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**EDITOR'S NOTE****Dear Contributors & Readers,**

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Welcome onboard the July 2013 issue of IJELLS. As always it has been a great experience of learning and enhancement for us who go through the process of editing.

The area of training students for skills acquisition is unexplored. All of us need to understand and promote this method of learning in our jobs of ensuring the students imbibe these skills. More articles on lesson plan sharing are welcome to charter this area.

From the next issue we are introducing an article which is extremely interesting to read as an end piece. The formatting fee for this well written and interesting read will be waived.

We present an assortment of a short story translation and other articles. We encourage our readers to submit creative writing along with research pursuits. We also encourage the contributors and readers to submit and share your unique and effective lesson plans with the teaching English fraternity. Any suggestions on how, this collaborative academic enterprise IJELLS can grow, are welcome and deeply appreciated.

**-Editor**

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## **PICTURE COURTESY:**

<http://www.smashingmagazine.com/2008/09/07/35-brilliant-examples-of-rain-photography/>

## A TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH OF KHALIL I. AL-FUZAI'S<sup>1</sup> "REVENGE"<sup>2</sup>

*Gassim H. Dohal*<sup>3</sup>

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The officer is busy asking Ahmed's mother more questions while some of his soldiers sneak into the kitchen in their ragged military uniforms. Their appearance illustrates that they suffer from misery; on their faces are signs of hesitancy and panic and fear. They look exhausted, their shoulders hang down, features of youth have faded; they seem as if they are carrying this universe's worries. Some of them have brought foodstuffs... they start gluttonously eating while standing... the officer grabs some food from a soldier, starts talking with his mouth full of food, and dribbles of saliva spurt out of his mouth. He addresses Ahmed's mother, "Your stubbornness will not benefit you... and will not save your son from revenge."

(The Avenger is Allah, o enemy of Allah.)<sup>4</sup>

He throws the dish of food aside and pronounces some swear word. Her face bashfully turns red... she does not respond...

(What kind of foolishness is it that ruins your minds? And what type of ugliness occupies your souls?)

He continues, "If you do not show us the way to your son and his companions, we will blow up this house along with whoever is inside it."

(And who is going to blow up your evil body?)

She interrupts him, "I told you that my son traveled to Saudi Arabia... there is nobody in the house other than me and the maid. The house is right in front of you; search it again."

She is afraid despite her courage... in her chest blaze fires of anger... she pretends to be calm... this is how she appears to the group of transgressors who have attacked her house by force, searching for men of the resistance. Her son, Ahmed, and three of his companions are hiding in the water tank on the roof... Allah's eye that does not sleep guards them.

The maid turns into a dumb person who does not understand speech. They have addressed her many times and she responds with a sign from her hands that she does not know anything... does not know what is taking place. She does not know why they came... does not know anybody in the resistance group... does not know where Ahmed and his companions went; she bears the officer's slaps that are intended to force her to talk. But she does not pronounce a sound until they become convinced that she really is dumb.

(Woe unto you from the Mighty Avenger.)

The sky of Kuwait grows dark after being overcast with black clouds... its streets wear grief... empty of anything except some burnt cars or those cars whose tires were taken and discarded on both sides of the street. Here and there... some invaders gather around an inquisition center with some military cars and equipment; over bridges and on the rooftops of buildings heavy artillery are installed. The facades of houses on the main streets are turned into fortifications for the invaders. Inhabitants keep to their homes, staying inside unless it is necessary to go out or it is time for prayer. The district of Al-Rumeitha is full of officers and soldiers looking for the resistance group, after the explosion of a military command center and the killing of a number of soldiers and officers, and the martyrdom of one of the resistance group as a result of the explosion of his booby-trapped car, which crashed into the command center after being filled with explosives.

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In one of the Al-Rumeitha villas... the officer and six of his soldiers are questioning and beating Ahmed's mother, who is resisting despite her wounds, stubborn despite her enemies' cruelty... as if they wanted to hideously humiliate her; when three soldiers with an order from their officer take the maid to a room. She returns crying... her clothes have been torn... terror is drawn on her face... shame tears her feelings. Ahmed's mother tries to cover her chest with her torn dress... it does not take her long to faint, and when Ahmed's mother tries to succor her, a soldier kicks her away. She stands in front of him challenging... he pushes her with the end of his gun until she bumps against the wall... with an iron voice he says, "Tell us the names of your son's friends."

