic that the story upholds that its affinity with SF gets established. In defining science fiction, Suvin says that it is not the 'truth' of science that is important to science fiction; it is the scientific method, the logical working through of a particular premise. Suvin asserts, "Science fiction is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional novum....validated by cognitive logic'. In a discussion of an SF writer Larry Niven's work titled "Ringworld", another critic Jones discusses how the book had to be withdrawn and rewritten since some people were unhappy with and objected to the unscientific descriptions in the book. Jones says that "the actual challenge was not to Niven's scientific accuracy but to his appearance of command over the language of science'. Thus it follows that SF's success depends on the writer's ability to make things appear logical and probable through the use of language. Unlike the internal logic within the ghost story which follows that the ghost is an entity within the world of the dead, a dissatisfied spirit returning to avenge its untimely death, this ghost story upholds SF's internal logic of making the story appear scientific. This is achieved by focussing the attention on the ghost-seer and not the ghost, valorising the rationality of physiological scientific premise which privileges sight over all the other senses. Hence what becomes a crucial question



in the story is not whether the ghost exists but whether it can be verified or explained within the rational and epistemological premise of scientific knowledge. Smajic argues that during the nineteenth century, research in physiological optics gave rise to a new type of scientific literature on the subject of ghosts in which the ghost was described as a perfectly normal optical effect rather than a dream vision or bizarre product of an overactive, unhealthy imagination. This physiological argument explained how ghosts could appear to persons of sound mind and vision, thus “propounding a new theory which not only undermines the Enlightenment’s imperative for absolute scientific objectivity by foregrounding the subjective nature of sensory perceptions, especially sight, and the ensuing uncertainties of all knowledge derived from empirical investigation”.

Science fiction, Scholes points out, offers us a world clearly and radically discontinuous from the one we know, yet returns to confront that known world in some cognitive way. In the story, there is a parallel world, the world of the dead which is explained within the logical world of sense experience of physical science. The narrator of the story claims to talk of an experience which in the annals of physical science is unparalleled. He and his friend who is incidentally called Dr. Hammond, clearly establishing him as a man of science, have an encounter with an invisible assailant whom they capture and bind to the bed without being able to see it. And it is in using scientific language to establish the veracity of their story that the narrator privileges vision over other senses like touch and sound.

There are references in the story to solid ponderable body, which nevertheless one cannot see. The narrator says that he felt a sort of scientific pride in the affair, which dominated every other feeling. The whole experience of them being able to touch the body but not being able to see it is very scientifically compared to pure glass which is tangible but transparent. Hence the whole experience of seeing the ghost is made theoretically possible. Within the same story and in the same breath the narrator draws parallels between this experience and the experience of séances arguing that at several spirit circles, spirits are known to touch the living. It is interesting to note that within the same story, there is an effort made to make both these experiences similar- one is the experience of science and the other the world of the spirits. Not satisfied with merely touching the invisible being, the narrator and his friend go on to make of cast of plaster of Paris to capture the shape of the invisible being. As Suvin says, more than the probability of the scientific experiment or the event, what constitutes SF is the logical and rational explanation of an event even if it is only theoretical. This story attempts to collect evidence to support the existence of ghosts.

The Victorian era was the age of science and also the séance. Victorian fascination with the occult was reflected in almost all the texts of the time which included science. The society for psychical research (SPR) was established and spiritualism as a movement gained ground even as scientific knowledge was establishing its supremacy. The spiritual movement was patronized by several scientists even. In 1885, the peak period of the spiritual movement, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps writes in the North American Review,

*It has been widely felt that the present is an opportune time for making an organized and systematic attempt to investigate that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, psychical, and spiritualistic. From the recorded testimony of many competent witnesses, past and present, including observations recently made by scientific men of eminence in various -countries, there appears to be, amidst much illusion and deception, an important body of remarkable phenomena, which are prima facie inexplicable on any generally recognized hypothesis, and which, if incontestably established, would be of the highest possible value. "*



In ghost stories of the time, there is an effort to study the phenomenon of the ghost within the knowledge base of physical sciences. Phelps' advice to scientists willing to study the phenomenon of spirits is to practice honesty and candour since she says that science is not all that objective and honest as it appears. She says that, "there were scholars among the contemporaries of Galileo who never would consent to look through a telescope, lest they should be compelled to admit the existence of the stars which he had discovered". Within this story too we have the narrator providing proofs of the ghost's existence, the sinking of the bed in which it lies, the sounds it makes, but they are unwilling to even go through the evidences since it cannot be explained within the scientific premise of seeing is believing. This was a period during which the metaphysically and the theologically informed debates about spiritual vision fought along with the investigative methods of philosophical scepticism and evidential rules of materialist science. One can see these debates being played out in the ghost stories of the times, especially in this story which tries to reinstate the importance of science by undermining the power of sight and emphasizing other senses like the sense of touch and hearing. There are stories in which the ghost is made visible through a scientific method which included spirit photography and other modes. One sees within ghost stories written during this period a long drawn battle between two forms of knowledge- the intuitive and the empirical. The theological and the metaphysical strand of knowledge sought to look at the spiritual vision, at a world unknown to the frontiers of science. Science, on the other hand privileged the scientific method of inquiry, an empirical evidence based approach to knowledge. The power to imagine, some of these vociferous supporters of the spiritual movement argued, is a crucial element within the scientific process too. It is in the ghost story that both these debates were played out, at times limiting the ghost story to mere fiction and at other times including it within the domain of science fiction.

#### End Notes

\* Irish born American settled, story published in 1859

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## **Representation of Womanhood in Popular Cinema: A study of *Vivah (2006)* and *Guzaarish (2010)***

**G. V. Dharmayaka**

### **Introduction**

Popular cinema has occupied a significant place in the cultural landscape of contemporary India. It has an integral component of mass culture and tends to symbolize the common aspirations, perspectives, attitudes, and hopes of larger society. Popular cinema has represented different shades of woman on the screen, which plays a key role in shaping opinions, constructing images and reinforcing dominant cultural roles. Though the number of popular films being released in Bollywood is increasing every year but, womanhood representation and role of women have not taken positive direction. They are represented as more stereotypical, more traditional, and often marginalized. Such fixed and endless repeated images of women are considered to be stereotypical portrayal of womanhood on the screen.

Despite the significant resistance by theorists, artists and feminist critics this image has remained unprogressive. The woman's role and their representation in film are reduced to cultural constructions. These representations are always made through cultural and patriarchal domination and more or less many filmmakers have restricted themselves to produce a progressive womanhood in film. In this context, the present study takes up the two such films *Vivah (2006)* and *Guzaarish (2010)* and examines that how these two popular films have represented womanhood as coy, conservative, stereotypical and sacrificial of Indian *nari* image.

### **Glimpse of 90s Popular Films**

During the nineties some popular films were been released and got huge success, which popularized family drama. And these films reinforced the patriarchal, traditional and cultural values of the Indian society. With these significant ideas filmmakers are successful in producing Indian cultural values, but they fail to produce new roles for women in films. In relation to womanhood representation these films can be seen as stereotypical and there is no sign of new womanhood qualities on the screen. In these films women have been portrayed as conventional or unconventional, but there is no space for progressive womanhood representation. This dichotomy is reinforced in popular films distinguished between the progressive or unprogressive women on the screen. These films have also been inspired to a large extent from Indian tradition, religion and cultural values, whereby womanhood representation is seen as stereotypical. This image of womanhood repeatedly evoke in films like; *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun (1994)*, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, (1998)*, *Saath Saath Hain (1999)*, *Biwi No:1 (1999)*, and *Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham (2001)* depicted womanhood as coy, conservative, stereotypical, passive, submissive and sacrificial. However, the filmmakers are successful to produce Indian tradition and culture but they have restricted themselves to represent progressive or new woman on the screen.

There is no real womanhood qualities in these films, because tradition, cultural values, ideals, principles; morals have dominated the frame-work in which these films are placed. Thus, women rather than being represented as progressive or new woman, they have been reduced as docile, domestic, honorable, noble and sacrificial. Though, women are very much important characters in these films but filmmakers laid down the conditions for ideal womanhood. While popular films from the 90s represented womanhood as ideal, the same has continued even to the



20s popular films with a little shift here and there. The films taken for the study 'Vivah' and 'Guzaarish' are two such films which are all these shades.

### The study of Chosen films

The film *Vivah* directed by Sooraj Barjatya, appears to activate woman's condition in a positive way. But, further this offers for considering shifts in representation of Indian traditional *nari*. The film follows the actions of engagement to marriage. In the film, Poonam (Amrita Rao), is a traditional and beautiful young girl living comfortably with her uncle Krishna Kant (Alok Nath). But, she has inertly suffers by her aunt Rama's behavior (Seema Biswas), who is not ready to treat Poonam as her own. This leads to the state of Poonam's life has in two conditions, one is a comfortable zone of her uncle's love and affection and other is the jealousy of her aunt's treatment about Poonam. On the surface this is the plot—but in the film the way that representation of womanhood has constructed through traditional and cultural values.

In the film Poonam is shown to be a college student and educated girl respectively. But, she never depicted to in her college space. She mostly engages with household works and in caring for her uncle. Even though she is modern and educated woman she submits to the desire of her family and eventually becomes more traditional. This is indication that in Indian culture even if a woman is educated but she has to be conservative, traditional, submissive, and sensitive and a sacrificing individual.

Further the narration leads to Poonam's marriage. Once the marriage proposal comes from Bhagatji, a jeweler friend of Krishna Kant's, who match-makes Poonam with Prem (Shahid Kapoor) son of Mr. Harishchandra. When, Poonam comes to know about this, she is more hesitant to express her opinion about the proposal. Here, viewers can identify that the womanhood representation is reduced as coy, conservative and stereotypical. And filmmaker has to stick to cultural values to produce this kind of womanhood on the screen. After the proposal is accepted by the families, Harishchandra's family visits Krishna Kant's house and let Prem and Poonam get acquainted with each other. Here, filmmaker has given space to meet bride and groom before marriage get fixed but he is not free to represent a new womanhood qualities on the screen. Because, when Poonam allows to talk with Prem, she is more hesitate and shy or coyness in her words and behavior. This proves that how the filmmaker has follow-up the conventional image of Indian womanhood and his ideals to represent this kind of woman on the screen.

The marriage date is set after six months and the two families plan a short vacation at Krishna Kant's summer residence in Som Sarovar, as an opportunity to understand one other better. When on their vacation in Som Sorovar, Prem wants to talk privately with Poonam. This is made possible by Prem's brother Sunil (Samir Soni) and his wife Bhavana (Lata Sabharwal). Once, Prem and Poonam get an opportunity to talk privately, Poonam hesitates to do so and tells Prem it won't be the right thing to do before marriage. Here Poonam is shy and she confines herself very much to culture and tradition. And it reveals that the nature of woman in Indian society is conservative, which is conventionally represented in popular cinema.

After vacation and several days, Prem goes on a business trip to Japan and comes back. Both families get busy in preparing for the wedding. Rama becomes very much irritated and angry with Krishna Kant for spending lavishly on Poonam's wedding. As she fears that there will be no money left for Rajani's marriage (Rama's own daughter). This hurts Poonam, and she cries and tells her uncle to stop the wedding. This sacrificing nature of Poonam's shows that, how a woman is ready to sacrifice her own life for sake of others.



*Women are insinuated in films as bearing the burden of pain or sacrifice that male roles cannot. Hence, they become the bearer, and not the maker of meaning (Mulvey 834).*

Most Indian women live a silent life with enormous amount of sacrifices and retain their frustration within themselves for the sake of family and societal pressure. After several incidents the film ends happily with Poonam and Prem's marriage. In this way, Poonam has been represented in film *Vivah* as coy, sacrifice, traditional, cultural and stereotypical of Indian womanhood.

Second chosen film for the study is *Guzaarish (2010)* directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali and he tells a story of quadriplegic magician Ethan Mascarenhas (Hrithik Roshan). Sofia D'Souza played by Aishwarya Rai is his nurse for the past twelve years. When the film begins, the audience is introduced to the care Sofia gives to Ethan where she is tending to him, cleaning him, feeding him with the professionalism of nurse yet warmth of a friend. At the beginning viewer can identify that representation of motherhood qualities through Sofia's character. This can be seen within the family, but here it proves that, though she not a mother or wife but she is more than that to Ethan. Here, the filmmaker explaining the perfect quality of motherhood through Sofia's character.

The character of Sofia comes to with her physical appearance which includes, a bright red lipstick, a black and red palette for her clothes and so much attention is paid to every small detail like the accessory she wears to convey a kind nature of womanhood. In this specific treatment there is respect to motherhood representation and an urge from the point of view of the filmmaker to create an equally powerful womanhood representation. The look of Sofia is not just at the surface but has a symbolic significance to her womanhood representation. The value of the character Sofia and makes it a point give her center stage and dwell into her selfless love for the hero.

The scene which is best displays this is when the judge visits Ethan's house for a special hearing for his petition for mercy killing and the prosecutor lawyer accuses Sofia of being only interested in Ethan's property and wealth and would sole beneficiary of his death. At this scene, where Devayani defense lawyer interrupts defending Sofia and said "she has been more than nurse, friend, a lover, even a wife, that is the truth your honor. In this respect through motherhood quality of Sofia, filmmaker expresses that emotional bonding of Sofia and Ethan.

The film ends with Ethan having farewell party with his close friends celebrating his last moments. It is here that towards the last part of the film viewer can see Sofia and Ethan kissing for the first time as they have now accepted each other as husband and wife. The filmmaker keeping with Indian tradition and does not allow to any physical intimacy between the two characters and maintains the purity of Indian womanhood. In this way the film depicts the concerned ideas of motherhood, emotional bonding, true relationship, sacrificing, and selfless love of Sofia to Ethan. The filmmaker has represented Sofia as selfless lover and that keeps the line with sacrificing tradition of the Indian womanhood. This proves that how popular films have inspired to a large extent from religion and mythology whereby womanhood was seen as the epitome of sacrificial, virtue and values (Sita, Sati and Savitri).

In this film also, filmmaker has fails to represent new womanhood qualities and also follows the stereotypical representation of womanhood. Right from the first Indian feature film, "*Raja Harishchandra*" (1913) many filmmakers are used the Indian epics with their ideals to



structure the plot or infuse strong moral values which make up the women characters in films. And they represent woman as coy, docile, submissive, selfless, and sacrificial but is that not reflections of what society want her to be.

In conclusion, my argument ends with popular cinema has to create a separate and independent space for womanhood, helping understand progressive womanhood qualities on the screen. And popular cinema's only end is not to entertain or produce traditional and cultural values in films. It must begin a quest for stereotype change through entertainment. As a cultural product, popular cinema is identified to accelerate the process of modernity, so it should not stick to the "preserve of tradition womanhood"; it should come with more progressive representation of womanhood.

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## Gender Discourse in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*

*Ikram Arfi*

The patriarchal society of the 18<sup>th</sup> century England prevents women from the construction of their identity. Daniel Defoe has a persistent interest in women's status and his novels reflect the important issues of the post-Renaissance period. Defoe leans on an abstract and symbolic dimension around which a collective imagination is articulated. His novels are impregnated with the developing men/women relations and the identity construction in 18<sup>th</sup> century England. This study delves into female self-representation through the gender discourse in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*. To recover the centrality of self-representation as the novel's defining concern is also to recover the dynamism of bimodal complexity. Thus, the focus Defoe's novelistic tradition deciphers the indeterminacy of the gender discourse engaged in the task of imposing and rebelling against the constraining order of the *self* and the *other*.

This research reveals how the female self-representations in the English culture during Defoe's time are not mere reflections of feminine nature—that is unchangeable. It illustrates the discourse of crisis occurring in the role of female self-representation and links it to the status of the novel itself as a disaffected genre in literary anthologies that century. These reflections lead to examine how the novelist uses identity construction contributing to the conception of cultural artifact. As a new literary genre, the novel struggled for a position of its own because it was usually relegated to an inferior status in the classical era compared to drama and poetry.<sup>1</sup>The novel of adventures then, becomes the embodiment of female identity and reflects the fictional process of the its conception. The stories of the fortunate and unfortunate heroines attract the reader when he/she becomes identified with a feminine heroine.

### Patriarchal Society and Female Self-Representation

In a relevant remark, Lewis Hyde sums up the conflicting relationship between men and women:

*Where men alone can give and receive, and where women alone are gifts, men will be active and women passive, men self-possessed and women dependent, men worldly and women domestic, and soon, through all the clichés of gender in particular. (1983: 102)*

The patriarchal attitude towards women reveals a stereotyped disposition which undermines their ability to gain independence and proceed with constructing their identity. The patriarchal discourse relates to male competence emphasizing men's independence, their pragmatic taste, and rationality. This opposes to the incompetence associated with "femininity", reducing women's image to impotence, irrationality, passivity and the lack of competitiveness. These words indicate the ideology of a whole society in which family; marriage and love are the constraints dictating to women an intangible social status. With reference to the new orientation of social ethics towards tolerance, Defoe's female characters, Moll and Roxana, reflect the emerging conflicts of the age. It seems necessary, therefore, to reveal the identity struggle led by Defoe's heroines through the female self-representation in both novels.

As an advocate for women's cause, Defoe starts highlighting a series of practical proposals of social organization. Indeed, Moll and Roxana illustrate what Defoe says earlier:



*Capacities of women are supposed to be great and their senses quicker than those of the men. (1969: 284)*

From then on, Defoe becomes interested in women affairs and writes his first picaresque novel, *Moll Flanders*. Moll, the “picara” remains an isolated phenomenon for the decades to come. It is all the more surprising to see the coming out of this kind of writing at that period, given the literary taste of Defoe’s contemporaries. Written in a period when criminal biographies were frequent, Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* depict the lives of irresistible heroines, their struggle against poverty and their relentless pursuit for wealth and power. At the ban of the patriarchal society, for instance, Moll lives in a cruel environment with few benefits:

*I had no adviser, at least who cou’d advise and assist together; and above all, i had no body to whom I could in confidence commit the secret of my circumstances to, and could depend upon for their secrecie and fidelity; and I found by experience, that to be friendless is the worst condition, next to being in want, that a woman can be reduc’d to: I say a woman, because ‘tis evident men can be their own advisers, and their own directors, and know how to work themeselves out of difficulties and into business better than women (1973: 101)*

Poverty, distress, and lack of male protection are embodied in both novels. Moll and Roxana stand for the often conflicting nature of female self-representation both respectful of the established social order and yet ready to challenge the patriarchal system. The origin of their dual self is generated by the fact of being torn between reality and expectations. The study of this dual identity reveals the use of two images for Moll and Roxana. First, the real self through which the heroine tells her *History* as it really happened (as Defoe clarified in his preface). It uses the pronoun *I* along with the past tense of narration. Second, the fictional self is displayed through the narrative process where the heroine uses direct speech to address the reader and comments on her illegal acts transformed into adventure activities (either fortunate or unfortunate) with using the present tense. Through this dual narrative the marginalized women make their voices heard to ensure a subversive power for themselves. They appear as masters of the novel’s plot where they reveal their inner feelings without inhibition.

Yet, Defoe’s fiction seems to be impregnated with conflicting attitudes. Women divided self-image in *Roxana*, for instance, unveils the melancholic and confused situation in which the heroine is trapped and cannot go over:

*I was in the greatest confusion imaginable, and so was he too: I could not imagine what should be the occasion of it, and began to be at odds with myself whether to be glad or sorry; but my affection byass’d all the rest, and it was impossible to conceal my joy, which was too great for smiles, for it burst into tears (1987: 120)*

The binaries in this passage (‘glad’, ‘sorry’, ‘joy’, ‘tears’) reflects the heroine’s confusion. The lack of harmony in her life implies her alienated self. This image is evocative of the ambivalent mentality of a whole society. M. E. Novak (2001) discusses Defoe’s view on the patriarchal society and how it provides a realistic picture of family life and man/woman relationships. Despite Defoe’s critical eye-witness, it seems that his personal convictions are constantly changing and paradoxical. They fluctuate between conservatism and tolerance. Contrary to his *Essay upon Projects* (1697) which claims for women’s rights, he praises the patriarchal puritan ethics in his *Family Instructor* (1715-1718). In a quite didactic representation of female characters, Defoe continues to highlight the problems likely to arise if ever women confuse protestant ethics with



the new emerging capitalist paradigms. He rather emphasizes the valuable role of male protection for women as a weak and alienated self.

Defoe is torn between two positions. For a long time women have been considered to be naturally “inferior” to men. They have been exclusively given a domestic role. On the other hand, women are considered to be active members of the socially and economically oriented change in the Reformation of Manners Club of that period. Most of the time in Defoe’s fiction, women are the symbol of change. They stand bestride two worlds. First, their world as women is infused with rigid and unchangeable predominant, traditional, visual representation. Secondly, there is the world they aspire to; and where abound equal opportunities, mutual understanding and respect as man, void of intense hostility of feminine gender discrimination and self-stigmatization:

*But if woman has no friend to communicate her affairs to, and to advise and assist her, 'tis ten to one but she is undone; nay, and the more money she has, the more danger she is in of being wrong'd and deceiv'd; and this was my case in the affair of the hundred pound which I left in the hand of the gold-smith, as above, whose credit, it seems, was upon the ebb before, but I that had no knowledge of things, and nobody to consult with, knew nothing of it, and so lost my money. (1973:101)*

Defoe criticizes the patriarchal society. For example, when Moll frequently refers to the word “pride” in what she calls her “artistry”, “dexterity” and “invention”, this metaphor must be associated with the spirit of the age (Ibid, 186-210). The metaphor does not celebrate women’s bravery as much as it sheds light on the changed meaning of words; women’s status is linked to a more “global” mutation in Defoe’s “modern society” after the Restoration. Women’s extreme dependence on social circumstances in a patriarchal society is expressed through Roxana’s feelings of melancholy when she endures tough life conditions:

*I went about with a heart loaded with crime, and altogether in the dark, as to what I was to do; and in this condition I languish'd near two years; I may well call it languishing, for if providence had not reliev'd me, I shou'd have died in little time. (1987: 311)*

In her book *Trauma of Gender* (2001) the feminist critic Helen Moglen reveals the characteristics of the patriarchal society: “Qualities of masculinity and femininity, seen as natural and treated as immutable, anchored personal identity as they are grounded on the socio-cultural order.” (p. 2) Yet, contrary to women’s exclusion from enjoying the benefits of economic expansion in their society, their contribution in the business world is a crucial point in Defoe’s novels. Women cannot have the status of citizens because they are not entitled to property ownership, which is exclusively reserved to men:

*I that a Widow, tho' I had sufficient to live on, yet had no way of increasing it; and that London was an expensive and extravagant Place; that I found I could not live here under a Hundred Pound a Year, unless I kept no Company, no Servant, made no Appearance, and buried myself in Privacy, as if I was oblig'd to it by Necessity. (1987: 102)*

The asymmetrical balance between the word “necessity” and the evaluating adjectives (such as “expensive” and “extravagant”) reveals the ambivalent tone of the sentence. Negation markers with recurrent use of “no” highlight the heroine’s desperate situation to fulfill her strong desire to lead an idle life. This paradoxical form of thought seems illogical and even amoral. It conveys, however, an illuminating attitude of Roxana who is tugged between dissatisfaction and a strong will to lead a “noble” lifestyle. Without being prepared to the new elements of the



socioeconomic ethics, Roxana can easily be lost as she lacks male protection. This dilemma springs from an ideological paradox; Defoe's society considers women as both inferior and equal to men. Because they are forbidden to contribute to the economic growth of England, women must be released by the patriarchal yoke. Yet, they are condemned and considered as a danger and an obstacle for economic progress. This image recalls the bourgeois' struggle to reach or achieve the aristocratic status of privileged. Defoe's representation of man/woman relationships highlights the link between the two classes. Because of their spiritual belief the tradesmen class, particularly the puritans whom Defoe belongs to, is prohibited from land ownership the same manner the women are. Hostile to social hierarchy, Defoe declares:

*Wealth, whosoever got, in England makes  
Lords of Mechanicks, gentlemen of Rakes.  
Antiquity and Birth are needless here.*<sup>2</sup>

If the aristocracy, which is much envied by the other layers of society, holds the top of the social scale, the bourgeoisie is a second target for the lower social stratum. However, given the mechanism of the rapid accumulation of money, we cannot help but be amazed by the episodes of banking transactions conducted by Moll and Roxana. In fact, for the uneducated women wealth originates from activities that are not specifically economic and do not concern any rules or knowledge. In this space where the two heroines Moll and Roxana are easily circulating their capital, such a rapid enrichment is also shocking. It goes against the traditional principles of Robinson's father, for example, who prefers to get rich slowly, with frugality and industry. As already suggested, it seems justified to create a link between the conservative puritan ideology and the economic development to decipher the view defended by Defoe on women. This link once again undermines the ambition and the social success in communities that suffered the rigors of social hierarchy.

The rise of a tolerant spirit towards women is one of the main subjects discussed in Defoe's novels. Though commercial affairs are exclusively held by men in both novels, women's rights are implicitly emphasized in their private life through story-telling. In fact, because of Defoe's position as a "dissenter" and an observer of the socioeconomic life, the subject of gender conflict plays a predominant part in his writings. It is in this perspective that one better discerns the working of the patriarchy in Defoe's novels as well as its impact on women. Indeed, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* all reveal a link between the pattern of solitude, the alienated *self* and the subject of autonomy and independence which are essential to identity construction. Moreover, the gender relations and women's marginalization are intrinsically linked. In a world governed by male power and authority, the quest for wealth is the primary leitmotif for women's self-fulfillment. Being forced into a marginal position, women are unable to contribute to economic growth. Their role is limited to domestic duties and taking care of the family. Defoe's novels reveal some ambivalence in the perspective on women in which a much profound and complex gender discourse is more at work than it appears at the first sight.

### **Gender discourse: a feminist reading**

During the last decades feminist women writers have endeavored to operate within new assumptions deemed appropriate by Postmodernism. Not only does contemporary feminist investigation imply the study of female self-representation, but also it goes far beyond the scanty issues to deal with more comprehensive subjects related to the representation of *feminine conditions* as a whole. Feminists perceive that women do not appear as equal, yet their *one* self-representation as well as their *difference* with male representation is key-bound. Undoubtedly,



this is why some feminist women writers such as Paula Backsheider, Helene Moglen and Lois Chabber engage a critical analysis to investigate the mystification strategies of woman self-representation in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*. They unveil woman's oppression as a second level citizen and examine the literary ethos of female self-representation. Hence, the emergence of gender discourse in the feminist writings reflects the acquiescence of the 18<sup>th</sup> c patriarchal ideology in England. According to these studies the masculinist /materialist discourse shared by most male critics is misleading and misreading for women's image in Defoe's novels.<sup>3</sup>

Concretely, up to a recent date, the dominant discourse during Defoe's days has been a masculinist discourse. Though in his novels the discourse is likely to advocate a *peculiar* change, his *Robinson Crusoe* is articulated as a male discourse. Conversely, in his *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*, the masculinist discourse is questioned by women who feel *marginalized* owing to the obliteration of some notions such as "self-independency" and "identity construction" in the beginning of the Enlightenment. The feminist reading of *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* entails a new study for the status of women and predicts that the gender discourse in both novels is framed in a new narrative spectrum. It is scrutinized, at least in part, from a social and economic focus.

From a social point of view, Puritanism has a prominent impact on women's self-fulfillment. The change fully takes place in the broader context of man-woman relationships and gender identities. *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* can be seen as novels of female emancipation against the very Calvinist male society where the two heroines are unable to reach their goals without the aid of men. For Marilyn Westfall puts it: *Roxana*, for instance decries against the extravagant life-style of the noble class and incorporates Calvinistic tropes:

*As "the Queen of Whores", Roxana becomes an allegorical representation of England, which according to the novel, is a nation prostituted by its nobles and king, whose behaviours are mirrored in the actions of the commoners.*<sup>4</sup>

In the same vein, Moll's adventures are known through large literary passages like the tragicomedy of the ideal life pursued by a middle class member. Indeed, having grown up in precarious conditions, being homeless and always on the move, Moll struggles against deceit, concealment and deception. But what differentiates radically the "picara" from her male counterparts, is the frequent association of prostitution with women's struggle for self-fulfillment. This is a prominent subject in both novels determining gender discourse. In order to survive in a male-dominated world, Moll and Roxana feel that they are obliged to prostitute. Clearly, there are a few opportunities for respectable women except marriage. Roxana is characterized by an unrestrained ambition: as the mistress of a prince, she rejects the marriage offer of a wealthy Dutch merchant. She is endowed with a strong desire for higher aims. Epitomizing a female self-turmoil, Roxana reveals how she fails to control her vanity: "My Vanity was fed up to such a height, that I had no room to give Way to such Reflections" (*Roxana*, 110). Her social function is entangled with a series of social norms that she must respect. Unlike Robinson who has an ambitious whim, Moll and Roxana want to be independent because they are marginalized. They lack male protection and need to cope with their precarious feminine conditions. If Crusoe's isolated-self is instilled with independence and authority, the heroines' lonely and alienated-self leads to their downfall.

Defoe's narratives reflect women's self-fulfillment, but the protagonists' identity construction does not lead to their undeniable integration. It is the price to pay to virtue and the concession given to conservative ethics. The social success of, Jack, Defoe's male hero in *Colonel Jack* (1722), is due to his social status as a gentleman even if he commits theft just the same way



as Moll does. Yet, he steals only out of necessity. In his future career, he does not engage in any wrong-doing. He neglects neither wealth nor education.<sup>5</sup>In this context, feminist critic Lois A. Chaber invokes the prevailing gendered morality in Defoe's novel:

*Because Moll is a member of the "second sex" her criminal aggression becomes at once a parody of the alienating features of a primitive capitalist society and a justified defiance of that society.*<sup>6</sup>

Moll's criminal world does not only stem from the increasing number of criminals. It is rather originated from a wider social phenomenon that determines the whole spirit of the age. The dichotomy between *good* and *evil* mirrors the gendered disparity between women's idleness and men's dynamism. Excluded from capitalist productivity, women were relegated to their feminine conditions and their psychological turmoil. They were not equipped with a necessary moral eminence to counterbalance the economic vigor of men. Defoe acknowledges and criticizes at once this myth. In Colchester, Moll's in-laws revolt because of her husband's (Robin) behaviour:

*And as to the father, he was a man in a hurry of public affairs and getting money, seldom at home, thoughtful of the main chance, but left all these things to his wife.(1973: 48)*

Moll receives something which is historically and culturally denied to most women. In fact, with her legacy of power and the autonomy she enjoys as a woman, she challenges both the women materialist triumph and the semantic duplicity of the novel which breaks the traditional literary canon.

From an economic point of view, women's marginalization is related to the rules and laws of the market. Money-related interests are gradually taking priority over the land-related interests as a basic element of wealth. This has a deplorable effect on the status of women. In his study "Nationalism, Commerce, and Imperial Anxiety in Defoe's Later Works" (2000) Christopher Flynn elucidates that both geographical and commercial imperialism reflecting the gender discourse in most Defoe's fictional works. Imperialism and the ownership of goods are the prerogatives of men. Defoe mixes up the imperialist component of trade with sexism. They are subject to new mercantilist ethics (the beginning of capitalism when riches and accumulation of money were worshipped). At the same time, change paves the way for an advantageous free access for women to become owners like men, to improve their situation and to achieve financial independence. Henceforth, the most central aspect of this transformation is that women's difficult adaptation for the new materialistic reality. Defoe's portrayal of women joins his contemporary vision which depicts the impact of the economic ethics on women's insecure status.

Defoe intervenes in the social and political affairs of his society less as a theoretician, like Hobbes and Locke than a moralist. Certainly, the staging of his work echoes the portrait of the marginalized woman in a mercantilist world known to the reader. When Moll is involved in an erotic relationship, for example, she refers to it as: "market-dealing". (68) As in the capitalist language commodities which appear two centuries later in Karl Marx's *Capital*, the word's sensual connotation mirrors products made for an immediate transaction of capital. Besides, the relationship between man and woman undergoes new rules that are codified by the market language. Women are wanted for short-term profits, and some men marry them only to finance projects that can bring them wealth. Therefore, women without material resources are no longer desired by men. However, the true meaning of the market code is not yet defined in a clear manner to facilitate its legislation and to create an academic economic and social order.



As Anne Louise Kibbie states in her study “Monstrous Generation: The Birth of Capital in Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*” (1995), the female body in Defoe’s novels and, especially that of Moll and Roxana, becomes the incarnation of capital (“the body of capital”).<sup>7</sup> In this mercantilist context, William E. Hummel’s study<sup>8</sup> on the early 18<sup>th</sup> century focuses on the product of market transaction between men and women in Defoe’s novels. According to Hummel, these exchanges are transformed into gifts that men give in order to “conquer” women. The type of material and symbolic transactions between women and men in Defoe’s novel reflect a theory of *gift* instead of a theory of *product*. Male characters reveal their intention to profit from women by presenting gifts. An action expressed by Hummel as “The Gender of The Gift”. Moll and Roxana live in a new economic system where cultural differences and social practices remain unclear with the misleading capital theories. According to Hummel, in their attempt to gain more material resources and have a status equal to men’s, Moll and Roxana show a kind of ruthless liveliness as they aspire to what Hummel calls “Christian selflessness”, which echoes their alienated self. Roxana, for example, is immersed in business relationships that drive her to a tragic end. Moll also is engaged in a series of financial activities, legitimate and illegal. Yet, Roxana is lost because of her image of “man-woman” (she fails motherhood and managed not to be dependent on men) which is suggestive of an unaccepted allegorical woman masculinization. In this context, Flynn opines that when Moll is deported in the new land (America) in *Moll Flanders*:

*The use of this word “Patrimony” has important gendered implications. Defoe wants to make America into a sustainable plantation along male models of control and development, taming the female aspects of the land itself, and reducing everything to a commercial transaction designed to improve England. In this formulation, females like Moll Flanders, are objects of commerce only, and until the colony is ready to function for profit, they are as dangerous to the shaping of “new” worlds as Eve is dangerous to Adamic peace in Milton’s version of the fall. (2000: 15)*

The colonization of Crusoe’s island, shows that he was able to establish a largely independent colony, and by analogy, one that relates to Great Britain. For him, female presence on the island is dangerous and must be tamed or “dessexued” before it becomes a viable commercial entity. When Crusoe promises his countrymen:

*As to the English Men, I promise’d them to send some Women from England (...) I sent them also Sheep, and some Hogs, which, when I came again, were to be considerably increas’d. (1975: 220)*

Women are then openly identified as objects of trade. They are given the same value as “sheep and hogs.” Women have no role in the construction of the settlement. Furthermore, the perception of America as a dangerous woman recalls Milton’s patriarchal vision. Crusoe is always on guard at the loss of his “paradise.” It is comparable to a land of Eden that provides everything they need, and where he has the right to name and claim anything he desires. The appearance of women in America must be tamed. The new order issued by Defoe on the feminine nature is transmitted through the episode of the attack on Moll’s boat during the journey to America. The “new order” in the new world is too dangerous to allow women influence:

*The comparison of the island to the Eve who must be tamed so this new “paradise” will not be lost through her treachery is one that shows Crusoe’s English consciousness as much as his fear of the unknown elements of America. (Flynn, 2000: 19)*

Moll is the female presence, a symbol of weakness, poverty and the dangerous alluring of the English society. The female weak self is reflected in *Moll Flanders* when the oldest sibling of the family expresses desire for Moll by throwing her “down upon the Bed, kissing her and



professing a great deal of Love” (23). The analogy raised here reveals Defoe as an advocate for colonization. As a representative of the British colony, Moll is not able to satisfy her material needs alone without having recourse to her host family.

Falling into poverty would be the worst woman’s disaster. It’s a mistake representing especially the root of sin. The relevant point of Roxana offers the best example to the twentieth-century feminist criticism to the eighteenth century women status: “A Wife must give up all she has, have every Reserve she makes for herself be thought hard of, and be upbraided with her very *pin-money*.” (*Roxana*, 13) For Moll and Roxana, experiences and misfortunes suggest a middle way between their status of being naïve and being mature. It is an act of consciousness:

*O let none read this part without seriously reflecting on the Circumstances of a Friend and want of Bread; it will certainly make them think not of sparing what they have only, but of looking up to Heaven for support, and of the wise Man’s Prayer, Give me not Poverty lest I Steal. (1973: 149)*

The polarization on Moll’s cognitive faculty is highlighted with a frequent use of the verbs like “think”, “look up” and “reflect”. Her reaction hides a temptation to plead her cause implying words that belong to the spiritual register like “Wise Man’s Prayer”. Roxana, on the contrary, accentuates her culpability and underlies the excess of her vanity. As a result, she appears unable to relish her reflections, and her identity construction is hindered by this lack of conscience. These confessions implemented in Defoe’s text highlight the importance of conscience as a necessary weapon against the voracious culpability of the female self and its psychological turmoil. This is how the heroine enjoys struggling with the slightest chance to improve her status and construct her identity.

The gender discourse represents the central feminist dialectical analysis of Defoe’s novels. Defoe chooses to stage two heroines to disseminate the story of the special tests that women without male protection can endure. He uses his female heroines to criticize the evils of women identity construction through the female self-representation. He undermines women’s marginalized status using gender discourse. In fact, oppression against women reflects the specific economic procedure that England stepped during the Enlightenment. Defoe’s novels represent distinctly and unquestionably a set of arguments vis-à-vis the emancipation of women, for they deal with different approaches that are strongly committed to ideas of social justice and overtly suggest a better future for mankind in general and for women in particular. It is for this reason that the author of the *Essay upon Projects* (1697) launches an urgent appeal to educate women and to prepare them for new social requirements instead of suggesting only a critical view on women’s status as an inferior self. Woman identity construction highlights her valuable vigor to struggle against injustice and echoes the fictional image of the novel which claims its aptitudes as a literary genre.

Defoe’s Gender discourse needs to be revisited in the light of specific context of the early Enlightenment. The author’s undeniable originality resides in his embodiment of women’s status through a fictional use of gender discourse. A substantial part of Defoe’s readership is female. Indeed, there was considerable progress in female literacy. His aim is to be read by men and women equally. Women cannot readers have the same fates as men, neither in their ambition nor in their career. Even in using their charms, these heroines are hardly independent. The new genre aims at meeting the literary ethos of that era and responds the readers’ needs. Emphasizing the search for identity and self-exploration through the female character, Defoe liberates women from the yoke of patriarchy and the novel from classic decorum.



### Notes:

1. James Sutherland states that, contrary to Defoe, his contemporaries Pope and Addison were considered as "cultured men and correct writers who had addressed themselves to the polite part of the Town, and who had subscribed to, and in a large degree created, the literary standards of the age in which they lived". (1970:5)
2. John Sheppard, *Daniel Defoe, The True-Born Englishman (1700)*, Éditionsd'Aujourd'hui, 1980, p. 24.
3. This idea is shared by Armstrong Nancy in, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, and Moglen Helen in, *The Trauma of Gender: A Feminist Theory of the English Novel*, University of California Press, 1997.
4. Marilyn Westfall, "A Sermon by the "Queen of Whores"", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol.41, No.3, *Restoration and Eighteenth Century*. (Summer, 2001), p. 484.
5. Daniel Defoe, *Colonel Jack*, (1722), Ed. Samuel Holt Monk, *The World's Classics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.
6. Lois A. Chaber, « Matriarchal Mirror: Women and Capital in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* ». *PMLA* 97, (1982), p. 23.
7. Kibbie Ann Louise, "Monstrous Generation: The Birth of Capital in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*". *PMLA*, 110 (1995); p. 1024.
8. Hummel, "The Gift of my Father's Bounty: Patriarchal Patronization in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana*", *Rocky Mountain of Language and Literature*, Vol. 48, N° 2 (1994), pp. 119-141.

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## Seeing Red in the Red Movement: A Glimpse into Naxalite Poetry

*Melissa Helen*

The literature of resistance is a “political and politicized activity” and the term can be applied to any writing that is involved in a “struggle against ascendant or dominant forms of ideological and cultural production” (Harlow, 28)

The term resistance literature was applied to poets from the Palestinian region. In contemporary times studies in post-colonial and subaltern and fourth world literature is gaining its rightful place in the world at large. In India, studies in Dalit literature are an additional interest. However, one group that is yet to make its presence felt in the academic circles is the literature of the naxalite group.

For various reasons, writers from this group are yet to receive their due in the academic circles. Though a few of their works might be studied in a few disciplines, majority of them and their writings are largely ignored in the conservative departments or disciplines. While balladeers like Gaddar and Vara Vara Rao are renowned for their poetry and publication, yet the fear of being condemned as a sympathizer for the naxalite movement acts as a deterrent. Hence, without going into the ideology of the writers concerned, my paper would like to look at their poetry published in the *Thema Book of Naxalite Poetry*. This book is edited with an elaborate introduction to each section by Sumanta Banerjee.

Audre Lorde in her reflections of Black women’s poetry writes that poetry is not a luxury. When people who are deprived of their basic needs and, their fight for their rights or against the societal inequalities and exploitations has often resulted in their death-- in the name of ‘encounters’-- fake or real. Poetry written out of such experiences cannot be a luxury. The injustices of the society, the inhumanity among human beings and the bestial nature of people in power makes one irate. Even after the constitution of a Human Rights Commission which is very powerful in contemporary times, one is aware of the possible repercussions of what happens to a person whether he is an informant or a supposed sympathizer. The villagers are often caught between the deep and the devil.

The Naxalite poems reflect the multifarious experiences that range from bondage, oppression, abject poverty, stark hunger, incarceration to violent death. While some of their poems voice their hope in the movement, some express their candid fear and unwillingness to go back to society.

This paper intends to trace the particular phases of their movement and their moods. Poems such as ‘Playing Hide and Seek’, ‘Squeeze the Hills’, ‘We Never Wanted...’ are some that justify their cause. ‘Squeeze the Hills’ is a poem written by a Telugu poet Cherabandaraju. The music lilt and rhythm of the poem is retained in the translation. It tells the readers of the hard labour of these laborers:

*With our blood as concrete,  
We built projects.  
Whose was the toil?  
Whose was the wealth?  
And*

*With our sweat as streams,*



*We harvested the crop.  
Whose was the grain?  
Whose was the gruel? (31)*

Similarly the poems 'We Never Wanted...' and 'Playing Hide and Seek' bring out the inhumanity of the ruling classes, the society, and, the injustices of the political system (the Congress government) that forced them to bestiality.

Tarit Kumar, a Hindi poet writes in 'We Never Wanted...' how they are forced to consider themselves as beasts,

*We never wanted  
to have four feet.  
But you made us bend for every  
need of ours.  
So our hands became feet.  
As you know,  
For a bent man,  
Two feet are not enough. (33)*

While Tarit Kumar tells that 'Every four-footed animal need not be a dog!', Subba Rao Panigrahi, a Telugu poet calls upon his people to rise up from slumber and issues a clarion call to rise in revolt against the Congress rule. In his poem, 'Playing Hide and Seek', he reminds the people that 'the bag of debt grows heavier/every year. / Yet you don't get two meals a day.' And whenever they said they want food and not speeches, they got 'police sticks or bullets'. He writes about the rampant corruption and deception and incites the people 'Make up your mind-/how long will you live like dogs?' (30).

In contemporary times a lot of research work has been done on humor as a weapon, as a therapy in distressful situations. Poets often resort to the use of irony, pun and satire. The purpose is nevertheless to invoke humor. Humor in the poetry of the Naxals is represented in the following two poems.

Aghniputran, a Tamil poet refers to Mahatma Gandhi's fondness for the legendary three monkeys of see no evil, hear no evil, and speak no evil in his poem 'Repairs can be done here'. He takes a dig at the idea of the three monkeys and makes one monkey out of three. He tells the monkey to 'tear your eyeballs' 'pull out your ears' 'pluck out your lips' and 'open your cranium'. The persona attempts to have undertaken the repairs and then advises the monkey whether this act of repairing and making one out of three would make him a 'dictator, or a democrat?' (84). We know that it is no monkey business when one decides to think properly and speak out against the corrupt leaders in a so-called democracy which is at times a disguised form of dictatorship. As the saying goes that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, the thin line between democracy and dictatorship gets blurred.

Similarly Gorakh Pandey's 'The Hungry Sparrow' is a hilarious account of a sparrow that flew about in search of a grain. The poem is rich in personification and pun. The nefarious crimes of the society are outlined in a humorous vein as the sparrow's is guilty of being 'hungry without reason or rhyme'. The poem is rich with connotations such as 'brother carpenter' and 'brother sentry' 'royal granary'. Though comradeship among the Naxalites is evoked in the word brother,



the hungry sparrow finds no grain to eat and complains to the sentry 'What shall I eat? What shall I eat? The reader finds it hilarious:

*The sentry took the matter to the minister,  
The minister to the monarch.  
The monarch summoned the commander -in-chief  
Who appointed a magistrate to study the case.  
The magistrate read through reams of law,  
and argued back and forth:  
...  
News spread rapidly  
The papers carried it to end*

However, laced with humor, in the case of 'sparrow versus the grain' it is height of madness when the sparrow was finally shot to death.

It is because of such instances that the revolutionaries hope that someday they will be able to unleash the poison of their anger, bitterness and hatred. Examples of poems that reflect such ardent hope and desire are 'The Drinking Snake' and 'The Night of the Full Moon'.

In 'The Drinking Snake' by Tej Singh, a Rajasthani poet, the drinking snake appears numbed as it coils upon the master's chest. Apparently, when it leaves it will whip the master 'with his tail' and it will be 'alarmingly late' (33-34). The revolutionaries hope that someday like the drinking snake that eventually kills the person by exhaling poison will also kill the evils of capitalism.

Similarly, in 'The Night of the Full Moon', Saroj Dutta a Bengali poet uses the cobra as a metaphor for the movement. Society, like the charmer, after defanging the cobra, chokes it in basket and amuses itself as the cobra sways its 'entranced hood'. The snake, in the form of the persona, however, rejoices in hope. The hope that on the full moon night the snake that sheds its skin comes out 'afresh, smooth and dangerous!' People, 'in the revelry of their games' have forgotten that the cobra has emerged in a new skin with its 'sack of venom full to the brim' (53-54).

Here the image of the imprisoned snake and its gradual transformation into a rebel is symbolic of the gradual preparation for revenge by the oppressed classes. This is evident in the period after 1970. However, a number of revolutionaries and their sympathisers have faced death or incarceration. In fact, Saroj Dutta whose snake is symbolic of the oppressed poor was a communist journalist. He was arrested from his hideout on the midnight of 4 August 1971, and shot dead by the police in Calcutta Maidan (Banerjee, 49)

This was a common fate of many Communist revolutionaries, especially during the times when the human rights commission was neither constituted nor active, activists and even their sympathisers were often put to death or faced imprisonment without a semblance of a trial. Concomitantly, a number of their poems deal with their prison experience and life.

The poem titled, 'To You from Prison' by Srijan Sen talks about the shattered dreams of a naxalite as he writes from a prison. The poet uses metaphors of the prison bars and the 'forest of the mind' to refer to the 'cluster of red flowers'. The reader's pathos is aroused as the cries of the birds in the outside world sounds like the 'clanging of chains' (102-103).



On the other hand, Venu Gopal in his 'A Poem from Jail' refuses to be bound by the physical jail. Instead, the 'magic band' around his waist helps the prisoner to 'waft into the kingdom of sun' where he can see 'cornucopian tree of undeterred smiles and hopes' (100-101).