She says while trying to be self-possessed, "I do not know them, and I do not know their parents."

The officer becomes furious with impatience, saying, "We will not leave you alone until you tell us about your son and his companions."

"I told you that he went to Saudi Arabia and I do not know his companions."  
"If you are stubborn, we will teach you obedience."

He gives her a strong slap that almost throws her on the ground, but she catches herself on the wall and says with determination, "What knightly conduct, o man! You show your courage to a woman your mother's age."

Her statement does not jar their dull feelings. He slaps her again. Her tears do not run and she does not cry.

(O sons of... if you were real men, you would not do what you did.)

If her son and his companions are caught by these savages, the soldiers will tear their bodies into pieces as they did with his cousin's body when they took him after dawn prayer to investigate whether he was a member of the resistance group or not. And at sunrise of the same day, they brought him to the front of his family's house... they showered him with bullets... his body turned into a sieve, blood and



pieces of that body flew and stuck to the fence of the house. They said he did not cooperate with them... the mere thought that Ahmed will be exposed to the same fate is enough to terrify her, yet facing this officer and his soldiers she appears calm... determined... strong-willed... she disregards his threat and intimidation... events have taught her that these people will try to cause her nervous breakdown to get her to admit where her son is or she may unintentionally say a word that will provide the continuation of punishing her severely. Her face is clad in dignity and bravery, her features show gravity and strength... her fear hides behind indisputable courage. She feels sorrow at the maid's distress and humiliation which her chest cannot bear. The poor maid is unwavering and has not disclosed the secret of Ahmed and his companions... she pretends that she is dumb skillfully, even when she is suffering harshly.

The officer shouts at her face, "It seems that reaching an agreement with you is impossible."

(O damned... what sin is left to commit?)

He hits her head with the butt of his gun. Her world becomes cloudy... she feels herself collapsing... pictures from the time of innocence jump to her mind... the time when people differ and do not differ... fathers plant cooperation, so they reap the fruits of love... sons quarrel but it is not long before friendship returns... women bicker with each other but neither sleeps that night until she is reassured of the other's rest and comfort... girls and boys build from the sand of the sea their dreams and palaces, they destroy the palaces of sand... dreams stay warm in their hearts... beautiful in their feelings... shiny in their imaginations... dreams they preserve and promise to make real... processions of women and girls are on the shore... in the beautiful evenings, they await... the return of travelers from the unknown... and when their ships appear on the horizon... their lights penetrate the darkness... their noise assassinates the calm of the sea... at that time, trilling cries of joy arise... and all exchange congratulations.

When her consciousness returns, she finds herself in her son's arms. She turns in hesitation and worry to see their corpses on the ground, and her son explains to her what happened, "We have surprised them and killed them... come on, we must leave right away."

May 4, 1993<sup>5</sup>.

### Translator's Notes

- 1- KHALIL I. AL-FUZAI is a Saudi Arabian short story writer.
- 2- "Revenge": this story was translated from the following Arabic source: Khalil I. Al-Fuzai. Torture That Does Not Die. العذاب الذي لا يموت Dammam: Eastern Province Literary Club, 1998: 7-16.
- 3- Gassim H. Dohal is an English faculty member at Imam University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He is a graduate of BSU & IUP, USA.
- 4- (...): What is put between brackets is a soliloquy.
- 5- May 4, 1993: This date is found in the source text.



## ENGLISH LITERATURE

**AFRICAN CULTURAL RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION: A STUDY OF  
TONI MORRISON'S BELOVED***Rosebel Wilson C & Avis Joseph*

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America has always been regarded as a nation of immigrants because many groups from Asia, the Middle East, and other corners of the globe arrived on America and made it their home. This phenomenon continues today, where new settlers arrive in the United States, adapt their cultures to the environment of the New World, and transform the national culture of the United States. With this, the New World became just that, a “new world”, replete with new institutions, beliefs and knowledge systems developed from the interaction of nationalities and cultures. It has been said that of all the ethnicities, West and Central African emigrants, who comprised one of the largest groups to arrive in the United States during the colonial era, had a significant place in the formation of American culture.