The poems of the Communist revolutionaries are rich and colorful. They are embellished with references to popular festivals and deities of the elite and the downtrodden. The balladeer Gaddar has penned down a poem titled 'Voli Volila Ranga Voli'. The popular Telugu refrain of the folk song of Holi festival adds a lyrical charm to the poem. The poet adds towards the end of the poem that the outcasts and the peasants from the depressed classes, the sharecroppers and the farm labourers who died, the death of all the exploited persons would be avenged as the survivors would become 'Kalis'(121-122).

The poems of the revolutionaries discussed so far offer an insight into the various moods of revolutionaries and phases of the revolution. From the disillusionment of the Land reforms act in the independent India that gave rise to their movement to their various experiences under many regimes, under the Congress rule, under the Emergency, under the Janata Party at the centre. The poems range from a sense of fire, call to action, defeat, helplessness and utter despair to an intense optimism that helps them to rise like a phoenix.

The poignancy of their poems affects the readers and makes them sympathetic to the cause they believed in. Reading the poetry written by the 'Reds' no doubt leaves the readers red at the inequalities of the society, the law and police brutalities.

What does it mean for us from the mainstream society? Some of us recoil with horror the incidents of train burning by the extremists in our own state sometime past, and their continued rampage in some states like Chhattisgarh even today. We only hope that at a time when India is shining, and the number of Indians among the billionaires in the world increases, the gap between the poor and the rich should also decrease considerably. This in turn might pave the way for the Communist revolutionaries to abstain from violence and help them to join the society.

\* All poems are indicated by the page numbers as it appears in Sumanta Banerjee's second edition.

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## **'The Morning after Death / Is Solemnest of Industries': An Enactment Of the 'Civility' Of Death in Emily Dickinson's Poetics**

***Mousumi Guha Banerjee***

Where, then, does love become life? Only after the pain – 'over there'. 'Till Death – is narrow Loving –' but then 'Love is immortality.' No wonder that immortality is 'the Flood subject'. When she and the lover had bound each other to the cross, the figure of the man blurred with that of Christ, and as she shared in the exquisite agony of His love, so she would share in His resurrection as well. Out of danger in the Eden-Heaven, all the emotional and religious frustrations which she had endured at such expense would be lost in her fulfillment in and absorption by the 'lover'; for 'years of troth have taught thee / more than Wifehood ever may!' Sometimes heaven ('Old Suitor Heaven') meant an eternity wed to God, the 'distant-stately Lover'. Then she would be 'Bride of the Father and the Son / Bride of the Holy Ghost': 'What omnipotence lies in wait / for her to be a Bride'. Sometimes Jesus was, explicitly or implicitly, the courtly gentleman, the Redeemer who became her Master; at other times she rejected Jesus for her 'lover' and looked forward to an immortality of 'you and me' in Paradise. The identity of the heavenly 'lover' – God, man, or God-man – was often indeterminate, a shape projected by the need of the isolate self. (1)

The identification of the poetic self with death appears to be overwhelmingly consummate on the one hand, and on the other, to reflect the uncertainty and unforeseen-ability of the royal 'Redeemer' as well as the accompanying doubt that tears apart the poetic mind which, in its turn, envisages the process of transmutation of life.

*There's a certain slant of light,  
Winter Afternoons –  
That oppresses, like the Heft  
Of cathedral Tunes – (2)*

Indeed, this 'certain slant of light' in 'Winter Afternoons' that oppresses like death, is a theme that we find pervading Emily Dickinson's poetics. This idea of death is nevertheless intertwined with love, underneath which run the sensibilities of despair and loss. Death, more often than not, follows from despondency and this significant perception is discernible in a handful of Dickinson's poems. In the above-mentioned poem, dejection is indubitably certain and inexorable. The expression 'heft' signifies weight, with further associations of burden and anxiety. The cathedral tunes intimidate due to the grim oppression of faith, which they implore the listener to possess. Dickinson invests the poem with a dispassionate tone, as disengaged and nonchalant as the bleakest chronicle. The expression, 'There's a certain slant of light, / Winter Afternoons –', reveals a sense of desolation, bearing an unfamiliar association. It comprises the poet's artistic tropes which lead to the creation of a mysterious thought that emerges from the juxtaposition of apparently incongruous ideas. They subsequently give rise to a wholly weird array of significance conveying one unequivocal impression. The affiliation between 'a certain slant of light' and 'Winter Afternoons' may initially seem markedly inconsistent, but both the metaphors are actually made to form one single image of 'the Heft / Of Cathedral Tunes'. This act of metaphorization is therefore apparently almost vague, and yet immaculate. The epithet 'slant' offers us an inkling of a threatening logic and, hence, the neutrality and the seeming detachment of 'Winter Afternoons' appear to perplex us with a sinister enticement emerging from the oppressive echoes of the metaphor of 'Cathedral Tunes'. At the beginning of the second stanza, this 'slant of light' inflicts 'Heavenly Hurt', thereby giving rise to a difference within: 'Where the meanings are now?' What



emerges from this ostensible distinction in the incongruously employed imagery is the manifestation of nature, which is as atypical and inexplicable as the cathedral tunes, and an inalienable music that is both devouring and beatific. Taking these metaphors together, Dickinson feels the oppressive 'heft' and, in anguish and resignation, she depicts 'An imperial affliction / Sent us of the air'. This 'affliction' casts a significant dominance over the landscape:

*When it comes, the Landscape listens –  
Shadows – hold their breath –  
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance  
On the look of Death –*

Here, we feel a certain similitude between the poet's situation and that of the 'Landscape', both experiencing the consternation. The 'slant of light' appears as being ominous and shares a hostile relationship with nature. Though there is a situational affinity between the poet and the landscape, there develops a distance between them. When the latter is tormented by dejection, which is revealed in the form of 'Shadows' holding 'their breath', the poet envisions a distant death that eventually signifies the ultimate form of reality. Distance has a close association with death in many of Dickinson's poems, particularly in her love poems, in which the non-existence of the lover is intensely felt as death. The dejection here is associated with death and is metaphorized as a 'seal' which, in its turn, symbolizes the truth of mortality that man is inevitably subject to. It is this seal that lends the poem a sense of finality as it draws towards the close.

Death is, hence, seen to approach with utter hopelessness and the close association that the two share, is prominent in the following poem:

*The difference between Despair  
And fear – is like the One  
Between the instant of a Wreck –  
And when the Wreck has been – (3)*

The above delineation offers a brusque description of the discrepancy that exists between 'despair' and 'fear', the former being associated with the moment of annihilation and the latter with the aftermath of such destruction. Despair is also associated with motionlessness and tranquillity of the 'Eye / Upon the Forehead of a Bust':

*The Mind is smooth – no Motion –  
Contented as the Eye  
Upon the Forehead of a Bust  
That knows – it cannot see – (4)*

The poet feels content with the eyes made frozen by death. The stroke of death could not take away the placidity of her mind. The poet's heart finds solace and reassurance in the realization of its trans-temporal state of existence. In yet another poem, she unravels the ecstasy she experienced, 'A perfect-paralyzing Bliss', unconditional and consummate. For Dickinson, content and despair are analogous in the sense that both the sensations are not only inalienable and commensurate, but are also immaculate.

One of the remarkable characteristics of Dickinsonian poetics is that she lends an equal form of completeness and purity to both pain and bliss. To her, both are plausible and fundamental and, hence, elated and felicitous.



Emily Dickinson's creativity entailed an essential constituent of gradual undoing, since she believed that both love and poetry are associated with visions of God and eventually lead to death. Death, in its turn, is so perfectly inevitable that it stands as being relentlessly conclusive. To Dickinson, 'To be alive – is Power' (5), since death usurps all the vitality of life revealing the fact that it is not merely apocalyptic, but it also indicates the sense of extinction of all forms of life.

As a woman writer, Dickinson perceives with a sense of anguish that 'I made my soul familiar – with her extremity – / That at the last, it should not be a novel Agony'. (6) She engages herself in the act of familiarization with the most perfect form of reality or, in the poet's words, life's 'extremity', to take on the agony that death is perceived to carry with it. It seems that the poet feels death within her and wishes the soul to be 'acquainted – / Meet tranquillity, as friends' so much so that life becomes a tranquil experience. In 'The last night that She lived' (7), Dickinson registers that 'It was a Common Night / Except the Dying – this tolls / Made Nature different'. The bemoaners are aware of all occurrences and nondescript entities are 'Italicized – as 'twere'. The impressions are rather quotidian here:

*We waited while She passed –  
It was a narrow time –  
Too jostled were Our Souls to speak  
At length the notice came.*

The mourners only look on when the departed retires. This postponement is repressive and hence the time constricting. During the spell that prefaced death, the acquaintances are shown as preparing for the funeral, resting around the corpse and assembling together. The language in Emily Dickinson's poems on death can perhaps be represented with no greater precision and profundity than in the following comment:

*The language of soul is taken from the language of body, as the language of eternity is derived from the language of time, because there is no other language. All language is, in this sense, domestic. Death poems are life poems. (8)*

Dickinson's poems on the theme of death bear testimony to the above position and it is this insight that lends them their unprecedented literary strength. She has combined the subliminal essence of language with the metaphor of domesticity to pen some of the greatest poems in the language. 'Too jostled were Our Souls to speak', as the poet strives staggeringly with her art to express her experiences and enrobe them with language. 'Jostled' is emblematic of a thespian urge mingled with an implication of the idea of domesticity, making another certainty very clear: what is trans-experiential has to either acknowledge a 'finite language' (9) or remain silent. As the poem concludes, the grievers feel reassured to go back to their lives – 'And then an awful leisure was / Belief to regulate' – and to usher in 'a discipline domestic in its language, esoteric in its particular application'. (10) The repertory of words that Dickinson uses in her poetry is greatly dependent on the metaphor of domesticity, which is expressed with such grace that her poetry becomes a novel art, particularly because the expressions she employs do not associate semantically with such domestic commonality. Hence, her sense of rapture, that marks the poems as quintessentially Dickinsonian, usually offers a fallacious impression, though later it is perceived to be unobtrusively true:

*I died for Beauty – but was scarce  
Adjusted in the Tomb ... (11)*



Perhaps, the magnificence of Dickinson's verse lies in the fact that she deploys an apparently nondescript language with such skill that her authorial craftsmanship can seldom be disputed. The convergence of subtle ideas and a seemingly unpretentious language leads to the formation of a heightened form of creation:

*I heard a Fly buzz – when I died –  
The Stillness in the Room  
Was like the Stillness in the Air –  
Between the Heaves of Storm – (12)*

This prologue to Poem 465 demonstrates that the speaker speaks after her death, an occasion when she could sense the tranquil ambience of the 'Room' to be in consonance with the unstirring peacefulness of the 'Air'. The mourners have gathered around and the metaphors of 'Eyes' and 'Breaths' usher in a kind of backdrop representative of a deathbed scene:

*The Eyes around – had wrung them dry –  
And Breaths were gathering firm  
For that last Onset – when the King  
Be witnessed – in the Room –*

Such a doleful episode is 'interposed' by 'a Fly' with 'Blue – uncertain stumbling Buzz / Between the light – and me – / And then the Windows failed – and then / I could not see to see –.' Death alienates the speaker from life, represented primarily by the 'Eyes' and 'Breaths' and more significantly by the 'Fly' with its 'stumbling Buzz'. 'That last Onset' (the third word conspicuous by a whimsical yet a connotative Dickinsonian upper case) was corroborated by the fact that 'the Windows failed – and then / I could not see to see –.' The poet feels anxious and distraught by the 'blueness' and uncertainty of the finality of her being and she can feel life, being on the threshold of death, from the stirrings of the emblematic fly. This onslaught obscures her vision and she is eventually distanced from the 'light' of creativity by the fly, the inspiring Muse, whizzing past the 'Windows' and shutting her from the outside world, that is much opposed to her wish and desire. The sense of alienation from the world of human existence creates in the poet a consciousness of futility and nothingness. This act of 'nihilization' gives birth to a feeling of numbness as far as her ability of self-definition through poetry is concerned.

Another remarkable instance of Dickinsonian theorization of death is Poem 712, where the poet delineates her own conceptual world, familiarizing the ultimate truth of mortality with the commonality of the domestic truth of survival. The poet conjures up a stage, whereupon the actors play their parts:

*Because I could not stop for Death –  
He kindly stopped for me –  
The Carriage held but just Ourselves –  
And Immortality. (13)*

It is true that while 'Yeats speaks of "that discourtesy of death", Emily Dickinson enacts its civility'. (14) We find an entirely different portrayal of death in this poem to what we found in 'I heard a Fly buzz'. The patrician here comes down and accompanies the lady to the 'Carriage'. The poem brings us close to the reminiscences of Robert Browning's 'The Last Ride Together', with which it has been compared:



*What if we still ride on, we too  
With life forever old yet new,  
Changed not in kind but in degree,  
The instant made eternity ...*

Not only did Emily Dickinson read the poem with care, but she was also moved by a line in the second stanza: 'So one day more am I deified'. However, she departed from the Browningesque thought of deification of the self which, together with the other, has come to constitute, for her, the 'me'. In Dickinson, 'we' comprises the self, and Death, the other. The speaker observes all the happenings of the phenomenal world and 'slowly' drives towards 'Eternity' accompanied by remarkable 'Civility'. She virtually succumbs to the gentleman in the 'Carriage', but her experience of life is barely melancholic. She does not fail to recognize the 'School, where Children strove / at Recess – in the Ring –', 'the Fields of Gazing Grain –', 'the Setting Sun –', each of which is nonetheless important to the speaker's perception of life. The reader feels somewhat struck by the conjectural antithesis she puts forward in the terminal stanza:

*Since then – 'tis Centuries – and yet  
Feels shorter than the Day  
I first surmised the Horses' Heads  
Were toward Eternity –*

The verse here perhaps lays itself bare to our presupposition that the poet-speaker reconciles herself to 'Eternity' without any protest, but she does yearn for those apparently insignificant temporal events, which provide her with the essential constituent elements for her poetry. A later poem that can be brought into context as an analogous text here is Poem 1445, where Dickinson personifies death as 'the supple Suitor / That wins at last'. (15) Both the poems portray death with an overtone of care and tenderness. In this poem, the progress towards death is demonstrated not as a ride towards immortality, but as 'a stealthy Wooing / Conducted first / By pallid innuendoes / And din approach'. The essence of these lines of verse differs from that of the former poem in that it brings forth a different portrayal of death, from which we feel a magnificent theme to be at work. The grandeur and flamboyance of 'Because I could not stop for Death' lie in the dignified, solemn and slow drive across the outstretched vista of the countryside and the courteous gentleman, who 'paused before a House' – which was almost in ruins – to enable the driven to catch a glimpse of the threatened existence of the derelict construction. Hence, the conclusion is characterized by a contemplative aftermath sans the sonorous 'Bugles'. The juxtaposition of two strikingly assorted images of death – the act of kindly stopping for the poet-speaker so that 'The Carriage held but just Ourselves' on the one hand, and on the other, that of stealthily wooing primarily by 'pallid innuendoes', braving 'at last with Bugles' and bearing away 'in triumph / To Troth unknown' – evokes a distinctive array of multifarious modes of signification that perhaps confounds the poet herself and causes her to struggle to convey the uncertainty of this finality that stealthily approaches, but surely destroys.

We do, of course, perceive the elegance of Dickinson's verse that lies in its ability to thrive upon such commonplace domestic ingredients. It seems she conceptualizes her own universe of thoughts, which considerably draws upon the apparently mundane experiences, and through an extraordinary act of poetic creation she subsequently transcends them to form a trans-temporal reality. This unique element of calm self-confidence in the poetic persona is discernible in another poem:



*The Bustle in a House  
The Morning after Death  
Is solemnest of industries  
Enacted upon Earth –*

*The Sweeping of the Heart  
And putting Love away  
We shall not want to use again  
Until Eternity. (16)*

Thus death, for Dickinson in this poem, comes as a lover and Albert J. Gelpi appositely puts it in the following way:

*... since death was crowned with power, he came as a lover-king; since death justified the "Guilt" of love, he came as a lover-redeemer. Dying itself was merely the passage, often depicted as a carriage ride, to love, coronation, heaven. (17)*

We find one instance of this idea in the inaugural stanza of 'Because I could not stop for Death'. In this context, another poem (Poem 1123) is worth referring to as it speaks of the 'tender Carpenter' nailing the coffin down implying death of the lover on the one hand, and the metaphor of the 'sovereign Carpenter' or Christ who is indicative of death, on the other. This act of metaphorization might not be very consciously achieved by the poet but such a purport is almost effortlessly expected, considering the magnificence of linguistic workmanship evident in Dickinson's verse. Hence, we find in her poetry a significant plethora of images of death, where she refers to death as 'democratic': 'The Beggar and his Queen / Propitiate this Democrat.' This description of death as a 'Democrat', along with the fact that 'Death's large – Democratic fingers / Rub away the Brand' of 'Color – Caste – Denomination –', did not seem adequate to her, since the idea of death could not merely be implicated with the notion of an enigmatic equalizer and destroyer. She does not also ignore the fact that death's imperial sovereignty accords 'One dignity' to all the subjects, each one of whom is not dispossessed of the enormous prerogative owned by her or him. Thus it can justly be maintained that, '... the brides of death were democrat-queens; the kingdom of death was an egalitarian Empire of Czars as small as Everyman'. (18)

Death may be ambivalent, unpredictable, cryptic and speculative, but love, for Dickinson, is certain, invariable, and unwavering. It is this momentum that invigorates life, transcends the spatio-temporal sense of death and brings about resurrection. To put it in her own words, it is 'anterior to Life – / Posterior to Death'. (19) It is a journey towards immortality, where the throes of love find fulfilment 'in ravished Holiness' accompanied by an excruciating 'Anger grander than Delight' as well as a riotous 'Transport wild as thrills the Graves'. Dickinson here is perplexed by her own anxiety of authorship. She expresses her disquietude by saying, 'I cannot live with You – ... I could not die – with You – ... Nor could I rise – with You –', the experience ultimately leading to despondency and eventual resignation: 'that White Sustenance – / Despair'. (20) The idea of immortality is almost everywhere in Dickinson's poetry and the juxtaposition of the apparently irreconcilable thoughts of hope and despair is astonishing. The poet even associated immortality with consciousness and with flashes of subtle insight. She contemplated immortality as the only inevitable phenomenon, bearing a profound significance as love and death, and revealing for her 'an existential state of mind and feeling'. (21) It is the consciousness, an inseparable human faculty, that enables the poet to experience such a beatific and 'deathless' moment. She could experience love in its agony, death in its destruction, and immortality in its unique palpability, through her secluded poetic self.



Dickinson was gifted with an amazing sense of artistry to imbibe and transform the Romantic convention of deployment of language into such a form of linguistic usage that unfolds 'the identity of the exclusive self'. (22) There is a complete identification of the poetic self with the sepulchre, particularly due to the essence of solitude the latter bears; nature now can barely be understood to exist outside the poet, who herself becomes the very objects she experiences and writes about:

*The setting is understood to contain the writer in the act of writing: the poet in the grip of what he feels and sees, and primitively inspired to carve it in the living rock. (23)*

The setting for Dickinson is truly the poetic self that has itself transformed, through the act of writing, into a 'living rock' upon which is epigraphed a multitude of experiences of love and affliction:

*I've dropped my Brain – My Soul is numb –  
The Veins that used to run  
Stop palsied – 'tis Paralysis  
Done perfecter on stone. (24)*

This metaphor of 'Paralysis', and the palsied 'Veins that used to run' are all engraved 'perfecter' on the stone of the self. In an analysis of Poem 341, 'After great pain, a formal feeling comes' (25), Charles R. Anderson explores the 'symbols of crystallization' and the essence of the stone as conceived by Dickinson:

*As the images of a funeral rite subside, two related ones emerge to body forth the victim who is at once a living organism and a frozen form. Both are symbols of crystallization: "Freezing" in the snow, which is neither life nor death but both simultaneously; and 'A Quartz contentment like a stone', for the paradoxical serenity that follows intense suffering. This recalls her envy of the 'little Stone', happy because unconscious of the exigencies that afflict mortals, and points forward to the paradox in another poem, 'Contended as despair'. Such is the 'formal feeling' that comes after great pain. It is, ironically no feeling at all, only numb rigidity existing outside time and space. (26)*

Another instance shows Dickinson transforming from a living and throbbing being into a lifeless fragment of marble:

*Vitality is Carved and cool.  
My nerve in Marble lies –  
A breathing Woman  
Yesterday – Endowed with Paradise.*

She, being now 'Endowed with Paradise', toils hard to retrieve herself from this transfiguration in the expectation of going back to her earlier state of life, when her actions were not fettered by the catastrophic power of such fatality:

*Who wrought Carrara in me  
And chiselled all my tune  
Were it a witchcraft – were it death –  
I've still a chance to strain*



*To Being, somewhere – Motion – Breath  
Though Centuries beyond,  
And every limit a Decade –  
I'll shiver, satisfied. (27)*

Through this yearning of the soul, echoes the Christian belief of resurrection. Dickinson has endorsed the most intense expressions of the barrow to demonstrate her inexplicable predicament. Subtle as Dickinson's strokes of significance are, she goes to the extent of imparting emotional implications to her verse. The unidentified 'Who' wrought a blotch in her and 'chiselled' all her 'time' – an act that causes a numbness in her sensations, requiring her to strive for centuries to resuscitate her tortured self, and a sense of agitation which causes her to ruminate. The poet's consternation is nevertheless perceptible in many of her poems in which we can also trace an experience of agony and soreness, engraved on the marble of her consciousness.

This image of a perfect art on the stone of the self does not, however, necessarily pivot on the affliction threatened by an anonymous 'who'. Dickinson envisages the circumstance after death in one of her early poems of 1860:

*If I shouldn't be alive  
When the Robins come,  
Give the one in Red Cravat  
A memorial crumb.*

*If I couldn't thank you,  
Being fast asleep,  
You will know I'm trying  
With my Granite lip! (28)*

The poet feels the granite within her and the stone precludes her from communicating with the living. She goes on straining herself to express her thoughts on the one hand, and on the other, she gives in to the competence of the breathing self of the other. What agonizes the female poet here is the oppression she feels at not being able to articulate her experience of the world. She would find herself greatly relieved if the pulsating other can perform the generous task of apportioning a 'memorial crumb' to the Robin, an act that will, by its virtue, perpetuate the poet's elevated task. The poet here becomes the stone and yet endeavours infinitely to struggle against the forced silence that her 'Granite lip' has disagreeably cast her into. Joanne Feit Diehl analyses the situation rather felicitously:

*The granite lip, rendered incapable of speech, is controlled by a "will" which supersedes the body's capacity to respond – effort outlasts mortality. The struggle of the granite lip to speak after death acknowledges the effort of the vital being as it confronts the pressures that urge her into silence; hence the need of another voice, the voice of the reader, who wins the poet's stifled thanks for carrying out the generous task of giving a crumb to a bird, the "memorial crumb" which keeps the poet's memory alive. (29)*

This identification of the self with the stone, resulting in a 'psychic numbing', metaphorically finds expression in the poem 'After great pain, a formal feeling comes –', with an overwhelming sense of stupefaction:

*After great pain, a formal feeling comes –  
The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs –*



*The stiff Heart, questions was it He, that bore,  
And Yesterday, or Centuries before?*

Death brings to the poet an unnerving sensation and this psychic numbness casts her into an eternal oblivion. Here again, she self-metamorphoses into stone. The poet talks of the numbing of the senses by indicating specifically the physical positions of the nerves, heart and the feet:

*The Feet, mechanical, go round –  
Of ground, or Air, or Ought –  
A Wooden way  
Regardless grown,  
A Quartz contentment, like a stone –*

The self provides the background to the poem and is itself marked by a stark inanity and emptiness. The direction of movement remains unknown to the inane self, stumbling as on 'A Wooden way', yet 'Regardless', and betraying 'A Quartz contentment', itself being transformed into a stone:

*This is the Hour of Lead –  
Remembered, if outlived,  
As Freezing persons, recollect the Snow –  
First – Chill – then Stupor – then the letting go – (30)*

The self gradually sails from consciousness to 'Stupor' and the transition is 'the Hour of Lead', the hour of slipping into unconsciousness beyond all spatio-temporal materiality of human existence. The entire saga of life ultimately consists of this peregrination to death, that ushers in 'a formal feeling' and 'Quartz contentment'. The irony intended by the epithet 'quartz' can barely be overlooked. The inherent malaise and anxiety seems very evident and the poet is apprehensive about confronting 'the Hour of Lead'. Oblivion prevents her creativity and the cessation that death causes to her thought is perhaps the eternal 'letting go' of her poetic faculty to communicate to the world of the living.

Death, seen in its myriad perspectives, brings Dickinson to describe herself as a corpse in one of her verses, and hence this has provoked a critic to consider the representation as one of Dickinson's 'most obviously hostile autobiographical poems'. (31) This poem exhibits a transformation of the subject, who envisages her own death as having 'the charm of a genre painting', and illustrates the fact that 'a change of voice is a change of style' for her:

*'Twas just this time, Last year. I died.  
I know I heard the Corn,  
When I was Carried by the Farms –  
It had the Tassels on –*

The poet laments at being deprived of the 'Christmas glee', and the 'drama' of the 'common day' torments her since she plays a character who does not take part in the immense mirth of the Thanksgiving celebration:

*I wondered which would miss me, least,  
And when Thanksgiving, came.*



*If Father'd multiply the plates –  
To make an even Sum – (32)*

The nostalgia, the pain of a relational familiarity, and the sense of lack, emerging from the inability to associate the physically dead self with the temporality of the earthly happenings, cause an overwhelming melancholy in the omniscient poet-narrator. She clings on to the reminiscences as a source of consolation for her reclusiveness and passionately craves to go back to the moment she once cherished. The poet wishes to script the never-ending 'theatre' of life and she records it in her immortal verses. Her life is undesirably put an end to by an unsolicited and immature death which becomes the cause of her angst, since she is forced to take an objective stance that impairs expression and necessitates insufferable silence and passivity.

As we examine the authorial intention in the poems, 'How many times these low feet staggered –' (33) and ' 'Twas just this time, last year, I died', (the second poem dated two years later), we find that the poet is quick enough to take a trans-thematic leap from individual emotions and sensibilities, which are often confused and nebulous, to a kind of poetry dispossessed of the cares and obligations of the self.

A writer, who has over 1700 poems to her credit and 1000 known letters, is seldom voiceless. Instead, Dickinson appears to condemn silence, not only because she endorses the supremacy of words, but since she is rather prone to be even more skeptical about the effectiveness of silence. She is a poet who scarcely glorifies silence and begins a poem with 'Silence is all we dread':

*There's ransom in a Voice –  
But Silence is Infinity.  
Himself have not a voice. (34)*

What Dickinson was anxious about was the way in which she would make silence 'a part of the linguistic experience' (35):

*There is no Silence in the Earth – so silent.  
As that endured  
Which uttered, would discourage Nature  
And haunt the World. (36)*

Silence, for Dickinson, may be discouraging since it implies an event of ghastly death that appalls and intimidates. It may denote an utter disengagement rather than a rapturous union. E. Miller Budick describes it as 'the lonesome, eternal distance created by a "ransom" or a redemption that dangles unattainably beyond humankind's reach'. (37) The consternation of the poet arises from the fact that it is language that can contort meaning, and silence thus signifies the 'absence of meaning, the ultimate cosmic default' (38), creating a void that renders all poetic expression impossible. Hence, in poem 1296, Dickinson says:

*Death's Waylaying not the sharpest  
Of the thefts of Time –  
There Marauds a sorer Robber,  
Silence – is his name –  
No Assault, nor any Menace  
Doth betoken him.*



*But from Life's consummate Cluster –  
He supplants the Balm.*

The poet is clearly apprehensive of the threatening marauder called 'Silence', that 'supplants' not only 'Life's consummate Cluster', but is itself more perilous than 'Death's Waylaying'. Thus silence can even unsettle meanings and cause them to cease, not to talk of conveying significances that 'lie magically beyond human verbalization'. (39) As Dickinson implies in another poem:

*Great Streets of silence led away.  
To Neighborhoods of Pause –  
Here was no Notice – no Dissent  
No Universe – no Laws (40)*

We find here that silence obliterates all laws of the Universe leading only to an eternal and devastating 'Pause'. It has rendered all earthly time as well as language meaningless. Language fails to generate meaning and hence renders the poet incapable of expression. Thus silence accompanies death, a reality that utterly separates a dead person from all forms of breathing life. The distance is unending and unbridgeable. Only some tender impressions like 'little Workmanships / In Crayon, or in Wool', 'The Thimble', 'The stitches', 'A Book' and the exiguous pencil 'Etchings' (41), remain. These are seemingly insignificant objects on which the poet thrives, with the help of which she creates and from which she derives her expression. Hence, death and silence may rob off the poet's precious acquaintances, but not her power of self-expression.

### End Notes & References

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## **Outsider's Gaze: Exploring Nadeem Aslam *The Wasted Vigil*** **Namita Singh**

A writer writing about a country he does not belong to, positions himself as an outsider that is far away from him plays the role of an outsider. The position of such writer can be compared to a camera taking the picture of an object from a distance. His writing about a particular country can be compared to the picture taken by the eye of a camera.

The outsider's perspective generally argues that access to authentic knowledge is more obtainable because of the objectivity and scientific detachment with the society or a group. While the proponents of the insider perspective claims that group membership provides special insight into matters based on one's knowledge of the language, intuitive sensitivity, empathy and understanding of the culture and its people.

On the wake of 9/11 Afghanistan came into focus and it inspired literature around the globe. The position of insider and outsider becomes important in case of Afghanistan as several Afghan and non-Afghan writers came forward with their writings about the country. The literature produced about Afghanistan can be categorized into the writers like Nadeem Aslam and Yasmina Khadra who do not belong to Afghanistan and they are the members of neighbouring countries that are directly or indirectly impacted by the political scenario of Afghanistan and the diasporic Afghan writers like Tamim Ansary and Khaled Hosseini who immigrated from Afghanistan due to the socio-political upheaval in the country. While staying in the host country they are writing about the conditions prevailing in their homeland out of the sense of responsibility and the feeling of nostalgia for their past. The writers from both the categories are the distant observer of their country because both of them are not the inhabitants of the country about which they are writing. Being distant observers, the authenticity of their work especially that of the non Afghan writers, as an insider or an outsider becomes suspected. Like the Afghan writers, the non Afghan writers also took interest in the political and social scenario of the country. Their writings present a vivid picture of Afghanistan to the world. The authenticity of the outsider's gaze or views need to be checked because an outsider is a non member and he is not linked to the historical past of the country and is not rooted in the culture he is writing about. Hence his experiences about the country are not that close as of an insider. An outsider, views the situation of a particular country or thing from distance while an insider himself experiences those situations.

The propagation of the concept of global village points at the shrinking of distances due to the advancement in fields of media and communication affecting geographical, cultural and also psychological arenas. Globalization initiated trade agreements, unified currencies, and disappearing borders and it has also created choices to people that were not available before. The changes wrought by the forces unleashed by globalization give rise to the paradox, redefining both what is "foreign" and what constitutes "home".

With the advent of low-budget communication facilities the physical distance between East and West is decreasing resulting in shrinking of psychological distance too. Therefore seeing the world' even as an outsider has become comparatively easier. There are writers like Ahmad Rashid and Rohan Gunaratna who do not belong to Afghanistan, though born and brought up in neighbouring countries are keen observers of the situation in Afghanistan from outside. Nadeem Aslam too can be placed in this category. He belongs to the Muslim Community and his country has socio-political and cultural connection with Afghanistan. Happenings in Afghanistan directly or indirectly impact the peace in their own countries. Being Muslim, the writer can relate to the



culture of Afghanistan being an Islamic Nation is also a Muslim country. The common roots become the reason for his writing about the situations prevailing in Afghanistan to which he can relate.

Can culture be understood by an outsider from an outside point of view? Or does an insider's gaze generate more insight of the situation prevailing in a country. In this regard, the cultural theorist Joanne Martin raises a simple question: Is culture an objective or subjective phenomenon? The position of an outsider can be discussed "through observation" and the Insider "through participation". Both positions can assert authority, the spectator position which claims the advantages of distance and detachment, and the participant position which claims that only through intimacy and involvement. The outsider in this scenario becomes an insider as he is granted to view the world from a different point of view. Vision can refer to what is seen but it can also refer to what is unseen or absent and therefore, the outsider has the advantage of not only seeing the unusual but also the invisible, seeing things that are non-existent. It is not the status of an insider or of an outsider matter, a person's distinctive and interactive role in the process of truth seeking matters.

The writer's desire to look at the world from the 'outside' and his actual position, as a key element in how one perceives the world is paradoxical. Thus, he could be described as a non-participating participant, as he needs to be aware of both: his subject and an image of his subject. In that sense, the writer constantly drifts in and out of different ways of perceiving his environment as it is important to be as concerned with perceptions of reality as reality itself. The writers perceiving the socio-political and cultural scenario of Afghanistan as a non-participant observer considered as outsiders. Nadeem Aslam is a writer originally from Pakistan who fled with his family to England when the regime threatened communists like his father. He published two novels about Pakistani culture, but *The Wasted Vigil* is his first novel about the socio-political complications prevailing in Afghanistan. He has visited Afghanistan extensively and after researching the land, its history, and interviewing refugees, Aslam brings a story that is tragic, painful, poignant, and political.

*The Wasted Vigil* is about remembering the past that haunts the characters in contemporary Afghanistan. Nadeem Aslam before starting his novel quotes Jimmy Carter, president of America in which he questions the legitimacy of rise of Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan and the collapse of Soviet Empire. Hence, indicating the writer's concern about the politics of Afghanistan. Both the rise of Taliban and the cold war proved dangerous for the world politics. As an outsider Nadeem Aslam is able to observe the situation of Afghanistan from the perspective of a distant observer. *The Wasted Vigil* spans 30 years of the conflict in Afghanistan which has now transformed into the front line of the 'war on terror' by the west. In the novel, the writer ranges across the country's ancient and modern history, punctuating his narrative with cross-cultural allusions. The characters of the novel are international figures; a Briton, a Russian and an American, representing the players of recent history. None was born in Afghanistan, but all are connected to the country by loss. They represent different world-views that are diverging greatly from each other. Russians, Americans and Afghans come together through a series of incidents and find themselves in a house in ruins but imbued with memories and symbolizing humanity. At one level, all the characters seem to stand for the forces that have shaped modern Afghanistan - an English doctor, a Russian woman, an American gem trader, another American spy, an Afghan woman who wants to run a school, and a troubled Afghan who wants to rid his country of all foreigners and non-believers. Marcus, an elderly Englishman lives alone near the Tora Bora Mountains. His Afghan wife and daughter are dead. A Russian woman named Lara arrives at his house searching for her brother, a soldier in the Soviet army who went missing in the 1980s.



David, a former CIA operative, has arrived on a search of his own. The story of their linked pasts is revealed in collage. Unafraid of political complexity, Nadeem Aslam is also unflinching in his examination of depravity - of torture, rape and violence. Yet his writing sensitively portrays tenderness.

Aslam took outsiders in the novel as his characters that are intricately connected with each other. The introduction of the foreign characters from the other nations in the novel brings in the outsider's perspective as he asserts in an interview that the reason for representing foreigners in his novel set in Afghanistan is, that he does not belong to Afghanistan himself and being an outsider he wanted to depict the perception of the First World countries and the other neighbouring countries on the affairs of Afghanistan.

The insider's doctrine given by Merton holds that the outsider has a structurally imposed incapacity to comprehend alien groups, statuses, cultures and societies. Unlike the insider, the outsider has neither been socialized in the group nor has engaged in the run of experience that makes up his life, and therefore cannot have the direct, intuitive sensitivity that makes empathic understanding possible. In contrary to the above statement Nadeem Aslam as an outsider has successfully shown a realistic imagery of Afghanistan.

He has taken up the issue of the missing girls in Vietnam, the early days of Soviet space programme and, more ambitiously, the spread of Buddhism in Afghanistan along with while the core of the novel which is made up of intersecting lives destroyed by the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

The story centres on the house of Marcus Caldwell an Englishman who had spent a major part of his life in Afghanistan and married an Afghan woman. Marcus' home, like Afghanistan, is the graveyard of a great, distinctive, violated, moth-eaten culture protected within the shambled remains of shell-shocked walls. A Russian woman named Lara came to Afghanistan to the house of Marcus in search of her brother who was in army during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Lara stays as a guest in the house of Marcus. She gives the reason for her presence in Afghanistan. "...she said that a quarter of a century ago her brother had entered Afghanistan as a soldier with the soviet army, and that he was one of the one who never returned home. She is here this time because she has learnt that Marcus's daughter might have known the young Soviet man". (7)

The writer gives the information about The First World intervention of Afghanistan that led it towards destruction. The information given by Lara about her lost brother serves as a medium for Nadeem Aslam to throw light on the history of Russian invasion of Afghanistan. During the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, several soldiers were displaced from their home and lost in war and they never returned to Russia. The writer explores the repercussions of war where both the sides involved have to bear the brunt of violence. The novel brings out the paradoxes inherent in a war situation. As a Nation Russia is the perpetrator of violence but at an individual level Russian soldiers too become victims of violence they initiate:

*Always hungry, always ill, the weak soviet antibiotics of little use if ever they were to be had, many soldiers had thought of and talked about deserting about defecting an arc of movement in their minds, from Afghanistan to a country in Western Europe perhaps even the United States of America. (28).*



The atrocities of the Soviet invasion followed by the civil war in Afghanistan and after that the rise of Taliban. He also gives the reference of 9/11 attacks and the American invasion of Afghanistan.

*This country was one of the greatest tragedies of the age; Torn to pieces by many hands of war, by various hatreds, and failings of the world.*

Nadeem Aslam has put a deep insight into the situation that prevailed during the rule of the superpowers in Afghanistan one after another. Through Lara's visit and the difficulties she faced during the visit, Nadeem Aslam throws light on the connection of Russia with Afghanistan and the views of a Russian towards Afghanistan have been projected. When she enters the house of Marcus as a guest, she finds a large mirror hanging on the wall:

*The mirror is large - if it was water she could dive and disappear into it without touching the sides. On the wide ceiling, are hundreds of books; each held in place by an iron nail hammered through it (5).*

The depiction of books nailed on the ceiling reflected through the mirror states the literary destruction that occurred during the time of Taliban regime where the books, kites, paintings or any kind of artwork was banned. Qatrina, the Afghan wife of Marcus had nailed the books on the ceiling, so that they might be protected from being burned or destroyed by the Taliban. The act of nailing the books and burying artefacts highlights the regressive approach of Taliban and at the same time keeps her alive in the memory of her husband. The past seems to be buried in the house in the form of books and the pieces of art, but it lies just beneath the surface, or stuck on the ceiling.

*Beginning on the ground floor, each of the first five rooms was dedicated to one of the five senses, and as the courtship slowly progressed over the following weeks, the couple went from one to the next. (11).*

There were portraits and paintings on the walls of the house, but Marcus has smeared mud over them because the Taliban do not permit art. Aslam writes about those books implicating Taliban for its destruction of history, interpersonal relationships and faith:

*A spike driven through the pages of history, a spike through the pages of love, a spike through the sacred.*

Marcus gifts to the guests a book each from his collection so that when they disperse around the globe they could recognize each other through them. There is a connection forged through these books:

*Perhaps everyone who comes here should be given one so that no matter where they are in the world they can recognize each other in a fellowship of wounds. (9)*

Here the books given by Marcus to his guests serve as the token of remembrance and are also the messengers to the world about the socio-political destruction of Afghanistan. Merton asserts:

*...only through continued socialization in the life of a group can one become fully aware of its symbolism and social shared realities. Only so can one understand the fine grained meanings of behaviour, feelings and values.*



In the same way in order to become fully aware of the problems of Afghans Nadeem Aslam himself visited the country and stayed there for two months. He talked to and interviewed people about their reaction to the contemporary scenario. Burgess's theory is applicable on the work done by Nadeem Aslam as an outsider. Burgess writes:

*'Being a stranger, an outsider in the social setting, gives the researcher scope to stand back and abstract material from the research experience'.*

Similarly Nadeem Aslam has used his experiences, thoughts, memories and emotions in his novel. Through the characters of *The Wasted Vigil* he has presented the information he got from the war torn Afghanistan. Both physically and psychologically people of Afghanistan were devastated by Taliban. Suffocating rules and regulations regarding their freedom made their life miserable. After the Taliban lost power the country people were not only happy but also psychologically relieved. The loss of power of Taliban was welcomed by the people who were relieved to be free of its tyrannical regime. There was a sense of freedom and people celebrated by breaking the taboos laid down by Taliban:

*There is hunger that declares itself only while it is being satisfied, and so for the next dozen hours he listened to music without pause, cassettes on every surface around him.(18).*

A drawback of being a writer with an outsider's view is that Nadeem Aslam being a 'non-member', a term used by Merton, is not aware of the history of the country he is writing about. His lack of knowledge regarding history makes his writing questionable. Nadeem Aslam uses his resources and materials in an attempt to access the History of Afghanistan. He traces several historical events in *The Wasted Vigil*. The historical events are intertwined with the personal lives of the characters:

*Continuing downwards and around the mass, they understood that they were excavating the head of a great Buddha lying on its side..... too heavy to move, he decided to continue with his plan for the factory with the head in it... (19).*

In the above lines Nadeem Aslam hints at the destruction of the Giant Bamiyaan Statues by the Taliban. Being an outsider, the writer does not give the elaborate details of how the destruction was caused but the excavated head of the Buddha found near the house of Marcus is indicative of the cultural destruction of National treasure by fundamentalist group of Taliban.

Like Tamim Ansary and Khaled Hosseini, Nadeem Aslam too portrays the peaceful days of Afghanistan, years before the Taliban came to power. The British character, Marcus recalls the days when the women of Kabul were independent and confident and they had the right to choose their husbands. Aslam specifies that in all recorded history there have been just 29 years without a war in Afghanistan and the Taliban regime was the most oppressive period for people, especially for women and children:

*...their childhoods; the hunger, the refugee camps, the death one by one of the adults around them due to various cases, the orphanages, the beatings and worse, the earning of daily bread as beggars or labourers in the bazaars.(56)*

Marcus too had to pay for his own freedom. Under the Taliban regime, Both Marcus and his wife Qatrina had to go through severe tortures. The left hand of Marcus was cut off for the crime of being a foreigner and a painter. His doctor wife Qatrina was forced to officiate, to sever



the hand. The official mutilation was carried out as a medical procedure to prevent him from bleeding to death. The brutality of the violence is heightened as years later Qatrina is stoned to death for her 'illegitimate' relationship with Marcus. A marriage of several decades is annulled and termed adultery as the ceremony was performed by a woman during the era of monarchy.

*A public spectacle after the Friday prayers, the stoning of sixty one years old adulterers; A rain of bricks and rocks, her punishment for living in sin, void in the eyes of the Taliban because the ceremony had been conducted by a female. (34).*

Writers like Khaled Hosseini, Tamim Ansary, being away from their homeland, observing the situation and conditions prevailing in Afghanistan from their host land. Do they have any claim to voicing the dilemma that Afghanistan is facing? This leads to the questioning of the authenticity of the views of Diasporas whether they are writing about the host land or the homeland. There is a problematization of the concept of belonging. Are the diasporic writers, insiders or outsiders when they are writing about their ancestral land? While living away from Afghanistan, can they justify their creative writings that deal with situations in ancestral land? These are questions that remain unsolved in the mind of the reader. They are born in Afghanistan and have spent their childhood there and hence can be referred to as insiders. They are acquainted with the condition of their country through lived experiences. Their displacement due to socio-political or personal reasons made them distanced physically from the society in their land of birth. However to be excluded from a group, organization or society requires ideological separation. Differences in opinion, belief or background resulting from their Diasporic experiences also emerge as the motive for spatial division. There is a sense of being an outsider with an emotional and physical distance from the homeland.

Like an artist, a writer also requires a corporal distance between subject and object of perception in the world of aesthetics, a writer can view things more clearly from his location as an outsider. Physical intimacy and deeper understanding would be equally impossible without having contemplated the object of fascination from a distance. Despite the outsider's distance from the subject's world, the influence on his perception of the subject should not be underestimated. In that regard, the definition of outsider and insider is not clear. It is difficult to differentiate between being located 'outside' and 'inside'. What is an outsider? This is a question that under certain circumstances is not easy to answer. The ideological manifestation of being 'outside' is however a vital starting point that induces a further definition. The outsider's perception embraces the notion of distance on mainly psychological and physical levels.

Although the outsider might be a part of the culture that he is studying, he might not understand the subculture, which points to the need for bracketing assumptions. Nadeem Aslam projects the fanatical and non-secular approach in religion through the words of Casa and depicts the extremism of terrorists and their obsession with their religion.

The issue of the researcher as an outsider or an insider to the group studied is an important one that has received increasing exploration by social scientists, often because they find themselves studying a group to which they are not a member. Though Nadeem Aslam is a non-member who do not belong to Afghan culture or society but one thing he has common with Afghan culture is Islam. This is the reason that his perception can be counted as an insider to some extent.



The emotions expressed by the writer in this novel are about certain outside processes politics, public morality, etc. that interfere with everyday life and with basic human emotions. There is a need to find hope and solace.

*The Wasted Vigil*, is a literary recognition of the anguish and persistence of the Afghans both inside and out of Afghanistan. Aslam has perfected the technique of using language to portray reality affectively. It connects people in a mesmerizing story of loss, memory and pain. Aslam's cast represent most of the factions involved in Afghanistan's long running civil war, in which local warlords, the Soviet invasion, Taliban insurgents and a western alliance waging its so-called "war on terror" have all played their part. Aslam draws parallels between the motives, and indeed the methods, of the various combatants. The jihadis and the CIA operative are both in their own ways believers who feel threatened, and whose primary loyalty is not to personal relationships or fellow humans but to nations and ideals. The reason for the incompetence of an outsider may be rooted in the difference in language, superficial knowledge and the lack of attachment with the country about which he is writing. From this point of view, Nadeem Aslam's perspective as an outsider is not wholly incompetent because he shares the same religion and language. Having the common grounding in religious beliefs and geographical connections, Nadeem Aslam's stance can be seen as that of an insider-outsider.

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## Differing Perceptions of the Protagonist and His Mental Conflicts in Judith Guest's *Ordinary People*

**Radhakrishnan C. & Olive Thambi**

### Introduction

Judith Guest is a screen writer and novelist, her successful novel *Ordinary People* (1976) propelled her fame as a best-selling author. The novel is adapted into an award-winning film directed by Robert Redford. *Second Heaven* (1982) is also much-admired more audience not like first novel. These novels are merely set in contemporary middle-class suburbia. Guest's introduces her characters especially troubled adolescence males as a central figure. The characters are struggled with problems such as: suicide, depression, divorce, and child abuse. These similar themes reflect in her first two novels. Guest's *Ordinary People* begins with the line, "To have reason to get up in the morning, it is necessary to possess a guiding principle" (Guest 1976:1). The author mentions bumper stickers as means of expressing what that principle can be for different people. The novel begins, the protagonist, Conrad Jarrett, high school student without guiding principle. He is simply lying on his bed in the morning, thoughts about the different think he has to complete. His unable move from the bed is struggling to resume his life with family and friends.

Conrad remembers about the most horrible days in spending time in a hospital to recover for his mental conflicts. Now, everything seems to be new to him, and he realizes that he does not have his own bumper. His release from the hospital, had felt that was guiding principles for getting his life in order, and "the details have somehow been lost. If there ever were any" (Guest 5). The protagonist is "lying on his back in bed, he gazes around the walls of his room, musing about what has happened to his collection of statements" (Guest 1976:1). He has looked up to the walls in the room "the walls are bare. They have been freshly painted. Pale blue. An anxious color. Anxiety is blue; failure, gray. He knows those shades." (Guest 1976:2) It shows that Conrad is psychically cured not mentally; still he is struggling with fear, anxiety and depression. This leads him in the alternative chapters of the book and reveals that anxiety becomes the part of his life, not only for Conrad but also his family.