But in the light of slavery, many intellectuals and white people in America, had a wrong conviction that Africans are culturally naked people and what they acquired today is because of their life in the American society. During the colonial era, Whites considered Blacks as mere animals or ‘niggers’ and consequently, they suffered a lot under racial prejudice. They were considered as the oppressed group just because they were born black. They had no means to articulate their feelings, ideas, aspirations, and hopes. And they were treated like stepchildren who fought for their country during the time of crisis, but were denied the privilege of full participation as a citizen. That is, in every facet of social interaction, he was oppressed, controlled, dominated and exploited.

This paper analyzes the elements of African cultural retention and destruction in the American society with a special emphasize on the religious aspects in Toni Morrison’s novel Beloved. To elaborate it further, there is an understandable tendency in the African American culture to think in accordance with the changing time. Obviously, African Americans were not brought to the United States as culturally naked people, and the problem is to determine what of their African heritage has been retained to influence life in America today. It is a fact that most of the African heritage was quickly and inevitably lost before the ways of life in the dominant culture. Yet cultural differentials are so important in the social adjustment of different peoples to each other that the retention even of cultural fragments from Africa may introduce serious impacts into black- white relationships. On the positive side, the origin of the distinctive cultural contributions of the African American to American life must have certain importance. With this approach, the question is to what extent the resulting adjustment throws light on the innate ability of African Americans to handle European civilization.

Most of the sociologist emphasized the point that Africa was a combination of various tribes or one can say that Africa consists of many tribal societies. These tribal people have to live partially away from the African customs and manners soon after they reached the American soil. The most significant of these is the change in

religious institutions. As a result of slavery and their struggle for getting a recognizable position in the American society, African Americans began to take hold of life where they could. Accordingly, they began to speak English, fell into the labor pattern demanded by American needs and customs, and took up the Christian religion of the United States. As a matter of fact, the African cultural retention and destruction is highly visible in the religious patterns of African Americans. They adapted the Christian religion, but they never completely destroyed their own religious aspects. Instead, they fit themselves as best they could into the religious aspects of the New World. Page | 10

The prominent place held by religion in the life of the African American in the United States, and the special forms assumed by African American versions of Christian dogma and ritual, are customarily explained as compensatory devices to meet the social and economic frustrations experienced by African Americans during slavery and after emancipation. Such explanations have the partial validity to hold for various phases of African American secular life but, as must be emphasized again, cannot be regarded as telling the entire causal tale. For underneath the life of the African American is a deep religious bent that is but the manifestation of the similar drive that, everywhere in African American societies, makes the supernatural a major focus of interest.

The tenability of this position is apparent when it is considered how, in an age marked by scepticism, the African American has held fast to religious belief. Religion is vital, meaningful, and understandable to the African Americans of the United States because, as in the West Indies and West Africa, it is not removed from life, but has been deeply integrated into the daily life. It is because of this, indeed, that everywhere compensation in terms of the supernatural is so immediately acceptable to this underprivileged folk and causes them, in contrast to other underprivileged groups elsewhere in the world, to turn to religion rather than to political action or other outlets for their frustration. It must therefore be assumed that in the very foundation of African American religion, the elements of Africanism are thoroughly visible.

Considering the organizations that compromise the institutionalized forms of African American religion, from the earliest times of slavery, it has been the less inhibited, more humble denominations that attracted African Americans in the United States. As Doyle (1924) states:

*The worship of the Negro is of the simplest sort. He has no appreciation of elaborate rituals, of services consisting of forms and ceremonies. Hence the great mass of colored races have united with either the Methodist or Baptist churches. These churches have the simplest, least complicated forms of church services, and the Negro naturally gravitated toward them. (p.185) .*

It is impossible to say from census materials what percentage of African Americans are members of religious bodies in African American community. It is assumed that about half of the adult African Americans are church members and of these, four-fifths are Baptists. Apparently the Baptists and Methodists were most energetic in their early measures to capture African American allegiance by means of

their itinerant preachers. Furthermore, the African background of African Americans seemed to have a marked selectivity for the tensity and emotionalism of the Baptist and Methodist preaching. As Jackson (1931) states:

*. . . there was a strong attraction of the slaves for the Baptist church because they were given greater participation in religious exercises . . . . There was also greater liberality among the Baptists in giving Negroes permission to preach while also in addition the Baptist method of discriminate against them. Finally the mode of Baptism among the Baptists satisfied the desire of the Negro for the spectacular. (p.199) .*

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In other words, the church gives African Americans some emotional release which would help them to release their psychological conflicts.

The most revealing segment of African American religious life is that of the Baptist 'shouters' who, on casual inspection, would be regarded merely as more individualistic adherents of that Christian sect. The 'shouters' themselves distinguish two types. The 'carnal' group, wherein 'shouting' is not countenanced and a greater degree of decorum exists than in Negro Baptist churches in the United States, and their own group, the 'spiritual' Baptists. They were outlawed by an ordinance in 1917, ostensibly because of the disturbances these groups created in their fervour, but probably in more realistic terms because of the understandable need felt by the more conventional denominations to counteract the inroads these 'shouters' were making into their following. They strikingly resemble the early Christians in their communal cooperativeness, in the measures they take to exact discipline and morality within their own groups, and in the gentle nonresistance and in what they regard as constant persecution resulting from enforcement of the law which makes them subject to frequent raids or fines or jail sentences.

Baby Suggs in Beloved is an 'unchurched preacher,' who is driven to bed to think about the colors of things by the un-Christian ways of white Christians. Morrison writes in Beloved (1987):

*She became an unchurched preacher, one who visited pulpits and opened her great heart to those who could use it. In winter and fall she carried it to AME's and Baptists, Holinesses and Sanctified, the church of the Redeemer and the Redeemed. Uncalled, unrobed, unanointed, she let her great heart beat in their presence. (p.102) .*

She creates a ritual, out of her own heart and imagination, to heal former slaves and enable them to seek a reconciliation with their memories, whose scars survive long (even generations) after the experience of slavery has ended.

The most significant difference between Baby Suggs's version of spirituality and that of the white religions depicted in the novel is her disdain for rules and prohibitions to define morality, as well as her rejection of definitions in general. For instance, according to Baby Sugg's morality, good and evil are indefinable, not based on absolute knowledge; they are part of a situational ethics. "Everything depends on knowing how much", she said and "Good is knowing when to stop" (p. 198). Because the white people don't know "when to stop", as Suggs says, slavery pushes the limits of the human capacity of suffering. The story of Halle's going mad, Sethe's murder of

her baby, Paul D's memories of Mister and the bit- all demonstrate the connection to the white slave holding society's immorality, its lack of human limitations on its actions, that reciprocates in the minds of its victims as too much suffering to be endured.

In analyzing African American religious institutions, those autonomous groups not affiliated with denominations whose primary membership is drawn from whites must also receive adequate treatment. These are the 'shouting' sects, which play a large part in African American religious life. This shouting sects have four general characteristics: primary emphasis up on 'preaching the Word', salvation by faith, worship as fellowship, and vernacular singing. Usually there will be a good leadership that is magnetic to an almost hypnotic degree and virtually dictatorial in its control over the cult devotees. The regular features of the worship services are listed as the frenzied overt emotional expressions such as shouting, running, jumping, screaming, and jerking. The other methods are the frequent repetition of hymns transformed into jazzy swing time accompanied with hand clapping, tapping of feet and swaying of bodies. And these ceremonies conclude with the testimonies given in rapid succession and certifying to the reception of miracles, healings, messages, visions, etc.

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Beloved portrays such a shouting sect under the leadership of Baby Suggs. Her preaching is based on the Word. Accepting no title of honor before her name, she became an unchurched preacher. She had begun those ceremonies by asking the children to laugh, the men to dance, but the women to cry, "for the living and the dead" (p. 103). Then she would direct them all to love themselves deeply.

*It started that way: laughing children, dancing men, crying women and then it got mixed up. Women stopped crying and danced; men sat down and cried; children danced, women laughed, children cried until, exhausted and riven, all and each lay about the Clearing damp and gasping for breath. In the silence that followed, Baby Suggs, holy offered up to them her great big heart. (p.103)*

She did not tell them to clean up their lives, or to go and sin no more. She did not tell them they were the blessed of the earth, its inheriting meek or its glory-bound pure. Instead "She told them that the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine. That if they could not see it, they would not have it"(p. 103). Thus, she is emphasizing her preaching on the faith.

Their meeting places are apparent that it is differing from what is found in more conventional Christian churches, at once strike the eye of the Africanist. ". . . a wide -open place cut deep in the woods only to deer and whoever cleared the land in the first place. In the heat of every Saturday afternoon, she sat in the clearing while the people waited among the trees" (p. 102). It will help to remember a reader about the meeting places of tribal blacks in the African forest.