The novel entitled *Ordinary People* that is ironic because there are no ordinary persons in this novel. Webster's define ordinary: usual, common, or normal. Therefore, an ordinary person is the book being unordinary is common for most of the characters. The author titled his novel *Ordinary People* to make readers ask themselves, and raise a question about 'ordinary'. Wilgoren says that "One of the things we're going to determine in this novel is that there is no such thing as ordinary people", the teacher says. We're all ordinary, but we're all extraordinary in one way" (Wilgoren 1994). The characters behaviour are really ordinary populace not their financial position and life style. According to the author, the novel opens in and ordinary day. The Jarretts and their friends appear to be ordinary men. The outer surface perspectives of the family, the Jarretts has been a particularly extraordinary family since the death of Buck and the suicide attempt of Conrad Jarrett.

### Mutual understanding between Conrad and Dr. Berger

As the novel progress, Conrad needs for a close relationship with his school friends. His friends are all seniors to him due to his stay in the hospital for treatment. He loses not only his brother but also his close friends at school. He visits to Dr. Berger, a psychiatrist, who has close relationship with Conrad. The doctor observed Conrad that the face clearly shows his nervous that



is why the psychiatrist discussed about the suicide attempt by slashing his wrist in the shower. Dr. Berger understands that he is fighting with panic; he concluded that the present problem is lack communication for Jarretts, "They do not discuss a problem in the presence of the problem. And, besides, there is no problem" (Guest 4). The family is failed to share their present problem instead they are struggling internally. They have no internal contact after the death of Buck, each one is grieving alone.

The first meeting with Dr. Berger, Conrad opens his mouth freely and telling that he is more control but his father is worrying too much about him, "I'd like to more control, I guess. So people can quit worrying about me" (Guest 42). Conrad's father is worrying more than his wife, Beth; this is his idea, "She's not a worrier" (42). Calvin's over protection to Conrad brings a drift between husband and wife relationship. Beth is also feeling about her son's present condition, expecting he should come out of the past. She went out often to join with her friends and playing golf. The Jerretts are moving towards their own level of acceptance, especially Beth wanted to move on without dwelling on the dead past. She thinks that the family needs to talk through the past, she didn't. Although, Conrad's father's professional success has enable the family to provide a comfortable life financially, not peacefully. The family members are alienated from actual life and suffering individually. Lemon also described that "the family is Joseph Heller's *Something Happened*. The stereotypes include the adolescent-with problems, the mother - with social activities- , father-with-sensitivity, and psychologist-with-accent" (Lemon 1977).

### **The Protagonist's Struggle with Friends**

A challenging deal of Conrad's struggle slowly but surely emerges out of depression and isolation. He is back to school, not join with people who surrounded him, and his stay in a library gives much comfort. He wanted to stay in a peaceful place which is suitable for his temporary problem. Conrad's concentration begins in school Choir because, "Choir is the one time of day when he lets down his guard there is place" (20). Where, Conrad becomes released his tension and feel free. He realized that he has more energy because his temporary escapes from mental illness. Otherwise, there is no way to forget his past incident. This problem is not only for the protagonist but also his parents: "psychologically, the book might have it has been even more probing if the problem rested between these three characters. But it has been denoted by the death of a fourth - Conrad's drowned elder brother. This tragedy has stripped away the normality which fuelled the parent's daily life, and has revealed their inadequacies" (Kitchen 1977).

The protagonist's stay in the mental hospital where Conrad had a close friend, Karen Aldrich, their close conversation brings more relaxation to each other. "They were good friends at the hospital. They still are. No reason to be uncomfortable is there?" (53). Karen's successful suicide attempt also shakes Conrad, losing another close one like his brother. He remembers his last meeting with her and telling that about his father, "I don't think he's go that much confidence in me" (55) therefore, "Berger, and his visits with him, have gotten to be something that he forward to" (55). Karen advices Conrad to live better instead living of past and why she commits suicide, Conrad is really worried about her wrong decision. On hearing this newspaper suddenly thrown into shock and Conrad spends the whole night in dream-like trance thinking about his past with Karen, his own suicide attempt and brother's death. This incident is compared with Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar (1963)*, deals with a young woman's breakdown and hospitalization and recovery from a mental illness.

Conrad's night stay in his house to reflect more dangerous nightmare he had during sleeping hours, "the way it used to be in the months after the accident, "he wasn't sleeping much.



And suddenly, he wasn't sleeping at all, he was unable to close his eyes," he had so many sleepless nights, and he was never able to tell them," (85) he tried to share his unwanted problems in school, sleeping time everything but he did not. He remembers once Dr. Crawford told him, set themselves, impossible standards. They have this need to perform well, to look good; they suffer excessive guilt over failure" (70). He realized that everyone needs to struggle hard to achieve something, so a healthy problem brings healthy solution at the end. He believed that finally everything happened to him is good for improving himself.

Conrad's close friend and a member of swim team Stillman. His cruelty is obvious from the beginning of the novel. He turned out to be opposite of Conrad. Conrad is back to school and believes that he will perform well in academic and sports. The rivalry among friends, he becomes fruited. However, Stillman criticizes and he goes to meet Coach Salan. Conrad informed his decision to quit the swim team. At last, he quits from school swim team, which made another gap between himself and his friends. He hates his school atmosphere to Dr. Berger saying that, "It's real, you know. A good, healthy problem needs a good, healthy solution" (Guest 1976:79-80) people may talk like this. Sometimes they say all stupid things. Conrad himself witness own inability, distress, feeling helpless, becomes over solitude towards his friends. He learns that he is angry with friends, for surviving with angry loss all the relations with them. Including his parents, from school friends, and swim team coach. He admits that he cannot be strong enough to believe on himself. He faces with this extraordinary circumstances and the effect, which could has on upliftment of his lives.

The protagonist realized his journey towards self-discovery of his own miseries and painful sorrows alone. He has to continue to deal with guilt over his brother's death, mother's coldness, and complete breakdown of disconnectedness between father and son relationships'. Almost all the problems Conrad had, in the middle part of the novel and he gets better over the treatment of Dr. Berger. The doctor's friendly approach gained more confident to face the internal struggle on Conrad. His mother is not hate him, she hates only Calvin's too much of protectiveness on Conrad and always worrying about him, understands later. Father and mother treated equally, but Beth never shows her concern to her son directly. The communication gap is separated them. The view of other friends of the Jarretts seem to be happy living couple, their appearances give more impressed others, says that they have no problem. On the other hand, they are clearly troubled and depressed by their sons especially Conrad, who is with them. At the end of the novel father and son relationships bring close together, but Beth left them alone. The protagonist and his father isolation again started like previous years, loneliness begins another time to Jarretts and it becomes inseparable one to the family.

## Conclusion

Judith Guest uses internal conflicts to develop the character that their lives face many internal battles. The protagonist's inner struggle reveals with himself almost constant throughout the novel. The Jarretts, who are faced with tragic death of the family member, create painful incidents and experience of suffering and growth. The author differentiated with the glitter of optimism with the touch of psychological realism to the teenager, which reflects deep anguish of suffering soul under pathetic situations and personal dilemma.

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## **An All Consuming Love: Domestic Violence in Alice Hoffman's *Here on Earth*** **Raji Narasimhan & Sushil Mary Mathews**

'Love' is a blanket word for many emotions, and is commonly used to denote many layers of meaning; be it affection, friendship, intimacy, appreciation and care among others. Literature has shown various forms and faces of 'Love' and continues to trace its shades faithfully by reflecting reality. Alice Hoffman's *Here on Earth* is one such reflection of love and life, captured by literature. The Love that is portrayed in the novel is a subtle revelation of an extreme and obsessive kind that is capable of crippling the spirit of its recipient. The high regard placed on love by women serves to be an underlying cause for their suffering and their lack of judgment as seen in this novel.

The plot of the novel *Here on Earth* closely resembles that of *Wuthering Heights*. The protagonist, March Murray, on returning to her home in Massachusetts after twenty years in California, meets her childhood love, Hollis, and their love is reignited despite the fact that she is now married and is accompanied by her fifteen-year-old daughter, Gwen. Hollis is a Byronic hero adopted by March's father with whom March falls in love with. Hollis is left at the mercy of Alan, March's brother, when her father dies. The cruelty of Alan chases Hollis to Florida, from where he returns a rich man to reclaim Alan's estate that is steeped in debt and to avenge Alan. The absence of Hollis unites March with her neighbor, Richard Cooper, in marriage and a respectful life in California. The marriage of Richard and March annoys Hollis who marries Richard's sister, Belinda. He abuses her until she is in her grave. This remains an open secret of the town. The reunion of Hollis and March after a hiatus of twenty years appears to be a strong force that cannot be overcome by March. The novel follows the development of their 'love' from high-strung passion to restraining suffocation. It also reveals the slow realization of March and her need to make choices that allow her spirit to flourish.

Domestic violence exists in many forms. Physical abuse is the most prominent form and has been brought to the attention of the public quite often. More subtle forms of violence are hidden behind closed door under the pretext of love. These may not leave physical evidence like bruises and scars but they are just as scarring and intimidating. *Here on Earth* brings to notice, the damage of this kind of abuse. Verbal abuse and economical abuse are two crippling factors that may change a healthy relationship into a master-slave relationship. Yet another kind of abuse involves the isolation of the victim from friends and family to such an extent that she has no one to fall back on. The abuser gradually invades the personal space of the victim where the only person of significance becomes the man concerned - the abuser. This is of course done gradually and under the pretense that it is for the good of the relationship and because of his love for her. Yielding to this kind of possessiveness is a strangulation of the spirit and leads to a willing submission on the part of the women. This kind of dominion over women is prevalent in all societies and is the open secret of our own.

Recognizing this kind of abuse poses as the first problem of the protagonist March, just as it is for many women in reality. The meeting between Hollis and March after twenty years causes March to revive her past feelings of love for him. When she finally decides to move in with Hollis, her life gradually takes a turn for the worse. March loses touch with friends because Hollis doesn't like them. She doesn't work because Hollis would rather have her home. The change is very gradual, so at first March doesn't realize the restraint that is put on her. She associates the feeling with love, as she willingly lets go of the world she knows:



*Don't think about the crows calling from the trees, or the sound of the front door slamming. What does it matter anyway? Let the dogs bark; let the hours pass by. It's all a dream, and it's yours, and it always will be. Give in to it, that's what he whispers. Don't bother bathing or combing your hair. Just do what he tells you, . . . Let it last an eternity, because in all honesty, there's no going back. Doors have been shut, suitcases unpacked; days have come and gone and you're still here. (213)*

March sees that her life is changing, but is unable to put a finger on the reason. She believes it is Hollis' love for her. She imagines that his love for her is so great that by keeping her for himself is the way he expresses the magnitude of his love. She willingly begins to refuse social gatherings stating that Hollis "hates Thanksgiving. He thinks turkey is inedible" (219). Suzie, a good friend of March, is her only lifeline out of the quicksand that she is willingly stepping into. Every effort of March to push Suzie away only goads Suzie to dig for information about Hollis. She is unrelenting about having March at her family dinners. This goes against the controlling urges of Hollis:

*"Even if Hollis doesn't want to favor us with his company, you can still come to dinner with Gwen and Hank."*

*"Easy for you to say." March laughs.*

*"Extremely easy." Suzie is not laughing. "Nobody's telling me what to do."*

*"It's not what you think," March says. "He's not like that. You know me Susie. Do you think I'd let someone boss me around? At my age?" (219).*

What March knows and what she expresses to the world are conflicting. She believes that she is in control of her decisions when in fact her decisions are simply a reflection of what Hollis demands. The self-abnegation of March is one that is taught to women from a very young age. Love and self-abnegation are made to sound synonymous. The words of J. S. Mills can substantiate this:

*All the moralities tell them that it is the duty of women and all the current sentimentalities that it is their nature, to live for others; to make complete abnegation of themselves, and to have no life but in their affections. And by their affections are meant the only ones they are allowed to have - those to the men with whom they are connected . . . by representing to them meekness, submissiveness and resignation of all individual will into the hands of a man, as an essential part of sexual attractiveness. (Mills 16).*

Hollis' 'love' changes from isolating March, to economic abuse, later to verbal abuse, sexual abuse and finally to physical harm. The realization of March is slow, as she believes that it is love and extreme passion that present itself as possessiveness. Later when she is left without money and is forced to wear cast offs that Hollis hands down to her, she believes that she is just not interested in dolling up, and also that Hollis doesn't care too much for her to get too dressed up. When the verbal and sexual abuses begin, (almost simultaneously) it is under the pretext of jealousy and as a way to reconcile, or to make up for his rudeness. The relationship becomes all about Hollis and what Hollis wants. March is in constant denial of her relationship with Hollis.

*The way he twisted her wrists hurt . . . but she's not going to think about that. Nothing happened, after all.(224-225).*

March has to repeatedly convince herself of Hollis' love for her, even though the signs of abuse are beginning to show on her.

*... he didn't mean to hurt her. He'd never do that."(224). The illusion of his love is a silent threat:*



*After he's done berating her, he turns his fury on himself, and that, of course is the thread that always ties March to him. No one will love you the way I do, that's what he tells her then. No one can have you if I can't. Don't even think about leaving. I mean that. Don't even try (276).*

It is at the very end of the novel that March is able to see her life for what it is. The love she believed to have existed has only diminished the person she was. It has thwarted her spirit until she is unable to find herself. She can no longer see the young boy that she fell in love with. The love that she thought they shared had consumed them. It had consumed all the goodness, liberty, passion and freedom that March had once had. This realization causes her to leave the relationship - to flee. She runs away from Hollis. In any abusive relationship, the hardest part is to get away from it. Hoffman solves this great predicament with the accident that kills Hollis. The novel therefore doesn't show the realities of getting away from an abusive relationship, but it certainly shows the progress that abuse makes from love to physical violence.

The book is a reflection of how women get involved in abusive relationships and why they continue to stay in them. Simply because the man hasn't hit the woman is no reason to rule out domestic violence. "He didn't mean to hurt me, He'd never do that." Or "Nothing happened after all" is often repeated as a reason to stay. The story reveals the importance of realizing and recognizing the signs of abuse when they are still subtle; long before they turn physical. It reiterates that emotional abuse is still abuse and should not be tolerated. March is yet another woman in Literature who reveals the reality of domestic violence to the readers.

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## T.S. Eliot: A Mind in Evolution

*Mitra Sannigrahi*

Among poetic geniuses of all time who have ushered in new eras in the sphere of English poetry, T.S. Eliot occupies a unique space. He is, beyond dispute, one of the most important figures in the twentieth-century literary arena. An astute modernist, his work has influenced a host of other modernist poets and it still remains influential. Behind his immense popularity lie several factors, perhaps the most important being the brilliant evocation of his contemporary world. His poetry is city poetry. It portrays, to a remarkable degree, the sordidness and squalor of city life and the misery of people. He presents the ugliness and yet the fascination of this life with fidelity. But this early phase of his career led to another period when his preoccupation changed. Not all his poetry is written in the same tone. A piece published in 1917 is fundamentally different from one that came out in 1942. To put it simply, we see an earlier Eliot, who is as if struggling for free air and light in a claustrophobic cityscape, and a later Eliot, who is at peace with himself and with the universal scheme of things. There is an intermediate period also, where light and shadow commingle. Eliot was a great admirer of Dante. And very interestingly, his poetic career can be interpreted as paralleling the three parts of Dante's *Divine Comedy*: "Inferno", "Purgatorio", and "Paradiso".

What led Eliot to write as he did in the earlier part of his career? What went into the formation of pieces like "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", "Portrait of a Lady", "Preludes", "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" etc.? A brief survey of the period will illustrate that. Eliot, though born in the U.S.A., had familial roots in England. His ancestor, Andrew Eliot came to America from England in the seventeenth century. Eliot was born in 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri. He was awarded a scholarship to Merton College, Oxford in 1914. He found that English poetry did not adequately capture the War-torn reality of the time. It did not focus on the misery that people faced each day. Poetry was becoming disconnected from life and hence meaningless and dull. It was the need of the hour to reconnect poetry with life—life that throbs in the midst of overwhelming anguish. In order to revitalize poetry he introduced startling images and new, innovative metaphors. Overhauling the prevalent poetic discourse of the time, he changed poetry lock, stock, and barrel.

Eliot appeared, so to speak, in the poetic scene with "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". This and other poems in *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917) provide us with a fascinatingly vivid picture of the city life in Eliot's time. Prufrock is indecisive—full of contradictory qualities within himself and yet on the way to encounter the 'overwhelming question' (Eliot 13) of life. In "Preludes", he talks about "The grimy scraps/ Of withered leaves", "newspapers from vacant lots;", "broken blinds and chimney-pots,", "faint stale smells of beer", "the sparrows in the gutters," (Eliot 22 and 23) etc. Poetry is no longer sugary and organized according to strict metrical rules. Now free verse is employed. Commenting on Eliot's early verse, May Sinclair writes in the December 1917 *Little Review*:

*And these things are ugly. The comfortable mind turns away from them in disgust. It identifies Mr. Eliot with a modern tendency; it labels him securely "Stark Realist," so that lovers of "true poetry" may beware.*

In *Poems* (1920), the satiric tone of the previous volume is present, although its quality is somewhat different. In an article entitled "Gerontion" John Crowe Ransom writes:



*The man of the poem in this dramatic monologue is in that final stage of human misery when there is nothing to do but brood over what little remains of a life that came rather early to have no principle of direction except its worldly interests; and to wish and wait for death, which is imminent, as its perfect ending.*

Eliot's vast knowledge—his wide reading of the literature of various countries and of various epochs—is visible in much of his work. George Williamson notes that the epigraph to “Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar” is compounded out of sources including a snatch of song in Gautier's “Sur les Lagunes”, the motto on an emblematic candle in a St. Sebastian by Mantegna, *The Aspern Papers*, *Othello*, Browning's “Toccatà of Galuppi's”, and Marston's masque, “Entertainment of Alice, Dowager Countess of Derby.” Bleistein is an almost wholly commercial-minded character. But Burbank too cannot be seen as an ideal one. He appears naïve.

“Sweeney Erect” seems to present an ironic commentary on Emerson's definition of history. The poet poses the question whether the ‘lengthened shadow’ (Eliot43) is that of man or anthropoid ape. In “Whispers of Immortality”, Eliot sketches, in compact and strikingly effective language, the attitude and poetical standards of Webster and Donne and contrasts them with the moderns. Webster was “much possessed by death” (Eliot 52), and Donne did not find a substitute for sense. Eliot directs our attention to Grishkin, who gives promise of “pneumatic” (Eliot 52) and no ultimate or real bliss. Man is now dominated by rank flesh. We are fated to be afraid of any “contact possible to flesh” (Eliot 52) and therefore, an abstract conception of death must sustain our metaphysics. Webster and Donne, possessed by death, saw beyond the flesh. But we, possessed by flesh, take refuge in abstractions to think of a life beyond the physical. In “Sweeney Among the Nightingales”, Sweeney is threatened by death. The poem is replete with symbolic images that intensify a deathlike atmosphere.

*The Waste Land* (1922) has been regarded as a major literary piece reflective of the arid modern civilization. Ezra Pound abridged the originally very long poem, giving it its present shape. The Fisher King is, “the prototype of the male characters who melt into one another, and his is the subsuming myth; hence the poem closes on him and his predicament, just as it develops after a comparable experience.”(Williamson 123) The Fisher King's experience is universalized in Tiresias. Myths are an integral part of the poem. But these myths are reoriented in many cases. For example, in the vegetation myths, there is a rejoicing attitude towards the renewal of life or spring, but in Eliot's poem a reverse note is struck. The inhabitants of the Waste Land are comforted by the barrenness of winter and not by the mellow and fruitful spring. The decline of religious feeling in the War-torn world may be one of the numerous implications of this poem. In each of its five parts, there are sections reflective of a dark world full of misery that is very clearly the modern one:

*I will show you fear in a handful of dust. (Eliot 61)*

*Unreal City,  
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,  
I had not thought death had undone so many. (Eliot 62)*

And yet in “The Hollow Men” (1925) the predicament of man finds a more vivid depiction. Eliot shows us hollow men whose heads are filled with straw, who can only whisper and never give full expression to their thoughts. They are like scarecrows, and the land they inhabit is an arid one:



*This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here the stone images  
Are raised, here they receive  
The supplication of a dead man's hand  
Under the twinkle of a fading star. (Eliot 84)*

Eliot talks about a "hollow valley" of "dying stars" (Eliot 84) which is the "last of meeting places" (Eliot 85) and where the hollow men gather without speaking. Eliot uses the imagery of frustrated love (Williamson 158) depicting people who tremble with tenderness and yet wake up alone. His characters are suspended between two kingdoms of death. Their desires always remain unfulfilled because between the impulse from which an action might have ensued and the ultimate step towards the realization of that impulse in the blossomed maturity of an action a shadow falls inevitably. In this land of broken dreams, one can never attain fulfilment. The world can end only with a "whimper". (Eliot 86) With devastating irony, Eliot extends game ritual into liturgical form. (Williamson 160-161)

Eliot's poetry written so far is characterized by restlessness, and at times, certain bitterness is visible. It is disjointed, broken poetry with formal innovations like the use of capital letters, italics, repetitions etc. He quotes from other writers frequently, not always acknowledging the borrowings. And there is the thematic preoccupation with the misery, the anguish, the anxiety of man in the splintered, nightmarish modern world. He talks about the sordidness of city life and about the increasing darkness enveloping us with the passing of each day. But now a change comes in his outlook and his work is transformed accordingly. Of course, this change can by no means be sudden. It had been taking shape in his consciousness for some time, but it becomes more perceptible after "The Hollow Men".

Eliot became a member of the Anglo-Catholic Church in 1927. Most of his Ariel Poems were published between 1927 and 1930. New content and style characterize these poems as Eliot turns to the Bible. He explores new avenues in diction, imagery, rhythm and rhyme. A search for balance and order is in progress. The subject matter of his previous poetry found proper expression in his disjointed language. The changed content demanded a new language. In "Animula", the poet shows how the human soul enters the world in its pure, unsullied state and progresses though obstacles, bewilderments and harm until it is distorted. In "Marina", Marina appears as an embodiment of hope and potentiality. With shifting focuses, a vision is described and an optimistic note is struck in the suggestion that though there is danger ahead, there is hope also and the journey may be continued.

*Ash-Wednesday* (1930) marks a more developed stage in his spirituality. In an essay in *Hound and Horn* (1931), Allen Tate writes,

*These six poems are a brief moment of religious experience in an age that believes religion to be a kind of defeatism and puts all its hope for man in finding the right secular order.*

In the first poem, the poet says that he does not wish to turn to the world. He has lost his strength and ambition, and material attractions do not tempt him anymore. But nor does he turn to God wholeheartedly. In Part II, he finds release from threats to the self in death. In Part III, there is a vision of "strength beyond hope and despair" (Eliot 93), and the speaker is fully aware of his shortcomings, is humble, and professes his faith in God:



*Lord, I am not worthy  
 Lord, I am not worthy  
 but speak the word only. (Eliot 93)*

In Part IV, gradually the Lady in white melts into the Mother of the Garden and to her colour and intelligence of love Mary's colour and knowledge of eternal sorrow are added. (Williamson 177) Towards the end of this part, a vision of regeneration, though conditional, is hinted at. In Part V, the focus is on the revelation of the Word in the present world. And in Part VI, there is the great Dantean idea of our peace residing in the will of God. The speaker wishes to turn to God:

*And let my cry come unto Thee. (Eliot 99)*

In *Four Quartets* (1944), the concepts of time and history are explored at length. The poems also analyse the nature of experience in the light of time and place. Moments of time must be experienced in places, and though the spiritual does not belong to time or place, it is known in time and place. Interestingly, the titles of the poems contain names of places which have particular significance for Eliot. Burnt Norton is the name of a Gloucestershire manor. East Coker is the village where many of Eliot's ancestors lived. The Dry Salvages indicate a group of rocks off the North East coast of Cape Ann, Massachusetts. And Little Gidding was the home of an Anglican community established in 1626 by Nicholas Ferrar.

In "Burnt Norton", Eliot collapses the divisions of time, demonstrating the eternal presence of all time. But as all time is "unredeemable" (Eliot 171), what might have been remains a possibility only in thought. The unrealized and the realized things of the past point to the same end when all time merges into the present and they are included in memory or the mind. Thus the poet's words may raise a similar impression in the reader. The "rose-garden" (Eliot 171) appears to denote something that might have been. Man probably finds illusions to be more comfortable than reality. And the bird presents a vision that mixes the actual and the fanciful. Plenitude is defined by paradoxes. In Section III, Eliot develops the idea of "here"—a place of "disaffection" in a "dim light" (Eliot 173) with neither the daylight of plenitude nor the darkness of vacancy. In Section IV, it is shown that though time buries the day, it cannot remove the sensual or cleanse affection. And it destroys plenitude without bringing vacancy. Desire does not perish. In Section V, the problem of the temporal is dealt with in the sphere of art. Time can find its pattern or meaning only if it is collapsed into the present and a semblance of eternity is suggested.

In "East Coker", the relations of time to change and constancy are further explored. Time and change, if viewed closely, point to the fact that in one's beginning one's end lies, and in one's end one's beginning can be traced. In the cycle of life and death matter constantly changes form. Fire is used as a metaphor of desire. The poet feels that at best, experience can result in a knowledge of limited value, imposing an old pattern on the ever-changing pattern of things. Also, he praises humility:

*The only wisdom we can hope to acquire  
 Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless. (Eliot 179)*

The soul, which is not ready for thought, must wait without hope, love, and even faith. And rebirth depends upon the "wounded surgeon", Christ. (Eliot 181) One starts from one's home, and though with the passing of years the world appears stranger, "Love is most nearly itself" (Eliot 182)



when place and time do not matter anymore. Finally, there is a suggestion that one's journey ends at one's home.

In "The Dry Salvages", the river that Eliot knew in Missouri is associated with destruction and probably equated with man's time, while the sea is identified with earth's time. If the river is the microcosmic rhythm of life, the sea represents the macrocosmic rhythm of eternity. (Williamson 223) Time is both a destroyer and a preserver. Referring to Lord Krishna, Eliot states that perhaps he had this paradoxical nature of time in his mind:

*And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back. (Eliot 187)*

During a voyage one can be indifferent to past and future. According to Krishna, the object of contemplation determines the succession of being, or comes to fulfilment in the following being, but there should not be any self-interested motive. There can only be "fare forward", and no "fare well". (Eliot 188) The Virgin, whose shrine is situated on the promontory, is invoked to pray for all who go to sea and for women who are their mothers or wives. Saints receive the power "to apprehend/ The point of intersection of the timeless/ With time," (Eliot 189-190), but ordinary people have "the moment in and out of time," (Eliot 190) and to "Hints followed by guesses" must be added "prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action." (Eliot 190)

In "Little Gidding", Eliot shows the readers a place where prayer has been "valid", a place of "the intersection of the timeless moment" (Eliot 192), a place both in and out of time and place. Memory or history can lead us to liberation, to an expansion of love beyond desire. In *Four Quartets*, memory ties us to the past and desire to the future. If love of a country begins as an attachment, finally there is the recognition of the personal as of little importance. Eliot thinks of Little Gidding, of the Civil Wars, of people who are now gathered in the conflict that separated them before. He thinks of men like Charles I, Strafford, Laud, Milton, and states that these dead men are celebrated more than the dying ones because they "Accept the constitution of silence". (Eliot 196)

In Section IV, Eliot shows that we only live consumed by the fire of desire or the fire of love, the fire of becoming or the fire of being. In Section V, it is suggested that the end of our never-ceasing exploration will be to arrive at the beginning. The ultimate form of the Garden entered in "Burnt Norton" is the end which was also the beginning. To the previous injunction to be quick is now added the condition of absolute simplicity. And "all shall be well" (Eliot 198) when the "pentecostal tongues of flame are folded into the interwoven knot of fire, when the fire of love and the rose of desire are one." (Williamson 233)

In Eliot's plays, written in the later part of his career, the same emphases on religion, faith and a search for peace can be noticed. Seeking the way to peace and salvation in a War-torn world, he wrote plays, basing them on myths and including elements of sin and expiation, often using modern settings. In *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, becomes a martyr through his spiritual resistance and complete devotion to God. In *The Family Reunion* (1939), there is Harry's journey from a state of ignorance to spiritual illumination. In *The Cocktail Party* (1949), there is Celia, whose sacrifice enlightens others. And in *The Confidential Clerk* (1953) and in *The Elder Statesman* (1958), characters pursue self-knowledge and overcome illusions.

Thus, in Eliot, we see a mind in evolution. From the broken, disjointed poetry of his earlier period, he moves, as if through a tunnel, at the end of which there is light. Such a brilliant



transformation to an orchestrated, ordered poetry as is found later in his career must have come into being with the healing touch of religion and faith. The chronicler of the crisis of modern civilization turned to God, and from emptiness, void and unrelieved misery religion, faith, hope and an optimistic attitude permeated his work. Equally brilliant in both sorts of writing, he probably suggested a remedy for the darkness enveloping the modern world in his later work.

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## **Wordsworth's *The Solitary Reaper*: A Kerala Critique** **Mohammed Shafeer K P**

Literature takes birth as the progeny of human thoughts, feelings, emotions and imagination. The unquenchable thirst to express the sediments of experiences collected from the nature with the help of human senses oozes out through the words and deeds of literary minds to the very nerves of readers to conquer their hearts. Different genres of literature flowed to the literary world from different tributaries of human experiences to find its confluence in the vast ocean of human minds. From the most primitive genre of poetry to the contemporary world of cyber literatures, literature spread its foliage of shade to the millions of weary minds who found relief in the realm of words. Literature underwent changes along with the changes in the life and world and produced different varieties of genres and types with the advent of science and technology.

Colonization helped the English language and literature to pervade its fragrance all over the world. The hue and odour of the language and literature reached different nooks and corners of the world as the political colonization never confined to the military expansion of the empire. Colonization compelled the change in the culture of men and matters of the colonies. The expansion of the language and literature created admirers for the legendary literary figures like Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Johnson and Wordsworth. The literary giants adorned different centuries and generations of English literature and spoke to the literary world based on the taste of the time and the aspirations of the writers.

Eighteenth century English literature witnessed the advent of romanticism through the works of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The publication of *Lyrical Ballads* paved the way to establish the foundation for the romantic revival in English literature. Romanticism shattered the shackles of suffocation the neoclassical dogmas imposed on the free flow of thoughts in literature. The strictness and rigidity of neoclassicism gave way to the fluidity of human expression. Romanticism saved literature from the altars of think tanks to the very nooks and corners of the common life to explore the different manifestations of human, thoughts, feelings, and expressions.

Though, *Lyrical Ballads* laid the foundation stone for the establishment of romanticism in English literature the poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge differed in many aspects. While Wordsworth portrayed the natural as the supernatural, Coleridge changed the supernatural into the natural. The concept of Wordsworthian romanticism came out through the publication of preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* and the reaction of Coleridge came through his legendary *Biographia Literaria*. Wordsworthian romanticism revolved around the common man to find the raw materials for poetry. Wordsworth tried to bring the common man to the mainstream of literature by portraying the life of the laity and selecting the subject matter from the unexplored rustic life. The life and language of the common man replaced the satires came out of the personal grudge of the neoclassical literary giants. The characters and subject matters of the common places conquered the fulcrum of literary discussions. The unexplored nooks and corners of the nature came to the forefront of literature. The reapers, beggars, leech gatherers, flowers, streams, rivulets, birds and infinite living organisms adorned the throne of poetry with their hue and fragrance.

*The Solitary Reaper* portrays the scintillating picture of a highland lass reaping lonely in a vast field surrounded by beautiful landscape. The reaper is alone in the field and she is singing a melancholic song while reaping. The song in Erse was so ecstatic for the poet that he thought of a



pause at the place to inquire about the theme of her song. The language of the song was indigestible for the poet and he thought of inquiring about the poem to the villagers or the passer by who are unaware of the singing. The supernaturalism of the natural incident caught the poet and shook his mind to fall upon the sweetness of the song and the beauty of the landscape. The poet's wings of imagination soared high as the sweetness of the song was sweeter than that of the nightingale's song to the weary travellers taking rest in the oasis of the Arabian deserts.

*"No nightingale did ever chaunt  
More welcome notes to weary bands  
Of travellers in some shady haunt,  
Among Arabian sands:  
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard  
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird  
Breaking the silence of the seas  
Among the farthest Hebrides."* (The Solitary Reaper 9-16)

The solace of the song excelled the solace brought about by the song of the nightingale in the dry deserts of the Arabian sands. The song of the girl was much better and thrilling than the song of the cuckoo heard in the spring time in the silent seas of the remotest Hebrides. The notes of the melancholic song reverberated in the deep valley as the poet's mind filled with joy and ecstasy. The incomprehensible language of the song made it sweeter and the disappointment in finding the real meaning of the song made the poet to guess the meaning of the notes of melancholy. The unavailability of the interpreter forces him to interpret the melancholic notes based on his romantic imagination. He guesses that the melancholic song might be connected to the unhappy incidents or battles of the past. He further imagines that the song might be about some misfortunes of everyday life of sorrows which come out of the mundane world. Despite the incomprehensible meaning and theme of the song, it appeared to the poet as she would continue her singing as long as the world perishes. The sweetness of the poem made the poet motionless and the song remained crowned in the mind of the poet even after ages of the incident. "The question why the poet is moved is subordinated to the fact that he is moved, that his mind overflows under the influence of the song" (Hartman 7).

The poem which took birth as result of Wordsworth's Scottish tour in the autumn of 1803 is a lyrical extravaganza. The impact of the poem on Wordsworth's mind is immense as it overflowed with joy and delight and produced the extraordinary poem from the most ordinary incident. Though Wordsworth accomplished in portraying the picture of the highland lass and the influence of the melancholic song in his mind, the modern analysis of the poem unveils the attitude of the poet towards the normal life of the ordinary men of the time. The romantic poet with his predominant subjectivity analysed the impact of the beautiful song and the land scape on the mind of the poet. He never thought of the reaper who toiled in the vast field alone because "Apart from the sanctifying touch of Nature, men and women are poor creatures to Wordsworth" (Compton- Rickett 311). The poet never explored the circumstances which made the girl to work alone in the vast field without a companion. The mind-set and attitude of the poet towards the common man of the country is well delineated in the poem. Wordsworth was making use of the raw materials from the life of the common man to create poetry and he neglected the life of the common man and the circumstances in which they led their day to day life. The reaper for him is natural as it is an ordinary picture in the Scottish highlands of the time.

The impact of the ordinary picture of the highland lass reaping in the beautiful landscape in the poet's mind can be well analysed by a state like Kerala as it is familiar with the matters of



harvest and reaping in the vast paddy fields of the agricultural state. But the picture of the solitary reaper generates a different feeling among the Kerala people. The concept of reaping and harvest and the attitude of the poet towards the working class needs analysis based on the Kerala background as Kerala is affluent with the experiences of the reaping and harvest.

Kerala minds will not be searching for the beauty in the sight for they are well aware of the history of the state and the circumstances of the past which made the reaper to work in the fields. The sight of the reaper in the vast fields of the Kerala soils reminds the Keralites of the harsh reality of the past in the times of feudalism and caste system. The Kerala past witnessed the hardships of the workers in the agricultural fields as the lower class workers were chained to the fields and are compelled to work for the landlord like slaves. The heartrending and pathetic sight of the working class in the past reminds the Keralites of the suffocation in the shackles of the landlord to make both ends meet. The caste system and feudalism made the life of the poor class pathetic and the reaping was never considered to a beautiful sight. The toil and hard work with little benefit showered tears in the vast fields and life was at the mercy of the landlord.

The land reforms of the first Kerala government shattered the evils systems of caste and feudalism, but created new strata of the land owners. The working class was again cheated by the rulers and the revolutionary changes brought about by the communist party confined to a minimum number of individuals and they emerged as the new landlords. The harvest and the reaping to make many lives sustain became at the mercy of the landlord. The poor class family lived at the mercy of the landlord and the harvest became the festival of the poor class as they can taste rice for their porridge. The harvest and reaping became the monopoly of the favourable workers who were close to the family of the landlord. The news of harvest pervaded among the workers with confidentiality and there were instances the harvest took place in the night in the light of the kerosene lamps. The landlord became merciless to the workers as they were pulled out from the field for entering the field for harvesting without the permission of the landlord. While the sight of the reaper in the pre-land reform Kerala evoked pity among the Keralites, the post-land reform Kerala reapers made their porridge at the mercy of the new landlord strata which took birth as a result of the land reforms. So the sight of the reaper in the vast field of Kerala is not a romantic sight for the Keralites in the past. The sight of the reaper and the melancholic song troubled the eardrums of the romantic Wordsworth and he was filled with ecstasy flying on the wings of imagination. But the songs came out of the mouths of the Kerala reapers in the time of harvest were full of pathos and hardships as they sang to alleviate the attack of the scorching sun in the shade-less field and burning hunger which weakened them. The sight of the solitary reaper remained a dream in the Kerala soil as poverty compelled the reaper to compete in the field for a chance to work and earn the paddy for the family's hunger. Wordsworthian view of the solitary reaper filled his mind with ecstasy and the beautiful sight of the human being was considered as a part of the landscape. "Human types ...are introduced as foreground figures in the land scape, to heighten the romantic effect ..." (Moorman 128-29). But Kerala view of the reaper reminds the Keralites of the fights and hardships of the working class to remain in the fields to sustain life. The romanticism for Keralites is in the bliss of fulfilling the needs of the family with the salty sweat of labour.

But the picture of reaping and harvest changed as the foreign money flowed to the very veins of the Kerala soil. The picture of reaping and harvest diminishes to the rarity of memory as the place of the reapers is substituted with the sophisticated machines and tools. The sight of the reapers will extinct in the near future as the workers are unwilling to follow the traditional works of agriculture and the machines will conquer the vast paddy fields in the near future. The value of Wordsworth's solitary reaper will be at its zenith in the near future as the sight of the reaper in the



fields confines to poetry and diminishes from the sight of the future generation. “And Wordsworth conveys this part of natural truth to us as no other has ever done no other poet having had in him so much of the reflective peasant” (Symons 92).

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## **Narrative Techniques in *Heart of Darkness***

**Sharmistha Basu**

### **Introduction**

Joseph Conrad used varied techniques in the narration of his celebrated work *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad does not involve the narrator directly in the course of events, and keeps him apart so as to critically observe all the characters and deliver it to the readers. The two narrators were designed artfully and they were successful in describing the chain of events one after the other. The first narrator opens the story and hands over to the second narrator and at last again comes back in the narrative.

### **Complexity in narration**

Marlow is the principal narrator in *Heart of Darkness*. He is introduced in the beginning of the novel by an anonymous narrator who talks about his past life and career. Marlow is used as a device, a figure created by Conrad to carry on the narration, to report on events and to examine and observe individuals and events partially. Marlow, the narrator is highly symbolical. He represents the spirit of adventure and the love of exploration.

Conrad's interest in the first person narration is quite clearly understood. He regards all human experiences as the trials and tribulations of human life. Marlow is an imaginary narrator invented by Conrad in the *Heart of Darkness*. He is a retired sailor who resembles Conrad himself but at the same time he differs a lot. Marlow speaks and narrates the whole story which constitutes the texture of the novel. The first narrator then becomes the listener to Marlow's story but he speaks again at intervals when Marlow stops for breath or for reconciling upon whatever he has said. Thus the narration in the novel seems a complex affair because it begins with a narrator who introduces Marlow and then Marlow becomes the chief narrator.

Conrad has invented an imaginary character Marlow who narrates the story and thus the novelist has kept himself away from the novel. Furthermore the story changes from physical exploration to the mental exploration. The exploration of Congo becomes the survey of the dark continent of human mind. The novel depicts a systematic statement of the destruction of the visible surface of life by the darkness, but it does so in order to provide a context for the formation of a new aesthetics, and it is here that Conrad makes his choice between Marlow and the anonymous narrator, between the dream and the darkness.

Although this novel is the story of Marlow's mission up the Congo River to Stanley Falls, his interest is centered in Kurtz. The following lines illustrated the regret of the reporting narrator: 'I don't want to bother you much with what happened to me personally', he began, showing in his remark the weakness of many tellers of tales who seem so often unaware of what their audience would best like to hear; "Yet to understand the effect of it on me you ought to know how I got out there, what I saw, how I went up that river to the place where I first met the poor chap".

In the first part of the novel, various themes are introduced. Here Marlow describes the miserable, poor and wretched conditions of the underdeveloped nations. The sight of suffering, pain and gloom makes him think that he has entered an inferno. Through his narration Marlow has given several examples of white –men's useless exertions like aimless firing by a warship, blasting of a rock that is not required in the process of making railway track etc. The emptiness and



hollowness of white people is portrayed by Marlow in the character of Manager, Brick maker and the agents who waste their time in nonsense talks. Marlow calls them 'faithless pilgrim'.

In part-II we get a clear picture of Mr. Kurtz. We are informed that Mr. Kurtz has identified himself with the savages and he takes active participation in their mid night dances which always end with 'unspeakable rites.' However Marlow's admiration for Kurtz is clearly understood; although he has not met him but Kurtz has influenced him a lot.

In part III, Marlow's own evil instinct arises from sleep and he feels a great sympathy for Kurtz. He expresses that he too would have become evil if he stayed there for such a long time. At this point of the novel Marlow has probed deeply into his subconscious mind and felt the kinship that is established between him and Mr. Kurtz .The last word "The horror! Horror" uttered by Kurtz shows that he was horrified at the realization of the evil within himself.

Joseph Conrad uses the technique of "frame "story, which means that a story is told within another story. Rather than simply having Marlow as the narrator from the beginning, the reader has the opportunity to get acquainted with each of the characters, their strengths, weaknesses and personalities. It is a unique way of setting up a story as it helps to improve the reader's perception and give them a better understanding of the story.

### **Conrad's relation to Africa in section 3.2, unit-III, of the book**

Heart of Darkness is the record of Conrad's own experiences that he enjoyed while visiting Congo in 1890. During this journey he succeeded to fulfill that desire he expressed in his childhood by putting his finger on a map of Central Africa and said that one day he would go there .As a child Conrad noted the black spot in the centre of a map of Africa, with a snake like river forming the entrance to this heart of darkness. Conrad reflected himself in the character of Charles Marlow who was narrating the story of his journey to the dark continent of Africa.

Conrad was a born seaman and had intense yearning for exploration. Marlow's experiences of maddening horrors and sensations were of Conrad's himself. During his journey Conrad was dismayed by the brutalities of the whites and the unbearable suffering, misery and horror were transmitted in the Heart of Darkness, the most outspoken component of white imperialism and Colonial exploration. Conrad's sympathy for the natives is expressed in the line: "They were not enemies, they were not criminals, and they were nothing earthly now-nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom".

The colonial exploitation of dark Africa by the white men in order to accumulate ivory which was told by Marlow was what actually Conrad himself witnessed. In the novel the author has created the background where ivory was playing the pivotal role. The ivory image hangs around the Manager of the Central station, the brick-maker and all the agents. The central character Mr. Kurtz, too was deeply obsessed with ivory. In his aim he expressed his prime objective to export the natives to accumulate ivory. The Russian conveyed to Marlow that on one occasion Mr. Kurtz had threatened to kill him if he did not handover a small amount of ivory to him. In fact, the Russian had received this ivory as a gift from the native tribal chief.

Therefore from the above it is obvious that ivory was an article which symbolized white man's greed and their business mindedness. The agents were given promotions because of their achievement in the collection of ivory.



The novelist described that the natives were mostly naked and were moving like ants. Further he explained that half a dozen men were chained to one another. Each was wearing an iron collar on his neck. They were punished because they disobeyed the laws. The white men were quite indifferent to the criminals and tortured them mercilessly. It has been mentioned further that black figures crouching under the trees. They were leaning against the trunks of the trees and were clinging to the earth. These men were rotting slowly and gradually and were about to die any moment. These criminals are symbols indicating the white-men. They were black figures representing anarchy. They also symbolized disease and starvation in the Congo.

The white men were selfish and hypocrite. In the novel, *Heart of Darkness*, the central character Marlow observed that a rock was being blasted by the gun powder. Actually blasting was not necessary as this rock was not causing any hindrance in the way of railway tracks. When Marlow was about to reach Congo he observed a warship anchoring aimlessly. Here Conrad is using the irony to reflect the waste of time.

Conrad seems to have gifted his spokesperson Marlow with an exceptional power of observation. The natural scenery, the climate, the complexion and traits of natives are described vividly. His description of natural scenery is elaborate and striking in the novel. When he sails up the River Congo he says that going up the river is like travelling back to the primitive beginnings of the world where there was much vegetation on the earth and trees were kings. He records skillfully the details of impenetrable forest, the warm air, the silvery sandbanks with hippos and alligators taking sunbath by the side etc...

## Conclusion

Coming to the conclusion it can be said that Conrad has expressed the theme of imperialism and evil in his novel *Heart of Darkness*. The novel projects the image of Africa as “the other world”, the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man’s gloated intelligence and refinement are finally mocked by jubilant barbarity. Conrad has used ‘retrospective method’ to convey his experience in the course of the narrative, Marlow moves back and forth to introduce past in order to understand the present and has established a relationship between past and present.

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## **Viability of Children's Literature for Future Sustainability**

***Mirza Sibtain Beg***

According to C.E.M. Joad, the first and foremost function of education is to enable a boy or a girl to earn his or her living, second to kindle his hidden abilities and third to make him a better human being. Educationist and thinkers are strenuously trying hard to evolve newer methods and techniques to equip a student to use literature as a vehicle for future Sustainability. The present paper aims at exploring the ways to spur young citizens to utilize literature to test and to adopt new life styles; sneak up towards right steps to preserve, protect and potential augmentation of the regional and global environment; to elevate them to accept new ideas and notions to work enthusiastically and cooperatively with others. The paper, however, tries out to analyze the strategies pivotal to contrive for better Sustainability. We, being the teachers and at the helm, should try to apprise them about the symbiosis and inter dependence of social, economic, cultural and environmental issues. These issues may prove fruitful to attain sustainable future irrevocably.

Inculcating a better understanding of things for sustainable future is instrumental in grooving students to owe responsibilities intuitively for their ingenious thoughts, prompt actions and to recognize their contribution's worth in one way or the other to make this world full of peace, prosperity, possibility and potentiality. Teachers play an important and pivotal role in building and uplifting the student's confidence and morale so much that they begin to feel their worth in the development of their respective countries and world over ingeniously. It is precise to say literally that to teach for Sustainability is to teach for world citizenship, many world issues such as peace, health, prosperity, environment and human rights et al. We can bring them abreast to the worldly menace of poverty and exploitation or regeneration in varied form and make them overwrought for its alleviation. Consequently, they may emerge from being a precious local to useful global denizen-a quintessential transition from Glocalisation to Globalisation. Sustainability is sometimes understood in social terms. Barbier (1987) defines social sustainability as "the ability to maintain desired social values, traditions, institutions, cultures, or other social characteristics". Dresner defines Sustainability as:

*Sustainability is a concept which combines post-modernist pessimism about the domination of nature with almost Enlightenment optimism about the possibility to reform human institutions".* (Dressner, 2002: 164)

### **Use of Children's Literature**

Children's literature in varied color and form can be utilized as a handy tool to raise the young souls to achieve their genuine goals, in knowing the things, and owing responsibility to find newer ways for sustainable future. By virtue of imparting good training for teachers, we can turn students strive for better comprehension of the sensitive issues and accentuating their curiosity to perform better. The well trained educators can kindle in young souls the hidden talent and ingenuity which may turn them into a desires, cherished world citizenship. Going through the texts, they can dive deep into the limpid pool of problems viz. misery, agony and loss of everything in futile and horrible wars, political instability, societal deterioration and environmental degradations. Stories help and encourage children develop critical thinking abilities, penchant for diverse cultures, sense of propriety and fairness which are requisite for the healthy development of a child. Children's literature can become a device make children analyze, evaluate and adopt suitable life styles to get a more feasible sustainable future. They may be intelligent enough to



search test and take appropriate actions to maintain the sanctity and refreshing charm of the environment and to accept new ideas and feel pleasure in working in collaboration with others.