At this point it is essential to summarize in greater detail the belief and ritual that exist in West Africa, and to follow this summary with a brief outline of the transmutation these forms have experienced in the New World. In the region of Africa from which the slaves were principally drawn, the outstanding aspects of religion,

noted by every writer, is the power of spirits. The forces of the universe, whether they work good or evil, are ever at hand to be consulted in time of doubt, to be informed when crucial steps are to be taken, and to be asked for help when protection or aid is needed. West African religion believes that after physical death, the individual spirit lives. These spirits may cause havoc to people if they are spirits of people who were killed in battle or unjustly and the spirits feel punished if their names are obliterated or forgotten.

In Beloved, Sethe kills her child unjustly so that no white man will ever 'dirty' her, so that no young man with "mossy teeth" will ever hold the child down and suck her breasts. But the unfulfilled desires of that child caused the second coming into this physical world as a ghost. Throughout the novel, the invasion of the world of the living by Beloved's physical presence is evidence of the terrible destruction of the natural order caused by slavery. No one had thought anything about a ghost haunting the house, because ancestral spirits were known to linger in the world. But her physical presence has the effect of Judgment day on all those whom she encounters: Sethe, Paul D, Denver, and the community. At the same time, this spirit feel punished with the view that Beloved has no name but the epitaph on her gravestone, a word Sethe remembers from the funeral. Thus Beloved proclaims that apocalypse which lifted the veil on whatever lies beyond.

The three residents of 124- Sethe, Paul D, and Denver- find out that although Beloved, once no longer a ghost, did address their deepest needs, she is also malevolent. Sethe realizes that Beloved will never accept her explanation for the murder and that Sethe can never make it up to her. Sethe consequently becomes Beloved's slave, goes without food so that Beloved can eat, and begins to die. Paul D recognizes that making love with Beloved "was more like a brainless urge to stay alive" (p. 87). Denver is finally deserted by Beloved when her mother recognizes her dead daughter. The character Beloved, thus, is not just the ghost of Sethe's dead child. She is a succumb, a female demon and nightmare figure that sexually assaults male sleepers and drains them of semen. This succumb figure, which is related to the vampire, another sexualized figure that drains a vital fluid, was incorporated into African American folklore in the form of shape shifting witches who 'ride' their terrified victims in the night, and Beloved embodies the qualities of that figure as well.

Morrison also presents the ghost figure to represent the effects of institutionalized rape under slavery. In separate assaults, Beloved drains Paul D of semen and Sethe of vitality ; symptomatically, Beloved's body swells as she also feeds off her victims' horrible memories of and recurring nightmares about sexual violations that occurred in their enslaved past. But Beloved functions as more than the receptacle of remembered stories; she reenacts sexual violation and thus figures the persistent nightmares common to survivors of trauma. Her insistent manifestation constitutes a challenge for the characters who have survived rapes inflicted while they were enslaved. It is clear from this incident that ghosts, witches, and vampires are as well known in Africa as in Europe and represents the strengthening of belief when comparable phenomena in the two cultures come into contact.



Beloved as the spirit of slavery-the circle of iron around slave necks-did try to kill Sethe. Murdered indirectly by Sethe's slave master, Beloved is an unquiet spirit. She herself becomes a bridge between the 'other side' and the living, the apocalyptic manifestation of the world beyond the veil. Like a bridge, Beloved enables passage to knowledge of the other side that otherwise would be impossible. Thus her reply, "the circle of iron choked it" (P.127), reflects the complexity of her character, as both the ghost of Sethe's murdered baby who can't get enough love from her mother and as also the representative of all the angry spirits-the manifestation of the murderous rage created by whites in enslaved African Americans.

Thus, while it is quite incorrect to describe the religion of the Africans as essentially based on fear, the very nearness of the spirits means that their requirements must be cared for as continuously and as conscientiously as the other practical needs of life. 'Shouting' practices, therefore, have their humblest expression in individual worship. Sacred localities do exist, and priest have their social and religious functions to perform, but in the final analysis the rapport between a person and the invisible powers of the world are his own immediate concern, to be given over into the hands of an outsider only in times of special needs.