Verily, we may sharpen the literary skills of young students by means of literature and pictures showing in class rooms. Showing images to the students will bring them to perceive the things not only from varying spatial perspectives, but also to seek stimulus from different universal perspectives. Through pictures, groups, tables, we can accentuate children's interest in exploring themes; evoke feelings of patriotism and excitement, to notice new concepts and emerging problems and thereby engaging them in healthy discussion. Children's literature can effectively be used to eradicate the moral depravity and other evils from our society. Going through all these, they can become indispensable world citizen. We can locate some problems and concerns underlying children's literature. Some of the issues regarding children's literature are found as:

*personal problems of family and peer relationships, but also compasses questions of wider social and political interest such as race and gender, the environment and conservation, social and community conflict, war and peace and even global interdependence. (Marriot, 1998, pp. 6-7).*

In such a way, the children can address issues like sustainable future by engaging themselves with relevant literature potentially. Literature can elevate them to analyses issues from different perspectives. After perusing literature, children can get an opportunity to develop their own views, ideas, thoughts and notions and compete themselves with peers across the world. Stephen opines:

*Children's fiction belongs firmly in the domain of cultural practices which exist for the purpose of socializing their target audience. Childhood is often seen as the crucial formative period in the life of a human being, the time for basic education about the nature of the world, how to live in it..... (Stephens, 1992, p. 8)*

In order to apprise our young citizens with the ecological degradation, we can invigorate them to develop a sympathetic understanding of the mutual dependence of all creatures found on earth. We can also instill a feeling in young souls to comprehend the worth of water and its conservation for all creatures. They can explore new sources for the better preservation and procurement of this precious gift of God. Thus the children can understand the significance of ecological sustainable actions. If we tell them in a form of a story, it will create ripples.

Though television is exerting a great influence on the developments of the children's personality, the most prevalent and pervasive form of media, literature can still offer an opportunity to analyze problems from different viewpoints. We can have the literary skills of the students if we give them important information about the things in presenting them in the form of story. Let us take the example of Robert Frost's poem 'The Runaway', showing how we can flat out children's intuitive grasping power. We talk about some of the things that children have to learn in life as they grow to adulthood.

### *The Runaway*

*Robert Frost*

*Once upon the snow of the year was beginning to fall,  
We stopped by a mountain pasture to say, "Whose colt?"  
A little Morgan had one forefoot on the wall,  
The other curled at his breast. He dipped his head  
And snorted at us. And then he had to bolt.*



*And we saw him, or thoughts we saw him, dim and gray,  
 Like shadow against the curtain falling flakes.  
 "I think the little fellow's afraid of the snow.  
 He isn't winter-broken. It isn't play  
 With the little follow at all. His running away.  
 I doubt if over his mother could tell him, 'sakes,  
 It's only weather'. He'd think she didn't know!  
 Where his mother? He can't be out alone".  
 And now he comes again with clatter of stone,  
 And mounts the wall again with white eyes  
 And all his tail that is'nt hair up straights  
 he shudders his coat as if to throw off flies.  
 Whoever it is that leaves him out so late.  
 When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,  
 Ought to be told to come and take him in"*

In this poem, Robert Frost introduces us a colt who's never seen snow before. The poem may be seen as a symbolic. What do one senses the frightened little colt stands for? The Morgan colt's are small, sturdy horses that excel at weight-pulling contests. Today they are used mostly for riding and in herding cattle.

### **Making Meanings**

#### ***First thoughts***

1. How would the students complete each of these sentences?
  - As he faced his first snow fall alone, the colt felt.....
  - As I read about him, I felt .....

#### ***Shaping Interpretations***

2. To break a colt is to get him used to being ridden common.
3. How do you think the speaker feels about the person who has left the colt alone in the pasture?
4. What is the colt running away from?
5. Some people think that the colt symbolizes a lost child. Do you agree with this interpretation with details from the poem.
6. From mental images of people, settings and events compare your mental images with those of your classmates.

#### ***Extending the Text***

7. Reread the last three lines of the poem. What other situations in life do you think these lines could be applied to? Explain.
8. Runaway can refer to people, too. What other "runaway are found in the world? What lives from the poem could apply to them.

Thus we may encourage them to go through such type of texts, that'll enable to make them resolute enough to perceive what is good for the Sustainability. We may encourage them to write stories on their topic of choice in order to turn them creative.

### **Reading for life**

While going through the text. How we can locate specific information.



## Strategies

1. Using the table of contents.
2. Glancing through the text and looking at headings.
3. Using graphic features like charts, tables and maps to organize information visually graphic features like colour, bold face words, and logos (tiny pictures- like computer icons) will help the students to find what they're looking for.
4. Analyzing the personal qualities that make people courageous create a presentation that teaches other about courage and fortitude.
5. Making groups to validate your point. Write down the person specific actions that show courage. Make questions:
  - What actions do you think require courage?
  - What personal qualities help you act courageously?
  - How can a person develop those qualities?
6. Presentation must be done on one of the following ways:
  - Role Play: Role play and deliver a speech to a class. Try to be as much like the courageous person, we have researched as possible.
  - Public service announcement writing and videotaping a public service announcement about acting courageously.
  - Design: Designing a symbol for each personal quality that contributes to courage. Label each symbol. Display symbols in any form one may wish. Consider writing a short article and sending designs to a magazine for possible publication.
  - Processing: Give sentences which exude the worth of courage:  
The most important thing I learned about courage is....

When we pay a cursory glance over the incredible development of Indian children literature in English, we witness a torrential rush and gush of thoughts and feelings and promises viable for sustainability in the works of our great writers- Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, Ruskin Bond, Anita Desai and a horde of other writers like Manoj Das, Satyajit Ray, Jaya Paramasivam, Sukumar Ray, Ira Saxena, Sandhya Rao, Deepa Agarwal, Dilip Salvi, Manorma Jafa etc, Mulk Raj Anand in his preface to *The Story of India* states remarkably:

*I wish to dedicate this new edition of The Story of India to all these young people who will work for the unity of our land and build it in the image of our noblest dreams. (The Story of India, Mulk Raj Anand, 1958)*

In our country, we see a flurry of literary magazines which contribute to hone the children's sensibility towards society through animal stories, comic strips, adventurous stories, myth, mystery, folklores, real stories, science fiction, space fiction etc. Furthermore, Children's Book Trust (CBT), National Book Trust (NBT), and National Council for Science and Technology Communication Network (NCSTC) are sprucing this genre by means of organizing seminars, conferences, symposiums, workshops, fests, summits and science congresses which will prove fruitful to facilitate children's creative activity and help them prepare for the future. Zakir Husain and Pt. Nehru, the bigwigs of our politics, contributed indefatigably for the enrichment and



development of children's literature. However, HRD ministry also counts on organizing events in order to obtain all round development of children in India and thereby to groom them to stand on their pedestal in future. On one occasion, the then Indian premier Atal Bihari Bajpai averred- " Children should spend time playfully and adventurously and learn the joys and pleasures of sharing happiness and sorrow ( *The Times of India*, 1988), exhorted that for future sustainability, the young souls ought to cultivate the crop of compassion and altruism to vindicate his point, he opined nonchalantly- " to eat when one is hungry is *Prakriti* (good nature); to waste the food is *Vikriti* (bad nature), and to share the food with others is *Sanskriti* (good nature). These instances evince that Indian English children literature in general, and English children literature world over has the rich matrix and potential to attain a quintessential progress, to establish unique cultural and literary identity and resultant progressive future prospects.

In conclusion, we may affirm that children's literature can vouch for our young children to create and develop a sustainable future, without active participation and engagement they can't prosper. Contriving for having holistic approach towards education, young souls can become intrepid enough to achieve set goals and also turning them into a harbinger of peace, brotherhood and harmony. To leap forward towards illustrious global citizenship, they can apprehend to welcome change and imbibe newer life styles fit for Sustainability. Literature can prove a stepping stone for sustenance and can equip them aware the latest development's surfacing in and around the atmosphere. It can serve as a catalyst in the all-round development of the child, thereby tilting them to identify and solving the problems, working collaterally with the people of diverse cultural background, coupled with awaiting themselves the genesis of these problems and uphold a spirit requisite to usher in an era of tolerance, justice and equality for all human beings. Children's literature has the capacity of enlightening mankind and brightening the prospects of world peace.

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## **Bricolage of Cultural Confluence and the Indian Connection in J. K. Rowling's the *Harry Potter* Series**

***Sumathi Shivakumar***

### **Introduction**

'Bricolage' is a term used by Claude Levi' Strauss as metaphor for mythmaking. However, this term has been applied in many disciplines that evolve a new product by synthesizing existing ones. In the practical arts and the fine arts, for instance, bricolage is the recreation from a diverse range of things Art from waste is a bricolage in Fine Arts. Recycling plastic and putting it to innovative use is a bricolage for safeguarding the environment. The term has also been extensively used in many other fields - philosophy, critical theory, education, software, business to name a few.

In cultural studies bricolage refers to the processes by which people assimilate, adopt and acquire objects from across socio – cultural divisions into a new cultural form. This has created new cultures, mainly of convenience, which are evolving into new transnational identities. In literature, bricolage is impacted by inter-textuality, shaping a text's meanings by relating it to other texts. This is also done by relating it to other mythologies as is seen in the Harry Potter series. It requires amazing powers of imagination churn out a new story from existing ones, usually mythologies. Imagination is the chief trait of any myth and it usually entails expressing a natural phenomenon through supernatural elements.

Although, it appears relatively simple to fabricate a new story from a popular myth, on closer analysis, it is easier said than done. Remaining faithful to the characteristics of the original is not the only challenge for the creator; it is equally demanding to maintain discretion. A literary work of a confluence of myths and cultures that weaves a new literary plot to accommodate them with remarkable ease and finesse is perhaps the ultimate joy for any literary connoisseur. J.K. Rowling's unique admixture of several myths rolled into one complex plot that sets her apart from all contemporary story tellers. The Harry Potter (HP) series is an amalgam of myth, legend, fairytale and folktale.

The wizardly world of Harry Potter is a storehouse of ancient lore, historical traditions, fairy tales and legends. If the plot and explicit magical milieu are Rowling's indigenous creation, nearly all the creatures, their exploits, spells, potions and the uncanny elucidation of events have their origins from popular European folklore/mythology.

Most critics are of the opinion that Greek, Roman and Egyptian sources have all got mixed together, something like a potpourri of the Western magical tradition. Several names of characters, magic spells, the potions and the curses vindicate this argument.

What many readers, critics seem to have overlooked is the Indian connection to these admixtures. The entire series is loaded with allusions to the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Srimad Bhagavatham, to name few. Echoes of the Bhagawad Gita resonate from almost every book in the series. We shall see the confluence of Western cultural history and mythology first before embarking on a journey into the Indian melting pot. David Colbert's "The Magical Worlds of Harry Potter: A Treasury of Myths, Legends, and Fascinating Facts" has been extensively referred to along with other web references. The details are given in the References.



## Smooth convergence

The fusion of myths and legends that the author has wielded is of an unimaginable magnitude. Even a cursory glance of the main characters reveal the silken convergence. Take for example the myths and their relevance that surround some of the main characters:

**Hermione:** Greek *Hermione* – Helen's only child Earthly, *Hermes*, God of orators, wit, literature, invention, weights measurements, and thieves. In the novel, she did steal a few items from Snape's office to prepare the poly-juice potion in the second book, *The Chamber of Secrets*. She is celebrated for her practical intelligence and wit right through the series. The only one to have studied Arithmancy and runes is testimony to this point.

**Granger:** (American English) Farmer. Her parents are muggles( non magical people)

**Sirius Black:** Egyptian and later Greek *Sirius* – Dog Star – are among the brightest in the Sirius constellation. He assumes a Black dog form for his animagus transformation

**Black:** English – dark (wizard)

**Potter** English

**Harry:** Henry, ruler of the home. Harry saves the wizarding world from the dark forces

**Lily** (mother): flower of purity Lily's pure love saves Harry.

**James** (father): supplanter – one who takes the place of someone else, especially by force James marries Lily, seizing the place of Snape who loved her deeply.

**Ron Weasley:** Scandinavian *Ron* – “advice ruler,” a leader who gives advice  
English **Weasley:** Sneaky, cowardly, running away from a situation

He is seen to advise Harry every now and then. Ron though intelligent, shows fear and would want to run away from many challenging situations like meeting the Aragog etc.

The above is a clear illustration of the confluence. It must also be admitted that this confluence is not restricted to characters and characterization alone. Several incidents are intertwined into the plot, resulting in a Lévi-Strauss term - *bricolage*. This metaphor for mythmaking produces new stories with the recycled pieces of ancient myths. In the hands of Rowling the blending is smooth wherein the inadvertent connections are much more sublime than the deliberate ones.

## Mythology Recycled

Myths represent human experience and exemplify the spiritual values of a culture. Harry Potter is a hugely popular transcultural phenomenon with a unique blend of global myths and cultures to create new cultural identities. Arthurian legends, Greek, Roman, Egyptian mythologies and many African mythologies can be recognised in the plot. Some are analysed below.

## Greek Mythology

Medusa, the female monster in ancient Greek mythology can be compared to the Basilisk, the powerful serpent in *The Chamber of Secrets*. Both possessed the destructive power to transform anyone looking at her eyes. Medusa turns them to stone while the serpent kills them. ‘Medusa's gaze’ as is popularly known, has destroyed several lives while the Basilisk's gaze has killed the ‘moaning Myrtle’. Many others saw a reflection of the serpent's eyes in water and have been turned into stone or ‘petrified’ as is referred to in the book. Perseus who eventually



vanquishes her, looks at her eyes in the reflection in his shield. Harry beheads the Basilisk with the Gryffindor Sword, which he retrieves from the Sorting Hat.

We can observe that the references are interwoven craftily into a seamless blend of thought, action and excitement.

### **Roman Mythology**

Many of the names of characters, spells, terms, subjects of study, etc. reveal tremendous influence of Roman mythology. Minerva McGonagall has a combination of Latin and Irish names. Minerva is the Roman Goddess of wisdom and the crafts while the name McGonagall (or McGonigle, McGonegal) is Scottish. In Celtic, Conegal, means 'the bravest,' plus Mc, or 'son/daughter of.' Incidentally she is the Head of the bravest House – Gryffindor.

In Roman mythology, Pomona was the goddess of fruit trees, gardens and orchards. Pomona Sprout is the Herbology instructor in HP.

In the potion called Veritaserum, Veritas is the Goddess of truth. And serum means extract. This is used to bring out the truth from Barty Crouch Jr. in The Goblet of Fire.

Curses like 'Imperius', spells like, 'reducto', terms like 'inferi', subjects like Arithmancy and many more are Latin – English combinations are scattered all over the books.

### **Arthurian Legends**

The striking parallels between King Arthur and Harry Potter cannot neither be missed nor understated. Harry and Arthur were orphaned at an early age, as a result of a prophecy, that claimed that they will triumph over the evil forces.

They eventually return to their original worlds, unperturbed by their power and glory; Harry had vanquished Voldermort and Arthur as become the sole heir to the throne. Another striking similarity is the protection they received from wise old wizards – Dumbledore for Harry and Merlin for Arthur.

But the most impressive comparison is the sword: Arthur pulls the sword Excalibur out of the stone and is given by the Lady of the Lake, while Harry retrieves the Sword of Gryffindor twice: once out of the Sorting Hat while fighting Basilisk in 'The Chamber of Secrets'. The second time is in the seventh book from the lake where he was led into the forest by a doe. The fact that they are the chosen ones to execute this power is also a point in case; Arthur was heir to the throne and Harry, a true Gryffindor.

Besides there are other features like Harry marrying Ginny and Arthur marrying Guinevere; both stories employing the symbolism of a gryffin as well as a white stag too provide proof on cultural influxes.

### **Indian Mythology and Harry Potter**

Cultural confluences and bricolage require more elements. It is here that we can see the influx of Indian Mythology, especially the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.



Harry chasing a white doe that led him to the lake to retrieve the Sword of Griffindor, leaving Hermione behind, is akin to Lakshmana leaving Seetha in their hut and following a deer to save Rama. He meets Rama, Seetha's husband while Harry meets Ron who eventually married Hermione. A semblance of Lord Krishna can also be seen in the early lives of Arthur and Harry. He was taken away from his parents (Devaki and Vasudeva) also as a result of a prophecy that Kamsa would be killed by Krishna. Lord Voldermort was to be killed by Harry according to the prophecy in HP. Therefore they proceed to kill their nemesis. Kamsa imprisoned Krishna's parents, hoping that he could kill Krishna at his very birth, while Lord Voldermort kills Harry's parents. However, both Krishna and Harry escape.

If the love of his parents saved Harry, Vasudeva's timely help saved Krishna. Krishna was escorted to Brindavan his relatives' home, by his father Vasudeva, wrapped in a basket at night. Harry was taken to his relatives by Hagrid, wrapped in a bundle of clothes, in the night. Just as Krishna and Kamsa have a blood relationship. Harry too has a blood connection with Voldermort, a factor that fetched many similar qualities in both of them. Krishna kills Kalia the sea serpent as Harry kills Basilisk, the underwater serpent. The end of Kamsa at the hands of Krishna and Voldermort's end in the hands of Harry too are very similar.

Apart from these mythological similarities of the magical universe of HP and the universal view of Sanatana Dharma, the factual similarities in the philosophical expressions of some of the characters in HP and those that reverberate in the Bhagavad Gita are remarkably similar. Given below is just a sample:

S.NO	Dialogues in Harry Potter	Corresponding verses in the Bhagavad Gita
1.	<p>"Look, if I picked up a sword right now, Ron, and ran you through with it, I wouldn't damage your soul at all."            "Which would be a real comfort to me, I'm sure," said Ron. Harry laughed.            "It should be, actually! But my point is that whatever happens to your body, your soul will survive untouched," said Hermione. ( Deathly Hallows Chapter 6)</p>	<p>Weapons cleave him not, nor fire burneth him, nor waters wet him, nor wind drieth him away. He is not slain when the body is slain. (Bhagavad Gita 2:23, 2:20)</p>
2.	<p>Professor Binns had been very old indeed when he had fallen asleep in front of the staff room fire and got up next morning to teach, leaving his body behind him. (The Philosopher's stone Chapter 8)</p>	<p>As a man casting off worn-out garments, taketh new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies, entereth into others that are new. (Bhagavad Gita 2:22)</p>
3.	<p>"After all, to the well-organized mind, death is but the next great adventure." (Albus Dumbledore, The Philosopher's Stone Chapter 17)</p>	<p>As the dweller in the body experieth childhood, youth, old age, so passeth he onto another body; steadfast one grieveth not at death. A self-realized soul (i.e. a "well-organized mind" to use Dumbledore's words) is not bewildered by such a change. /Bhagavad Gita 2:13/</p>



4.	“It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities” (Albus Dumbledore, The Chamber of Secrets)	Even if the most sinful worship Me with undivided heart, he too must be accounted righteous, for he hath rightly resolved i.e. chosen the right path. (Bhagavad Gita 9:30)
5.	“The happiest man will look into the mirror and see himself exactly as he is” (Albus Dumbledore, The Philosopher’s Stone)	He who beareth no ill-will to any being, friendly and compassionate, without attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving, Ever content, harmonious, with the self controlled, resolute, with mind and reason, dedicated Me, he My devotee is dear to Me. (Bhagavad Gita 12:13-14)

These and many more overtones of The Divine Song are very striking as we browse through the different books. Though Rowling has not made explicit reference to the Bhagavad Gita or for that matter any mythology, nor has suggested that she has indeed read the Hindu Scriptures, it may be inferred that these concepts are universal in their approach and therefore eternal in their existence.

### Summation

As we transit from one mythology to another, the inventiveness and veracity of the collection transcends its piecemeal sources and resources. It must be noted that the major readership of this series belong to the generation of hard-core techno savvy ipod, video-game addicts. For them, this would serve as an awareness – creating opportunity; since herein, they could encounter, an encyclopedia of world classics, the magnetism of Lewis Carroll, Barrie, Tolkien, Nesbitt and Travers, besides the charisma of Dickens and Stevenson all at once, and more importantly perhaps, for the first time! What a thrust for reading habit in general and plurality of cultures in particular!

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## **Eco-symbolism in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing***

***Sr. Candy D' Cunha & G. Suvarna Lakshmi***

### **Introduction**

Since time immemorial, man inherited the language of symbols. He used signs and symbols for expressing his ideas and feelings when there were no other ways and means for communicating. Symbols are powerful expressions of ideas and emotions. They also represent one's culture and national feelings. The symbolist movement began in France during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a revolt against realism. Stephane Mallaseme was its high priest. Later, the influence of symbolism was strengthened by Pater and English aesthetes who had hailed themselves as the English speaking representatives of the French symbolic school.

The main concern of symbolism is to glue the innermost feelings of man with the physical images or symbols. In the course of time, man is able to strongly relate himself with others using symbols. Symbols lead to a sense of reality for him in order to live consciously and in helping him to achieve his true vision. Every nation has its own flag, colour, and the art on it that represents its vision. Many other symbols are also attributed to the same nation in order to express its uniqueness and tradition. All these can be strongly understood only through symbols. Symbols when correctly designed have given mankind the right picture of one's own state and feelings. Moreover it has become the most powerful iconography in the art history.

Various writers throughout the centuries have touched upon the concept of symbolism, often altering it through art and literature. W. B. Yeats has been specially revered for his insights on symbolism. He was totally influenced by the French movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even today, W. B. Yeats is considered as one of the foremost poets in English literature in the realm of symbols. He said: "a symbol is the possible expression of some invisible essence, a transparent lamp about a spiritual flame ----." He further stated that symbols give voice to dumb things and body to body-less things. W. B. Yeats used many symbols in his poetry and essays which helped a reader to understand the personal symbolic elements in his works.

Symbolism has had given various shades to symbols as it viewed them not only from a denotative but also from connotative and evocative viewpoints. Symbolism brings out the broader attributes of poetry or a text in which symbols can be depicted as objects, events, or colours etc., whereas eco-symbolism adheres to nature symbols. Nature plays a vital role as far as the prefix "eco" is concerned.

Eco-symbolism celebrates the gift of creativity in man by inviting him to convert his thoughts into actions, remaining profoundly connected to nature. It aims at creating a healthy dialogue between man and the natural world in order to help him to live more meaningfully, healthily and responsibly in the natural world. Just like an artist throwing paint on the canvas to bring the best out of his creative mind, so also eco-symbolism tries to represent art in order to bring man closer to nature. Art pursues new and creative aesthetic solutions to bring in harmony and beauty into life.

Eco-symbolism focuses on creating a dialogue to re-strengthen our perspectives of life together on earth. By using eco-symbols, our collective knowledge can re-affirm the universality of being. This concept can give hope for the next generation to be more committed and look at the mother earth with veneration. Thus, freedom, dialogue, respect, and above all constructive debate remain vital and imperative as art progresses through human endeavours. Eco-symbolism



becomes an art in which visual artists are challenged to understand the universal dialect of symbolism.

Eco-symbolism shows the rising awareness of environmental concerns. It powerfully brings in the art of integrity by addressing the universal human conditions to create respect for the natural world. Eco-symbolism creates possibilities for man to explore the richness of the environment in which he lives and moves. In a way, it also helps him in adding concreteness to his vision and mission. Eco-symbolism becomes a tool that tries to evoke a strong social consciousness and empathy for others. It also takes up the further lead to ethical responsibility and above all the moral dimensions which inspire positive feeling of harmony and peace.

Margaret Eleanor Atwood is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, and environmental activist. She is among the most-honoured authors of fiction in the recent history. Atwood is known, both for the quality and the quantity of her writings. She has won more than 55 awards in Canada and internationally. She has published many novels, short stories, poems, and works of literary criticism. Atwood has repeatedly reinvented herself over the course of her career. She has written science fiction, speculative fiction, historical fiction, and realistic fiction. Science is usually an important theme in her books, and Atwood agrees that having a father who was a scientist played an important role in her interest in exploring this field.

Atwood has spoken and written prolifically on the art of writing and on being a writer. Atwood is also a feminist writer. Her themes are Civilization vs. Wilderness, Immortality, The nature of Nature, Identical crisis, feminism, eco-feminism, environmental issues etc. The novels of Atwood are eco-symbolic as they provoke the mind of the reader to visualise reality from a deeper level.

In *Surfacing*, Atwood uses various eco-symbols such as animals, nature objects, colours, and places to show the inherent connection of man with nature. These eco-symbols bring out the deeper meaning hidden between the lines, enabling the reader to introspect and bring about possible changes. The novel *Surfacing* has a very simple story line if one views it superficially. The novel opens with the unnamed protagonist who comes back from Toronto to northern Quebec where she grew up as a child in search of her father who is reported to have mysteriously vanished. The protagonist works as a commercial artist and is back to the place after nine long years. She has totally kept herself aloof from her parents except that once she visited her mother when she was hospitalised. The very reason for her long silence and her hidden life was that she was cheated and exploited by her lover, making her pregnant and then refusing to marry her. He had insisted with her to undergo an abortion which was against her wish, but she had to get her pregnancy terminated.

The protagonist had to cut herself off from her parents because her reality would shock them. She told her parents that she was divorced and the child was left with her lover. On hearing the disastrous incident of her father who was a botanist and was missing near the lake, she goes on her way to discover the circumstances of her father's death. As she begins her journey she struggles to trace her identity and origin and her psychological journey leads her directly to the natural world. She comes along to the island with her three companions, namely David, Anna and Joe. David and Anna are married couples and are her causal friends but Joe is her lover. The three friends of the narrator were busy in looking at the landscape and taking photos. The heroine is very serious in search of her father. Several questions flash through her mind with regard to his death, which offer her several possibilities. She gets trapped in the web of confusion and is unable to solve the mystery of her father's disappearance. This confusion leads her to a psychological



journey, in bringing back the traumatic memories of the aborted foetus, which were lying dormant in her sub-conscious. Her guilty conscious haunts her memory.

As the protagonist continues her journey, she encounters many symbols which reflect the author's major concerns in the novel. The images such as lake, road, and island, can be seen from an eco-symbolic view point, connecting it to the inner and the outer world of the protagonist.

Looking from an eco-symbolic view point, the lake becomes a symbol of anti-nature. Firstly, in making her realise that she has been a killer as she recollects her memories of the aborted foetus which time and again surface to her conscious mind. She suffers from a guilt complex, even though aborting was not her choice. She also understands that she has been treated as a puppet, 'the second sex'.

*He trembles and then I can feel my lost child surfacing within me, forgive me, rising from the lake where it has been poisoned for so long, its eyes and teeth phosphorescent; the two halves clasp, interlocking like fingers, it buds, it sends out fronds. (p.209)*

Secondly, having a keen look at the lake once again, the heroine is shocked at the mutilation that is visible there. She could see the ruin caused to the lake and the island by the Americans, as they took pleasure in destroying nature.

*Anything that suffers and dies instead of us is Christ; if they didn't kill birds and fish they would have killed us. The animals die that we may live; they are substitute people, hunters in the fall killing the deer that is Christ also. (p.179)*

Once again, the heroine is struck by guilt in seeing northern Quebec which was entirely different than when she grew up there. She feels deeply sorry and longs for the Canadian past. Here, the lake becomes an eco-symbol because it leads her to open up her guilty conscience and to understand that she herself has been anti-nature.

Coming to the image of the lake which represents water is totally eco-symbolic as the title of the novel itself suggests. Water imagery gets established right from the title, bringing out the hidden meaning of water as life and death. The white birches near the lake "are dying" but at the end of the chapter, the lake becomes the giver of life as the context shows "blue and cool as redemption", showing that water has a power to generate energy and strength.

Later, towards the end of part I, the protagonist plunges herself into the lake. She desires to purify her guilty conscience and tries to submerge herself under the water. Water becomes the powerful element of life. Here the narrative begins and ends with the lake. The word Lake has been used nearly 100 times in various contexts. There are also other references to water, such as river, sea, water, stream, etc.

Water symbolises death but it also symbolises transformation through purification. Images of diving and drowning are constantly repeated in *Surfacing*. These images are strongly associated with water where the protagonist calls the drowning of her brother and diving, as she surfaces with the newly formed self. The protagonist ultimately surfaces from the depths. Here, the radical change in the life of the heroine is to be noted. Water has washed her clean, making her a renewed person.



The image of the road also has a symbolic element in *Surfacing*. The protagonist begins her journey on the road which did not have identical roots of the past.

*I can't believe I'm on this road again, twisting along past the lake where the white birches are dying, the disease is spreading from the south, and I notice they now have sea-planes for hire. (p.3)*

The old road which the protagonist desires, leads to “totalitarian innocence” while the new road leads to “Americanism”. The old road is juxtaposed against the image of the new road which has the eco-symbolic element. Here the new road attracts and captures the attention of the tourists and hence they do terrible harm to the environment. Their travelling on the smooth path not only gives them comfort but in fact provokes them to destroy the nature. When the protagonist returns home after nine long years, she tries to look for the old familiar road. She is told by a woman at the corner store that the old road has been closed for many years and is no more used. On hearing this, the protagonist is terribly shocked and she undergoes a severe breakdown as she is unable to reconcile herself to the change.

From an eco-symbolic point of view, the new road leads to commercialism whereas the old road leads to an organic way of living with natural and interpersonal proximity.

For the protagonist, the island symbolises alienation. The island is set apart from the city where transportation becomes a difficult thing. One cannot imagine a bus or a train on the island. Here the protagonist herself is an island. Despite having the company of three companions, she shuts herself off completely from others. Though she knew David and Anna's car was the only way for her to reach her homeland, she takes things for granted and feels terribly restless in their company. Through certain incidents in the novel it is also understood that the heroine is waiting for the opportunity to be alone on the island.

*I try to think for the first time what it was like to be them: our father, islanding his life, protecting both of us and himself, in the midst of war and in a poor country... (p.274)*

The protagonist goes on leading an isolated life in spite of knowing that the island was not a safe place for her. She was even sometimes terrified by David and Joe as they were men and there would be chances for sexual advances. Even though she is fond of Joe she tries to be careful with him. She also desires not to be bounded in the fetters of marriage even if she would become pregnant through Joe.

Towards the end, the island becomes an eco-symbol for her to realise that she has to come out of her caged feelings. She gains inner strength and feels courage to stand strong without going into the cage. She decides to be a mother and participates in the natural process of procreation. She pulls Joe out of the cabin and quenches her sexual thirst with him. Now, she feels satisfied to conceive a baby.

The underlining message on the island is all about the beauty of life. The protagonist realises that she cannot conceive without the help of a man and thus she remains grateful to Joe. It can be noted that the protagonist has attained realization in discovering the truth. She feels enthusiastic and renewed in her new found freedom. She seems to leave the island and live a normal life in the company of others, especially Joe, in talking and socializing and by a new beginning. As the novel ends with the following lines: The lake is quiet, the trees surround me, asking and giving nothing.(p.251)



Margaret Atwood the artist with a canvas and paints has beautifully portrayed the characters in *Surfacing* apt to its title. As the title itself suggests, the eco-symbolic features are truly present, active and alive in the novel. Atwood uses many symbols such as animals, colours, objects, etc., to create visual effects on the novel. Apart from the decorative and the projective style in the novel, the true purpose of art has also been served. This in fact has enhanced the universal condition of mankind. Thus, eco-symbols in the novel have provoked a reaction which is a universal reality. Man has to be always united in the company of others. The purpose of life is to live it with others in harmony and peace. The present paper is an attempt to explore the visual concepts of eco-symbolism which make *Surfacing* a painter's novel.

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## **Promise of an Ecological Disaster: the Future that is Envisioned by *Wall-E* and *Idiocracy***

***Tushnim Gangopadhyay***

The world changes – which is at best a neutral observation to be made given the nature of change. We have changed over the ages, and are now a lot closer to a trans-humanist stage than we ever were. However, optimism notwithstanding, this may also appear to be the limit of how far we can evolve. Despite our best attempts to conciliate the struggle between nature and progress, it is highly doubtful that the world will ever get greener than it is. It will certainly never go back to the golden days of yore that we fondly recollect. Our exponential growth in population has shown no sign of slowing down; and humankind is yet to collectively acknowledge that water-bodies are not inexhaustible sinks, as the fact that the practice of *visarjan* in Indian rivers has to be perforce illegalized after centuries of unimpeded practice points out. That is not to say that there is a readily available platform of moral elevation which would allow us paint reality in black and white. We have not yet discovered a practical way of controlling the population growth, which means that consumption of land and natural resources will continue to sky-rocket for a long time into the foreseeable future. The only way to keep our heads above the water is to continue mutilating the ecology and hoping that we do not live long enough to see the day when the whiplash comes.

Several movies have strived to portray the state of ecological decay towards which we are driving, often to quite fear-inducing results. Many have tried to portray the pathos of contemporary world where capitalistic greed and governmental callousness destroys both life and land. This paper is not about them. This paper is aimed towards discussing the innate quality of human beings – that particular alienation typical to the hairless ape – which acts as one of the important causal factors behind such calamitous behavior. The quality in consideration is humanism – particularly Christian and modern humanism – which ensures a homocentric perspective in human beings, reducing the existential status of everything non-human to the level of mere tools. To this end, we shall look at some movies which take a largely over the top attitude; movies which we rarely consider an ecological warning such as the likes of *Godzilla* and *King Kong*, classics and numerous reiterated both.

It may be generally agreed upon that these movies are not made with an eco-critical perspective; but literature is famous for its tendency of involuntarily exposing pieces of information by the very nature of its being. While *Godzilla* works on the lines of nuclear abuse and rising pollution levels of land and water with a rather ham-fisted way – ham-fisted because we probably are not very scared of the prospect of unnatural mutation in iguanas to consider lowering our level of eco-abuse least a fire-breathing giant lizard comes wreaking havoc in our hometown – *King Kong* hits much closer to home with its warnings on the unwitting adaptation of wildlife into our unprepared urban setting. Considering the vast number of likes every tortured pet animal receives upon its pictures or videos being uploaded and streamed, mankind in general has still a lot to learn about human-animal coexistence.

Rihanna's recent tour to Thailand, triggering the arrest of two men who were peddling a Slow Loris has started uproar in some communities regarding the brutal treatment of such exotic creatures while keeping them as pets. There are several other creatures, similar to the Slow Loris in their fate, who do not belong to the urbanized human world, and are yet taken away from their natural habitat so that some human beings can feel a misplaced sense of joy by owning them. If a Slow Loris or an Iguana had been as large as the titular Kong or *Godzilla*, who is to say that, the



result would be any different from what the respective movies have depicted? The lesson that we are, as a kind, not prepared to transcend our humanistic life and move into a trans-humanistic or post-humanistic existence has not yet been completely comprehended. Innumerable instances of manipulating the ecological environment around us are showcased throughout human history – of which the number of harm done outweighs the advantages significantly. The question is, will our race ever be able to comprehend the necessity of striking a balance between nature and humanistic outlook?

Wall-E and Idiocracy offer some prediction in this regard, which though of a very dark nature indeed, still appear to be highly probable from our present day stand-point. Both the movies in consideration are not, in their bones, of an eco-critical nature. However, they both shed a significant light on the nature of human complacency, lack of awareness, lack of information, materialistic progress, and lack of foresight – things which affect the eco-system in devastating ways and are originated entirely from a humanistic perspective. Another movie that can join the melee is *The Lorax*, based on Dr. Seuss' book of the same name. However, *The Lorax* takes an optimistic view of the ecological crisis depicted in the movie – where vast deforestation in order to promote consumerism results in a dystopian society, ruled by a capitalistic farm – which can easily be ended by a willing little boy who gains the support of the community. Although pithy and succinct in its depiction, the movie boils the crisis down to a much more children-friendly problem, easily tackled. Wall – E and Idiocracy points the finger to the shortcomings of basic human nature; a problem that cannot be tackled with any degree of ease, be it in the movie or in reality.

The manifestations of human greed, complacency, negligence, and – in the case of Idiocracy – human idiocy, finds similar ways of expression in both the movies. The nature vs. culture font is depicted in a microcosm, by the means of the organization Buy 'n' Large in Wall-E, and Brawndo in Idiocracy. The organizations in both instances have technically taken over the world, so much so that even the government has been bought by the companies. In Idiocracy, the energy drink company Brawndo receives a secondary focus, as compared to the primary spotlight which is enjoyed by the issue of rapidly increasing human stupidity. Similarly, in Wall-E the Buy 'n' Large Company is not directly criticized for its irresponsible and flawed policies, as much as Wall-E and Eve's romance is lauded. However, the visual presentation of product placements in both the movies is used deftly in pointing out that the present global crisis is in several ways the fault of excessive consumerism.

Plot-wise, both the movies share a common theme – that of human degradation. In Wall-E, besides saturating the world and its atmosphere with dirt, junk, garbage and pollution, humans have also made an erroneous decision – largely subsidized by Buy 'n' Large – of moving to the space while numerous robotic cleaning staff cleans the planet. That this is either an oversight on the part of the leaders of human civilization or a ploy by future capitalism in order to retain and enhance its relevance, becomes clear as soon as the audience set their eyes on earth. For seven hundred years the entire human civilization has waited in their space station for the army of Wall-E compactor robots to clear the earth, without paying much attention to either the condition of the Wall-Es, or trying actively to rehabilitate the earth.

As the movie begins, we see only one surviving Wall-E, who has miraculously gained sentience. It is this sentience which leads him to gather interesting objects from his surroundings, in his attempt to emulate a human life-style. Among mementos of the absent humanity he finds the first sapling on earth in seven hundred years. Such an event cannot be preplanned, and is therefore a completely unreliable instance of *deus ex machina*. The next happenstance occurs when Eve, the probe robot sent to earth in order to scan for ecological re-growth, also attains a



degree of sentience which allows her to bond with Wall-E, resultantly receiving the sapling as a courting gift. None of these could be predictable and therefore do not count towards humanity's active attempts at restoring the earth's ecosystem. Following these events Wall-E and Eve reach the space station Axiom and try to bring the humans back to earth by prompting its captain, McCrea, to end the A113 protocol which was to be in power until humanity discovered that earth could be inhabited again. Considering that the starship Axiom was also created by Buy 'n' Large, the company which runs the entire crew of surviving human beings like a mall cum daycare center; it is hardly surprising that there would be pretenses of taking the humans back to their native habitat with such enormous loopholes in it.

To begin with, all that the compactor bots had been tasked with was to arrange the earth's trash in compact cubes and arranging them – which resulted in skyscrapers of garbage cubes all over the world, where only heaps of similar height had existed before. The atmospheric trash had not been cleared, thus giving the earth its alien brown stratosphere at the beginning of the movie. No evident attempts to address this issue are visible at any part of the movie. The condition of the Wall-Es proves that sufficient attention had not been paid towards their maintenance during the absence of humanity. Though this is not a major lack of foresight at first consideration, since Buy 'n' Large had promised to bring humanity back by the end of fifty years, which might have been the optimal operating period for the compactor bots; it still appears to be a huge miscalculation on the company's part – if it was a miscalculation and not a willingly enacted sabotage – given how great an amount of garbage there is on the planet even seven hundred years after the initiative had begun. That this apparent miscalculation can be intentional is further signified by the counteractive actions of Auto, Axiom's auto-pilot. When captain McCrea tries to end the A113 Protocol, Auto – who has also seemingly gained sentience somehow – mutinies and tries everything in his power to stop humanity from returning to earth. Though to the casual observer it might appear that Auto has grown to love the sense of command and authority he has as long as mankind lives in Axiom, there is a significant chance that Auto's sentience is nothing more than a programmed bug created by Buy 'n' Large in order to ensure that its consumerist reign never ends. Economic profit has misbalanced mankind's common sense, leading to a self-serving ploy by Buy 'n' Large to stay in power for seven hundred long years without anyone questioning it or even trying to find out an active remedy to the problem over this vast amount of time. The problem was tackled in due course by a post-human phenomenon, who not only had to gain sentience but had to progress along humanism to some degree in order to do so.

What is surprising is that the humanism which Wall-E gains is one that humankind has experienced in the early Nineteenth Century during the Romantic Age and has subsequently discarded in favor of the presently overwhelming homocentric world-view. The unity of the human soul with the world and nature is not a novel concept, though in actuality it has never been achieved to a truly post-humanist degree. The Nineteenth Century Romantics such as Wordsworth, Emerson and Thoreau have long ago preached the necessity of intellectual individualism and spiritual unity with nature – the surest way to attain the trans-humanist stage wherein humankind can empathize with the global ecology and overcome the confinements of narrow homocentricity. However, such philosophies seem fated to be steamrolled over by humanistic consumerism in the not-so-distant future. None of the aesthetic or spiritual characteristics of humankind appears to have been sustained during the seven hundred year period, where the only tribute to aesthetics is shown to be the music video which Wall-E watches in his attempt to connect with human sentiments. It is highly ironic that the human-nature connection which characterizes everything romantic in humanity, is evident and existent only in a robot, whereas the humans prefer not only to remove themselves from the trans-material arts,



but also from the non-consumerist part of the society, preferring to delegate interaction to the sphere of social media.

Alienation has occurred here not only between humanity and the rest of existence, but also between one human and the other, which makes it far easier to treat them as isolated units to be consumed by the consumerist culture. Perhaps along with the essential human-nature bond, external non-human agencies will also have to bear the onus to remind humanity of its identity – which Wall-E symbolically does with two of Axiom’s inhabitants, John and Mary, whom he accidentally bumps into and breaks out of the technological-brainwashing trance which they previously shared with the other inhabitants.

In defense of a similar degree of consumerist-dependence humanism – albeit a very self-negligent strains thereof – among its civilization, Idiocracy can at least point towards the phenomenal stupidity which inhibits them. Instead of one company encompassing every sector of livelihood as in Wall-E, Idiocracy’s world sports a bevy of associations and industries, ranging from media to agricultural suppliers, who has collectively as well as competitively taken over humanity. Though the façade is different here, the end result is the same. Constantly bombarded with brainwashing advertisements and product placements, the people have succumbed to a state of zombie-like consumerism. Instead of living in complete dependence on Buy ‘n’ Large, in Idiocracy every individual has become a walking billboard for every conceivable company and product. Here mankind takes up a more antagonistic approach towards the *deus ex machina* than in Wall-E, in keeping with the primary theme of the movie which states that humanity has become increasingly stupid with the progressing years. This also helps in excusing much of humanity’s complacency regarding the ecological disaster their world is faced with, whereas Wall-E merely depends on consumerist brainwashing and alienation in order to explain its inhabitants’ nonchalance towards earth.

Here we evidence the unpredictable saviors being sent to a cryogenic sleep five hundred years before the catastrophe takes place. With such advancement in technology, it is stupefying how humanity focused more on cryogenic preservation rather than cleaning up the eco-system which was obviously in a state of decline even then. However, since the cryogenic chambers were supposed to be opened at the end of one year, this was an unexpected event by all means. Although the movie says that humanity has declined in intellect over the years and has reached a state of absolute idiocy, despite the assistance to plot-credibility, this device is hardly crucial towards explaining the dust bowl and ecological disaster. Till the present day, human beings have displayed ample evidence to suggest that such a scenario – such as for instance the Arctic Refuge Drilling Controversy – does not necessarily require a colossal increase in human idiocy in order to transpire. The stupidity does make it more difficult for the protagonist to revert the damage that has been done to the topsoil by watering crops with the energy drink Brawndo, which was the chief culprit behind the dust bowl. Even while the President of United States, Camacho (Terry Crews) bestows upon the protagonist Joe Buers (Luke Wilson) his trust and the governmental authority to re-stabilize the ecosystem, it is only by a matter of chance that the plan succeeds. Nature was revived and humanity rescued in Idiocracy just as in Wall-E by a freak accident which had nothing to do with human intelligence, effort, goodwill or awareness.

Considering that both the movies rely on accidents and coincidence in order to bring the audience a happy ending, the comment on mankind’s chances of coexistence with nature appears doubtful, if not impossible, unless an external force unpredictably interferes. As of the present day, we have seen little to believe that such external influences might be present. While there are several cues – like the anti-vaccination campaign, and rampant deforestation as well as poaching –



to suggest that despite moving towards a similar future as shown in the movies, we might not have a happy ending. The movies in consideration shift the onus of transcending humanism or homo-centrism on to an agency removed from the now and here, because that is the only possible way in which such a radical movement could have been possibly depicted in a scenario where humanism taken such unopposed root in the collective consciousness. In both the scenarios, whether intentionally or incidentally, the reestablishment of a working ecological system is not an end in itself, but rather a means to the desired end for humanity. The plant which brings back humans to earth in Wall-E is not important in itself, but simply because it indicates a shift in the existential paradigm of humanity. If it had not occurred, humanity would have existed in a different way, but would not have been affected as much as the plant's own genus or the entire ecology is affected by the fact of the plant's existence or inexistence. Similarly, the earthly denizens in Idiocracy might have been wiped out due to the ecological disaster which they had created, and that was the sole reason for the protagonist's enterprise in attempting to reestablish the proper ecological balance.

The natural balance within the ecology matters to humankind only when it affects us collectively or individually; which is to say, human beings lack enough empathetic connection with anything non-human and only consider them instrumental to the human existence. An excellent example would be the controversy regarding Texas ranchers and the animal rights group, Friends of Animals, regarding the herding and hunting rights of the Scimitar Oryx. Both the parties to the argument have opinions which are valid when seen through a typical humanistic filter, but are in the greater scale equally irresponsible and immoral. The Scimitar Oryx, which had been on the verge of extinction at a mere number of 1,800 in 2004, have been raised and bred by the hunting ranchers to a staggering 17,000 by as early as 2011. However, the cost for maintenance and breeding is countered by issuing hunting permits, which necessarily means that a certain number of the creatures are killed each year – which is a lot less laudable as a technique, but is maintained for the want of a better policy. Friends of Animals, on the other hand, are bent upon stopping the hunting practice without consideration to the upkeep of the animals. Aware that such a step will again send the animals to possible extinction, the group has decided that this would a more favorable outcome for the creatures.

In all of this, however, there neither is, nor be an opinion from the animals themselves. Their rights and freedoms are for humans to determine, and the key factor behind the determination is the value which is placed on the animals by again, human evaluation. The evaluation may include several variables, such as the cost of upkeep, the danger to ecology – which then translates to danger to human existence – and morality; but they significantly overlook the value of the animal to and for itself. The rights of an animal to live and die, to choose its habitat and to relocate are never brought into consideration because they escape the range of human empathy. If it was otherwise, a similar degree of activism would have been brought fourth regarding the slaughtering of poultry and creating cities, farms and pastures which relocate millions of ecological inhabitants and drive them to either extinction or force them to adapt to unsuitable environments.

Unless humankind extends its empathetic range and identifies with the ecology in terms other than it's worth to human morality or survival, as both the movies showcase, there will be no other way than to wait for an external, post human phenomenon in order to deliver us from the doom that we are orchestrating.

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## Family as a Theme of Shashi Deshpande's Select Novels

T. Vasanth & K. Sundararajan

### Introduction

Shashi Deshpande is an award winning Indian Novelist. She is the second daughter of famous Kannada dramatist and writer Shriranga. She was born in 1938 in Karnataka and educated in Bombay and Bangalore. She published many collections of short stories and novels. She presents a social world of many complex relationships in her works men and women living together, journeying across life in their difference age groups, classes and gendered roles.

She is an eminent novelist has emerged as a writer holding deep insight into the female psyche. Her works reveal the man-made patriarchal traditions and uneasiness of the modern Indian woman in being a part of them. She uses this point of view of present social reality as at is experienced by women. To present the world of mothers, daughters and wives is also to present indirectly the fathers, sons and husbands the relation between men and woman and between women themselves. Her women are rebel against the traditional way of life and patriarchal values.

Family is the smallest unit of society where all the members share their joys, sorrows and anxieties of life. The relations are important as they help us cooperate with the wider social world and the family members often serve as the central focus in works of literature. In particularly, many writers used women have a great place in the significance on the dynamics of human relationships for relations often present complex, provocative models of interaction.

*...the term family is not neutral but historically variable and ideologically charged by religion, culture, politics, and economics. The family, whatever its form, is also the location for the formation of the individual and for the reproduction of psychologies of gender. Thus social-historical, feminist, literary and psychoanalytic concerns meet in the concept of family. (Lewiecki)*

From ancient time women have been seen to sincerely play their role of protection the traditions of the family. Ever since the birth of civilization, there has been a struggle to free women from male domination. Consequently, more and more women writers are articulating anxieties and concerns focusing on women's issues and creating a body of 'literature of their own' and transcending the limits of nationality, race and principle. They have been echoing the feeling of marginality and expressing their revolt against the purely masculine world. One of the major concerns of contemporary literature the world over has been to highlight the plight of women, their increasing problems, their physical, financial and emotional exploitation and their mental suffering in their families as well in the male dominated society in every sphere of life.

The male domination in a woman's life is a natural occurrence in a patriarchal society and the consequent suppression of the woman to a secondary position seem to have prompted Indian women writers to take up the cause of women. The Indian women writers focused on the dual image of women to break the bonds of their traditional position and search for their identity as an individual.

Deshpande's *Dark Holds No Terrors, That Long Silence, The Binding Vine, A Matter of Time* reveals her reliable preoccupation with human relationships firmly rooted in the Indian social and cultural context without displaying any major preference to move out of it. The experiment has diverse with themes and issues which interest her contemporaries in the picture of Indian English



Writing. Her entire interest to the symbolic presentation of family and familial relationships in her fiction appears effortless.

She is showing how the heroines trapped by family and society, suffer from a critical sense of emptiness in life. They struggle to stop gender discrimination and seek mutuality and harmony in life but ultimately realize that the safest place for them is their own family and get accommodated to the society in which they live. The study makes it clear that though the Indian woman makes several attempts to liberate herself, she ultimately realizes that the safest place for her is her family. She deals with the middle class urban women who are educated, cultured, traditional, intelligent and intellectual too. Most of her women are protagonists, so she presents a woman's view, family and family means to her, she writes:

*It is the family, the home consisting of parents, children, grand-children, siblings, which we hold on to even today as the one sage unchanging place in a changing world. It is the tradition of the family itself, as well as the traditions within the family, that we cherish, it is these that women are supposed to uphold and be steadfast to an important and a much lauded role which has been given to them and which they are, so we are told performing with great sincerity. (Prasanna 12-13).*

She started her novels 'with people' and the family provides an effective force in her study of people in the human situation. It may be argued that for every writer the human condition becomes a loaded subject but then there are differences of stresses on the elements that build up this condition. Thus of Deshpande, human relationships provide a never ending foundation of interest through which she attempts a re-reading of the family and culture that sustain it. Commenting on the significance of human relationships in her fiction she has remarked:

*Human relationship is what a writer is involved with. Person to person and person to society relationships – these are the two primary concerns of a creative writer and to me, the former is of immense importance. My preoccupation is with interpersonal relationships and human emotions. (Pathak 17)*

Woman sincerely plays her role of upholding the traditions of family. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is about the traumatic experience the protagonist Saru undergoes as her husband refuses to play a second-fiddle role. She got great humiliation and neglect as a child and after marriage as a wife. Deshpande discusses the blatant gender discrimination shown by parents towards their daughters and their desire to have a male child. After her marriage as she gain a greater social status than her husband Manohar's, all begins to fall apart. His husband's sense of inferiority complex and the humiliation he feels as a result of society's reaction to Saru's superior position develops sadism in him. Manohar's frustration dominates her in the form of sexual sadism, which has been vividly portrayed by Deshpande.

In *That Long Silence* is the story of an educated middle class girl, Jaya who finds herself restricted in her married life. Her husband Mohan is a happily married couple with two children. But her secure life is threatened when Mohan is accused of malpractice at his workplace and is asked to leave as long as the investigation. They shift into a different home and she is forced to live alone for a few days. This time spent alone makes her analyze her life from childhood. The silence between Jaya and her husband further deteriorates the situation. Towards the end of the novel, she realizes that she should break the silence and try to achieve her identity as an individual through self-realization.



Her novel *The Binding Vine* deals with the personal tragedy of the protagonist Urmi who is a clever, educated woman working as a lecturer in a college. Against the wishes of her parents she gets married to man of her own choice but is desperate about her married life. Her problem is that being financially emancipated and having confidence in herself as she works outside the home, she has developed a kind of ego which enables her not to submit before her husband, Kishore. She cannot also bear the submission of Vanaa, her friend and sister-in-law and her mother. Kishore, the archetypal Indian husband, never understands the depth of her feeling and she openly reveals her emotional insecurity. The author tries to restore the discarded reality of life. Thus, the novel defines the man-woman relationships and their sexual freedom and liberation.

*A Matter of Time*, it's about three women from three generations from the same family and how they survive with the tragedies in their lives. Sumi is deserted by her husband Gopal and she faces her humiliation with great courage on patience. Though deep inside she is struck with immense grief but tries to keep her composed for the sake of her daughters. Her mother Kalyani was married off to her maternal uncle Shripati. When their four-year-old son gets lost at a railway station, Shripati sends her back to her parent's house. On Kalyani's mother Manorama's request he returns but maintains a cruel silence for the rest of his life. Manorama doubt to beget a male heir to her husband for the purpose of her husband should take another wife. She avoids the property getting passed on to other family. Thus Deshpande has revealed to their regard the fears, frustrations and compulsions of three women from three generations from the same family.

Her novels seeks to explore the psychological complexities in which the Indian middle class family gets associated in the process of radical changes brought about by industrialization, urbanization and the growing influences of western thoughts and attitudes. Her novels also reflect a major shift in interpersonal relations and their consequences upon the changes in the Indian family.

There is nothing wrong if women are ambitious and want to put their own mark and identity in world outside along with their home and family. Majority of male take this as a threat to family and tradition. But the two worlds are closely connected because the family is the smallest cell of social life. Jasbir Jain writes about the novels of Shashi Deshpande in her famous book, *Gendered Realities, Human Spaces: The Writing of Shashi Deshpande*:

*Deshpande's novels show a concern with families and space. There are families, nuclear families with memories of living in joint family structures, families with arms extended in every directions, those who hold together and those who don't. (Jain 34)*

Families always work through relationships and interdependence, the base of the families is always marriage. But these families have their critics, rebels and dissidents like any other social group. So families in themselves are powerful medium of socialization. They transmit the values and ideas to next generation. Family has variety of people or members who have their own individual identity. Deshpande's protagonists have their own analysis of its various bonds, ties and relationships. Families always play an important role in her life; she tries her best to struggle for her family's survival. Her protagonists are not radical feminists they don't perish, they don't discard, they don't collapse, but survive through their self-realization and awareness which emerges from their own mind, which is the centre of struggle, conflict, intellectual adjustment and revolution. In an interview, Deshpande says:

*The point is that the greatest revolution can take place in the mind, all revolutions begin there. How this thinking is translated into action is another thing, it is not necessary to walk out, to*



*commit adultery, to divorce, to show defiance or a rejection of tradition. [...] But each person takes a decision depending on the circumstances of his/her life. (Deshpande, 'How to read').*

Happy family gives healthy vision towards life which is reunite it and give strength to struggle but a family which is not supportive fill individual with a sense of frustration. Women have the power to calculate and judge their condition and situation. Family is their priority and is of the most important thing but how much it provides space and freedom to the individual is also a most question. Sometimes it reduces personal space and forces goals and expectations which the individual take as burden in lack of capability to hold it. Rejection by a family can make the individual alienated and rejection of the family lead to feelings of loneliness and guilt.

During the survey of her novels various aspects and various dimensions of familial relationships emerge, there are mother-daughter, father-daughter, brother-sister relationship with in-laws, but the much focused one is husband-wife relationship which is the foundation and base of family from where many new relations start taking shape and develop. The joint family of character is full of many more relationships uncle-aunt both paternal and maternal, their children and relation with them, the grand children's relation with their grandparents etc. But these relationships have been portrayed in a very realistic and transparent way, not always happy but full of sadness too. A family has to live both with sorrow and happiness because it is inevitable, nobody can escape it and what kind of impact it leaves in the individual and their further life.

Her protagonists when reflects on her past, dismantles the joint family with sweet and sour experiences. So her novel is a sweet and sour journey towards family and familial relationships which is many a time parallel to them. Distorted, disturbed and scattered family leads to frustration, crime and death as projected in her novels.

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## ***Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard: A Critical Evaluation*** **Vivek Kumar Gupta**

*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is a 'brilliant debut novel' by the author. The narrative brings in to spotlight the hard living environment of the public of a small town Shahkot, where due to the late appearance of monsoon the residents are made to suffer variously by the high temperature of summer.

Though *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* has been celebrated by the novelist as a comedy or a trail of exciting activities, yet it powerfully maintains the pace quick along with all the species of a satire and a fable. Among all the families in the Shahkot there is a family of Mr. R. K. Chawla. Mostly, the story of the novel has been woven around the family members of Mr. Chawla, and their quite unusual actions. Mr. Chawla is a lately married man, whose matrimonial life is not a thing of a thorough contentment and total fulfillment for him, as his spouse bears some mysterious temperament qualities or can be taken as case of psychological mental illness. He has one more member in his life, his mother (known as Ammaji in the novel), who is accountable for putting him in this uncomfortable state of affairs.

The life account of Mr. Chawla is a story of every youthful Indian middle class young man, whose fondness or disliking does not matter a lot for a fitting match for him. Someway he manages with the contrasting status of his living. This works for fuelling in him a sense of superiority feeling and dominating approach, as he considers himself the only being with logics and experienced understanding in his residence. Kulfi, the companion of Mr. Chawla, is a pregnant lady with very bizarre and voracious consumption habits. She continues with endless experimental procedure while cooking the food and imagining about the diverse kinds of food. With all her odd interest and unusual actions Kulfi gives birth to a male child, who is named as Sampath. This name bears the sense of good fortune's coming. And this highly looked-for minute comes to the Chawla family with the arrival of heavy monsoon, the enormously looked-for thing for the people of Shahkot.

Luckily, it has brought the moment of twofold pleasure for Kulfi and her family. The co-incident connecting the influx of monsoon and delivery of Sampath made everyone to take it as an auspicious sign of God to inform them about their coming fortune. As they utter in happiness, "Let's name him Sampath, they said. Good fortune."

Interestingly, as the story grows we are introduced with a young boy of twenty possessing some unusual behavior traits. Sampath was born with the same odd attitude like her mother. However, he cannot be taken as an absolutely abnormal human being; rather all through experience something very important absent from his character that psychologically categorizes us as regular human beings. To elaborate, he is a recluse boy and is entirely discontented to his existence and public around him.

Unluckily, this is something very complicated for his father to make a tuning with it. Mr. Chawla's furry grows at length each time he thinks that his son has innately inherited the same symptoms of strangeness that has overcome his mother's sensibilities.

Mr. Chawla's leading approach is now strengthened manifold. He can be seen all the time regulating his son and daughter to take their life sincerely. Furthermore, Pinky and Sampath are frequently enforced to accept life according to their father's point of view. Although Sampath is not fixed to any time and routine bound job, yet his father has set for a government post of a post



office clerk. The aimless post office clerk Sampath does not get any sort of significance and contentment in his work. Anyhow he wants to get rid of the dullness occurred owing to the conservative social living.

However, the story as well as the life of the poor Sampath takes an attractive turn that is followed by the repeated laughter and plenty of fun. Incidentally, a hilarious at the same time upsetting incident belonging to the wedding function of the post office head's daughter makes Sampath leave his job. Poor Sampath, thoroughly distressed by his father's suggestion of a new job at the 'Utterly Butterly Delicious Butter factory', is made to depart his home and to run away from his people. Ultimately, he took refuge in a guava orchard. Ironically, the first time in his life things have started to take action according to his urges. This entirely new surrounding gave him the experience of his dream land. It enthralled Sampath so much that he lastly determined to inhabit his life in the guava tree. But this festivity could not last long. And these elevated fantasy flights of Sampath are interrupted by his family members, who have one way or another succeeded in collecting the information concerning his arrangement in the orchard. As soon as his family joined him, a new chapter has started in the life of Chawla family and the people of Shahkot. At first, the family engaged every trap to distract his brain and to drag him down from the tree, but in a while they decided to stay there with Sampath. However, this new situation makes the story moving towards the two different dimensions. On the one hand, Sampath is made a 'tree-baba' by some unintentionally occurred actions, while on the other hand his family started making economic profit out of the whole disorder.

Sampath's family members jointly started doing tough movements for building their future sound. In the quickly mounting procedure everybody together with Mr. Chawla, Ammaji and Pinky, all except Kulfi, gave their full input to Mr. Chawla's preparation. Only Kulfi was absent from any kind of occurrence about her; rather she took the new atmosphere as a stage where she can display her concealed catering faculty. Here we can see her strangeness working into a full swing. She madly started an eternal hunt for spices and herbs in the forest spending all her nights and days.

Though at the beginning Sampath gets a bit impatient by the actions destroying his tranquility and freedom there, yet afterwards he gets matured with his new acquaintance that was making him take pleasure in the larger quantity of consideration and admiration, which he never anticipated for him.

These unprompted things continued happening around him and shortly he established a local standing as a sacred man. The guava orchard becomes the epicenter of all the characters. In the meantime, the orchard becomes a place for selling and trade movements followed by a mass of businessmen, who established a marketplace close to the 'monkey baba's' stay. In this market all from toothpaste to mosquito repellents was obtainable. However, Sampath has nothing to do with the wealth creation procedure of his father and the greedy intentions of his family members; rather he was entirely enjoying his liberated livelihood. Unluckily, this good has been endangered by the influx of the monkeys in the orchard. Contrasting others Sampath was now better-off than ever before. It was big occurrence for him to live with the monkeys in the orchard. One way or another he was succeeded in establishing a human – monkey chat between them. But this man- animal connection could not continue for long. Incidentally, monkeys started to generate a great problem for everybody after experiencing the taste of liquor. Now, everybody in the town, parting all other jobs, started to look for a way out to have an instant control over the irrational behavior of the monkeys. The punches of forthcoming disorder are felt all through the narrative. The monkeys have not only succeeded in destroying total future preparation of Mr.



Chawla, but also forced the big names of city to spend disturbed nights for building the insane schemes to clash in opposition to the monkey- terror.

The Chief Medical Officer, an specialist in human-monkey communication, Vermaji, the Brigadier, the District Collector and the superintendent of Police, all stood at once to set aside their city as well as the 'tree-baba' from monkeys. Though Sampath, unpleased to these activities around him, had given up his gladness, in the middle of mad persuasion of monkeys by the people. As the hullabaloo maintains its pace faster the story seems to be approaching its undetermined end. On the one fine morning when all were set to trap the monkeys Mr. Chawla and his family find the guava orchard vacant. They repeatedly called Sampath but he was nowhere to be found; rather they found a fresh guava with a black mole in the place of Sampath.

In the narrative, there is limitless enjoyment followed by the uncountable entertaining actions that keep us spell bound in total. This makes us holding our mind with every single occurrence in it. Along with this, hullabaloo is a tale bearing the unquenchable thirst of the populace that comes out through their conflicting exposures towards the life situations and discontented requirements. It seems essential from time to time which proves ill-logical and hilarious in other conditions. There is no hesitation that the point of inevitability bears a deep sense of significance in itself, but the ingenuity of the novelist get broadened when we are prepared to come across the fact becoming the part of this hullabaloo so light heartedly that no strain of gravity is missing at the back; for example, Mr. Chawla's difficulty, to live a life with the life partner who maintains an odd outlook, is of course a grave idea to be taken. Rather, in spite of feeling sympathy for him, we are often made to express amusement at the unintelligent actions of his wife, Kulfi. He is all the time dejected about the absent minded approach of his spouse and expresses his internal furry, "What an earth is she doing", and further in a bad tempered stroke he heads towards Ammaji, "What have you married to, Amma?"(5). This does not finish here; rather his fortune has covered much stir for him. However, apart from little occasions, Mr. Chawla's response does not appear as an overreacted turn of phrase. Kulfi's answer, "I would not like peacocks and pomegranates" (24). Kulfi's stable labors for collecting the cooking objects and her approximately mad attraction for spices quickly succeeded in dragging out our mind from the grave downpour trouble to her unintelligence drags our attention magnetically towards the silent volcano that has, in spite of shattering anything, worked for synchronizing her dreams with the reality. This is Kulfi's totally ignorant attitude and unreasonable indulgence in the useless things that keep her thoroughly cool and feel highly elated in a place that works for multiplying the troubles of her family members. When everyone is worried for Sampath's settlement in the orchard, she has no tension; rather she utters, "Let him be" (54).

Unlike her mother, Sampath, who is responsible for all, leads the two kinds of attitudes. Sometimes he comes before us as a normal person having great sense and knowledge about life, while other times he too seems to be expressing the same abnormality of attitude led by her mother and goes far apart from the reader's access making the world astonished. If we give a serious thought to his comments we will find in him a man having great philosophical wisdom.

While sometimes it becomes a comprehensive and confusing exercise to draw the correct meaning from his sayings. As he says, "First a chikoo is raw, said Sampath, then, if you do not pick and eat it quickly, it will soon rot and turn to alcohol"(123). It is quite difficult to access the true meaning of this sentence here. As we know, it is the first novel of Kiran Desai, however she has succeeded well in balancing the complicated plots with a pinch of humour, and the combination serves as a piece of thorough entertainment. Sampath's awkward dance followed by his crazy expressions towards the female belongings as clothes and jewellery, etc. in the marriage function



is one of the most hilarious moments in the novel as well as a smooth and effortless product of Kiran Desai's creative mind.

Certainly, who can fail to remember the unsuccessful plan of Sampath's wedding on the tree followed by the limitless fun and a satirical hunt for an ideal daughter-in-law? Finally the thorough discussion on a matrimonial that contains a large list of girls' traits and a number of limitations laid upon their deeds informs us about novelist's profound awareness of Indian civilization and the present tendency regulating the middle class society. Above all, Sampath's dread from wedding and his sole way of rejection followed by his irrational demands of living the days like monkeys keep us repeatedly laughing at his antique longing.

As we recognize that the humor is the dominating trait in the narrative, it can be observed in approximately each action of the characters. Sampath's days as a forgetful post office clerk; his practice of reading other's letters in free times, his break away from plain life and accidentally becoming a renounced holy man by the pre-gathered details about the people, his family's altering response on his act. Lastly, the influx of monkeys and his relation with them; all is a story of great fun. However, in the tale it is not only 'Sampath-ies' that has produced so much fun all through, but also there is a sequence of hilarious incidents supervised by the other characters like Kulfi, Mr. Chawla and Ammaji. Is Pinki's love for Ice cream man? Everybody in the narrative maintains certain qualities of oddity, rather it can be more evidently explained by taking them as the community totally discontented with their ways of life. Even Ammaji, Mr. Chawla's mother, does not pay any concern to be acquainted with the desire of his son while taking the decision of Mr. Chawla's wedding. In reality, she is not prepared to recognize her son's uncertainty on Kulfi's approach; rather for collecting a giant amount of capital as offering as she is contented to hail her daughter –in-law wit all her weaknesses. Even after the years, she is not prepared to admit it as her mistake or the result of her greediness.

Furthermore, the discussion of Kulfi's weird outlook are very elegantly pressed behind her, each time her son tries to center his mind on it. Moreover, the same she does in the case of Sampath. She constantly comes ahead to guard Sampath's mysterious nature from the arrows of his son's annoyance saying, "Oh leave him alone. His stars are good.....give him a good head massage every day and the obstruction to his progress will go away" (26). After Kulfi, Ammaji is the lone being who has no complains with Sampath. However, their reasons are relatively dissimilar to each other. Kulfi has no difficulty because she finds in Sampath the same culmination of which she herself is suffering from. However Ammaji does it for merely showering her love on her grandson.

When Sampath becomes well-known as a saint she feels herself as a triumphant. Because when Sampath was considered a good for naught man by his father and others, it was only Ammaji who used to say that one day he will confirm a fortunate talisman for them. Undeniably, Ammaji is one of the strangest reasons, which makes the narrative a grand comedy. Her sequential actions promoting the fun comprise her act of collecting the objects, which have been presented to the 'tree-baba' by his devotees, and re-selling them. Furthermore, her quickly mounting wish for fresh duo of dentures as the sign of their recently gained wealth, her approximately crazy action in the marketplace when she and Pinky had marked the cinema monkey; all are authentically cherished moments for the readers. The absent and retrieval of the dentures in the complete bewilderment is also a large piece of humor in the narrative.

Each character has strengthened a particular piece of the narrative and kept the fun rising lofty. In this context, we can't stop thinking about Pinky and her unsettled troubles. Pinky has her



own globe to live in. occasionally her troubles seem to a certain extent usual and alike to any ordinary adolescent young woman. Pinky's all actions including her growing anxiety for her looks, her confusions concerning the dresses and corresponding jewellery; her bizarre feelings concerning the public around her; are followed by her internal eagerness for becoming a centre of notice for all. Desperately, her family, which is not relatively usual like others, fails to present a good friend to a girl passing through a gentle period. And this resulted in building her a piece of contempt prepared by her. Her exceptional expression of love for Ice cream Man chased by her unintelligent hard work to pull his notice bears a succession of mirth in it. Although her want is fairly dissimilar from that of her brother, mother, father and her grandmother, yet her straightforward wish of being noticed and appreciated by her lover creates a good humor. This is not since she has chosen an Ice- cream vendor; rather because of the ways she has adopted to triumph his notice. Her steady pains and ill-logical thoughts for making her lover, Hungry Hop Boy, know about her thoughts; is something we cannot carry on ourselves away from a noisy laughter. Exceeding all, we cannot overlook the event which has taken place in the market with Pinky and her grandmother. This is the event I loved most in the novel. It has been intrigued so wisely that one feels automatically becoming the part of it.

Mr. Chawla, Ammaji, Kulfi, Pinki and Sampath all articulate total lack of care towards other's difficulty. And this is the strongest attribute that works for keeping the momentum of enthusiasm lofty. There is no suspicion from commencement to the finish narrative has extraordinary maintained an amazing combination of comedy and satire. And whatsoever we sense absent has been very reasonably fulfilled by the wonderfully constructed culmination of the narrative. The narrative, which was overall bearing an essence of wit so far, wrecked with a very grave and persuasive message building a huge synchronicity with the single design of the narrative.

*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* is unquestionably a maddeningly amusing narrative. The book provides a huge blend of imagination and actuality that overtakes our senses now and then by the serious move of amusement, while other by a caring shower of actuality wrapped in to a hard satire. Kiran Desai herself accepts it saying, "I do feel very close to this book in one way, but the book is very much a product of my imagination as well. It is a comedy and it is a satiric in many ways I think, and it's fantastic.... I think anyone with a sense of humor would enjoy it."

The liking of food, we see in Kulfi, introduces us with the author's own curiosity in catering and food. The writer accepts her love for food saying, "I really like working in the kitchen; I find that whatever I am I work near the kitchen or in the kitchen itself. It's a great interest of mine; it's so much a part of my life. I am always in the kitchen, cooking and experimenting. I love it ... food is a big part of my life."

The author's uniqueness keeps maintaining its smell while harmonizing the wit and gravity together. Kulfi's growing volume of belly owing to the pregnancy and her selling of clothes and jewellery for satisfying her consumption requirements work for preparing a good piece of humor. There is no uncertainty that the author has admirably succeeded in illuminating the aspirations of images, local words, phrases, and an antique list of spices, combination of food items, and the contrary sets of characters everything has been very carefully used by the novelist. It is a very nice experience to take pleasure in the summer along with the amazing narrative of a small town, the burning disposition of Mr. Chawla, the cool love story of Pinky, the spicy curries of Kulfi and of course to listen the intelligence loaded words of 'monkey baba', "If you have a monkey, you will not acquire lice". To make curd, don't unsettle the milk. Does a pond clean the mud at its bottom? Does the rain wash the sky? As is the wood, is the meat cooked upon it" (201). At last, we discover



the book as a thoroughly delightful, hilarious and intermittently teaching insight into the absurdities and ambiguities of living in a small town Shahkot.

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## ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

### **Stories of Success: A Study of Strategies Adopted by High Achievers in Deprived Contexts**

*Sadananda Meher & Anand Mahanand*

When we talk about inclusive education, we generally view it in relation to achievement and quality. This “tension” arises because we think that by making education accessible to certain class, we may have to compromise on quality, standard and achievement (Black–Hawkins, Florian and Rouse, 2007, p. 4). It is generally thought that students from deprived backgrounds are low achievers. But it is not a surprising fact that among the underprivileged category, there are certain high achievers who do well in academics using various strategies skilfully. These include strategies like memorization, association of ideas, using schema, making notes, and underlining, making graphic organizers and making acronyms. ESL experts have categorized these as observable and non-observable strategies.

This motivated us to study the use of strategies by a group of underprivileged learners at the secondary level.

In this study, we would like to report our findings on such achievers and their strategy use. We had conducted a research among a group of students from the underprivileged categories in Sinapali block of Nuapada district of Odisha. It came to our notice that some of the strategies used by them are linked with their traditional form of education like memorization and performance. This study will hopefully help in standardization of strategies that can be adopted by other students in such schools.

#### **Learning Strategies: definitions and review of related literature**

Learning Strategies are defined as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, p. 8). Further, Language learning strategies are understood as intentional steps, tactics or procedures adopted by learners to optimize their learning in the target language. There has been considerable corpus of research in this area in ELT since the 1970s including that of Rubin, 1975; Stern 1975; Naiman, et.al. 1978. The works of Skehan (1991) can also be included in the list. In the recent past, researchers like O’ Malley, 1985, Oxford, 1989 have studied strategies used by successful second language learners and pointed out that such users not only use strategies effectively but are aware of their mental processes, and are good at monitoring their learning. All these researchers seem to agree in general that effective use of learning strategies help in developing language proficiency. They also seem to agree on the point that the strategies used by high achievers can be tailor-made and can be used to enhance language proficiency of other learners.

#### **The Experiment**

The study is concerned with a group of tribal learners i.e. Gond, the largest tribal group in north India. They are also found in western districts of Odisha like Nuapada, Kalahandi, Bargarh, Bolangir, and Koraput. Unfortunate issue with the Gonds is that now they are moving to mainstream in search of jobs and settling down in mainstream villages where their language i.e.



Gondi is not used. In this context, when the Gondi children go to mainstream schools, they do not perform well there as their identity, culture and background knowledge are snapped out the moment they get into mainstream classrooms as it does not use their mother tongue. Ignoring this fact, they are generally termed as 'poor' and 'lazy' students with less or zero motivation in studies. Nobody bothers to know about the reason of their poor performance in the classroom and nobody cares to know whether they have the potential to perform at par with the mainstream learners given a conducive environment.

Thus, it was imperative for the study to going by the beliefs of those language strategy experts who are of the belief that learning strategy training has the potential to facilitate better learning. Going by the assumptions that even the learners from deprived background can do well in their studies given some strategy awareness training, the present study adopted a planned method of enquiry. It is an established fact that non-observable strategy use is generally difficult to detect. But, it was essential for the study to know whether there is any learner among the deprived ones who uses any strategy. Thus, the study used an unconventional tool i.e. a think-aloud protocol in an attempt to know what goes on in the minds of learners when they try to read and comprehend a passage in their mother tongue and in English. It was imperative for the study to know what goes on in the mind of the learners while reading in their mother tongue as it was intended to see whether they would benefit from the use of strategy like mental translation, referring to bilingual dictionary, and associating ideas or using schema. Selecting three particular strategies for the training, the study intended to see whether the strategies related to use of their mother tongue would benefit the learners.

Thirty Gondi learners of class VIII from Pendren High school were chosen for the study as they speak Gondi at their home and go to a school where their mother tongue is not used. The learners chosen for the study were in the age group of 14-15.

Two think-aloud protocols used in the study are similar with similar items/questions in them. The first inventory was used to know what they think and what goes on in their minds when they are given a culturally familiar passage in their mother tongue. This inventory was given to them when they were reading a Gondi passage. They were asked to respond to the inventory quickly after reading.

The second inventory, which was given to them when they were reading English reading comprehension passage, tried to know what they think and how they try to understand while reading in English.

The inventories were objective type asking them to choose from given options or to answer in 'yes' or 'no'. However, two questions in each inventory demanded open-ended answers. The inventories were in English. On their request, the learners were explained the meaning of each item before they responded to the inventory.

Apart from using the think-aloud protocol, the study, without being judgmental that learners in deprived contexts are generally poor in academics, had a belief that there must be some quick learners. The study was interested in knowing whether they use any reading strategy consciously or unconsciously to perform better than other learners.

Strategies are "Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). Going by what Oxford says about strategies, the study attempted to observe the



conscious or unconscious use of strategies by the learners and tries to make use of the strategies for the common benefit in the deprived context.

For this purpose, five learners who performed comparatively better in the given reading comprehension tests were interviewed using the semi structured interview format. They were individually asked about how they like to learn language, what are the things they do while reading and to understand a passage, and how they approach a comprehension passage.

The study had an objective to generalize the quick learners' strategies in use among all the learners so that the whole sample benefits and does well in reading comprehension. The study wanted to equip the learners with strategies by teaching them how to use strategies in reading comprehension. "Language learning strategies enable students to gain a large measure of responsibility for their own progress, and there is considerable evidence that effective strategy use can be taught," (Green & Oxford, 1995, p.264). With this underpinning, the study was hopeful that the learners in the context would benefit if they are made aware of some strategies and their use and trained accordingly.

The responses of the quick learners were recorded for analysis to know what strategy(s) they use.

### Investigating the way they read in mother tongue

To know how they read and understand in Gondi, they were given an inventory while reading the Gondi passage. They had the freedom to respond to the inventory during or after their reading. They were also allowed to use any language they are comfortable with to respond to the inventory. The whole objective of this activity was to record what they think while reading in Gondi.

The Gondi passage was a mythological story involving Gond God Mahadev, Goddess Parvati and wild animals. Initially they were surprised seeing a passage in their language but they quickly started reading. The inventory was explained to them minutely and they were explained what to do with it. Their responses to the inventory were amazingly interesting. Some significant responses are presented below.

### Learners' responses to the inventory while reading in Gondi

Items	Learners' responses			
What was I thinking up while reading?	Village temple, forest, God, tiger, Grandmother's story			
Did I understand what I read?	Yes	No	Cannot say	
	24	4	2	
How did I understand the passage? (They could choose more than one option)	By key words	Using the title	Relating to background	Asking a friend
	21	6	16	1
Did I make any note while reading?	Yes	No	Cannot say	
	9	20	1	
Did I think of any familiar topic known to me while reading?	Yes	No	Cannot say	
	13	4	13	
Did the thinking help me?	Yes	No	Cannot say	
	7	4	19	



Did I face any difficult word?	Yes	No	Cannot say
	1	26	3
How did I try to understand the word?	(only one learner) Asked the teacher		

The table presents what the learners thought during reading and how they tried to understand the given passage in Gondi.

Being a folk tale, the story was related to the cultural beliefs of the learners. As many of them have indicated, they thought of their village temple, nearby forests, God, tiger and grandmother's story. Different learners shared about thinking up different things. The words in Gondi passage might have activated their background knowledge and that is how they could relate the passage to themselves. It was amazing to find that 80% of them said that they understood what they read.

70% of the learners said that they understood the passage by the help of key words. This is a good strategy in itself. Here, it is understood that the study can make use of this technique/strategy generalizing it among all the learners to improve their reading skills. 20% of them said that they could infer using the title of the passage. 54% of them said that they understood by relating the passage with the things they knew. It was found that 9 of them made some notes while reading while 20 of them did not do that. It was decided to use those learners to help others in the classroom to share the techniques of making small notes, as this is a beneficial comprehension strategy. As the table shows, 13 learners said that they thought about similar topics and stories told by their elders while reading the given passage and 7 of them said that the thinking and relating was helpful in understanding it. It was pleasing to learn that 87% learners did not face any difficulty regarding difficult word. Thus, it can be stated that reading in their language was easy for them.

Having learnt this, further we were interested to know how they read and try to understand a passage in English. Another inventory was used for this purpose. The data collected through that inventory is as follows.

### Investigating the way they read English

A similar inventory was given to the learners to respond in order to explore how they attempt to comprehend a passage in English. They were explained the inventory and allowed to respond in any language again.

The given passage contained a story of cleverness of Tenali Rama, a famous court minister during the time of kings in India. The story involved king, minister, Brahmins etc. However, the story was in English and no help was given to them while they attempted to comprehend it even if they asked for it. When asked to respond to the inventory after their reading, they responded as the following.

### Learners' responses to the inventory while reading in English

Items	Learners' responses		
What was I thinking up while reading	King story, mango		
Did I understand what I read?	Yes	No	Cannot say



	5		19		6	
How did I understand the passage?	By key words	Translating into MT	Using the title	Relating to background	Asking a friend	
	1	7	1	2	2	
Did I try to translate the lines into Reading in English?	Yes		No		Cannot say	
	11		3		16	
Do I always use mother tongue while reading in English?	Yes		No		Cannot say	
	7		6		17	
Did I make any note while trying to understand the passage?	Yes		No		Cannot say	
	3		19		8	
Did I think of any familiar topic known to me while reading?	Yes		No		Cannot say	
	4		13		13	
Did the thinking help me?	Yes		No		Cannot say	
	2		0		28	
Did I face any difficult word?	Yes		No		Cannot say	
	30		0		0	

The table records what the learners reflected about their thoughts during reading the given English passage.

Few of them stated that they were thinking up king-queen stories told to them by grandparents as this story started with the mention of a king. Seeing the word 'mango', some of them were thinking about mango even. While 24 learners had said that they understood the Gondi passage, only 5 learners here said that they understood the given English passage. Keywords had helped as many as 21 learners to understand the Gondi passage but only one learner could do that in case of English passage. 7 learners said that they tried to understand the passage by translating it into their mother tongue and they were found to have performed well at least in answering the factual questions. Thus, it was decided to encourage this strategy among all the learners. 11 learners said that they tried translating the passage into Gondi and 7 of them admitted that they always try to do that in order to comprehend English passages and stories. While 9 learners were found to have made some notes to understand the Gondi passage, only 3 could do the same while comprehending English passage. All thirty learners said that they faced many difficult words while reading in English and in fact, they were observed asking for meanings of many words in English.

This step of the research helped us to know many vital things like how the learners read, what problems they face, and how they try to comprehend passages in Gondi and English. This insight was helpful to us for strategy training to all the learners and in our attempt to improve the reading skills of the learners.

While investigating the way they read in their mother tongue and in English, we explored that some of them use some strategies to help themselves comprehending a given passage well. The study was actually interested to see whether the learners in the deprived background use any strategy knowingly or unknowingly. Our next tool helped us know every detail about their strategy use for language learning.

The enquiry carried out with the help of think-aloud protocol established that the learners are more comfortable while reading in mother tongue. It also indicated that they are able to relate the content of the context with their background if the text is somehow familiar to them. But it



was observed that only a few learners used the schema and mother tongue and indicated about doing so. Having learnt about the unconscious use of schema by the learners, it was imperative for the study to know what other strategies those learners use in the context. For this purpose, the learners who were found to be using some strategy were recognized and interviewed individually.

### **Finding the ways the Quick Learners Read**

The language learning strategy inventory targeted to explore the way the achievers read and comprehend. It was meant to be administered to only quick learners. It was observed that few learners had performed reasonably well in comprehension in all the four languages. Again, the think-aloud procedure found them using some useful strategies like underlining, note making, relating to own background etc. Those five learners, who had done well in comprehension tests and talked about using the mentioned strategies, were interviewed individually.

The first item of the inventory was a general question related to language learning. It wanted to know how they learn a language. It asked them how they like to learn a language and what techniques are successful for them in language learning. They were asked to choose from a variety of options like reading with/without a dictionary, reading textbook/authentic materials (stories etc), making word lists, watching TV, Learning songs, listening to radio, discussing with friends, translating, self-study, studying with friends etc.

The second item in the inventory sought to know how they help themselves to read and understand. They were asked whether they ask teacher, try to translate into mother tongue, underline main points, make notes, or use dictionary.

The third item offered them some techniques related to reading development and asked whether they follow any of those.

The learners had freedom to choose multiple options to respond to all three items mentioned above. Their responses are as followed.

**Learner 1**, responding to those three items, said that he likes reading textbook and he does that with a dictionary. He also said that he translates the lines into Gondi to understand the given passage. He reads something every day. To help himself in understanding, he highlights the main points in story, asks teacher and uses dictionary.

**Learner 2** said that he likes learning language through watching TV and by reading the textbook in the school. He translates into mother tongue and makes small notes to understand a passage.

**Learner 3** said that he reads textbook to learn language and does it every day. He translates the passage into English and makes notes to remember things.

**Learner 4** had some interesting answers. He stated that he learns language by watching TV, listening to songs, discussing with friends, studying with friends and studying the grammar of the language. Regarding reading strategies, he said that he underline main points to remember the meaning of the paragraph and uses dictionary to understand the meaning. He further said that using the English-Odia dictionary does not help sometimes, as he has to ask the meaning of that Odia word to his father. Therefore, he prefers to ask his father directly when at home. When asked whether he reads every day, he said he does not read on Sundays and holidays.



**Learner 5** said he learns by reading the books every day, self-studying and listening to songs. He prefers translating and using dictionary as strategies of reading.

All five of them said that they like to read something familiar to them. They also admitted that they translate the given passage into Gondi in their attempt to understand the given passage in English. None of them could say whether they try to derive meaning from the context to understand a difficult word or phrase in the process of comprehension.

They were also asked some questions related to comprehension in Gondi. We were interested to know whether they can locate the main information while reading in Gondi, and whether they are able to answer locating the information from the passage. All five of them said that they could skim the passage easily and answer question based on a passage in Gondi.

We were also interested to know what they do when they get ready for reading, when they do not understand something and when they finish reading. Asked all these questions, 4 learners said that they look at the title and try to understand before reading. 3 of them said that they underline the important portions of the passage. 3 learners said they make notes to remember the information from passage.

They were asked two open ended questions at the end of the interview. When asked how they realize that they are not able to understand a passage, all five of them said that when they come across many difficult words that they do not know, they feel that they cannot understand.

Asked the way they locate answers from the passage, they said that they try to find some words of the questions in the passage. Matching those words, they derive the answers. This is a good technique involving a vital sub-skill of reading i.e. scanning.

This enquiry brought in several important data informing and preparing us with what to be done during reading comprehension practices and strategy training sessions in the later phase.

Apart from these views from particular learners, the study also collected general information about teaching-learning situation in the context from all the learners involved in the study.

In the later phase, the sample was taught eight passages. This section of the study included the generalization of strategies those were being used by few successful learners. Five quick learners were found to be using observable strategies like underlining and making small notes. Again, some of them responded in the interview that they look up the difficult word in the dictionary. They were also found to be using non-observable strategies like mental translation and associating ideas. In a plan to make use of these learners to equip other learners with those strategies, the class was divided into 5 groups and they were made the leaders of those groups. They were asked to work on the reading comprehension passages together with their group mates during the tryout of the model. They were all made aware of the strategies those five learners used and the benefits of using those strategies were explained to them.

During this phase, the learners were trained to use strategies like underlining, making small notes, associating ideas, and translating mentally. Being an exploratory study which targeted to observe the difference in the reading comprehension performance of the learners after strategy training, the activities of the learners were observed during the teaching of reading passages. They were found to be underlining all the difficult words, writing the equivalents in their mother tongue, and also writing small notes in their mother tongue beside the passages. Although the



difference in scores in the periodic tests were not taken as a measure yardstick to show their improvement, the comparison of the scores obviously shows that they started taking interest in reading comprehension in English because of which we have observed a gradual improvement in the performance of almost all the learners. The study analyses the behavioural changes like increased interest in reading class, increased participation, using the trained strategies, answering questions and arrives at the conclusion that the underprivileged learners may be deprived but not poor academically. There are some students who use reading strategies unconsciously and those strategies can be generalized in the classroom. We are here firm to say that the deprived learners can do well given a conducive environment to learn and if taught through a method appropriate for them.

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## **Remediation of Learners' Errors in Oral Communication**

***K. R. Athista***

Oral communication is every day human process. There are different contexts in which people communicate orally. It takes place in face-to-face conversations, group discussions, telephone calls, counselling, interviews and so on. Oral communication expresses ideas through the spoken word. It can be defined as the exchange of messages between the speaker and the listener through the word of mouth.

A peep into the process of oral communication at infant stage has helped planners in education. A child develops skills in oral communication from its childhood days by listening to speakers of various kinds. Some people seem to do their delivery of ideas orally better than the others. There are two perspectives to the development of speaking skill. Some people acquire the art of conversational skill naturally through exposure by listening to others. The others develop it through practice and perseverance.

In the oral communication skill classroom, there exists the habit to retrieve structures in response to higher level demands and to adapt utterances to suit immediate needs. This can be developed through an integrated practice in real-life situations, in which learners are required to move through four stages of production outlined by Garrett, 1982. In Garret's model, the cognitive processes cause the speech to pass through four "levels of representation" before it is actually produced as sound. Firstly, conceptual planning processes create the "message level" at which ideas and general meanings are represented. Secondly, broad syntactic frames are assembled and word meanings are selected in order to create what Garrett calls "functional level" plans. Thirdly, the exact sentence structure and word forms are defined in order to create plans at the positional level. Finally, plans are created for the actual articulation of the words. These plans result in the physical production of speech.

The role of teachers in developing oral communication is to create opportunities for the learners to integrate all the four parts outlined by Garrett and then to move from the stage of accuracy to the stage of fluency. Accuracy aspect insists on the correct use of grammar and usage. Fluency is smoothness of language production. Accuracy aspect focuses on error correction in speech and writing. Fluency aspect focuses on smoothness of speech ignoring inaccuracies in grammar and usage.

Inter-language is the type of language produced by second and foreign-language learners who are in the process of learning a language. The innate language hypothesis was posted first by Pit Corder, and developed later by Selinker. The basic idea underlying the inter-language hypothesis is that the L2 learner always moves towards the target language (TL). This movement towards the TL occurs in stages till the ideal state of target language attainment.

In the process of language acquisition, a learner goes through stages of learning. Through trial and error, a learner acquires the rules of the target language. Thus the learner continuously strives for perfect mastery of the TL. The development of oral communication skill in real-life situation is seen as a form of natural growth. The perspective derives from a child learning his/her mother tongue as a result of being exposed to different contexts. A teacher teaching oral communication to students will do well to create a near natural environment in the classroom. This is a difficult task; nevertheless, efficient teachers achieve it.



In the field of methodology, there are two schools of thought with respect to learners' errors: 1. The school favouring error correction and 2. The school supporting error tolerance. Stephen Pit Corder (1918-1990), Professor of Applied Linguistics at Edinburgh University, favours error correction. Stephen Krashen (b. 1941- ), linguist and education researcher, on the other hand, advocates error tolerance. There are reasons for both the views. Corder, 1974 considers errors as a sign of imperfect language teaching and learning. It is, therefore, necessary for an English language teacher to correct errors of learners then and then. In oral communication, learners commit errors in pronunciation, stress, tune and grammar. A learner whose mother tongue is Tamil usually uses spelling pronunciation in English. For example, s/he says, \*gen-ree instead of 'genre'. The learner applies the stress on the root indiscriminately on all English words. Hence, s/he fails to distinguish the parts of speech in common English words such as 'conduct (noun, adjective) and con'duct (verb). The oral communication in these instances interferes with the intelligibility of the listeners. Error correction has to be applied in the interest of achieving intelligibility in oral communication. If an English language teacher jumps to correct the errors of the learners immediately, what impact does it leave on the learners? The learner attempting at oral language production becomes diffident about his/her abilities and is inhibited by frequent halts for correction. This discontinuity at every stage of language production results in impairing fluency skill. Krashen, 1982 puts forth his view in support of his error tolerance theory. He observes, "... continuous correction can raise learners' level of anxiety, and that this impedes learning."

While a general English teacher is tossed between error correction and error tolerance, an English language teacher guiding Engineering Graduates faces another challenge. Engineering colleges draw students from different parts of India and the students specialize in different subjects such as Civil, Electrical, Electronics, and Computer Science and so on. Engineering colleges vie with one another in preparing their young graduates to get selected in campus interviews. Oral communication skill is a prerequisite for many jobs. The skill helps candidates convey information accurately. Faulty language use by a candidate in an interview will render him/her unfit for the job. Such candidates will be unselected for the job. Hence, an English teacher in an Engineering College has to combine accuracy aspect and fluency aspect in the oral communication sessions.

There are major hindrances to develop fluency skill coupled with accuracy. Certain errors affect oral communication in English especially in the multilingual Indian context. Some of the errors are, "Code-switching", "Code-mixing", "Borrowing patterns", "Extending patterns", "Communication strategy" and "Fossilization".

Code Switching is the speaker's change from one language to another. A learner whose mother tongue is Tamil begins speaking in English and switches to using Tamil. For example s/he says,

*\* Washing machine run aayitu iruku. Switch cha amathitu va.*

The desired expression is,

*Washing machine keeps on running. Return after switching it off/ switch it off and return.*

To promote fluency skill in English for code switchers, the teacher could give them a task. Each student may be asked to describe in English an experiment conducted personally in the lab without code – switching. Whenever the learner switches codes, the peer group learners or the



teacher could supply the correct English equivalents. This practice would improve fluency gradually avoiding code – switching.

Code mixing is another error affecting fluency skill. It is a selection of a particular language for a given situation. For example, a learner speaking in a presentation mixes codes in the salutation part. S/he says, “Hi friends!” instead of “Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening”. The presentation situation is formal and it requires formal salutation. “Hi friends!” is acceptable only in informal context. Formal salutation is necessary in this context. The teacher would do well to distinguish between formal variety of language and informal variety of language and suggest appropriate contexts for their use.

Borrowing patterns is an error affecting fluency skill. A learner speaking in English may draw patterns from the mother tongue. For example, a Tamilian in an oral communication in English may say,

*\* I am there since Monday*

This utterance is caused by the borrowing of sentence pattern from Tamil language: *naan ange thingal varai irupen*. It is to be noted that English and Tamil differ in terms of sentence structures. The desired utterance is as follows:

*I have been there since Monday.*

To remediate the error in borrowing patterns, the teacher could assign a task for the students. A student reads sentences in Tamil. The other students will give English translation. The teacher applies correction(s), if necessary. The learners understand the structural difference between English and Tamil and learn to translate ideas in their mother tongue into English and gain fluency skill.