Sethe's relationship with Beloved and the following exorcism is an evident for this view. In the presence of the ghost, Sethe gradually and painfully recollects the repressed past. Like Paul D's tobacco tin, Sethe's repressed past is like a rusted box closed inside of her. When she finally realizes that Beloved is the reincarnation of her dead baby, she feels as if she's found buried treasure. It echoes in the following lines:

*A hobnail casket of jewels found in a tree hollow should be fondled before it is opened. Its lock may have rusted or broken away from the clasp . . . . No smashing with an ax head before it is decently exhumed from the grave that has hidden it all this time. No gasp at a miracle that is truly miraculous because the magic lies in the fact that you knew it was there for you all along. (P. 207-208).*

Beloved's resurrection exhumes the past Sethe has buried deep inside her. The treasure chest combines images of great discovery and wealth with images of death, the casket and the grave. As Amy Denver says, "Anything dead coming back to life hurts" (BL 96), and Sethe attempts to prove her love to Beloved and gain Beloved's forgiveness nearly destroy Sethe.

The power of the women's voices joined together has a creative capacity that symbolizes and ritualizes Sethe's cycle from spiritual death to rebirth. In the exorcism ritual, near the end of the novel, the women's voices carry Sethe back to an original creative power: "They stopped praying and took a step back to the beginning. In the beginning there were no words. In the beginning was the sound, and they all knew what that sound sounded like" (P. 305). The other women's voices, sound without words, have the power of cleaning waters, bringing Sethe back to the "clearing" and to Baby Suggs's rituals during Sethe's brief period- between slavery and the return of school teacher- of freedom. The exorcism of Beloved is, thus, a purgation ritual, a baptismal cleansing and rebirth, and a psychological clearing.

*For Sethe it was as though the clearing had come to her with all its heat and*

*simmering leaves, where the voices of women searched for the right combination, the key, the code, the sound that broke the back of words. Building voice upon voice until they found it, and when they did it was a wave of sound wide enough to sound deep water and knock the pods off chestnut trees. It broke over Sethe and she trembled like the baptized in its wash. (P. 308) .*

The cleansing ritual also brings Sethe back to the original scene of repression and enables her to relive it with a difference. When Denver's white employer arrives in the midst of the ritual, the confused Sethe believes him to be one of the Whiteman who has come to take her and her children back into slavery, and Denver must hold her mother back as Sethe launches a murderous attack on the white man. As a freed woman with a group of her peers surrounding her, Sethe can act on her mother love as she would have chosen to originally. Instead of turning on her children to save them free slavery, she turns on the white man who threatens them. The reconstruction of the scene of the trauma completes the psychological cleansing of the ritual and exorcises Beloved from Sethe's life. Sethe can finally: "lay em down, Sethe. The sword and shield "(P. 101) that she has needed to found off her memories.

The importance of the association of water with African ritual indicates its fundamental character. In the African ritual, one invariable element was a visit to the river or ocean for the purpose of obtaining the liquid indispensable for the rites. In certain occasions, the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself by entering the head of a devotee and causing him to fling himself, possessed, into the water. But in the United States, where such type of rituals is absent, their water rituals are those of Baptism. The importance of the Biblical concept of 'crossing the river Jordan' in the religious images of the African Americans, and as a symbol of what comes after death, is a further part of this complex. For, like Baptism, the river Jordan embodies a concept in Christianity that any Africans would find readily understandable. In the transmutation of belief and behavior under acculturation, it furnished one of the least difficult transitions to a new form of belief. In the end of the novel, the woman's voices have the power of cleansing waters upon Sethe. It baptizes Sethe into a new radical spiritual transformation. In the aftermath of her baptism, though Sethe is devastated, her 'best thing' taken from her a second time. She has taken a crucial step towards self ownership in directing her protective violence against the oppressor and the novel ends with a positive note of better future for African Americans.

There is another aspect of African belief that associated with river- that is, the river spirits. It was pointed out that the river spirits are among the most powerful of those inhabiting the supernatural world, and that priests of this cult are among the most powerful member of tribal priestly groups. In all those parts of the new world where African religious belief have persisted, the river cult or the cult of water spirits holds an important place. All this testifies to the vitality of this element in African religion.

The entering of the ghost child re-strengthens this view: "A fully dressed woman walked out of the water . . . . Sopping wet and breathing shallow she spent those hours trying to negotiate the weight of her cyclids . . . . Nobody saw her emerge or came accidentally by" (P. 60). But the next pages reveal the fact that she was very thirsty. "The woman gulped water from a speckled tin cup and held it out for more.



Four times Denver filled it, and four times the woman drank as though she had crossed a desert” (P. 62). And this ghost child made large destructions to the whole family, both physically and emotionally. Beloved, thus categorizes as a river spirit.