Extending patterns is a process in which a learner extends the use of a grammatical rule or linguistic item beyond its accepted use. A learner utters a Wh- question such as \* “What did he intended to say? Instead of “What did he intend to say?” The learner commits the error by extending the past tense morpheme –ed incorrectly (Selinker, 1974:38). The teacher resays the correct sentence and asks the learners to repeat it.

Communication strategy is also an error affecting fluency skill. The learner may have a limited command of the language. In trying to communicate, s/he may have to make up for a lack of knowledge of grammar or vocabulary. Learners often say, \* “Yesterday I took leave” instead of “Yesterday I availed myself of leave”. The learners err in oral communication because of the limitation of their word power in English. Learner’s word power and knowledge of grammar require improvement. For this, the teacher could supply words belonging to different parts of speech and ask learners to frame sentences on their own. This practice is supposed to expand learner’s knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.

Fossilization is yet another error affecting the fluency skill. It is a process in which incorrect linguistic features become a permanent part of the way a person speaks a language. Aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and grammar may become fixed or fossilized in second or foreign language learning. While referring to the first page in a book, the learner utters con’tent instead of ‘content. The shift in the stress pattern, in certain two syllable words, changes the part of speech in the English language. Hence, the teacher could correct the stress of the word by



constant drilling so as to avoid the fossilized wrong stress. It can be said that perfect mastery of a second language is the goal that learners continually strive to achieve.

Error Correction should not always be the responsibility of the teachers. Teachers should train their students to use discovery techniques. For example, if a student makes an error while speaking, the teacher could say: “Excuse me?”, “sorry, could you say that again?” or he could repeat the student’s sentence and stress the error to indicate that it is not correct. By doing so, the student will try to correct and as a result, would be more confident while dealing with errors and less dependent on the teacher.

Diane and Barbara (1998) put forward the following types of feedback to error correction quoted in Hoglin Zhu’s “An Analysis of College Students’ Attitude towards Error Correction in EFL Context”:

- 1) Explicit correction: This method indicates clearly that the student’s answer is incorrect. The correct answer is provided.
- 2) Recast: This method indicates directly that the student’s answer is incorrect. The teacher implicitly reformulates the student’s error, or provides the answer.
- 3) Clarification: This method uses expressions like “Excuse me?” or “Sorry, I don’t understand”, the teacher indicates the message has not been understood or that the student’s answer contained some kind of mistake and repetition or reformulation is required.
- 4) Elicitation: In this method the teacher elicits the correct form from the student by asking questions or by allowing the student to complete the teacher’s utterance (e.g. “This is a .....), or by asking student to reformulate the answer (e.g. “say it again”).
- 5) Repetition: In this method the teacher repeats the student’s mistake and adjusts intonation to draw their attention.

There are other requirements for effective delivery of oral communication. A speaker has to consider vocal pitch, rate and volume of oral delivery. It is important to incorporate changes in vocal pitch to add emphasis and avoid monotony. It is also helpful to vary the rate of speaking and incorporate pauses to allow the listener to reflect upon specific elements of the overall message. Finding the appropriate volume is crucial to the success of an oral communication. The speaker should be careful not to add extraneous words or sounds – such as “um,” “you know,” or “okay” – between words or sentences. Evidently, effective oral communication in English fetches rich dividends for learners in general and Engineering college students in particular.

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## Western Musical Staff Notation in the Teaching of Phonetics

*Grace Suneetha Didla*

### Introduction

*Phonetics is concerned with describing speech. There are many different reasons for wanting to do this, which means that there are different kinds of phoneticians. Some are interested in different sounds that occur in different languages. Some are more concerned with pathological speech. Others are trying to help people speak a particular form of English, (Ladefoged, 2006:1).*

Whatever be the interest of the phonetician, one should realize the fact that music is inextricably linked with the study of Phonetics.

In the description of Phonetics, whether articulatory, clinical or acoustic phonetics, most of the standard books draw several parallels between phonetics and music. The lack of knowledge of the terms related to music can hamper one's comprehension to a great extent. The purpose of this paper is twofold— first, to underscore the need for all the phoneticians to have a working knowledge of the Western Musical Notation so that this knowledge can go a long way from the perspective of pedagogy and second, to demonstrate the link between music and phonetics at various levels.

### 1. Articulatory phonetics

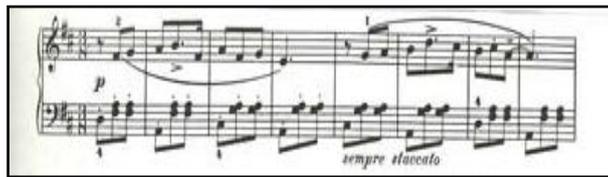
Articulatory phonetics deals with a description of speech sounds. Describing speech is undoubtedly a daunting task. "Speech involves the careful coordination of the lips, tongue, vocal folds, breathing and so on. In producing even the simplest of speech sounds, we are coordinating a large number of things. Phonetics involves something like unpicking the sounds of speech and working out how all the components work together, what they do, and when. It is a bit like hearing a piece of music and working out how the score is constructed," (Ogden, 2009:7).

In the description of the prosodic features, several references are made to musical terms. Halliday (1970:1) defines rhythm in the following manner: "The rhythm of spoken English is based on a unit known as the foot. The foot therefore is like the 'bar' in music; and a spoken sentence consists of a succession of feet, in the same way as a piece of music consists of a succession of bars...Thus again, like the bar in music, the foot always begins with a beat. But a musical bar may also begin with a rest, a silent beat. A foot may begin with a silent beat, without the rhythm becoming disrupted or lost."

E.g. Each / foot /  $\wedge$  in/ turn /  $\wedge$  con / sists of ...

In this example the foot boundaries are marked by slash and a silent beat or a rest is indicated by a  $\wedge$  (caret). The aforesaid definition of Halliday draws a lot of parallels between the rhythm of music and the rhythm of spoken language.

The musical terms 'bar' and 'rest' can be represented through western musical staff notation as follows.



As can be seen, the vertical lines in the score represent the bars in music, and in the above score there are 8 bars. While the treble clef (the upper set of lines of representation) begins with a rest, the bass clef (the lower set of lines of representation) starts with a salient beat.

Likewise, Halliday (1970:58), also makes a reference to an utterance which was spoken twice with different rhythms, “with shorter feet and more salient syllables (as if in 2/4 time), and with longer feet and fewer salient syllables (as if in 4/4 time).”

The following two musical pieces are a representation of the two types of rhythm mentioned above.



These two pieces of music are excellent examples to demonstrate the difference in tempo between a 2/4 time signature and 4/4 time signature that Halliday was referring to.

**2. Clinical phonetics**

*If phonetics is the scientific study and description of speech sounds, then clinical phonetics is the application of this approach to the speech sounds used by speaker with a speech problem, (Ball & Lowry, 2001:3).*

Broadly the communication disorders can be classified as a) voice disorders, b) fluency disorders, c) language disorders, and d) articulation disorders. This paper addresses two disorders: voice and fluency, in greater detail.

**2.1 Voice disorders:**

The human voice is an incredible instrument that can display a wide range of emotions through slight changes of pitch, loudness, quality, timbre etc. As Riper (1990: 235) has rightly said, “A person’s voice is a sensitive barometer of his physical and emotional health.” It is an established fact that each person’s voice is unique. Of course, voice disorders may not necessarily hinder communication unlike a person with a language disorder. “Nonetheless, a voice problem is no less a handicap to the one who has it.” (Hegde 1995: 262).



Any irregular vocal fold vibrations cause voice disorders. The voice disorders can be related to pitch, loudness and a few other factors.

### 2.1.1 Pitch disorders

Three factors affect the vocal fold vibration: mass, length and tension. Massive folds are usually longer, too. Longer and massive folds vibrate at a lower rate and thus produce lower pitch. However, when the folds are stretched they become tensed and thinner causing higher pitch. Men's vocal folds are usually more massive than women's and therefore the perceived pitch is lower. Pitch disorders can be broadly listed as:

- **Monopitch:** Monopitch, strictly speaking, does not mean phonating on a single pitch. The patients who are rated as using monopitch are capable of some pitch change often no more than one or two semitones.
- **Too- low pitch:** It refers to habitual pitch range that is abnormally low.
- **Too -high pitch:** It refers to habitual pitch range that is abnormally high.
- **Falsetto:** During a falsetto, the vocal folds are shortened and made thinner and therefore the falsetto voice is usually located beyond the upper limits of the normal pitch range.
- **Diplophonia:** It is a rare disorder in which the person produces two distinct pitches at the same time.
- **Pitch breaks:** They refer to sudden shifts of pitch as characteristic of the period of voice change. The pitch breaks can be towards the higher notes and the lower notes as well.

Given the brief description of the pitch and its related disorders, the obvious question is: Does the knowledge of musical notation help in dealing with these disorders? The answer is an emphatic Yes!

James Thomas, a laryngologist, is absolutely right when he says, "If you read medical papers on voice, chances are you have encountered a statement like - The pitch increased an average of 20 Hz (Hertz) with the procedure. This is a relatively meaningless statement, unfortunately. Hertz is a logarithmic/exponential scale. Averaging numbers (adding up a group of numbers and dividing by the total) in an exponential scale is a non-simple task. It mixes up addition with multiplication and the order in which one adds and multiplies has an effect on the answer. It can be done with logarithms, but not directly. The effect is perhaps most noticeable when you compare pitch notation in Hertz with pitch notation in semitones. Perhaps thinking about a piano might be helpful." (<http://www.voicedoctor.net/diagnose/pitch.html>)

Given below are a couple of case studies taken from Riper (1990: 248 - 249) to substantiate the same.

**Case Study 1:** "Joan Poch, a high school senior, referred herself to the speech clinic after hearing a recording of her voice.....An analysis of the average pitch levels used by the girl showed that she phonated about the pitch of 'middle C'..... We then made another recording in front of a class and this time the average pitch level did reach 'F' above 'middle C'. We explained to Joan that most females hear their recorded voices as seemingly higher in pitch just as most males hear themselves as possessing a deeper voice than they expect...."

**Case Study 2:** "A boy of seventeen was referred to us as monotone, and most of his speech was pitched at 'D' above 'middle C'. He tended to use loudness instead of pitch variations to give the

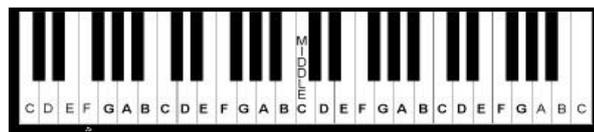


meaningful inflections necessary in asking questions, making demands, and so on...A year later he was re-examined and his voice was entirely normal, being pitched at 'B' below 'middle C', with the range of an octave and a half, and normal inflections and quality..."

The case studies might be difficult to understand if one is not familiar with the music terminology. The first case study says that Joan Poch phonated at the pitch of 'middle C', and if the readers do not know what 'middle C' is and how it sounds, the comprehension of the disorder can be difficult. Likewise, the second case study refers to the pitch of a seventeen year old boy whose speech was pitched at 'D' above 'middle C'. Yet again, one can be caught helpless without the knowledge of these notes.

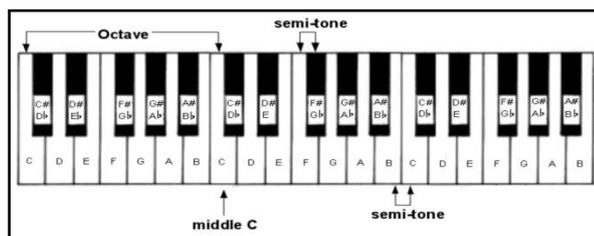
These concepts can be easily explained in simple terms using a piano. Here is a description of the same. "Musical sounds are explained by characters called notes, which are named after the first seven letters of the alphabet, namely, A.B.C.D.E.F.G. On examining the keyboard of the piano, it can be observed that there are white and black keys. The former represent the natural notes and the latter the flats and sharps." (Smallwood 1983: 1 & 4).

Each white key has a name as shown in the picture below.



The white key mentioned 'Middle C' is an important key because the description of other keys usually goes in reference with it.

Riper (1990: 250) defines monopitch as "a narrow range of inflection and pitch change, often no more than two semitones." The term 'semitone' is again a musical term and can be better explained by a demonstration on the piano.



As explained earlier, the white keys stand for natural notes and the black keys stand for the sharps and flats. "It will now be necessary to notice the different characters termed sharps, flats and naturals. On the piano each black key has two names; for instance, the black key between C and D is C sharp and D flat. The sharp raises the note before which it is placed by a semitone, which is the next black key to the right. The flat lowers the note by a semitone, which is the next black key to the left. The natural restores to its original state any note that has been altered by a sharp or a flat." (Smallwood 1983: 14). A semitone is the distance between each note including the black keys as depicted in the picture above.

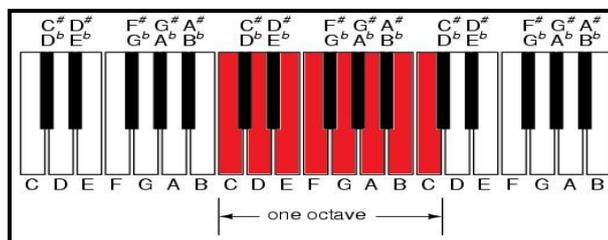
Likewise, on mutational voice change, Aronson and Bless (2009: 184) say:

*The general trend of mutational voice change is a downward direction of pitch. It is generally agreed that boys' speaking voices become one octave lower and girls' one or two tones.*



Investigations of pubertal change of the singing voice have led to the agreement that the lower limit of girls' voices descends by one or two tones and the upper limit may gain the same. The lower limit of boys' voices descends a full octave.

The term 'octave' as mentioned above refers to 8 notes as depicted in the picture below. As the keys highlighted are pressed from right to left, one can very vividly perceive the fall in pitch experienced by a boy going through pubertal voice change.



### 2.1.2 Disorder of loudness

Loudness is another characteristic of voice. It is determined by the intensity of the sound signal. The more intense the sound signal is the greater the perceived loudness. The sound is actually a disturbance in the air particles. The extent of the movement of the air particles is measured as amplitude. Disorders related to loudness can be of two types – excessively loud or excessively soft. While assessing disordered speech, the phonetician will often need to indicate marked variation in the loudness of speech. Symbolic representations for different levels of loudness has been included in the extIPA (Extensions to the IPA) chart and the terms and the symbols used are adapted from the music terminology -- f (forte) for loud speech, ff (fortissimo) for very loud speech, p (piano) for soft speech and pp (Pianissimo) for very soft speech.

Likewise, to record finer distinctions in speech rate, the musical analogy can be extended and terms such as 'crescendo' and 'rallentando' can be used to indicate speech that gets progressively louder or progressively slower (Ball, Rahilly and Tench, 1996:150-151).

All the above mentioned symbols used for different degrees of loudness and speech rate can be demonstrated very effectively through musical scores as given below.



As can be seen the symbols 'p' and 'f' are indicated in the musical score and 'crescendo' is abbreviated as 'cresc.'. This musical score when rendered can clearly demonstrate the varying degrees of loudness.

**2.2 Fluency Disorders:** One of the major disorders of fluency is stuttering and yet again, in the description of this disorder there are a lot of musical terms used.

- **Stuttering:** In his historic book 'The Nature of Stuttering', Van Riper (1982:1) begins by stating "Stuttering has been called a riddle" and he further goes on to say, "It is at least a complicated multidimensional jigsaw puzzle with many pieces still missing."



Stuttering is a common disorder which is one of those universal afflictions plaguing mankind. There have been many studies that examine the prevalence of stuttering and prevalence numbers remain within a range of about 1 percent of the world's population. Stuttering has three basic dimensions to it—abnormal speech behavior, abnormal physical reactions and negative attitudes and lifestyle adjustments. The major types of disfluencies that disrupt fluent speech are repetitions, prolongations, interjections, silent pauses and broken words.

Stuttering is a disorder of fluency and it primarily affects the rhythm. The patterning of stressed and unstressed syllables in speech contributes to the overall rhythm of the speech. If every syllable receives the stress then it leads to slow and labored speech which results in 'staccato' rhythm. Yet again, for the description of stuttering, a similar, quasimusical system is adopted to indicate variation in speech rate. The terms 'allegro' and 'lento' serve the purpose. While 'allegro' refers to fast speech, 'lento' refers to slow speech and 'staccato' refers to labored speech. These different rhythms can be explicitly demonstrated through musical pieces. The following is an example of 'allegro'.



### 3. Acoustic Phonetics

*Speech acoustics is the study of the transmission of speech from the speaker to the hearer through the air. In other words, acoustic phonetics looks at speech once it has left the organs of articulation and before it operates on the organs of hearing, (Ball & Lowry, 2001: 61).*

Speech sounds like other sounds, can differ in frequency, intensity and duration.

In his popular book 'The Physics of Speech', Fry (2004) at several places uses musical terms and makes references to many musical instruments to capture the essence of the acoustics of speech.

In order to explain the basic concept of the generation of sound he very beautifully elaborates the same using the analogy of an 'orchestra'.

Likewise, he uses musical references to introduce the term frequency. "The first attribute of a sound that is measurable, therefore, is its frequency...if we take the first sound, of the 100 cycle fork, to be the 'do' of a musical scale, we should find that the 150 cycle fork sounded the 'sol' above this 'do', an increase in pitch of a musical fifth." (Fry, 2004: 8-9).

The concept of 'damping' which applies to the sound waves has been explained yet again with reference to a piano. "The strings of a piano are set into vibration by the hammers; their motion has a considerable degree of damping and the sound dies away quite rapidly after the piano key has been struck." (Fry, 2004:26).

He further uses the musical terms 'middle C' and 'Octave' to explain the acoustic concepts like fundamental frequency and harmonics. Likewise, to define amplitude he uses the relative musical terms 'forte' and 'piano' and their derivatives.



The following is a table that he uses to show the Frequency relations of the notes in a diatonic scale which in fact acts as a ready reckoner.

Frequency relations of the notes in diatonic scale

	Multiplying factor	Note	Frequency (c.p.s)
Do	1	C	264
Re	9/8	D	297
Mi	5/4	E	330
Fa	4/3	F	352
Sol	3/2	G	396
La	5/3	A	440
Si	15/8	B	495
Do	2	C	528

Fry makes every effort to make sure that he is being understood, by constantly giving references to the musical instruments and their functioning. In doing so, it makes the readers much more connected to the concepts.

## Conclusion

To conclude, I wish to underline the fact that music and phonetics go hand in hand. The pedagogical implications of the link between phonetics and music cannot be ignored. It must be noted that phonetics is a very practical subject in the sense that many of the fundamental concepts need demonstration.

In the light of these, this paper emphasizes that the onus is on the teachers of phonetics to employ these strategies in the teaching of phonetics, without which, it is akin to beating on cold iron.

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## Creative Writing via Folk Tales in the Classroom

*Pragyan Paramita Pattnaik*

### Introduction:

'Writing cannot be taught', 'however, writers can be encouraged to write'. This was affirmed in the University of Iowa's workshop which declared that writing as a literary form is very difficult to be inculcated. Even expert writers frequently lament how difficult it is to effectively plan, compose, evaluate and revise their compositions. It is a clear hint that writing as a literary endeavor is really difficult, though not entirely impossible. Writing as an art can be taught by the help of a self motivated trainer. So the idea that creative writing cannot be taught and is the prerogative of a blessed few who have the natural ability to play with words and imagination is not the entire truth. Norman (2005) believes creative writing to be a formable art in which all students are capable of participating rather than a talent that only a select few possess. In reality, creative writing which is one of the most powerful forms of communication can be taught.

Creative writing refers to the art of writing about persons, places and events in an imaginative way. It refers to the innate knack of different writers to express their novel ideas and imagination in the form of novels, short stories, plays, poems etc. However, creative writing can be encouraged among the interested few through different creative writing programs or workshops. If desired, creative writing can be made a part of classroom activities. Students can be inspired to write creatively by reading and analyzing the texts of different veteran writers. An adequate stock of vocabulary and mastery of the complex structures of language are not the only pre requisites for writing. For the purpose, we also require a fecund imagination and a free flow of ideas. For this very few people are interested in this literary genre.

We as teachers and facilitators can always encourage our students to write and express their ideas in black and white. Creative writing which involves an imaginative portrayal of ideas can help students sharpen their ability to express their thoughts clearly. It can help them use their imagination to express their ideas. It will also help them hone their vocabulary skills and sentence patterns. It will also help them develop their critical thinking skills and ultimately improve their problem solving skills. It provides a platform to the students to give vent to their personal experiences and dramatize their inner feelings. These are the several reasons why creative writing has become a part of the curriculum in several universities. All these ideas have also been highlighted by Tompkins (1982) when he suggests that creative writing sessions should be incorporated into regular classroom routine in order to

- Explore the functions and values of writing
- To stimulate imagination
- To clarify thinking
- To search for identity and
- To learn to read and write

Tompkins (1982) has also opined that the importance of creative writing in developing children's cognitive and communicative skills cannot be underestimated.

Exclusive departments have evolved to propagate creative writing. This has happened with the realization that such programs will not only improve their creative writing skills, it will also improve their imagination, their vocabulary skills, their command over the structures of English



language and will also broaden their analytical skills. According to Santangelo and Graham (2015), the important components of an effective writing instruction program are:

- Students need to know the general characteristics of good writing
- Students need to be able to effectively use a variety of strategies involved with composing
- Students need to be proficient with the foundational skills required to translate ideas into written texts
- Students need to be motivated to engage in the writing process

In such creative writing courses, students are encouraged to read and emulate various literary forms by veteran writers. In the case under study, I have selected folk tales as the models to be imitated for the purpose of writing. Going beyond the conventional notion that folk tales are to be read and enjoyed at the elementary level, I thought of introducing folk tales in the undergraduate classes. Most children barring their age, have an inherent inclination and love for stories (Graves, 1983). The sole intention of using folk tales as tools for teaching creative writing is related to their short and simple nature in both content and delivery. Reading or listening to these tales would not seem cumbersome to the students. To read and easily understand them is a pre requisite for writing creatively. The moral values ingrained in these stories would definitely have an unconscious impact on the teenagers. It is particularly at this age that children should be taught the dichotomy between the good and evil. Rather than directly talking to them on these issues, they can be inspired to read such texts which would enlighten them. Moreover, the different life skills like assertiveness, positive attitude, leadership skills, and teamwork can be instilled in them through these folk tales.

#### **Methodologies involved:**

In a creative writing class the trainer can adhere to different methodologies to teach writing through folk tales.

- The entire story can be read to the students and they can be asked to redraft the story by changing its conclusion and giving the story a different twist.
- As reading well crafted literature provides a model that illustrates the characteristics of good writing, students can be inspired to read the folk tales and reframe the story from a different point of view.
- As all the folk tales carry a moral, students may be asked to use their imagination and write another story with the same moral.
- Students may be abruptly given a few characters from a folk tale and they may be asked to write their own story hovering round these characters.
- Picture prompts may also be provided to the students to draft their own story.
- To help students think creatively, a story outline may be supplied to the students which will help them expand it to a full story.
- Another humorous method could be asking the students to make a parody of the folk tale that they have read.
- Students who are fairly above average may be asked to write a poem or a short play with the same theme and characters as in the folk tale.



### Tried Out Lessons:

As a part of this creative writing course, the students of Polytechnic were given the folk tale – “Double Double”. They were asked to read the story thoroughly and use their imagination to rewrite the story giving a different twist to the conclusion of the story. The trainer gave the students one hour for the activity. While assessing the stories the trainer was stunned with the creativity of the students in reframing the story. I would like to cite one of the best twists that a student had given to the story.

*“The husband was delighted that he would reach home and eat the pancakes. But when he reached home he saw his wife sitting outside the house and crying. When he inquired his wife told him the story of the pancakes. She was very happy to see the millets. When she soaked them, they doubled. When she ground them again they doubled. When she tried to fry the dose on the frying pan they went on doubling and now the entire house is filled with the millet pancakes. As there is no space inside the house she is sitting outside the house. The husband now realized his own fault. All this was the result of his greed. He again prayed to God and requested him to take back the boon of doubling the millets. The God took back his boon and everything became normal. ”*

Many such ‘out of box thinking’ could be traced in the writings of the students. Thus the story with the moral that greediness has disastrous consequences was introduced to the students indirectly and their impression of the story was also recorded. The students not only enjoyed the class thoroughly, they wanted an assessment of their stories. The trainer was surprised with the insightfulness of the students. Though creative writing is ‘impossible to grade’, still the trainer shared an individual feedback with all the students and also encouraged peer feedback. Basing on the feedback received some of the stories were also rewritten by the students. It was observed that administering folk tales as a tool for writing was a source of amusement for the students. They had no difficulty in understanding the plot as it was short and simple. The trainer also traced an informal discussion among students regarding the moral of the story. The writing class did not appear monotonous or boring for the students. The constant encouragement from the trainer helped the students enjoy the writing activity. They not only enjoyed the activity, they enthusiastically looked forward to their next writing class.

In the next writing class the students were given an open ended tale i.e “Who will bell the cat”. The students were asked to complete the story. The trainer came across several endings to the story. One of the endings was quite interesting.

*“First of all a mice got a small bell and tied it round its own neck. Where ever it went it produced that tingling sound. This sound attracted the small daughter of the merchant. The mice entertained the girl for some time and then took out that bell. Now the little girl urged her father to get a bell and then tied it to the cat’s neck to hear that tingling sound. When the cat walked the bell produced the sound which excited the girl and simultaneously made the rats alert that the cat is around. In this way the rats were successful in belling the cat.”*

In yet another creative writing class, the students of Polytechnic were given the folk tale – “The Woodcutter and the axe”. The story was read out to them and they were asked to write a parody of the story. While assessing the stories the trainer could trace the extensive use of creative imagination put by the students in reframing the story with a parody. One of such stories which were humorous is as below:



*“When the truthful woodcutter went back home with the gold and silver axe, his neighbor became greedy and decided to go to the same river to get the gold and silver axe for himself. But this neighbor was accompanied by his wife. Both of them reached the river. But before the man could throw his axe into water, his wife fell into the water. The man started crying bitterly when the Goddess came from the water with a beautiful girl and asked the man if she was his wife. The man immediately said ‘yes’. The Goddess became angry and scolded the man for accepting a different lady as his wife. Then the man promptly replied that if he had said ‘no’, the Goddess would have presented him two ladies and it would be difficult for him to handle two wives. So he immediately said yes to the first lady that the Goddess showed him.”*

The response of the students in the creative writing classes is a clear hint that they not only enjoyed the stories, they exhibited their superb imagination in reframing the stories. Thus folk tales can be introduced in the initial creative writing classes as ‘mentor texts’ to provide a foundation for writing and induce students to the activity of writing. Later on texts of higher grades with different methodologies may be introduced to the students in their writing classes.

### **Conclusion:**

Once the trainer has established a basic structure for writing, other effective practices such as assessment techniques, practices to enhance the motivation of students to read well scripted literature can be taken up which will contribute to good writing. Though Zimmerman and Reisemberg (1997) are of opinion that many students struggle with the writing process as it is often times difficult to correctly plan, compose, evaluate and revise their compositions, it is the prerogative of the trainer to encourage the students to plan, draft, edit and revise their written work. The trainer should not only give his own feedback and inspire peer feedback; he should also teach students how to assess the quality of their own writing. Such strategies can be used in the classroom for realizing a positive change in the attitude of students towards writing.

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### Appendix 1

#### Checklist for Peer Assessment

- Is the development of the story logical? (5 marks)
- Is the continuation of the story interesting? (5 marks)
- Are the ideas original? (5 marks)
- Is the choice of diction effective? (5 marks)
- Is the language colloquial? (5 marks)

### Appendix 2

#### **Double Double**

A very poor couple lived in a small hut. They lived by gathering firewood and selling it. One day, the husband felt like eating millet *dosés* (pancakes). But he had no millet at home. So he thought he would go to the hills, pray to God, and ask him for a small measure of millet. So he went to the hills, performed penances, and God was very pleased. He appeared to the man and asked, "What do you want?" The man said "I want just a small measure of millet. I don't want anything else." The God replied "Sure, go home and you'll find a measure of millet." Just then, the man thought he could ask for more. "God, God, could you please double it for me?" To this God obliged and said "Sure, go home and your millet will double itself." When he went home, he found his measuring vessel full of millet. He gave it to his wife and said, "Grind it and make a *dosé* for me."

She took it and poured it into a winnowing fan. The millet doubled itself. She put it in the mouth of the grinding stone. As she ground it, the millet doubled itself. When she gathered the flour in the winnowing fan, the flour doubled itself. She mixed it in butter and started frying the *dosé* in a frying pan. When she finished making one, she found she had made two. She could never stop. She had many many *dosés* on her platter.

The husband was beside himself with joy and took one pancake in his hand. He found he really had two. When he put one in his mouth, he found he had still another. As he chewed on them, he had another in his mouth, even as he had one in his hand. He ate and ate till he swelled and burst.

Four men came to carry his dead body on their shoulders to the burial ground. As soon as they buried him, they found they had another body on their shoulders. When they passed it on to another four men, they had still another body appear on their shoulders. The more bodies they buried, the more they had, till every foursome in town had a body to carry.

God saw the confusion. He saved them by taking back his boon and making everything as it was before.



### Appendix 3

#### **Who will bell the Cat**

Once upon a time, there lived many mice in a grocer's shop. There in the shop, they ate delicious wheat and rice, pulses and nuts, bread and butter and biscuits. They grew fat day by day. One day, the grocer thought about the heavy losses that he had to suffer because of the menace of the mice. This angered him so much, that the next day, he brought a big fat cat to his shop. The big fat cat began to catch and kill the fat mice every day. The mice became worried. They called a meeting to discuss the problem. "Let's get rid of this cruel fat cat," the leader of the mice said.

"But how?" the other mice asked. All of them began to think. Then one mouse said, "We should tie a bell round the neck of the fat cat. So, whenever she would move towards us, the bell would ring and we will run into our holes immediately." All the mice became very happy to hear this. They began dancing with joy. But their joy was short-lived. An old and experienced mouse interrupted their merry-making and shouted, "Fools, stop it and tell me, who'll bell the cat?" No mouse had the answer to this big question.

### Appendix 4

#### **The Truthful Woodcutter**

One day a wood cutter's axe accidentally fell into a river. The poor wood cutter made a good search in the water. But his efforts were in vain. Finally he burst into tears. Hearing his sobs, an Angel appeared before him. The Angel dived into the river and came up carrying a golden axe. The wood cutter did not accept it. He stated that his axe was made of iron. The Angel disappeared and soon returned with a silver axe. The wood cutter again denied that it was his axe. The Angel once again plunged into the river. It soon reappeared carrying the axe of the wood cutter. The poor man greeted the angel with words of profuse thanks and great joy. The Angel was impressed by the man's honesty. She presented him with the golden and silver axes in recognition of his truthful nature.



## **Developing Analytical Skills through Context Based Teaching and Learning: A Strategic Approach**

***Narasimha Raju P. & Suneeti T.***

### **Introduction**

With the advancement of technology into learning, days are gone to think of affording full length commitment for all-round improvement of learners in pursuing education at graduate level. The changing global competitive market conditions, the phenomenon of jobs, and sophisticated technology have influenced importance for career and technical education (CTE) at present in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Though many researchers proposed and practised different methods of teaching and learning, Brunton (2009), while describing the designing of ESP, included certain aspects of ESP through register analysis (1969); target situation analysis (1980); and needs analysis (1970s). In addition to this, while talking about sociopolitical, socio-cultural and sociodiscoursal trends in ESP, reasons for the emergence of ESP were quoted from Hutchinson & Waters (1987).

The roots of 20<sup>th</sup> century career and technical education (CTE) were found in David Snedden and Wharles Prosser (1951) for vocational education through 'learn while doing'. In the same way E L Thorndike (1874) proposed the behavioral theory, but this only has served as the fundamental teaching and learning model for CTE. Much emphasis was laid abroad on contextual teaching and learning (CTL) at graduate level. This approach was followed at numerous universities like Ohio State University, Northumbria University, Central Michigan University, Carnegie Mellon University and so on, but in the context of teaching in India, china, south Africa, Jamaica, Italy. Spain, Sudan, and a few other countries, contextual teaching was not materialized though learners can adapt themselves to it. With the rising need for both teachers and learners to have professional and personal development in this pell-mell universe, the former is expected to follow the context based teaching practices, while the latter, context based learning in approach. For attaining such level of learning, discourse may be quite helpful.

### **Existing problems**

Learners at graduate level, especially engineering graduates, in the recent times, have preferred to take target oriented and a time bound program as a crash course for CAT, GATE, SAT, TOEFL, IELTS, GRE, and other competitive examinations, but for which the contenders were in vain to advance their contextual learning skills. This is due to lack of analytical skills which should have been developed as part of their academics.

As on date, the word 'learners' remained common in the context of teaching and learning, but the mode of learning has not been changed due to various reasons and problems being prevailed. Learners of vernacular background, in specific, are unable to cope up with the new methods of learning as they were habituated to the conventional methods of teaching in their classes. The other reason for them is that English language was considered a foreign language (EFL) or the second language (ESL) in the process of their academic learning. In addition to this, though many problems exist in teaching as far as factors and determinants that affect teaching are concerned, many teachers of English are of an impression that effective material, resources, proper utilization of teaching methodology, requisite skills for framing and developing concepts of teaching are beyond their level of teaching and/or research. While the aforesaid skills are highly expected from the teaching fraternity, to materialize the insightful learning in their model of teaching has been out of their sight.



### **Problems being faced by teachers**

Though the task based language learning (TBLL) and/or task based language teaching (TBLT) which originated from communicative language teaching (CLT) were proved to be partly successful methods of teaching and learning process, most of the teachers were not able to employ contextual teaching and learning (CTL) to develop analytical skills of learners in a simulative manner. Hence, this stands out to be lacunae for both learners and teachers to think of improving creative thinking skills of learners in course of their journey towards both academic and professional excellence. On a large scale, it is observed that teachers need to enhance their skills such as critical thinking, analytical, logical, creative, material designing, finding suitability, writing, editing, organizing, and testing and assessment strategies.

### **Problems being faced by learners**

- English as Second Language (ESL) in academics
- Lack of awareness on words
- Lack of application oriented learning
- Memorizing meanings of word but not drilling
- Inability to have real-time learning
- Inability to understand and relate meanings of words clearly
- Inability to analyze the context, concordance, register, and praxis of the terms
- Inability to use words in sentences semantically
- Inability connect words structurally
- Lack of virtual learning
- Lack of proper guidance
- Lack of objective oriented approaches in learning language
- Faulty Methods being followed in the classroom

### **Theories of language learning and acquisition**

The behaviorist, Mentalist, Rationalist (Cognitive), Empiricist (Audiolingualism), and Cognitive-code theories are some of these theories. The previously stated theories confine to learning variants but not teaching approaches. Theories of situated cognition, which focus explicitly on this relationship, assume that knowledge is inseparable from the contexts and activities within which it develops (Borko and Putnam, 1998).

### **Insights and Insightful Thinking**

Insights nurture with the implementation of a point of view as trial and error analysis, to improve spatial and verbal abilities of a learner. This process has to be stimulated by a teacher with the students, as part of responsible and passionate teaching. Insight was first researched by Gestalt, in the early part of the 20th century, while finding an alternative to associationistic view of learning. Some proposed potential mechanisms for insight include: suddenly seeing the problem in a new way, connecting the problem to another relevant problem/solution pair, releasing past experiences that are blocking the solution, or seeing problem in a larger, coherent context.



## **Insightful Teaching**

The basics of teaching are associated with the determination of a teacher to lead oneself in a constructive research oriented approach. It doesn't mean all the teachers teaching are ineffective, or should be the researchers in the field of their specialization, but a teacher's contribution to research is, in turn, contribution to one's own teaching.

## **Analytical Learning**

Analytical learning has coherence comparatively with each and every discipline and discourse oriented studies. It's a process, in which mental manipulation of information associates with a hurdle of learning, apprehending a solution to the problem. Insightful learning evolves out of an effective guidance, motivation and target oriented approaches. This is considered to be discriminative learning when both teachers and learners pay attention to keen observation. Though it is considered to be cognitive in approach, the relevance of thought in the contextual learning may be different. Kohler (1920) had a hunch it would reflect as a result of experience through personal interactions in the society, but he could not prove it to a genuine approach. In the comparative point of view, while McLaughlin (1987) pointed out that learning a second language is to acquire a skill in consonance with practice oriented approach; Merriam and Caffarella (1999) discussed experiential learning, and theorized the learning process. Borko and Putnam (1998) view that knowledge is inseparable from the contexts and activities within which a teacher teaches and a learner learns. Based on these observations, Kohler's (1925) theory of insight learning became an early argument for the involvement of cognition, or thinking, in the process of learning.

## **Context based study and analysis in learning**

To develop context based learning skills with students, teachers are expected to create a problematic situation wherein the students should involve and solve the given problem in a way that is associated with language centered approach. For instance, while talking about reading comprehension passages, in general, learners may be provided with a paragraph or a passage followed by a set of questions corresponding to the data given in the passage. This is a conventional approach, but, instead of instructing the students in that approach, teacher may provide them a set of words randomly and instruct learners to develop a paragraph based on background of their general knowledge and awareness on day-to-day news. It may be observed clearly that a few learners are fast and others thinking in the first few minutes of time, but the thinking promotes them to list down the problems, events, incidents, and many as writing is known as a process and the plan of the teacher would be materialized in the succeeding time. Once learners develop a paragraph with the given set of words, they may be asked to compare and differentiate the ideas each student had and developed a paragraph. Thereafter, students may be instructed to frame at least 5 questions from the paragraph or passage the students have written.

Teacher may restrict learners with a set of conditions to widen their thinking so that the logical thinking skills of learners will also be improved. This will be proved as a successful method for vernacular students as the proposed method would stimulate interest towards mode of learning in the reading comprehensions. This may plunge learners to work in groups and hence, group learning activities will be familiarized. If the modalities and methods as mentioned above are employed in other contexts, teachers can build up good number of ideas to nurture in the field of teaching and learning so that learning on the part of learners and teaching on the part of



teachers would remain enticing for them. Hence, contextual teaching and learning (CTL) will turn out to be the feasible approach on par with the conventional methods of teaching and learning.

### Advantages

As Morlock (1978) discussed, the presently proposed method would offer adventure education to learners as well as insights the teachers. With this approach, students will develop participative learning skills and collaborative learning skills realizing a fact that process of thinking plays a vital role in learning a new thing independently. In addition to this, students can develop independent learning strategies widening their vocabulary skills, social behavioral skills, representation skills in rich contextual settings in course of their academics and societal learning situations.

### Conclusion

Contrary to task based language learning (TBLL) and task based language teaching (TBLT), context based teaching and learning with Analysis Centered Contextual English Language Learning (ACCELL) substitutes as the most feasible approach for developing insights of learners and positioning them as insightful individuals in future. Hence, ACCELL will be proved as an appropriate approach for augmenting insightful learning abilities of learners.

The present paper may lead to bring out a statistical analysis on the feasibility of the methods and approaches suggested in research.

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# Lesson Planning for Engineering English: NBA Course Planner Reviewed in the Light of Digital Lab-Based English Teaching in Engineering

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## Introduction: Basic Principles of Lesson Planning under NBA Course Planner

Since Engineering Education was brought under the Provisions of Washington Accord in India two overriding principles behind standard Course Planning and Lesson Planning are being used that are known to be ‘variety’ and ‘flexibility’.

‘Variety’ with reference to Digital Lab-Based English teaching, means involving Engineering Students in a number of different types of Digital Learning Activities and introducing them to wide selections of relevant Digital Study Materials through a number of Realia (see Table 1 below for details).

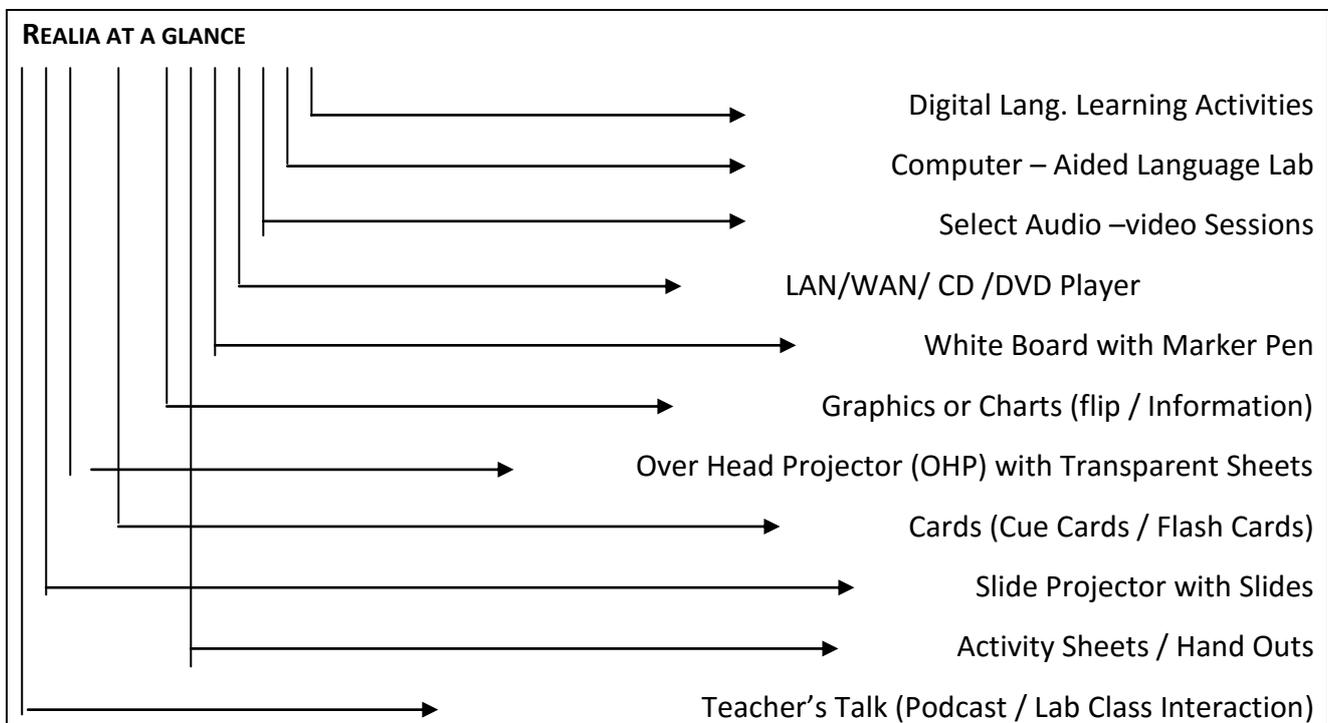


Table 1: Realia used in English Language Lab

Lesson Planning for digitally Programmed Engineering English Teaching in a Lab situation should take up the challenges of the recently designed NBA Course Planner (See Annexure 1 and Annexure 2 for details) so that learning Technical Communicative English becomes ever - interesting and never - monotonous one for the Engineering Students.

‘Flexibility’ comes into play when Engineering English teachers deal with the NBA – designed Course Planner which is based on Major Graduate Attributes of the Washington Accord. The Lesson Plan for a particular day or a Session in the Engineering English Language Lab class may not be appropriate for that class.

There may be a number of reasons behind the failure of a Lesson Plan in a Digital English Language Lab Class. Some probable reasons are:



- Odd Routine Timings
- Non – Contextual Texts
- Lack of pre- Session Motivational Activities

The flexible Engineering English teacher must be able to change the Lesson Plan in such a situation even if it requires minor adjustments with the prescribed NBA Course Planner. Flexibility at the Implementation Level is the prime requisite that a genuinely adaptable and dynamic teacher may never disregard. (See Sub-Skills of Digital English Teaching Skill in Table 2 below)

<b>Sub-Skills and Qualities of Digital Engineering English Teaching Skill</b>
T - Tenacity Building for Developing Engineering English Language Proficiency
E - Enterprise for Involving the Students in English Learning Activities
A - Adaptability to Digital English Language Lab Environment
C - Communicative ability in English Language
H - Heuristic Ability regarding English Language <i>Pedagogy</i>
I - Interest for Self Development in English Language Teaching Ability
N - Nurturing Attitude towards Engineering English
G - Generating Interest in Engineering English as a <i>Creative Monitor</i>
S - Soft Skills related to Engineering English Teaching
K - Kinetic Capacity Building in Engineering English
I - Ideational <i>Thinking Skill</i> Building in Engineering English
L - Learner – Centered Pedagogy (Teaching and Learning Process)
L – Logical use of <i>Authentic Materials</i> in the Engineering English Lab Class

Table 2: Sub-Skills of Engineering English Teaching Skill

Experienced English Professors of Engineering colleges all over the globe are well aware of the danger of routine and monotonous lecture method of Language teaching. They are also aware of how Engineering students may become de-motivated if they face the same sort of classroom environment in the Digital English Language Lab. The danger of inattentive class can only be avoided if the teacher believes that the learning experience should be permanently stimulating and interesting for Engineering English.

Pedagogically saying, this is difficult to achieve but not impossible to execute. If the Lab Class Activities, Language Learning Tasks and English Language Exercises are properly adapted in the Lesson Plan the would-be Engineers will be interested and happy to do such self- promoting Activities. Engineering English is required to be introduced in various ways like ‘Dialogue Analysis’, ‘Discourse Analysis’, ‘Authentic Business Communication Analysis’ and ‘Case Studies’. No doubt, the introduction stages of Engineering English class will become gradually less and less challenging.

If all **Reading Activities** are always concentrated on extracting specific information through mechanical *skimming* and *scanning* the Engineering students hardly get any opportunity to use



and hone their Soft Skills. Naturally, 'Reading for comprehension' becomes less interesting activity for them. The same is true of any other language activity that is continually repeated in Engineering class. Engineering English Teachers' aim should always be to provide a variety of different language learning activities which will help individual students to have a command over the language that they use either for Technical Communication or for Business Development.

Engineering students need to know the purpose behind a certain task for they need to know why they are doing some language activity and what they will achieve after completing the given task.

The Lesson Plan should specify the purpose which may be 'Communicative Activities' or development of Receptive skills (Listening skill & Reading skill) and Productive skills (Speaking Skill & Writing Skill) or Technical –cum-Business Orientation.

Engineering English teachers of Engineering Institutes must have a purpose for all the activities they organize in a class or in Digital Language Laboratory for that matter and they should communicate that purpose in their Lesson Plan. Lesson Plan should also be available as an appendage of NBA Course Plan.

#### **Pedagogic Thinking:**

Engineering class may include a **number of intellectually advanced personalities** with diverse Learning Experiences and different *world views*. As a result, the language activity that is particularly appropriate for a fresher may not be ideal for a Diploma Holder with Job Experience. Therefore Engineering English teachers who **vary their teaching** approaches may be able to satisfy most of their Engineering and students at different times.

#### **Multi-Functional Variety:**

Variety is a principle that applies especially to a series of classes. Over a two-week period, for example, we will try and do different things in the classes. Variety also applies to a lesser extent to a single class period. Although there are some activities that can last for fifty minutes it seems generally true that changes of activity during that time are advisable. An introduction of new language that lasted for fifty minutes would probably be counter-productive, and it is noticeable how an over-long accurate reproduction stage tires students and fails to be very effective.

We would not expect, either, to ask the students to engage in 'Reading Comprehension' for a whole class. We might, however, be able to base a whole class on one Reading passage, but only if we varied the activities that we could use with it. Thus we might get students to read to extract specific information; this could be followed by some discussion, some intensive work and some kind of written or oral follow-up. Children, especially, need to do different things in fairly quick succession since they will generally not be able to concentrate on one activity for a long stretch of time.

The teacher who believes in variety will have to be flexible since the only way to provide variety is to use a number of different techniques; not all of these will fit into one



methodology (teachers should be immediately suspicious of anyone who says they have the answer to language teaching for this will imply a lack of flexibility).

### **Features of a Lesson Plan:**

Good lesson planning is the art of mixing techniques, activities and materials in such a way that an ideal balance is created for the class. In a general language course there will be work on the four skills (although a teacher will probably come to a decision about the relative merits of each skill): there will be presentation and controlled practice, roughly-tuned input (receptive skill work) and communicative activities. Different student grouping will be used.

If the teachers have a large variety of techniques and activities that they can use with students they can then apply themselves to the central question of lesson planning: 'What is it that my students will feel, know or be able to do at the end of the class (or classes) that they did not feel or know or were not able to do at the beginning of the class (or classes)?' We can say for example, that they will feel more positive about learning English at the end of the class than they did at the beginning as a result of activities that were enjoyable; we can say that they will know some new language that they did not know before; we can say that they will be able to write a type of letter that they were not able to write before, for example.

In answering the central question teachers will create the objectives for the class. Students may be involved in a game-like activity because the teacher's objective is to have them relax and feel more positive about their English classes. The students may be given a reading passage to work on because the teacher's objective is to improve their ability to extract specific information from written texts. Story-telling activity may be introduced because the objective is that students should know how to refer to the past, for example.

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- Washington Accord: Professional Graduate's Attributes
- NBA Course Planner, NBA, Government of India
- Moulana Abul Kalam Azad University Of Technology, West Bengal Syllabus



### ANNEXURE 1

<b>Format</b>	<b>Course Curriculum</b>
Department, Course Number and Title of Course and Year of Study	.....Engineering , HU 101, English Language and Technical Communication, 1 <sup>st</sup> Year 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester, 2015
Identification of Course Designers: names of faculty ( <u>writers &amp; editors/moderator</u> ) with designations & qualifications	<p>Course Designer/Writer: Dr. S K. Dey Associate Professor (English) M, A In English; DELT (Institute of English, Calcutta) M, A In English Language Teaching; M. A. in History; M. A. in Education; Ph. D.(Humanities);</p> <p>Ph. D Thesis: Paradigms of English Language Teaching in India (1993);</p> <p>Post Doctoral Dissertation: A Study of Reactions of Netaji Subhas Open University PGDELTrainee Teachers towards Practical Course (2015)</p> <p>Moderator: Prof Arpita Banerjee, Former Professor of English, Institute of English, Calcutta</p>
Mapping with Faculty Expertise (total experience and experience of teaching compatible course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. S K. Dey (19 years, Ph.D. in Humanities)</li> <li>• Prof A. Banerjee (30 years, Ph.D. in ELT)</li> </ul>
Designation as a Compulsory or Elective course	Compulsory (Engineering Science)
Pre-requisites Courses	Knowledge of Class XII level English.
Contact Hours, Credits and type of course (Theory, tutorial, seminar, project, etc.)	<p>Course Mode: Theoretical L-T-P : 3-1-0 Credit – 3. Class/Laboratory Schedule: 3 hours lecture and 1 hour tutorial Duration: One Semester</p>
Course Outcomes	<p>Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to: Develop English Proficiency for all Types of Technical Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply Correct Vocabulary of English</li> <li>• Review the concept of Technical Communication</li> <li>• Translate the insight and experience in Social and Professional Communication</li> <li>• Identify Different English Accents and other Problem Areas of English Communication</li> <li>• Explain individual and group Experience in Private and Public Situation</li> <li>• Decode the Diagram, Charts both in Spoken and Written Communication.</li> </ul>
Topics Covered based on Syllabus of affiliating university	Please vide University Syllabus -attached
Additional Topics, activities and Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to Technical Report Writing</li> <li>• Applying Group Dynamics</li> <li>• Memo Writing for Organizational Communication</li> </ul>
Hints for Learning-Teaching Approach (Course Delivery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus – Based Lectures by the teaching faculty</li> <li>• Class room interaction</li> <li>• Group Discussion</li> <li>• Presentations and Practice Activities</li> <li>• Resolution of problems by students individually outside the class through Selective Project Works</li> </ul>
Course Assessment Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course notes, tutorial notes, tips for weekly study and class notes are</li> </ul>



	<p>given through class representatives or posted on the course web according to progress of the course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quizzes/Assignments are conducted/given to students according to the course progress, and,</li> <li>• Selected Assignments' answers are distributed through class representatives or posted onto course web.</li> <li>• Weekly tutorial / Surprise Class Tests are taken for Confidence Building</li> <li>• 4 Quizzes/Assignments are given and only the best 2 are counted;</li> <li>• Two 3/4-hour Unit Tests and a 3-hours final exam will be required respectively.</li> </ul>
Hints for Course Assessment instruments & processes (both continuous and semester-end assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance (Direct Assessment Method): 5%</li> <li>• Interaction &amp; Homework: Quizzes and Assignments (Direct Assessment Method): 10%</li> <li>• 2 Unit Tests Exams (Direct Assessment Method): 15%</li> <li>• Final University Exam (Direct Assessment Method): 70%</li> <li>• Students Feedback (Indirect Assessment Methods): Twice in a Semester</li> </ul>
Text Books and/or Reference Material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text:</li> <li>• Contemporary Communicative English for Technical Communication</li> <li>• Technical Communication for Engineers</li> <li>• English Language Laboratory WBUT EDITION</li> <li>• Syntax by A.Thakur</li> </ul>

### ANNEXURE 2

Format	Course Curriculum
Department, Course Number and Title of Course and Year of Study	ECE, HU 191, English Language Laboratory 1 <sup>st</sup> Year 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester
Identification of Course Designers: names of faculty ( <u>writers &amp; editors/moderator</u> ) with designations & qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writer: Dr. S K. Dey</li> <li>• Moderator: Prof A. Banerjee</li> </ul>
Mapping with Faculty Expertise (total experience and experience of teaching compatible course)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. S K. Dey (18 years, Ph.D. in Humanities)</li> <li>• Prof A. Banerjee (28 years, Ph. D in ELT)</li> </ul>
Designation as a Compulsory or Elective course	Compulsory (Engineering Science)
Pre-requisites Courses	Knowledge of Class XII level Physics, Mathematics and ES 101.
Contact Hours, Credits and type of course (Theory, tutorial, seminar, project, etc.)	<p>Course Mode: Practical</p> <p>L-T-P : 0-0-3</p> <p>Credit – 2</p> <p>Class/Laboratory Schedule: 3 hours Practical</p> <p>Duration: One Semester</p>
Course Outcomes	<p>Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student will understand the similarities and differences between different accents in English Language</li> <li>• Recognise primary Language Skills and their Sub Skills</li> <li>• Demonstrate an appreciation of the logicity of English Language</li> <li>• Use their newly earned Language Skills for developing Technical Communication</li> <li>• Assemble Sub Skills of English for grand Skills</li> <li>• Process and analyze English Language Skills and present them orally in a meaningful way.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write a coherent and properly-structured report as Performance Report /Laboratory Report</li> </ul>
Topics Covered based on syllabus of affiliating university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please vide the Syllabus attached</li> </ul>
Additional Topics, activities and Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ex Tempore and</li> <li>• JAM</li> <li>• Contrastive Analysis between English Phonetics and L1 Phonetics</li> </ul>
Hints for Learning-Teaching Approach (Course Delivery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration by the teaching faculty</li> <li>• Lab interaction</li> <li>• Presentations and Practice Activities</li> <li>• English Language Skills Development</li> </ul>
Course Assessment Policy	<p>Micro Academic Projects are given to students on the basis of the course progress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignments are given</li> <li>• Internal assessment by corresponding faculty and</li> <li>• 3-hours final exam in presence of corresponding faculty and external faculty member.</li> </ul>
Hints for Course Assessment instruments & processes (both continuous and semester-end assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance (Direct Assessment Method): 5%</li> <li>• Performance/ Laboratory practice and problem solving (Direct Assessment Method): 15%</li> <li>• Lab Report (Direct Assessment Method): 15%</li> <li>• Interaction &amp; Homework: Quizzes and Assignments (Direct Assessment Method): 5%</li> <li>• Final Exam/ Theoretical - Practical test (Direct Assessment Method): 60% (Objective and Organization: 20%, Experiment performance: 20%, Comprehensive viva voce on the allotted work: 20%)</li> <li>• Students feedback (Indirect Assessment Methods): Twice in a Semester</li> </ul>
Text Books and/or Reference Material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text:</li> <li>• English Language Laboratory WBUT EDITION</li> <li>Reference</li> <li>Internet</li> </ul>



## Redefining Education: Cognitive Revaluation of Twenty First Century Needs

*Sanjukta Sivakumar*

The key words in the title of this article are *twenty first century*. Most Indian teachers are aware of a tremendous global movement current in education linked with life-skills, social equality, contexts of learning, the Four C's (creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication), value frameworks, holistic assessment and other innovative perspectives that have also had a lower key existence in previous centuries. This window of pedagogical awareness of twenty first century educational needs is, however, moderated by certain local realities. The first of these is the *gap between the demands of the curriculum and the efficacy of our training infrastructure* in equipping teachers with the requisite skills. The second is the *gap between parental expectations from students relating to their performance in examinations and the objectives of the twenty first century curriculum*. The last is a questionable, tacit complicity between the government and the politics of Right to Education (RTE) activism in *shifting the responsibility for delivering the twenty first century curriculum from the public to the private sector*.

All of the several definitions of a twenty-first century curriculum agree on the primary need to *balance content knowledge with skills* due to the concurrency of gaining skills while furthering knowledge and vice versa. This curriculum covers an extremely ambitious range of Knowledge and Skills, reflecting the twenty first century frontiers of humanistic endeavour, extending to and beyond:

- Academic disciplines of Languages and Literatures, Mathematics, Sciences, Humanities, Arts, Economics, Commerce, Civics, etc.
- Tolerance and understanding of religious, linguistic, cultural and racial diversities
- Leadership, social equality and civic responsibility
- Self direction, initiative, risk-taking, anger management, autonomy
- Geo-political and ecological issues and disaster management
- Meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies, peer collaboration and communication
- Moral, ethical and philosophical frameworks of learning
- Productivity through Multiple Intelligences
- Problem-solving through creative, divergent and critical thinking
- Health and hygiene issues
- ICT and Media literacy
- Extra mural, networked digital learning beyond restrictive institutional timetables
- Experiential learning through projects in finance, journalism, robotics, film-making, astronomy, etc.

Assuming the above list to be a fairly adequate approximation of twenty first century curricular goals, let us, then, examine the concomitant spectrum of teacher knowledge and skills required to deliver this comprehensive curriculum. It may be noted in passing, that teacher knowledge need not necessarily translate into skills practice in the classroom. Practice involves the constant updating of knowledge and skills (Rotherham and Willingham, 2009) as well as the classroom implementation of these. Teacher education in knowledge and skills must therefore, cover the traditional domains of classroom management, ICT and media literacy (Blair, 2012), thinking tools, constructivist pedagogy, learning environments, disabilities, character building and leadership (Tough, 2013), applications of neuroscience and psychology, curriculum framing and materials



generation, feedback modes and assessment scales, socio-economic, race and gender issues, as well as emergent innovations like flipped classrooms (Bishop and Verleger, 2013). Given the enormous diversity, depth and controversy in this normative body of teacher knowledge and skills, it is commendable that teachers are willing and even enthusiastic in their attempts to gain mastery over sections of it selected according to their own interests and aptitudes. The greater challenge, however, is to customise teacher training to localised and individual teacher needs. The current teacher education scenario needs to be less monolithic and top-down to include diverse local needs in marginal and rural India.

Mainstream teachers (receiving the benefits of liberal teacher education) are usually aware of the latest educational trends and published research findings made accessible in journals and magazines expressly for classroom implementation. Liberal school managements presumably, enable teacher autonomy to read, experiment, innovate, engage in collaboration and provide feedback. Yet, in these institutions too, the focus on teacher education needs to be proactively maintained and expanded, even driven, by a core team passionately committed to the defining objectives of a twenty first century curriculum. Meanwhile, the onus for actual growth rests with the teacher. It is a sad fact that even teachers with the requisite knowledge often lack the skill for sustained classroom implementation because of the exigencies of short-term results or due to their inability to persist with problem-solving, or even due to impatience or lack of self confidence. Whereas, teachers with little initial knowledge or skills develop and grow, solely through will power, innate faith in themselves and their determination to benefit the learner. Providing support and motivation is therefore, equally important as imparting knowledge and skills to teachers, especially, when this snowballs into a supportive learning environment and collaborative autonomy.

A major obstruction to the success of teacher education and enlightened classroom practice is also the gap between curricular and parental expectations from students. A reality check reveals that the summative board examination transforms learners into candidates, limits the measure of their academic merit to marks, grades, and percentiles, and even claims to predict their future careers. It is no surprise, then, that parents of older students are, in the main, indifferent to the wider twenty first century curricular objectives. They accept evidence of teaching-learning efficacy only in examination results, thus generating acute anxiety and stress alike, in teachers and students. The first imperative of twenty first century pedagogy is to replace this ends-versus-means disconnect between curricular and assessment objectives.

Our current system of examinations ultimately compels students to focus narrowly on their ability to deliver stock responses to set questions within time-space confines. The examination mark-sheet is the valued standard for determining their future studies and careers, rather than, for instance, their sensitivity to social issues, their divergent thinking on ecological problems, or their contribution to the school community. It is a flawed system, allowing for a disturbing degree of failure, dishonesty and suicide. In view of this negative wash back of assessment, an approach to assessment that nurtures and fulfils the higher self-actualising needs of learners (Maslow, 1971) would thus, take precedence even over teacher education in promoting twenty first century curriculum delivery, besides providing a more accurate measurement of teaching-learning efficacy (Silva, 2009). But this is not a grassroots issue decided by primary stakeholders like schools or parents. Teachers and students have no decisive voice in the determination of assessment policy.

Assessment in India is the one aspect of education that is solely and centrally decided and controlled by government policy. The think-tank framing assessment policy gains automatic



control over all other aspects of education. In twenty first century India, the central government decides the education budget, frames educational policy and implements educational programmes to the accompaniment of a strident chorus of activist voices that appears to reflect the needs, values and aims, sometimes of mainstream society and at other times, of marginalised groups. The media does much to amplify these voices that analyse, critique and evaluate governmental education policy. The ongoing debate even seeks to gain legitimacy by airing occasional lone voices of an actual stakeholder, perhaps a principal or a teacher, on educational issues. Politicising vital issues like teaching, learning and assessment, however, has led to the trivialising in practice, of valuable ideas like the universal Right to Education and sidelined the importance of evaluating the standard of education obtained by the general school-going population.

Private schools, in addition to meeting the very definite challenges of twenty first century curriculum delivery as outlined above, are mandatorily obliged to subsidise the education of children from the socially underprivileged and economically backward sections of society (Soni and Rahman, 2013). Excluding private organisations that voluntarily subsidise 25% needy students as per RTE, there are yet two factors contradicting the general fulfilment of this expectation. Firstly, some private educational institutions may either have limited resources, being dependent solely on fees, government subsidies or donations, or even if financially solvent, may not be entirely free from a profit motive. It is then probable that fee-paying parents would involuntarily share in subsidising the education of free students, given the unequal compensatory measures followed by the government. On the other hand, the government can levy an educational tax on citizens commensurate with their income to subsidise education for the needy. Secondly, the logic determining that educational policy framing is government responsibility as well as the large budget that is inevitably necessary to implement a twenty first century curriculum in all its aspects, is a pertinent reason why the government rather than random private institutions should be responsible for fulfilling RTE. It is perhaps the only way to ensure that children in all sections of Indian society will receive an equal twenty first century education.

The crucial conclusion emerging out of the three realities stated at the beginning of this article, is that assessment is the key to education policy and without first bringing about an assessment system commensurate with twenty first century educational needs and values, no visible changes in classroom teaching-learning can be expected, even if we educate all our teachers according to the most efficacious policies and advanced practices. In so far as the government remains central to deciding assessment policy, educational quality as well as equality will be determined centrally and politically more than by intellectual, social or global standards.

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## **Need for Introducing a full-fledged Course in Writing Skills for Engineering Students: A Survey**

*Sasi Sekhar Mallampalli*

### **Introduction**

Engineers require a wider range of communication skills to stay relevant in today's dynamic business environment. Engineers are expected to communicate the purpose and relevance of their work not only in speaking but also in writing. When it comes to industry, they are supposed to communicate with managers and co-workers and of course with customers and suppliers all the time. Furthermore, if you are to raise funds for your Research & Development project, you must market your ideas effectively, write your proposals persuasively, and generate enthusiasm for your research. If you work in public policy or government, you will have to communicate effectively and cogently with the press as well as the public. Employers now increasingly seek graduates with effective communication skills that go beyond academic credentials

### **Writing, a Vital Skill**

Hence, the importance of good writing skills need not be reemphasized as every undergraduate in engineering acknowledges the importance of acquiring proficiency in writing as a vital aspect of career success. (Appendix 1)

Writing is a fundamental component of language. When a child writes, thoughts and knowledge are blended together creating a unique meaning (Jones, Reutzell, & Fargo, 2010). Consequently, students identify the skill of writing, as more difficult than listening and reading (Berman & Cheng, 2010).

Among the four language skills, perhaps, it is the last one to be learnt and mastered if we go by the natural order of learning the language. In fact, there are numerous reasons for writing to be the last acquired domains of learning English, one being that a more detailed and analyzed knowledge of a language is needed to write it than to understand it (Bialystok & Bryan, 1985).

Writing has always been an important and integral skill in English language acquisition. This is due to the fact that it reinforces grammatical structures and vocabulary that teachers strive to teach our students.

Even in the second language learning, though the learning process starts with writing, with more emphasis on grammatical accuracy, as is the experience of many a second language English teacher, the ability to write independently still remains an underdeveloped or undeveloped skill.

### **Writing, a much neglected skill**

Though writing is an essential and important skill for career progress, it is often the most grossly neglected area in English Language Teaching in India. Angela Koreth rightly points out the problem when she says, "over the years, a decline in writing skills was evident, attuned as students were becoming, to objective tests and inhabiting as they did, a world of texting and messaging".



The chances for writing on their own get reduced as they make progress from school to intermediate where the focus is more on science and mathematics at the cost of developing language skills required for their professional studies later.

At the engineering colleges where English language skills are taught with the course titles like Technical Communication or Professional Communication are failing to match the writing abilities of the students, leading to a widening gap between expectations of the industry and actual performance. While complex writing tasks like Report Writing and Proposal writing are being taught to students who, in fact, cannot write a simple email in English. "Indian students' writing skills are not as developed as the U.S. students' standards. Many students do a shoddy job of writing their cover letters" reports The Hindu.

The fact that many Indian engineering graduates are lacking in writing skills amply reflects in the latest report released by Education Testing Service that conducts TOEFL and GRE.

### Performance of Indians in Analytical Writing

#### ***Volume and Performance Information for the GRE Population, July 2014–June 2015***

The following table shows the performance information of test takers based on their country of citizenship. The table shows United States (325,431), India (96,178), and Mainland China (42,816) had the highest number of citizens that took the test.

Rank	Country	No of Test Takers	Analytical Writing (Mean)
1	Australia	528	4.3
1	New Zealand	160	4.3
1	Singapore	862	4.3
1	United Kingdom	1,529	4.3
2	Canada	5,328	4.2
3	Ireland	159	4.1
3	Mauritius	34	4.1
4	Netherlands	341	4.0
4	South Africa,	296	4.0
5	Germany	1,436	3.8
5	United States of America	3,25, 431	3.8
40	Pakistan	2,496	3.4
96	China	42,816	3.0
114	India	96, 178	2.9



A glance at the above table prepared from the snapshot test taker data 2015, reveals where Indian test takers stand in their analytical writing skills. It is essential to know why our many test takers in India are failing and what their drawbacks are. The test score descriptions throw much light on where the test takers with the scores 3 and 2.5 stand in their writing skills and what their specific weaknesses while answering the analytical writing questions.

At 2.9 mean, the writing skills of many Indian students display some competence in analytical writing and addressing specific task directions. Although the writing is flawed in at least one of the following ways:

- limited analysis or development
- weak organization
- weak control of sentence structure or usage,
- with errors that often result in vagueness or a lack of clarity

In order to reach the next level i.e. for scores 4 and 3.5, our students writing should display following characteristics:

- competent analysis of ideas
- develops and supports main points with relevant reasons and/or examples
- is adequately organized
- conveys meaning with reasonable clarity
- demonstrates satisfactory control of sentence structure and language usage
- may have some errors that affect clarity

The ideal standard of good wiring should have the following as mentioned in the score description levels between 6 and 5.5

- sustains insightful, in-depth analysis of complex ideas
- develops and supports main points with logically compelling reasons and/or highly persuasive examples
- is well focused and well organized
- skilfully uses sentence variety and precise vocabulary to convey meaning effectively
- demonstrates superior facility with sentence structure and language usage
- may have minor errors that do not interfere with meaning.

In order to reach the above level of writing proficiency, present engineering undergraduates have a long way to go. It is high time the issue of writing skills got addressed and the problem should be addressed by all the stakeholders concerned and develop courses with special focus on developing writing skills exclusively.

Keeping the ground realities in view and the changing preferences of students in their learning methods with the advent of latest technologies, the researcher has undertaken a survey among the first year students of engineering to ascertain their views and preferences for enhancing their writing skills.



## Methodology

*Participants:* A sample of one hundred students was taken to know their preferred ways of learning writing skills. The students belong to the first year of their engineering course at University of Petroleum & Energy Studies, Dehradun.

*Questionnaire:* A set of closed end questions was given to the participants and they were asked to mark a relevant point on a scale of ten points.

*Objective:* Listening to the students and their preferences gains greater importance in order to make the language skills class more engaging and learning to take place. As Ian Gilbert rightly argues that technology has become an integral part of our life and it has thrown many challenges to the teachers especially, like students are able to get better content presented in a more interesting and engaging way than the class room teaching.

If only the course meets their expectations and their preferred ways of learning, will there be any real learning. Teacher's role has changed from being a fountain of knowledge to a being a facilitator. Teaching has to be replaced with Learning.

## Findings from the Survey (Appendix 1)

1. An overwhelming 86% of students have stressed the importance good writing skills as key to success by rating 6 or above on a ten point scale.
2. Nearly 60% of students rate their writing skills as average and needs improvement by rating their skills between 5 and 6 on a ten point scale. While 28% of respondents to the questionnaire (appendix 1) rated their writing skills good and very good by marking 6 or above on a ten point scale. This is their self assessment, not done by the teacher.
3. When asked about whether they prefer technology for improving their writing skills, 82% of students expressed their desire to use technology to improve their writing skills by rating 6 or above on a ten point scale. This has to be kept in mind when a writing skills course is introduced in the classroom.
4. When asked about their learning of writing skills at school, nearly 77% of students were satisfied with their learning of writing skills in their schooling by rating their satisfaction levels 6 or above on a ten point scale. It is against the common view held by many people that writing skills are neglected in schooling.
5. When they were asked about their interest and willingness to improve their writing skills, 83% of participants expressed their willingness to improve their writing skills.
6. When they were asked if they would like to join an exclusive Writing Skills Course as an integral part of their curriculum, 68% of respondents shown a keen desire to attend a course offered by the university.
7. Though 82% of respondents expressed a desire to improve their writing skills through technology, (question 3, Appendix I) only 34% of students prefer to write online.
8. 59% of respondents want to write on paper to improve their writing skills. Perhaps, this throws much light on their poor keyboard skills. It is observed in the language labs and computer labs that students lack proper keyboard skills and struggle a lot to type without any mistakes.
9. Peer correction is one of the important aspects of learning language skills, only 35% of respondents expressed a desire to be corrected by their fellow participants in the program by marking 6 or above on a ten point scale.



10. On the other hand, 51% of respondents still like to have corrections done by their respective faculty members.
11. When asked about how far technologies are helping them to improve their writing skills, 49% of students were happy with the technologies they were using for sharpening their writing skills by marking 6 or above on a ten point scale. While, nearly 51% of respondents are not happy with the present writing tools available to them.
12. 56% of students would like to attend online classes and they expressed the same by rating 6 or above on a ten point scale.
13. Only 22% of respondents are willing to attend the classroom by rating 6 or above on a ten point scale. The remaining students were not so willing to attend the classes and their rated between 5 and 2 on a ten point scale. This has to be taken seriously by the faculty concerned and plan his teaching sessions carefully to have full attendance. Otherwise, the writing skills program may suffer from lack of attendance.
14. When asked about their reading habits, 77% responded that they do reading on a regular basis. It is true that reading and writing affect each other. In fact, they supplement and complement each other.
15. 78% of respondents expressed that they are keen on improving their writing skills by rating 6 or above on a ten point scale.

## Conclusions

From the above findings it is clear that 86% of students have recognised and acknowledged the importance of writing skills and 60% of the respondents have admitted that their writing skills are of average standard.

It is worth noting here that though a very significant percentage of students i.e. 86% consider writing skills are crucial and 68% of students are willing to take up a course, it is only 22% of students who are actually ready to attend the classroom. This throws much light on the present-day-student attitude towards attending regular classes on language skills. So this is an eye-opener for the teachers and the authorities concerned to make the courses more engaging and to see real learning takes place instead of teachers explaining something all the time.

An overwhelming 82% of respondents have expressed their interest in improving their writing skills through the use of technology. 68% of the respondents are ready to take up an exclusive course on Writing Skills if it is offered by the university. Among them 56% of them are interested in attending online classes instead of regular classes.

From these observations, it is clear that present day engineering students are keen on sharpening their writing skills if offered by the university. They prefer to use the modern methods of learning by using computers and mobile phones for improving their writing skills.

It is obvious from the snapshot of GRE scores that Indian students badly need rigorous training for improving their writing skills. Hence, it is high time all the stake holders concerned took a crucial decision of developing a comprehensive course for improving the writing skills of the students.

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### Appendix 1

Q No	Question	Self Rating (1 lowest and 10 highest)
1	Do you think writing skills are still relevant and important at present?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2	How do you rate your present writing skills?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3	Do you like to use the technology for learning writing skills in English?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4	Are writing skills given due importance in your schooling?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5	Would you like to improve your writing skills?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6	Are you willing to join an exclusive Writing Skills Program as a part of curriculum?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7	Would you like to write online for improving your writing skills?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8	How do you like paper based writing	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9	Would you like your writing to be corrected by your peers?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10	Would you like your writing to be corrected by your teachers?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11	How far the latest technologies have helped improving your writing skills?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
12	Would you like to attend online classes?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13	Would you like to attend traditional classroom?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
14	Do you read any magazines and professional journals?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
15	How serious are you in improving your writing skills on a scale of ten?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



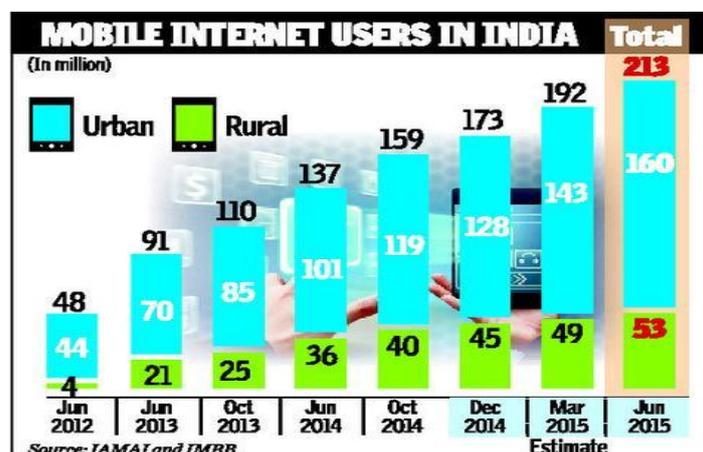
## Improving Listening Skills for Cracking Versant English Test: A Case Study in the Use of Smartphones for Language Learning

*M. M. Sastry & A. Sherine Joy*

### Introduction

In a world of increasingly ubiquitous technology consumption, the mobile phone is the most commonly purchased electronic device in the world (John & Wheeler, 2008). With the growing network of both private and public mobile phone operators and the availability of android smartphones for affordable price have made them ubiquitous.

India has become the second-biggest smartphone market in terms of active unique smartphone users, crossing 220 million users, surpassing the US market, according to a report by Counterpoint Research. According to a report released by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), out of two hundred and thirteen million users, 53 million users are from rural India, with a rise from 22% to 38% in the last four years.



The use of mobile technologies in language learning, especially in situations where device portability offers specific advantages, has altered how students learn the language. (Kukulka – Hulme, 2013)

Smart phones have dramatically changed the way people communicate with one another through social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter and apps like Whatsapp. They have altered the way students get access to information they need and their preparation for their academics as well as placement tests. Moreover, students prefer to have bite-sized learning to listening to one hour long lectures from morning to evening in the classrooms. Moreover, Taiwanese learners found the mobile learning manageable as they could enjoy “bite-size-chunks” of learning contents through the relatively small screen (Chen, Hsieh & Kinshuk, 2008).

### Versant English Test for Recruitment

Some software companies like Mphasis, Capgemini have made Versant English Test mandatory to screen out engineering students who do not have English language skills for software jobs and technical support roles. Though the students were strong their core engineering subjects, they found it difficult to crack the Versant English as it plays a crucial role in the final selection process.



**Versant English Test** is an automated test for speaking and listening skills that is taken on the telephone or computer. It takes approximately from 15 to 20 minutes time with six sections. According to the official website of the Versant English Test, a sample test contains six sections as indicated below:

- Reading
- Repeat
- Questions
- Sentence Builds
- Story Retelling
- Open Questions

### **Performance in Versant English Test**

The success percentage of students who cleared the Versant English Test varied from 12% to 23% in the many campus selections held in 2016 Andhra Pradesh. For example, out of 38 engineering undergraduates, who took the test for Mphasis recruitment drive, only 9 students got through the test. The success rate is only 22.25%. A survey questionnaire given to the Versant English Test revealed that nearly 60% of test takers found listening part most challenging as they were unaccustomed to the native English speakers' accent.

### **Statement of the problem**

In order for improving listening skills of the learners for cracking the Versant English Test, the android apps and the smartphones must be accessible, engaging and useful for practice as it provides exposure to native speakers' conversations.

### **Objective and Scope of the Study**

This study intends to explore how language learners use their smartphones when a specific skill has to be improved in order to crack an important test for their career advancement. In addition, when the teachers are aware of students' level of involvement and their ability to different apps on the smartphone, it provides useful information for teacher to design the courses and guide learner in the right direction. As Kukulska-Hulme (2010) points out:

*A culture of listening to learners will involve finding out about their current practices with mobile technologies and seeking to extend them or channel them in the right direction. Language learners and teachers will need to understand and be equipped for self-directed, situated learning. (p. 11)*

The study is limited to ten students only who are pursuing their undergraduate course in engineering and registered for Versant Test. Moreover, students who are weak in their listening skills and who have an android smart phone with internet connection were taken for the study.

### **Research Questions**

**RQ1:** How learners use their smart phones for improving their listening skills in English using the android apps like "Listening English" produced by BBC and other apps?

**RQ 2:** What do learners feel about their involvement and improvement of their listening skills?



## Setting

The question of training the students for Versant English Test gained significance when 38 students from our college appeared for Versant English Test and only 9 students got through the test. It was a decimal performance of the students in clearing a simple listening and speaking test in English with a success rate of just 22.25%.

Keeping the poor performance of the students in mind, it is proposed to give special training to the students intend to take the test next time. Fortunately, the researcher has got the opportunity for training the students and studying how learners can best enhance their listening skills using the mobile technologies, as the classroom training has got many limitations.

With an aim to familiarize the students with the native speakers' accent and pronunciation a batch of 10 prospective Versant English Takers were given training in listening skills with the help of smart phones.

## Methodology

### Participants

The ten participants in the training program belong to final year B. Tech program from different branches. Ten students for this training program were selected based on the following parameters:

- a) Interest and willingness to participate actively in the program
- b) Telugu Medium background
- c) Having Smartphone with internet connection
- d) Registered for Versant English Test

Apart from the researcher, one more English faculty member has actively involved in preparing the handouts and conducting the training classes.

### Materials

Android smart phones are recommended and the same have been used by all the participants, though there is a little variation in the version of android which makes little difference to the present study. 'Listening English' an android app developed by BBC Learning English has been recommended to be used for the purpose of the present study. In addition, students were asked to listen tonative English speakers' conversations using any other app they like at their home.

### Procedure

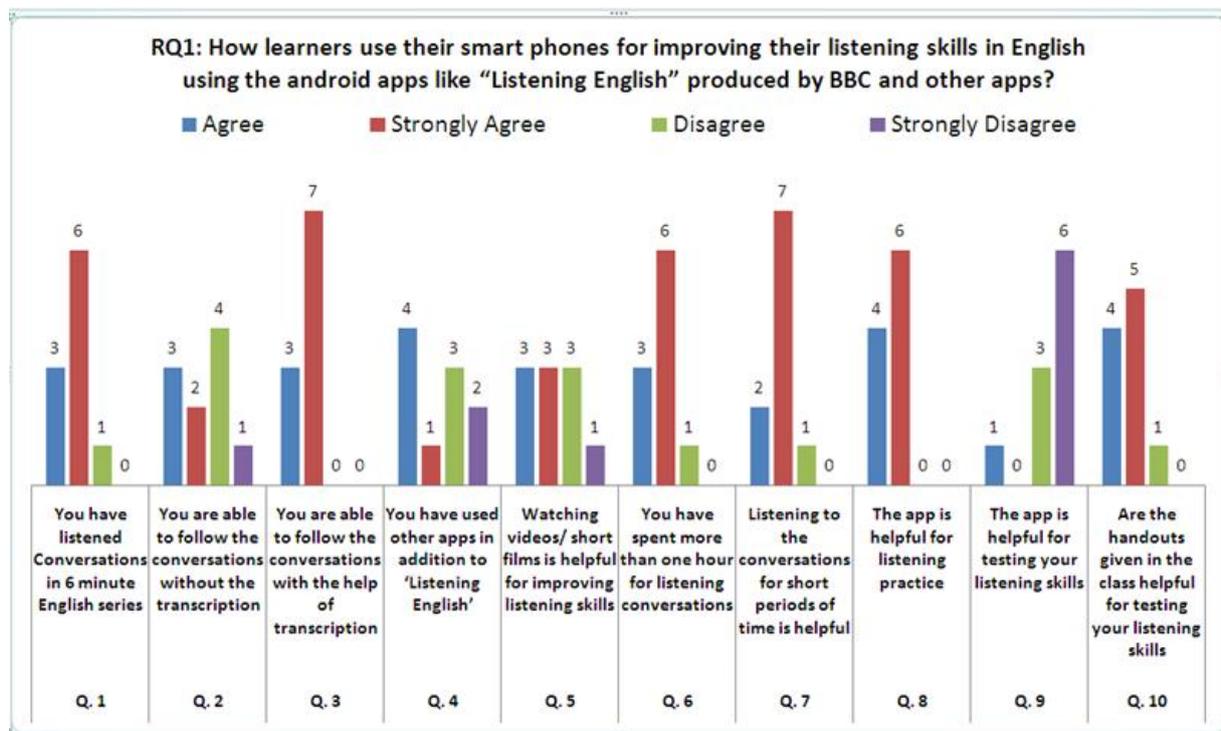
The ten participants in the training program were asked to download 'Listening English' an android app for improving English language skills developed by BBC Learning English. They were given the task of listening to the conversations of in popular lessons like 6 minute English. Participants were asked to repeat the same after each speaker in the dialogues and they were also asked to summarize the entire conversation at the end. They were given handouts to fill in the gaps and marking the right options while listening to the conversation. Learners were asked to listen to native English Conversations and maintain a log of their listening activities. At the end of the training program through smartphones, participants were given a questionnaire (appendix 1) to know how they have used the smartphones and how they felt about its usefulness.



**Analysis & Discussion**

**RQ1:** How learners use their smart phones for improving their listening skills in English using the android apps like “Listening English” produced by BBC and other apps?

For ascertaining answer to the first research question, a survey was conducted at the end of the training program. A set of ten close-end questions (appendix 1) was given to participants and their answers were represented in the form bar chart below:

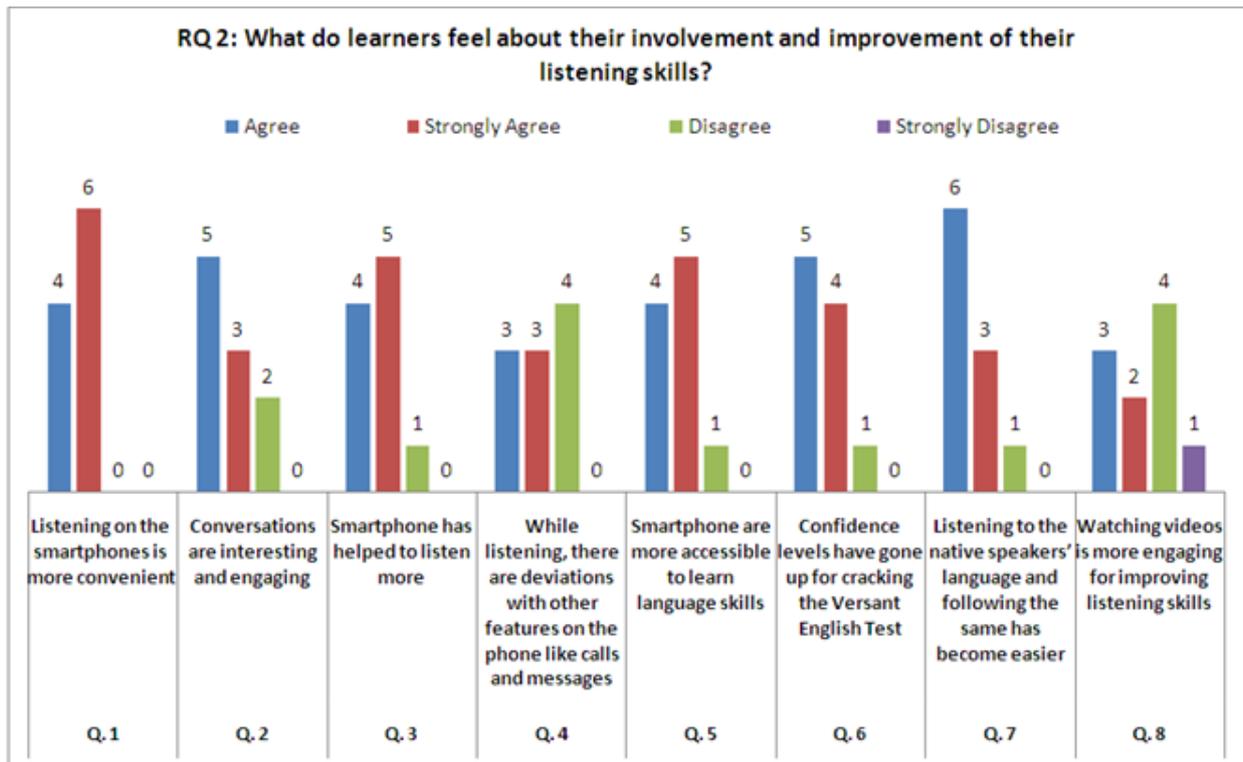


The survey regarding how they have used the smartphones for enhancing their listening skills revealed that:

- 70% of learners found listening native speakers’ conversation with the help of transcription of the same proved very helpful in improving their listening skills and another 30% of learners found it useful.
- 60% of students spent more than one hour listening to the conversations on their smartphones outside the classroom and another three students out of ten spent nearly one hour every day.
- 70% of the participants prefer to have bite-sized learning i.e. listening for a short periods of time.
- 60% learners found the particular app useful for listening practice whereas an overwhelming 90% of learners felt that the particular app was not useful for testing their listening skills.

**RQ 2:** What do learners feel about their involvement and improvement of their listening skills?

For ascertaining answer to the second research question, a survey was conducted at the end of the training program. A set of eight close-end questions (appendix 1) was given to participants and their answers were represented in the form bar chart below:



- Almost everyone who participated in the training program felt that listening on the smartphone is more convenient. Out of ten, six members strongly felt it is more useful.
- 50% of learners strongly felt that smartphones helped them to listen more and 40% of them felt the same. It was only one person (i.e. 10% of students ) who did not feel the same
- 30% of learners strongly felt that there were deviations while listening on the smartphone and another 30% of students have also felt the same though not that strongly.
- Coming to accessibility, almost 90% of learners have expressed positively out which 50% strongly felt smartphones were more accessible to them.
- An overwhelming 90% of learners felt that their confidence levels have gone up in their listening skills, out of which 50% were strong in their opinion.
- 60% of learners felt that listening to the native speakers conversations and following the same has become easier.

**Benefits**

On the whole, many learners felt their experience in enhancing listening skills using smartphones has been positive and, in fact, it has helped them in cracking the Versant English Test for which they took part in the training program.

- Almost everyone who participated in the training program felt that listening on the smartphone is more convenient. Out of ten, six members strongly felt it is more useful.
- 70% of learner felt that using smartphone has enhanced their chances of improving their listening skills.
- 50% of learners strongly felt that smartphones helped them to listen more and 40% of them felt the same. It was only one person (i.e. 10% of students ) who did not feel the same
- 60% of learners felt that listening to the native speakers conversations and following the same has become easier.



## Limitations

The study is limited to only ten students who have registered for Versant English Test. The study can be undertaken on a broader scale by taking a large number of learners into consideration.

The study revealed that smartphones though made listening to native speakers more accessible, they faced certain problems:

- 6 out of 10 learners felt they were deviated from the main task while listening on the smartphone.
- 9 out of 10 learners felt there was no scope for testing their listening skills on the particular app which is essential to have mock tests before the final test.

The present case study did not include other factors like affordability and accessibility of smartphones for the learners on a large scale. Students who have got a smartphone are only taken for the study.

## Conclusions

Though the sample size is small, it is noteworthy that there has been a remarkable improvement in the performance of the students between the first test and the second test. When the first test was conducted on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015, out of 38 students only 9 students qualified the test with a success percentage of just 23.68.

On the other hand, at the end of the training program all the ten students appeared for the campus recruitment drive, and nine students who cleared the rounds like logical reasoning and aptitude and got eligibility to take the Versant English Test. Five students out of nine cleared the Versant English Test and got the final placement. The success rate of qualified students is 55.55%. The training program for improving their listening skills using the smartphones and the subsequent test and the rise in the success rate can be seen as positive signs in the direction of using smartphones for enhancing the language skills of students. As android smartphones with more interactive apps are getting cheaper and accessible to more number of rural students, using the same for enhancing the language skills of rural engineering students gains greater significance.

Further research in this direction can help hundreds and thousands of rural students utilize the mobile technologies for enhancing their language skills and it also helps them build successful career in their future, thereby realizing the dream of 'Digital India' with greater digital learning experience

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### Appendix 1 Questionnaire

**RQ1:** How learners use their smart phones for improving their listening skills in English using the android apps like “Listening English” produced by BBC and other apps?

Q No	Question	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	You have listened Conversations in 6 minute English series				
2	You are able to follow the conversations without the transcription				
3	You are able to follow the conversations with the help of transcription				
4	You have used other apps also for listening English conversations				
5	Watching videos/ short films is helpful for improving listening skills				
6	You have spent more than one hour for listening conversations				
7	Listening to the conversations for short periods of time is helpful				
8	The app is helpful for listening practice				
9	The app is helpful for testing your listening skills				
10	Are the handouts given in the class helpful for testing your listening skills				

**RQ 2:** What do learners feel about their involvement and improvement of their listening skills?

Q No	Question	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Listening on the smartphones is more convenient				
2	Conversations are interesting and engaging				
3	Smartphone has helped to listen more				
4	While listening, there are deviations with other features on the phone like calls and messages				
5	Smartphone are more accessible to learn language skills				
6	Confidence levels have gone up for cracking the Versant English Test				
7	Listening to the native speakers' language and following the same has become easier				
8	Watching videos is more engaging for improving listening skills				



## Story as a Vehicle: Teaching Vocabulary to Young ESL Learners

T. Sunitha

### Introduction

Students who are graduating or completing their education lack in expression. This is largely because of inadequate vocabulary they possess. Developing vocabulary has been ignored for a long time in the past. Vocabulary teaching was subsumed as part of teaching reading. It is only now that we have been paying special attention to teaching vocabulary as part of content in an exclusive manner.

Vocabulary teaching needs to be contextualized. Stories provide the best contexts and particularly in the case of children, they offer a totally imaginary world, created by language that children can enter into and enjoy learning language as they go (Cameron, 2001). Indeed, stories have the inbuilt potential to offer language gain for children across the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Jangid (1999, 2005) reports the gains in reading, speaking and writing skills of learners in the primary school when stories were used as the source of input in two story projects. The potential of stories can therefore be properly exploited in the early years of schooling to develop adequate vocabulary.

Here is an experiment that shows how this can be done. This experiment was conducted to examine the effect of three conditions on children's vocabulary acquisition from the context of three stories. Though this is not the only way in which vocabulary can be taught, this is one of the very effective ways as revealed by the results of the experiment. With proper development of vocabulary, the weaker students can be helped to cope with the demand of higher learning without being left out.

### Literature Review

*'Although there is strong evidence supporting explicit instruction of vocabulary, a question remains regarding which aspect or model of instruction is best' (Butler, Urrutia, Buenger, Gonzalez, Hunt, and Eisenhart, 2010, p.4).*

To compare the effectiveness of two types of classroom vocabulary instruction with a non-instruction type homework assignment, Jiganti and Tindall (1986), conducted a study, with fifth grade learners. It was found that only good readers learned more than poor readers in the non-instruction based learning; however, both good and poor readers improved with the interactive classroom based instruction of new vocabulary. Elley, W.B. (1989) conducted two experiments with elementary school children, of 7 and 8 years of age, to measure the extent of new vocabulary gained by children with and without teacher explanation of word meanings when stories were read aloud to them. He found that word learning correlated significantly with the number of times the word was pictured, the helpfulness of cues to meaning in the texts and the number of times a word occurred in the story.

When story reading was accompanied by teacher explanations of new words, through pictures, acting out the meaning or verbal explanation, the vocabulary gain doubled, and this gain was noticeable even three months after the exposure to the words. An interesting finding here was that vocabulary gain across the stories used in the study varied, indicating that the story also has an effect vocabulary learning. Elley suggests that learner involvement with a story may be what makes the difference.



In another study, conducted by Brett, Rothlein, and Hurley (1996), the effects of three conditions on students' vocabulary acquisition: listening to stories with a brief explanation of the unfamiliar target words, listening to stories with no explanation of the words, and having no exposure to the stories or vocabulary (the control condition) were examined. The subjects of this study were all in the age range of 9 to 11 years. The Pre-Test scores for the story-with-word-explanation group were lower than the scores for the other two groups. The Post-Test and delayed Post-test scores of the story-with-word-explanation group were significantly higher than the scores of the other two groups. Irrespective of the students in the story-with-word-explanation group scored significantly higher than the other two groups on the words from both the stories. Students in the story-with-word-explanation group not only learned more new words, but they also remembered those 6 weeks later.

The results of these studies were surprisingly similar to the studies conducted by Biemiller and Boote (2006). Cain (2007) found that when students explained their own definitions of the target words, the vocabulary gains were the highest.

The ideas for the three conditions for vocabulary instruction for the present experiment were drawn from the studies of Jiganti and Tindall (1986) and Elley (1989). This is elaborated in the following section on Methodology.