Coming back to the ‘shouting’ practices, the manner in which baptismal rituals, begun, as decorous Baptist meetings, turn into “shouts” is not at all European. They usually start with a song. After two or three repetitions however, the tempo quickens, the rhythm changes, and the tune is connected into a song typically African in its accompaniment of clapping hands and foot patting, and in its singing style. The change from Baptist ritual to the African- like “shout” during a given service is gradual, for, as is often the case in Africa itself, even leader does not know when the spirit will come and possession will occur. Drums and rattles forbidden in Christian rite are naturally absent. But the deficiency is compensated for by hand clapping and choral singing. Possession is present in full vigor, with only the African element of the dance lacking, though on occasion even this represented in the manner in which “patting” the foot is done by the person possessed.

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The importance of revelation in giving remedies to mankind is a fundamental West African tenet. The role of the forest spirits or Legba, the trickster gives the information for healing the diseased persons. The fact that practitioners of magic are “dependent upon the spirits of the dead ancestry” is likewise purely African. In the New World culture, the spirits help a peculiar person to reopen his or her past and thus heal completely, as it is clearly evident in Sethe’s healing. It is, thus, apparent that while Christianity gave to the African Americans in the New World much of its own world view in the United States where perpetuation of African gods under their own names was impossible, the process of readjustment permitted the deity to survive under a different designation.

All these features evidently state that the Africans, as a matter of fact, accepted Christianity as their religion, but they never completely omitted their own religious aspects. Instead, they injected dancing and shouting in their new religion. That is, they recited hymns from Bible in a manner as they repeated in the African religious rituals. Although, their shouting practices helped them to re-unite and make good communal connections, they still continued the essential African elements in it. Another point of interest is that aboriginality manifested most strongly in the field of religion, where both conquered and conquerors often took over the gods of their opponents. Morrison brought this blend in her Beloved.. the ghost child in the novel is purely an African concept. But it also resembles Satan in the biblical accounts. Like Satan, this ghost child made devastations to all the lives including that of community. At the same time, one should remember the African concept of life after death, as Ella says: “anything dead coming back to life hurts” (P. 96). In the exorcism of the ghost, again this blend is visible. The community women reached Sethe’s house and recited the biblical hymns in the form of shouting. All these reveals the fact that regarding the religious perspective, both African and American religious aspects goes hand in hand.

The implications of this final culminating belief concerning the African American has been seen to be of the greatest importance in shaping attitudes toward African Americans on the part of whites and attitudes of African Americans toward

themselves. It has been indicated how, in the patterned values of United States, the past characteristically operates as a psychological support for the present. To recognize that the past of the African American in slavery and the physical differences that mark off this group from the American majority have aggravated attitudes toward the presumed savagery of their pre- American past, is merely to favor an explanation in terms of multiple causation. But, the recognition by the majority of the population of certain values in African American song and dance has already heightened African American self-pride and has affected white attitudes toward the African American. For the African American to be similarly proud of his entire past as manifested in his present customs should carry further these tendencies.

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In the evaluative processes of United States, the past counts more heavily than is realized. For instance, the African Americans in America had to suffer a lot under the race prejudice. Though they showed their abilities and talents abundantly to promote the national culture and also to bring America in the zenith of glory in all spheres of activities, they were still tolerated the step-children by their color. Though the American constitution ensured the legal and civil liberties to African Americans, they were still under the socio- psychological conflicts which resulted from the contradictory cultural imperatives of European colonialism and African traditions. That is, it was the complex double vision of Americans of African descent whose humanity and culture had been historical devalued and marginalized by people of European descent that should be removed.

There is wide scope for research with the rich literature available with this aspect and a great deal of writings of African Americans relating to their culture has yet to come to lime light. Studies which show the importance of African American cultural values based on African culture began at a time when America was undergoing serious racial issues and thus the course of its running was not smooth. It had to struggle a lot to find out the retention of African elements in the American society and then the destroyed elements. These research studies have a good current value in the American society, as the African Americans themselves became the main highlight of the United States.