## Methodology

i. In the present experiment, the effects of three conditions—

- a) Searching for word meanings in a dictionary by assigning words as homework/ assignment after listening to the story with no explanation;
- b) Listening to stories with no explanation of the unfamiliar target words; and
- c) Listening to stories with brief explanation of the unfamiliar target words; on children's vocabulary acquisition was examined.

ii. Setting

This experiment was conducted in an English medium co-education school located in a semi-urban school in Hyderabad. Sixteen students studying grade four participated in this experiment. They were in the age group of 9 to 10 years. Of the sixteen students, five were girls and eleven were boys.

iii. Materials

Taking account of the level of the learners and their interests, three stories from the *Panchatantra* were selected. They were — 'The Brahmin and the Goat'; 'The Lion-makers'; and 'The Tortoise and the Geese'. (See Appendix I for the list of target words from these three stories.)

iv. Classroom Activities for each Session

The experiment was planned to be conducted in six days, spread over 3 weeks (that is on Wednesdays and Fridays). Each session was of 45 minutes duration. A Pre-Test was conducted before reading the story; a Post-Test 1 was conducted after one reading of the story with no explanation of the target words. Finally, a Post-Test 2 was conducted after teacher explanation of



the target words. A Pre-Test was a multiple choice test designed by selecting 25 words from the three stories. The aim of this test was to eliminate those words that were already known to all the students.

This test initiated in arriving at a list of target words that were to be taught. After one reading of each story, with absolutely no definition or explanation of the target words during the reading, Post-Test 1 was administered to estimate the number of words learners could either remember from their dictionary usage or guess the meaning of the word from the context of the story. A Post-Test 2 for each story was conducted after each of the three stories was read again to students. This was a multiple choice type test where half of the words were presented as picture vocabulary items (in which the students had to tick the right picture, out of the four pictures presented as options [See Appendix II], the one that matched most closely to the meaning of the target word) and the remaining target words were tested by using word synonyms (where the students had to tick the right option). The schedule of the experiment is represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Schedule of the experiment

DAY	PLAN FOR THE DAY
DAY 1 (Wednesday)	Pre-Test (a test with 30 Multiple choice questions) Reading Story 1 (without explanation) Homework assignment (*) for words from Story 1
DAY 2 (Friday)	Reading Story 2 (without explanation) Reading Story 3 (without explanation) Homework assignment for words from Story 2 and Story3
DAY 3 (Wednesday)	Second reading of Story 1 (Without explanation of the target words) Post-Test 1 for Story 1 Story 1 read with explanation of target words
DAY 4 (Friday)	Post-Test 2 for Story 1 Second reading of Story 2 (Without explanation of the target words) Post-Test 1 for Story 2 Story 2 read with explanation of target words
DAY 5 (Wednesday)	Post-Test 2 for Story 2 Second reading of Story 3 (Without explanation of the target words) Post-Test 1 for Story 2 Story 3 read with explanation of target words
DAY 6 (Friday)	Post-Test 2 for story 3

Before beginning the sessions on Day 2 and Day 3, homework assignments were collected from students. The three stories were read to the students by the researcher. On Day 4 and Day 5 the class sessions were extended by 5 and 10 minutes respectively.

## Findings

### i. The Homework assignment



The data(\*\*)obtained, see Table 2, showed that 35.71% students chose to do the first homework assignment, 23.07% of them chose to do the second homework assignment and an abysmally low 7.69% chose to do the third homework assignment. Thus, the dictionary search for word meaning by assigning words as homework assignment seems to be not a very motivating exercise for children at this level although all of them claimed to possess a pocket dictionary.

**Table 1** Performance on the Homework assignment

Story	Percentage of students who did the homework
Story 1	35.71
Story 2	23.07
Story 3	<b>7.69</b>

The data from the three tests (Pre-Test, Post-Test 1 and Post-Test 2) and the corresponding percentage gains are represented in Table 2. See Appendix III for Table A, Band C.

**Table 2** Results of the three conditions (Pre-Test, Post-Test 1 Post-Test 2)

Serial number for student	BR to OR	OR to WE	BR to WE
Student 1	24	44	<b>68</b>
Student 2	16	40	56
Student 3	16	32	48
Student 4	8	48	56
Student 5	8	56	64
Student 6	16	32	48
Student 7	0	48	48
Student 8	32	28	60
Student 9	-28	40	12
Student 10	4	32	36

Where, BR to OR is the percentage increase from Before Reading the story to after One Reading of the story. OR to WE is the percentage increase from One Reading of the story to With teacher Explanation of the target words. BR to WE is the percentage increase from Before Reading the story to With teacher Explanation of the target words.

From table 2, it can be stated that for student 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 the vocabulary gain is either double or more than double. It can therefore be stated that with the additional explanation of unknown words, as they are encountered in stories, the vocabulary gains can be more than doubled.

### **An interesting finding from the experiment**

The learners were grouped into low, medium and high ability groups based on the scores obtained by them on the pre-test. The difference in mean scores between the Pre-Test and the two post-tests, i.e., Post-Test 1 and Post-Test 2 are represented in Table 3. It was interesting to find that the mean percentage increase in vocabulary gain was the highest for the low ability group (54.67) than the high ability group (50.67). The experiment shows that the learners in the low ability group benefited the most from the explanation of target words in the context of stories.

**Table 3** Comparison of vocabulary gain between the three groups

Group	Student	Pre-Test Score	Post Test 1 Score	Post Test 2 Score	Difference in mean scores of Pretest and Post Test 2	Mean Percentage increase in scores
Low Ability group	S8	5	13	20		
	S10	6	7	15		
	S1	7	13	24		
	MEAN	6	11	<b>19.67</b>	<b>13.67</b>	<b>54.67</b>
Medium Ability group	S5	8	10	24		
	S9	8	1	11		
	S4	9	11	23		
	S7	9	9	21		
	MEAN	8.5	7.75	19.75	11.25	45
High Ability group	S2	10	14	24		
	S3	11	15	23		
	S6	12	16	24		
	MEAN	11	15	<b>23.67</b>	12.67	50.67

The findings of this experiment can thus be summarized as follows:

- Dictionary search for word meanings may not be the most reliable way for children to learn new words.
- Young children can learn new vocabulary incidentally from having illustrated storybooks read to them.
- Teachers' additional explanations of unknown words as they are encountered can more than double such vocabulary gains.
- Low-scoring children can gain as much as high-scoring children, when vocabulary presented in the context of a story is accompanied by teacher's explanation of the target words.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This experiment focuses on the vocabulary acquisition of young learners in the age group of 9 to 10 years only. With adult learners, however, the results of the experiment may be significantly different. Nevertheless, this experiment has implications for teachers, materials writers and parents. It is suggested that although stories offer rich context for vocabulary learning, this learning calls for extra support either by way of explanations of meanings of difficult words or by providing examples of usage of the words by the teacher.

Today, vocabulary instruction has found a prime of place in language teaching, especially in relation to the ESP courses. Almost all courses are tending towards ESP, and we know for sure that ESP is secondary and EGP is primary. In order to facilitate proper vocabulary development at the tertiary level in terms of ESP, necessary it is to provide the basic vocabulary at the primary level, and the experiment suggested here relates to that. At the tertiary courses today, we have corpus based studies using ICT techniques to develop vocabulary and discussing it is beyond the



scope of this paper. Suffice it to say, the present experiment provides the necessary impetus for better learning of vocabulary at a later stage.

### End Notes:

(\*)The Homework Assignment: After the first reading of each story, a homework assignment was given to the learners. The homework assignment required the students to find the meanings of certain words in the dictionary and write sentences of their own using those words. All the learners in this class said that they owned a pocket dictionary. This was confirmed after speaking to their regular English teacher. On Day 2, only ten words were given as the homework from Story 2. The ten words from Story 3 were given to their regular English teacher who was asked to assign these as homework by writing them on the board after their class the next day.

(\*\*)The Pre-Test and Post-Test scores of 6 students were not counted because of their absence in one or more sessions. Thus, out of the 16 students, the scores of only 10 students who were present in all the 6 sessions were taken into consideration.

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### List of Appendices

Appendix I: List of the target words selected from the three stories

Appendix II: Post Test 2

Appendix III: Results and Comparison of Pre-Test, Post-Test 1 and Post-Test 2

### Appendix I

The target words from each story are listed below:

<b>Story 1 The Brahmin and the Goat:</b>	<b>Story 2 The Lion Makers:</b>	<b>Story 3 The Tortoise and the Geese:</b>
1. Glance	10. Pounce	18. Drought
2. Whisper	11. Mighty	19. Famine
3. Holy man	12. Climb	20. Attempt
4. Rogue	13. Dense	21. Wonderful
5. Mutter	14. Burden	22. Crushed
6. Flung	15. Ignorant	23. Farewell
7. Frightened	16. Favour	24. Carrying
8. Calf	17. Assemble	25. Beak
9. Pardon		



**Appendix II The Post-Test 2**

**Post Test 2 Brahmin And The Goat**

**Name:**

**Roll No:**

1) One of the following picture refers to **WHISPER**



2) One of the following Picture is that of a **HOLY MAN** IS ONE WHO IS A \_\_\_\_\_



3) Which of the following pictures refers to **FLUNG**

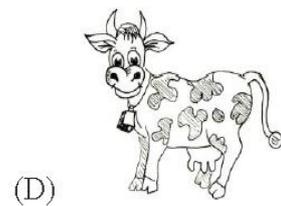
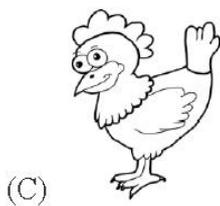
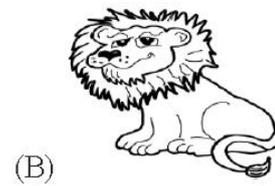
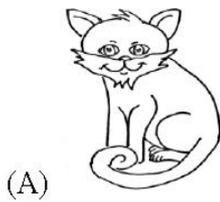




4) Tick the one which depicts the expression of **FRIGHTENED**



5) **CALF** IS THE YOUNG ONE OF \_\_\_\_\_



6) A **ROGUE** IS ONE WHO \_\_\_\_\_

- (A) CHEATS AND IS DISHONEST (B) IS HONEST (C) IS GOOD (D) IS RICH

7) TO **MUTTER** IS TO \_\_\_\_\_

- (A) SCREAM (B) WHISPER AND COMPLAIN (C) LAUGH (D) CRY

8) **PARDON** MEANS TO ASK FOR \_\_\_\_\_

- (A) BURDEN (B) HELP (C) EXCUSE (D) RESPECT

9) **GLANCE** MEANS \_\_\_\_\_

- (A) TARGET (B) STARE (C) PEEP (D) BRIEF LOOK



### APPENDIX III Results and Comparison of Pre-Test, Post-Test 1 and Post-Test 2

#### Post-Test 1

The Post test scores of three stories (9 words from story 1, 8 words from story 2 and 8 words from story 3;  $9+8+8=25$  words in all) were collated and the score for each student was marked out of 25. In **Table 4** a comparison of Pre-Test scores (before reading the story) with the Post-Test 1 scores (after one reading of the story) are presented.

**Table 4** Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test 1 scores

Serial number for student	Pre-Test Score	Percentage Score (Score Total words)	Post Test 1	Percentage Score (Score Total words)	Percentage Increase
<b>Student 1</b>	7	28	13	52	24
<b>Student 2</b>	10	40	14	56	16
<b>Student 3</b>	11	44	15	60	16
<b>Student 4</b>	9	36	11	44	8
<b>Student 5</b>	8	32	10	40	8
<b>Student 6</b>	12	48	16	64	16
<b>Student 7</b>	9	36	9	36	<b>0</b>
<b>Student 8</b>	5	20	13	52	<b>32</b>
<b>Student 9</b>	8	32	1	4	<b>-28</b>
<b>Student 10</b>	6	24	7	28	4

From Table 4, it can be interpreted that for only one student the percentage of increase from before reading the story to after one reading of the story was maximum. Note that the Student 7 showed no increase at all from the Pre-Test to the Post-Test 1. Also, note that Student 9 probably might have guessed the answers in both the tests. If we were to look at the range of percentage increase from the Pre-Test to the test, it is between a minimum of 0% to a maximum of 32% only. Thus, from table 3 seems to suggest that children can make only limited gains in vocabulary by inferring the meaning of the new words from the stories read to them.

#### Post-Test 2

After reading of each story with the explanation of the target vocabulary, a Post test was conducted for each story and the results were analysed. The aim of this test was to examine if additional explanation of target words by the teacher facilitate the vocabulary gains. **Table 5** compares the data obtained from Pre-Test 1 and Post-Test 2.

**Table 5** Comparison of Results on Pre-Test and Post-Test 2

Serial number for student	Pre-Test Score	Percentage Score (Score Total words)	Post Test 2	Percentage Score (Score Total words)	Percentage Increase
<b>Student 1</b>	7	28	24	96	68
<b>Student 2</b>	10	40	24	96	56
<b>Student 3</b>	11	44	23	92	48
<b>Student 4</b>	9	36	23	92	56



<b>Student 5</b>	8	32	24	96	<b>64</b>
<b>Student 6</b>	12	48	24	96	48
<b>Student 7</b>	9	36	21	84	<b>48</b>
<b>Student 8</b>	5	20	20	80	<b>60</b>
<b>Student 9</b>	8	32	11	44	12
<b>Student 10</b>	6	24	15	60	36

If we were to compare the % increase with and without explanation of the target words, i.e. Post test 1 versus Post test 2, as tabulated in Table 6, it is observed that teacher explanation of the target vocabulary has more than double the incidental learning of vocabulary from the stories.

**Table 6** Comparison of results on Post-Test 1 and Post-Test 2

<b>Serial number for student</b>	<b>Post Test 1</b>	<b>Percentage Score (Score Total words)</b>	<b>Post Test 2</b>	<b>Percentage Score (Score Total words)</b>	<b>Percentage Increase</b>
<b>Student 1</b>	13	52	24	96	44
<b>Student 2</b>	14	56	24	96	40
<b>Student 3</b>	15	60	23	92	32
<b>Student 4</b>	11	44	23	92	48
<b>Student 5</b>	10	40	24	96	56
<b>Student 6</b>	16	64	24	96	32
<b>Student 7</b>	9	36	21	84	48
<b>Student 8</b>	13	52	20	80	28
<b>Student 9</b>	1	4	11	44	40
<b>Student 10</b>	7	28	15	60	32



## Humanising Language Teaching: Multiple Perspectives and Human Centric Approaches

*D. Uma*

In Modern times, the movement is increasingly towards specialization and compartmentalization of disciplines. In this kind of a situation, the biggest casualty is the complete truth. Such approaches spell the death of “holism” and, mistakenly, a part or parts are substituted for the “whole” In language teaching and pedagogies that go with it, there was this movement towards treating learners as linguistic objects. In reaction to these approaches, a kind of a counterpoint was posited that human being are not mere linguistic objects, but living entities with cognitive and affective faculties and function.

This intellectual position was used as a starting point for the genesis and evolution of a number of humanistic approaches in the field of language teaching. Before one start exploring this, one must first come to terms with what the word “humanism” signifies these humanistic approaches.

There is a philosophy of humanism and in the field language teaching it can also be related to psycholinguistics and “child psychology” The humanistic philosophy recognizes the uniqueness of the human person. It accepts that any human being is an autonomous entity with a distinct personality, and not a mere body-mind complex. When these are accepted, routine and mass approaches become suspect, and the child is no longer treated as a simple tabular –as a/or a clean slate upon which stimuli get written. When the preciousness of human beings is recognized, we have to factor in “interpersonal relations” as a crucial part of the new curricula. In this new reality, student-teacher relationship becomes more fulfilling.

To gain a better understanding of humanism, one has to start at some point. The presenter of this paper feels, one can begin with K. Poper’s scientific approach. In his book *Unended Quest*, he speaks of three worlds. His world 1 is a world things and inanimate objects like tables and chairs actual photographs and painting and the like. World 2 is a realism of subjective experience like the perceptions formed out of the audible, visible, and sensible events in the class rooms. Given its subjective character, one person’s world 2 per se differs from another’s without contradicting it. As a pedagogue, popper is primarily concerned with world 23 which he calls “the world of statement in them”. This world includes problems, theories and critical arguments, and it extends all the way from one- sentence maxim and full blown methods. This world is created by human beings, and in it, unlike in world 2, the content of one person’s thought may contradict, the content of another person’s. Elucidating this realization, Popper says “the function of language become particular important for me, because I regarded it as the basis of all critical thought”.

On studying Poper’s pedagogy, we realize that this critical method cannot be called a humanistic approach. It is well suited for about ‘quarks’(sub- atomic particles theorizing found in the cosmos)or continental drift and plate tectonics, but it fails to explain the emotional side of human nature, for it cannot be subjected to what he calls ‘testability’.

Humanism, per se, is a very complex and spread out area. Some humanists have discovered five aspects or dimension in it. The first one is H, which includes both personal emotions, and aesthetic appreciation. They are covered by the rubric feelings. Humanism rejects whatever hurts people’s feelings and diminishes aesthetic enjoyment. H2 or social relations



encourage friendship cooperation, and discards their opposite. H3 or responsibility is expression of openness and the need for criticism and connection. H4 is the intellect. It is the umbrella term which covers knowledge, reason, understanding and the other higher faculties which work in the processes of cerebration. This aspect of humanism rejects anything which does not pass the test of reason and intellectual validation.

The fifth aspect is self-actualization which expresses the innate human urge or request to realize or actualize one's fullest potential. It also finds expression in a continuing movement towards individuation.

Humanism is a vast field and many language teachers have written about it. Some prominent names of those who have mapped and explored the topography of humanism or the humanisms, for it has many faces, are Moskowitz, Carl Rogers, Brumfit and Rivers. Though they represent, in their approaches are essentially humanistic or human-centric for they are based on the recognition of the primacy of the autonomous human entity. They believe individual freedom alone can unleash man's creative energy, and not coercion or competition. Humanism treats students as 'whole persons' by adopting an approach which integrates cognition and affect. Practitioners of humanistic pedagogies use metaphors as a tool in teaching language. The focus is on understanding attributive and Reminiscent Connections. Metaphors and similes are not very different from one another.

Technically a metaphor only suggests a resemblance between its vehicle and its tenor; while a simile explicitly states-commonly by the use of 'like' or as that a resemblance exists. To illustrate from the well-known song 'Annie Laurie'

Simile: Her brow is like {a} snowdrift.

Metaphor: Her brow is a snowdrift.

'Snowdrift' is, of course, the vehicle here and Annie Laurie's brow is the tenor.

Psycholinguistic studies the use of metaphors in language teaching to gain insights into the working of human mind. Language teachers use mixed general and humanistic metaphors in teaching, for example 'surmount' and 'chasm' are mixed metaphors. Some other metaphors used in the study of language are 'level' dimension and the 'Language Acquisition Device' (LAD) partial ARCs are used in tabular form to explain the relationship between vehicle and tenor.

There are many areas in human language where you have multiple levels of meaning. There is what we call connotations and denotations. It is an accepted that can be emotionally loaded. An example here is the word 'Fringe'. The phrase 'Fringe Methodology means' a method that is "unconventional: or is outside of the mainstream'. But this word also occurs in association with the word 'lunatic', as in the phrase 'fringe group' which could mean a group of cranks or crack pots can use the ARC to cover the Kline. In language study, come across the language of power where pronunciation the use of specific registers reveals the speaker/ user's status and position in a social hierarchy. For example, the frequent use of the passive indicates that the speaker is an academic, for 'passives' are not very frequently language of everyday people in everyday life.

For humanists in the field of language teaching areas of concern are many. One is the use of faulty syllogisms. Another is rigidity, which is a rubric for hard and inflexible approaches and teaching methods humanists have studied these phenomena to locate stress in the learning process.



Humanists are opposed to the use of hard- and fast rules and inflexible methods. For them, teaching is a therapeutic activity, and they believe that the intuitive and the irrational aspects of the human organism should be factored in while drawing up and preparing teaching methodologies.

Two big names in the field of humanistic language teaching are Charles A Curran and Caleb Gattegno. Curran's approach is called 'counselling- learning and its application in the field of language teaching is community language learning or CLL for short. To explain his approach, two class room situations are presented. In S1, the teacher asks the students to study an on – site dialogue between a rental agent and a young house- hunting couple. After the students study the dialogue, she asks question about the dialogue, she asks questions about what they find in the 'kitchen'. She uses this word as trigger to put them on an exploratory verbal journey to find out if they already know word like 'kitchen' ; living room' and 'sunny'. If she feels that they don't know the meaning of particular word, she explains the meaning through a combination of examples and voice quality. The student then takes turn to read aloud the sentences of the dialogue from their books. If a student makes a serious error in pronunciation, she gently corrects him by pronouncing it property, and making the student repeat it after her. The students are actively encouraged to ask about anything they don't understand in the dialogue. She ends the lesson by commending them on their good performance.

In S2 or class room situation 2 the student s, belonging to the same level as students of S1, are made to sit in a circle, and a tape recorder is placed in the Centre on a low table. The teacher stands outside the circle. Each student speaks into the microphone. If a student is not able to say something, she stands behind him and makes him say it in his own language or in perfect English. The teacher corrects him by speaking the correct phrase softly in his ear. In this way the conversation of the students is taped by the machine. The tape is then played back a couple of times, the second time in the pause –play mode. The teacher writes the phrases on a flip chart, explaining the meanings and certain point of grammar. Then the students take turn to read aloud word or short phrases from the chart. Whatever they read, the teacher repeats in normal correct English. She then invites them to make up their own sentences using material from the chart. Where ever necessary she corrects them. At the end of the session, she asks them if they can use what they have learnt outside the classroom. They replay in the affirmative. Out of the two situations, the S2 teacher is using counselling- learning. CLL takes the student towards' incarnation by creating a willingness to take life as a whole, both the sunny and the seamy side. The teacher, in CLL is more a knower counsellor whose approach is warm, supportive and evaluative which adds to the learner's sense of security.

In 'counselling –learning' concept like 'incarnation' and redemption' are used though not in a theological sense. In Curran's philosophy of humanism, 'Incarnation' is self –congruence or the unity of body and mid a.k.a. the body-mind complex. In 'incarnation' the 'I' embraces and accepts the 'myself' without any schism. Curran also uses the term 'incarnation to mean the forgoing of power by the knower-counsellor. Curran conceives of 'redemption' as a movement away from demeaning, disgusting attitudes to self towards redemptive, respectful ones. It means gaining or having a growing sense of unique self-acceptance. Curran writing on the god- project' says the teacher should not believe that he has god like attributes. It means his giving up the privilege of imposing a pre- determined curriculum, for going the power of flat-out confrontational correction of errors and refusing the luxury of being able to make everyone else feel inferior. In summation, in CLL, the emphasis is on personal feelings and social relations, and also on responsibility and self-actualization.



The second great humanistic educator is Caleg Gattegno. His system is known as her science of education and the silent way.

Two vignettes can be used to illustrate his approach. In one classroom, a teacher named Don uses a fidel, which is Amharic for 'Alphabet'. He uses a fidel chart in English with all spellings for a given sound grouped together against a distinctive colour background. For example, e, ey, ay, and eigh appear in the same list, with the same colour because of words like 'café' 'they' 'day' and 'sleigh'.

The items 'e' and 'ai' appear in a different list with a different colour on account of word like 'set' and 'said'. He doesn't use fidel for the spellings of the sounds in the learner's language, with the same colour scheme. He uses choral repetition, making the students repeat after him words in English which is the target language.

He makes individual students also repeat after him. After several rounds of practice, he writes various syllables on the chalk board. The students are asked to repeat them chorally and then individually. By the end of the session, the students control much of the linguistic material that has been presented. In a second situation, in Donna's class, the student's native language fidel is used. Her approach is informal and friendly. Slowly, using a pointer, she makes the students pronounce the syllables. Some students reply aloud, while other just listens. She then gives the pointer to a student, who goes to the fidel and points out those items. Other students respond. If a response is inconsistent, she silently gestures to them to try again. The students move with sounds that are identical or similar in both the native and target language. Where there are small differences between target- languages. Donna puts this information across either (a) by gesture, or (b) by letting students guess the sound, or (c) as a last resort, by saying the sound once. This third expedient is the only time in the entire procedure that Donna has said anything. By the end of the session the students have not only acquired some of the presented linguistic material, but they have also learned something about their own power as learners.

Donna is a silent way teacher. She has used the students pre-existing resources to make them learn the target language, thus fostering in them a sense of independence. By using the native language fidel she has made them to reawaken the powers that all babies have. This method is called 'forcing awareness'. Gattegno's system is based on the two concepts of energy and 'time' which he believes are at the origin of all realities.

He believes human exist simultaneously in four different 'realms' (a) the atomic, for we consist of atoms and molecules. (b) The Cellular, for we are made up of cells and tissues capable of metabolism. This gives us the power of sentence, (c) In the third realm; we have a generic identity as a species with characteristics instincts and behaviors. (d) The fourth realm is that of 'awareness' which gives the individual the power to transcend the species by going beyond the pull of the instincts.

He believes that the self which is an energy system endowed with awareness can take a leap that would generate the next layer of evolution for man. He talks of vertical and horizontal evolution. He believes in reincarnation. The self, he says, dwells in the psychosomatic system, and its two energies are represented by soma and psyche. Intelligence, he writes, is only an aspect of the self, and is not itself energy. Interestingly, Gattegno calls the human body a bag covered by skin.



His humanism comes through when he says we must seek and accept uniqueness; adopt an attitude of relativism which translates into living life non-judgmentally; and loving others. He would like people to become more independent, autonomous and responsible, and to encourage these qualities in others.

Apart from these two great systems, there have been other approaches to humanism in language teaching. They are:

- a) Grammar- translation
- b) Audio- Lingualism
- c) Desauze's Direct method
- d) Total physical Response
- e) The Natural Approach
- f) Suggestopedia
- g) The Communicative Approach

Essentially, humanism is all about being humanistic in thought, word and action. The qualities one would associate with it are kindness, firmness, concentration, intuitive introspection; sensitive understanding of the other person, and rational, crucial enquiry.

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## **Needs Analysis - An overview**

*Vijayasri*

### **Introduction**

The main purpose of an ESP course is to enable the learners to function adequately in a target situation, that is, the situation in which the learners will use the language they are learning. So, the first and the foremost thing is to identify the target situation and then carry out a rigorous analysis of the linguistic features of that situation. This process is known as needs analysis. Richards and Rodgers (1986)

Needs analysis refers to the techniques for collecting and assessing information relevant to course design. It is a continuous process because we modify our teaching as we come to learn more about our students, and in this way it actually shades into evaluation. Needs is actually an umbrella term that embraces many aspects, incorporating learner's goals and backgrounds, their language proficiencies, their reasons for taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in. Needs can involve what learners know, do not know, or what to know, and can be collected and analysed in a variety of ways.

### **Definition**

Tony Dudley-Evans and Maggie Jo St John (1998) defined needs analysis as "the process of establishing what and the how of a course". The two words what and how show that an ESP course designer has to design a questionnaire in such a way that it will help the target group/learners arrive at the course content and pay some attention to the methodology that will suit the learners best. However, we are given to understand that more attention should be paid to the 'what' part of it.

An ESP course designer has to first analyse the needs of the target group. Next design the questionnaire and then collect data in such a way that the two words what and how are addressed and pay attention to the course content and methodology that is suitable for the learners. Needs differ from one learner to another and an ESP course designer has to take the learner's individual needs into consideration. Now we will look into the needs in detail.

### **Needs**

What distinguishes an ESP from a General English course is not the existence of a need but rather an awareness of the need. Needs according to Hutchinson and Waters are the necessities, lacks and wants of the learner.

### **Necessities**

According to the demands of the target situation, necessities are what the learner has to know in order to function effectively.

### **Lacks**

According to what the learner already knows, we decide what necessities are missing. There is a gap between the existing proficiency and the target proficiency.



## Wants

According to what we have considered from an objective we can say that a need does not exist independent of a person. It is the people who build images of their needs on the basis of data relating to themselves and their environment.

## Classification of needs

Needs are classified by experts in different ways. Richterich classified needs into objective needs and subjective needs. Objective needs are also called as perceived needs or assumed needs that are brought by the course designer. They are verifiable and based on facts that are seen by others. Subjective needs are felt needs that are spelt out by the learners themselves. They are based on the learners' cognition or attitude. It should also be stated that there are other ways of classifying needs.

Needs are also classified by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) as:

**Target Needs** - Target-needs refer to the needs of the place / situation in which language will be used or in which learners are likely to use English. In other words, what the learners need to do in the target situation is what is meant by target needs. Target needs are divided further into necessities, lacks and wants. Necessities refer to language needs only i.e., what the learner needs in order to function effectively in the target situation, lacks are defined as the gap between the existing proficiency level of the learner and his / her target proficiency level

**Learning Needs** - Learning needs refer to the processes and methodology that the learners are comfortable with. Wants come from the learners. They refer to what learners personally want the course to provide them with. It is important to remember that while analyzing learners' needs, we have to go by the needs of the majority of learners as it is not possible to attend to the needs of each individual learner. Thus we have to do some kind of prioritization in which we take the needs of the majority of learners into consideration.

## Approaches to Needs Analysis

Needs Analysis is used for various purposes depending on the situations in which the language is used. One of these is to find out what language skills a learner needs in order to perform a particular task. Needs Analysis comprises of three approaches namely Present Situation Analysis (PSA) and Target Situation Analysis (TSA) and Learning Situation Analysis (LSA)

### Present situation analysis (PSA)

The Present Situation Analysis is concerned with the information such as the personal information (learner's proficiency, the sources available to the learner), the professional information such as purposes for using English. Present situation analysis concerns 'starting where the students are' and refers to information about learners' current proficiencies and ambitions: what they can do and what they want at the beginning of the course; their skills and perceptions; their familiarity with the specialist subject; and what they know of its demands and genres. This kind of data can be both objective (age, proficiency, prior learning experiences) and subjective (self-perceived needs, strengths and weaknesses). Essentially it refers, in Brindley's (1989) terms, to 'means needs' which enable students to learn and pursue their language goals as the course progresses, and 'ends needs', or those associated with target goals.

Learning Situation Analysis (LSA)



This type of analysis tells one the learners' practical experience, learning process, learning needs, learning styles and the learners' level of enthusiasm. That is to say, it helps the course designer know the learners' wants, felt and process-oriented needs, personal and cultural background. Moreover, it tells the course designer about the learners' previous learning experience as well as their reasons for learning, and their expectations from the course.

### **Target Situation Analysis**

The Target Situation Analysis is concerned with the expected proficiency for performing various functions in English, the areas where the learners need training. Target situation analysis concerns the learners' future roles and the linguistic skills and knowledge they need to perform competently in their disciplines. This relates to communication needs rather than learning needs and involves mainly objective and product-oriented data: identifying the contexts of language use, observing the language events in these contexts, and collecting and analysing target genres.

### **Conclusion**

The work done by ESP teachers is concerned with designing appropriate courses for various groups of learners. For the ESP teacher, course design is often a substantial and important part of the workload. Designing a course is fundamentally a process of asking a wide range of questions: general and specific, theoretical and practical.

To sum up, the results of the needs analysis help teachers to identify the students' needs and deficiencies with respect to the language skill in focus. Only after analyzing the students' needs and determining the objectives of the language course, we can select a material that meets the needs of the students. Thus, needs analysis is the foundation on which we can develop curriculum content, teaching materials and methods that can increase the learners' motivation and success.

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# ENGLISH & COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## Effective Resume and Report Writing

*P. Rajisha Menon*

### Resume Writing

Resume is an important document. It is the first introduction of a candidate to the employer; this explains briefly the background of the candidate, before meeting him personally. Many corporate bodies Organizations do a screening and shortlist the candidate on the basis of the information provided by the candidates on their resumes. Therefore resumes play a very important role in the selection process. The resume if not prepared and presented elegantly, intelligently so as to create a positive impact or impression on the employer, may become a hurdle in selection despite good qualities and merits one may possess .So utmost care should be taken while preparing resume.

You are going to start your job hunt, and you have sent all your educational qualifications, skills and experience, then packed it and sent it to as many companies as possible, but their resumes pile up in an obscure corner of an office creating no impact and serving no purpose. It must be understood well that the resume is a critical tool in evaluating each candidates potential. A resume is a self-promotional.

It is a document that presents you in the best possible light, for the purpose of getting invited to the job interview. It is a selling tool, outlining your skills and experience so an employer can see at a glance, how you can contribute to the employer's workplace. Your resume is your ticket to an interview where you can sell yourself.

If we describe resume in brief, we can say it is the first contact a candidate has with the potential employers. The resume is also the first chance the candidate has, to persuade the prospective employer to call him for an interview. It is also where the candidate lists his skills and creates a marketable presentation so that companies/corporate could realize the benefits of employing him.

Presentation is important, because resume is one two page document introducing yourself as a professional and helps the prospective employer to decide if you have the skill and experience he specifically needs. Preparing a resume is not simply an act of recording some facts about you to send off to the employer. Your resume is a targeted and carefully selected summary of your skills, experience and achievements relevant to the particular position or area of work. The presentation of information extremely important because employer ordinarily takes one or two minutes in scanning your information is extremely important because employer ordinarily takes one or two minutes in scanning your resume. If relevant facts are hidden or not easy to locate, you may miss your chance of getting a call for interview and your chance of getting selection is altogether blocked.

The purpose of resume is that it should be compelling enough to impress the recruiter about the qualities and capabilities of the candidate to such an extent that he invites him to an interview with the potential employer; it should be clear, accurate and concise. Your resume must



outline your career objective and highlights of previous and present career, education, important skills and accomplishments, work experience, references etc.

There are various ways of laying out the resume, they are 1) Chronological Resumes, 2) Functional Resumes, 3) Combination Resumes, 4) Electronic Resumes, 5) Targeted Resumes.

### **Chronological Resumes:**

This is the most familiar type of resume format which presents the qualities in an effective manner. In such type of resumes the education and experience are listed in reverse chronological order, starting with your most recent experience working backwards. The various employers, dates and responsibilities are also listed in this type of format.

The format is considered advantageous, if you are planning to stay in the same field. If one's past job history shows growth and development, if the names of your last employers are impressive and having achieved some significant results then they are worth mentioning.

The format is disadvantageous if you are visualizing to change career or work focus, if you have changed jobs quite frequently, if there are long gaps in your work history either due to unemployment, redundancy, self-employment, ill-health after a long gap you are entering the job again, if your job career has undergone a number of phenomenal turns and you have not many achievements to mention.

### **Functional Resumes:**

This type of resume format highlights your major skills and accomplishments from the very beginning and it can, there, be very useful if you have had a varied career or you are seeking a change of career direction. In this format, job titles and company names are given less importance or even omitted in some cases. This format is considered advantageous, if you are looking the job for the first time, if you are changing career or work focus, if your experience and skills are more significant than your work history, if you want to include your voluntary services in your history and if you have changed your employers frequently. This format is considered disadvantageous if you have performed limited number of skills in your previous jobs, if your past history shows career development/promotions, if you are interested in emphasizing your past job history and the name of your employers are prestigious.

### **Combination Resumes:**

This type of resume format includes features of both the chronological and the functional formats. This is used when we want to get benefits of features of both the formats. The format is considered advantageous, when you want to emphasize your skills and potential work history with evidential growth and you have all the plus points relating to the job and have nothing to De-emphasize. This format is considered disadvantageous, it becomes somewhat a longer format and it can have some repetitive elements.

### **Electronic Resumes:**

With the revolution in the field of communication the electronic resume is used widely now- a- days. The resume that is sent through e-mail, is called electronic resume. This type of resume is specially formatted for scanning and searching by optical scanning systems. The



electronic resume is generally used when we want to send it through electronic medium for banks and job sites like job street.com.in, etc.

### **Targeted Resumes:**

This type of resume is suitable for those candidates who one target and utilize all their energy to achieve that target. This format is advantageous if you have targeted for one specific job, if you are clear and confident about your abilities and skills for a specific position and if you are in a position to prove your suitability for a specific position and if you are a beginner and have no specific qualifications and experience. This is disadvantageous if you are not clear about the position applied for, if your qualification and skills are not commensurate with the job, you want to apply and if you are a beginner and have no specific qualifications and experience matching with the job.

### **The contents of a resume:**

- 1) Contact information
- 2) Objective
- 3) Qualification summary
- 4) Work experience
- 5) Education
- 6) Additional information
- 7) Personal details
- 8) Personal interests or hobbies
- 9) References

**Contact Information:** Name, full address, telephone and mobile number, e-mail address and website address, if any they are generally written on the top of your resume. Write your full name first. Write your permanent address. If the address for communication is different from the permanent, write that too. Write your permanent telephone number with area code to avoid communication gap. If you have a mobile add mobile number also. Add your e-mail address. In today's world, the e-mail address is becoming very useful and necessary. Please note to use an e-mail address that sounds professional and not a funny one. Include your website address only if the webpage reflects your professional ambitions.

**Objective:** Writing an appropriate objective statement is one of the most challenging tasks of creating a 'winning' resume. Below you'll find some tricks, hints, options and strategies to help you write an appropriate objective statement. The objective section is an important part of your resume, and might be the first be the first thing the employers look at. The objective section of your resume provides a brief introduction to your career objective and that of job you are interested in. The objective section is the first one that catches his eyes. Your objective should be well commensurate with the position being sought. To write a good objective, first of all decide on a specific job title for your objective. Try to find out as to what an employer expects from the candidate to achieve. Be sure the objective is relevant and to the point. Integrate key words and phrases used in the job advertisement or on the website of the company. Strive to match your experience and qualifications with those desired by the organization. Always tailor your objective statement commensurate to the particular organization and position applied for.

**Qualification Summary:** A summary provides an insight into what is unique and competitive about you. Your summary section is critical to your resume's success .Employers always want to know what makes you a better fit The summary statement should begin with a headline that



summarizes your professional title or your professional statement. This section highlights your most important accomplishments' talents and qualities. You must convince the employer that you are the ideal man /woman for the job. This is what the purpose of this section is, after reading this section; the employer must be compelled to read more.

**About Experience:** Candidates can use the following headings. Begin with the current or most recent position and go backwards. Next list your key responsibilities which you have performed. Write your achievements with every position you held. Do not mention those positions that you might have held for very short period of time. Whatever you want to highlight more, your job titles or the names of the companies, should be listed.

**Writing a winning resume:** Ensure to keep the resume compact and concise. The size of the resume depends on the need of that particular job and the industry you are applying for, but to have impactful resume it should be concise and compact.

- Avoid repeating information and unnecessary chattiness
- Mention only the recent experience
- Don't include irrelevant information
- Report job duties in short
- Avoid references, available upon request
- Edit unnecessary words

## **Report Writing**

It is really difficult to give a precise definition of a report because it can mean so many different things at the same time. If considered loosely a report is an account of something. It either answers a question or meets a demand made by a person who is seeking information.

**Parameters of a report:** It should be presented in an organized manner, it must contain rational information and an authorized person must have requested the information.

**Kinds of report:** Reports can be of different kinds, at least three of which must be distinguished

- 1) Periodical Reports
- 2) Progress Reports
- 3) Special Reports

### ***Periodical reports***

They are submitted after regular intervals of time: three months, half year or one year. It is a convention among public institutions and industrial companies to issue annual reports giving an account of important events during the year, of work done of appointments and promotions and of plans for future expansion, etc. The managing director of a company has the duty of presenting the report to the shareholders at the annual meeting.

### ***A Progress report***

As the name indicates is the statement of the progress made or work done in a unit or institution during a specified period of time. A progress report is less comprehensive than a periodical report, it does not normally include obituaries, departures, future plans etc. Many progress reports are of a routine, like the six monthly progress report of a researcher and are submitted on printed forms.

***A special report***

It is submitted on a specified subject after a careful collection, processing and consideration of all relevant facts. A special is generally made on the instruction of some authority. These instructions which define the nature and scope of the task are called terms of reference.

Reports in general may be classified as oral and written. Written is of two types, informal and formal. Formal is divided into three types; they are informational, interpretive and routine. Routine reports are further divided, Progress reports, Laboratory reports, Inspection reports, Inspection reports, Inventory reports, Annual confidential reports, Project reports.



## Developing Effective Communication through Active Listening

Vijaylaxmi Shivmurthi Prashene

### Introduction

In today's world of globalization, communication has a decisive place. Effective communication plays a dominant role at all levels, personal or professional. To be an effective communicator, one needs to possess good communication skills. These skills are nothing but ways to address people, convey your ideas or thoughts, interact and negotiate with people.

When we talk about developing communication skills, the basic and important components are the four skills i.e. *listening, speaking, reading and writing* (LSRW). Among these speaking and writing are considered to be active or productive skills whereas listening and reading are treated as passive or receptive skills. Here, all the four skills are equally important for acquiring competence in second language ( $S_2$ ) and making communication successful and efficient. When it is about oral or spoken communication we accentuate on speaking but listening is also a component with identical importance. We take listening as granted, it is a neglected skill; this is because we believe that an arresting and effective communication is all about impressive speaking. But effective speaking is possible when you tend to listen. It is said that we should listen twice that we speak.

Most of the communication takes place through listening. We hear our friends, parents, colleagues, boss and so people around us. But how much do we really listen. Through researches it has been demonstrated that we spend 40 to 50 % of communication time in listening. (Gilmand and Moody, 1984). For of a good communicator as speaking fluently and effectively is important, listening effectively is necessary. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages can be misunderstood because of which communication breaks, resulting in ineffective and inefficient communication. Effective listening is a skill that underpins all positive human relationships, spend some time thinking about what is being said and developing listening ability. Listening is seen only as a passive skill but it involves cognitive aspects like thinking, understanding and interpreting.

### Listening Process

Listening is a mental process which enables to discriminate between sounds, understanding words and its pronunciation. It also involves retaining and interpreting grammatical structures. According to Rost, 2002 listening is a process of receiving (receptive orientation), constructing (constructive orientation), negotiating and responding to the speaker (collaborative orientation) and also creating meaning through imagination i.e. (transformative orientation). This implies that listening is a systematic process of receiving the message, constructing meaning and ideas through imagination and then responding. Listening is a complex process in which the listener matches what he/she hears with what he/she already knows. When the listener uses his prior knowledge to understand and comprehend the meaning of a message, it is the 'top-down' process. This prior knowledge can be about a topic, culture or any information stored. The listener uses contextual clues to understand and form hypotheses. The other way is the 'bottom-top' process where the listener applies linguistic knowledge to understand the meaning of a message making it an interactive and interpretative process.

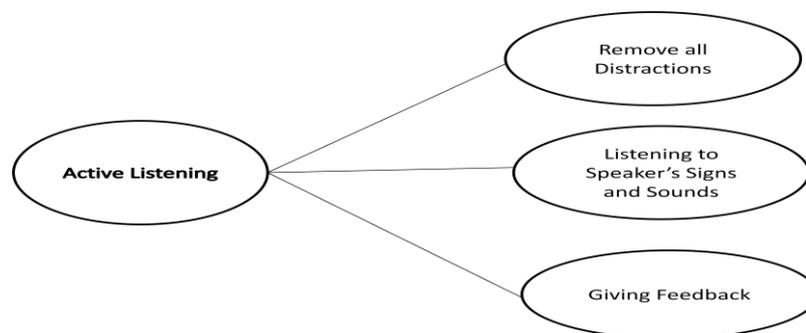


## Context

We communicate with so many people around us, at home, school, college or workplace. We think that we have received the complete message that the speaker intends to convey. But the fact is that most of us receive less than half of what is being heard. Researchers point that we remember 25 to 50% of what we hear. We do not pay complete attention to everything, sometimes we listen selectively, according to the purpose and person to whom we are listening. Because of this we miss the important parts of the message. This is what happens in our class rooms. Because of poor listening skills the students fail to notice important lessons which affect their performance. To cope up with this and improve, students need to focus on developing listening skill through active or attentive listening.

## Active and Passive listening

The two different types of listening are based on the person and purpose to which you are listening; they are active listening and passive listening. Active listening involves the listener to respond to the speaker, whereas passive listening is quietly absorbing the information without responding or speaking, for example: while listening to the news or a lecture engages the listener passively. Passive listening demands enhanced focus on the speaker and the message without responding to external distractions. On the other hand active listening requires responding to the speaker. It allows engaging in the conversation through replies and feedback or non-verbal signs. Note-making while listening is also a way of responding to the speaker; like you listen to a lecture and jot down the points.



The above figure implies that active listening involves listening to the speaker attentively without distracting and also responding to the speaker through verbal and non-verbal ways.

## Barriers in effective Listening

There are certain elements around us that cause distractions in the process of communication. These can be external or internal sources of disturbances. A person may get distracted by external elements like noise of the vehicles, crowd, etc. It can be message or phone call distracting you; even though you avoid it, you at least peep on the screen. Other situations can be when you are listening to a podcast, tape recorder or person speaking through mike, technical problems arise creating impediments to clear communication. Sometimes internal or psychological factors cause disturbances resulting in ineffective communication. Among these are prejudice; prejudice is a preconceived opinion about a person which may be irrational. It averts the listener to listen to the speaker. Another, emotions or feelings like anger, sorrow or distress which do not allow the listener to listen attentively. Fear or nervousness can worsen the situation affecting communication.



These barriers can be overcome through practice and inculcation of habits of listening attentively. The obstacles that impede effective listening can be removed through practicing 'active listening'.

### **Improving communication through Active Listening**

Many a times we mistake listening and hearing. Our conscious efforts to hear the words those are spoken, trying to understand the complete message is termed as 'active listening'. While listening actively, the listener tries to grasp most of the message and also comprehend it. For this what we need to do is:

#### ***Pay attention***

This is the most important key to active listening. Do not allow yourself to get distracted by sources like noise around or phone calls. When you pay attention to the speaker, you not only listen to the words but also observe the body language of the speaker that gives you non-verbal signals.

#### ***Respond to the message***

Acknowledge the message given by the speaker; use your body language and gestures to express your attention. You can do this by:

- Nodding occasionally to express that you are listening.
- Use facial expressions like smiling; raising your eyebrows showing surprise or disgust that would be appropriate to the context.
- Maintain your posture showing that you are open and interested in the conversation.
- Use verbal expressions like 'yes', 'hmm', 'OK' which will encourage the speaker to continue.

#### ***Do not interrupt***

Do not interrupt the speaker in between. If you seek to clarify something use proper body language like raising the hand.

#### ***Avoid bringing in emotions***

Emotions are noise within a person and difficult to overcome. They come up as barriers to active listening and affect our senses to function at their optimum level. Avoid conversation in a mood of anger or distress.

#### ***Provide feedback***

As a listener, you try to understand, respond to what is being said. It requires reflection to the message in the form of feedback. You can do this by:

- Using paraphrases like, "I think what you say is...", "I agree but...", "what I understand is..." and such other ways to reflect back.
- It is not always possible that you understand and seize the complete message. At such situations you can ask questions to clarify your points by using expressions like "Do you mean to say this...?", "could you explain the point?"

#### ***Respond appropriately***

Your response to the speaker adds a lot in a conversation. Inappropriate response can frustrate the speaker putting him or her down. Active listening also demands respect and understanding the speaker. So



- Be honest in your response
- Express your opinions respectfully without letting the speaker down.

***Do not be judgmental***

Having prejudices about a person may tend you to be judgmental. Do not criticize the speaker because of any misunderstandings about the speaker. This will prevent you to listen attentively to the speaker. Try to overcome prejudices. Believe that the other person speaking also knows something.

To be an active listener it needs concentration. With deliberate and active listening, you hear what the other person is saying, concentrating on the thoughts and behavior of the speaker with the message. Active listening helps to be an effective communicator, increasing productivity at workplace and thus building better relationships.



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