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## CHINUA ACHEBE AS A NIGERIAN ENGLISH NOVELIST

*Dr. Penjuri Satyanarayana*

### Introduction

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Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian Novelist seen by millions as the father of Modern African Literature, has died at the age of 82 on 22-03-2013 in Boston in the USA. He was born in 1930 On 15<sup>th</sup> November in a village called Ogidi in Eastern Nigeria in Africa. His mother tongue is Ibo. His parents were Christians. His father was a teacher in a missionary school in Ogidi. Young Achebe went to this school for his early education. When he was eight he began to learn English and at fourteen he attended Government College at Umuahia. He intended to study medicine but soon switched to English literary studies. He went to the University of Ibadan where he studied English, history and theology. After graduating in 1953, he decided to be a writer. He read some novels of English writers such as Joyce Cary, Joseph Conrad and Graham Greene. He found their depiction of the Africans and their habitation and life style, 'appalling'. He is a master of the craft of fiction. His control over language is absolute with a range of vocabulary and appropriate usage. On attaining B.A., he joined Nigerian Broadcasting Company in Lagos in 1954. He travelled to America during his stint at the voice of Nigeria. During the Nigerian Civil War (1967-70), he worked for the Biafran government as an ambassador. Later he was appointed research fellow at the University of Nigeria and went on to become a professor of English. He retired in 1981. He has been Professor Emeritus since 1985. He was involved in a road accident in Lagos, and was paralyzed from waist down. Ever since, he has been living in USA. He teaches undergraduates in Bard College in Upstate New York.

### Literary Out Put

Achebe has written five novels. Between 1958 and 1966, he published four novels. They are '*Things Fall Apart*' (1958), '*No Longer at Ease*' (1960), '*Arrow of God*' (1964) and '*A Man of the People*' (1966). After Twenty One years of "fictional silence" in 1987 he published his fifth novel '*Anthills of Savannah*'. "Things Fall Apart" and "No Longer Ease" were originally planned as parts of one big novel, a trilogy spanning a history of three generations of Okonkwo, his son Nwoye and his grandson, Obiokonkwo. Achebe shortened the book into two and wrote about the two generations of Okonkwo and his grandson Obiokonkwo. He admitted the middle generation of Okonkwo's son, Nwoye. These novels have a historical and political fictional basis beginning with the time when the British Colonial government and the Christian missions penetrated Igbo land unto the period of post independent Nigeria. It was a historical necessity for Achebe to give a credible picture of African life as a prelude to restoring the lost dignity of the African. It becomes imperative for him to treat the present time and trace the change from the old tribal set up to the colonial present in his first two novels.

Achebe is known widely for his first novel '*Things Fall Apart*', a tale told "from the inside" about the destructive impact of European Christianity on pre-colonial Igbo culture. It has been sold more than 10 million copies and has been translated

into 45 languages, making it one of the most widely read novels of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Okonkwo, the stubborn hero of this novel goes to great lengths to defend the native Igbo culture. He kills the court messenger, a fellow black man who is an agent of the colonial intruders. He expects his clan to fight to uphold the existing order of things. His clan disappoints him and he commits suicide. His friend, Obierika who admires Okonkwo but lacks courage accuses the District Commissioner of being responsible for Okonkwo's suicide. The 'roaring flame' of the Ibo tribe is not even to have the honour of a tribal funeral and a grave. Achebe further enhances this rich 'content' by using various narrative strategies like the narration by an undramatized village elder and the use of Igbo proverbs, songs, figures of speech and anecdotes. Achebe presents the conflict between the individual and the society and its consequences in a pre-colonial society in a neutral fashion without taking sides either with the individual or with the society. A critic, David Cook points out, "Achebe prefers to reveal the darker side of both traditions as well as the better side and leave us to draw our own conclusions". The Ibo society depicted by Achebe is a self-contained tribal society in which the myths, legends, beliefs, customs, religion, proverbs and tales are utilized with a sense of art. But the white men disrupted an ordered Ibo society by imposing on it their own forms of government and religious worship.

Achebe's next novel, "No Longer at Ease" intended as a sequel to "Things Fall Apart" is set in the capital of Nigeria in the late 1950s. It is set on the cusp of independence. The story is told through Third-person narrative. Achebe has used the major concern of the decline in the social values in Nigeria. Obiokonkwo, Okonkwo's grandson and the chief character in this novel, is a Victorian of the two cultures, Igbo and English. He has been trained in a British university and comes home to Lagos to serve as a civil servant in the British administration in his own country. He has imbibed in him the high ideals and is determined to prove himself as an honest, hard-working bureau craft. He eventually becomes corrupted because he is unable to reconcile to the demands placed upon him by his girlfriend, Clara and his tradition-bound parents. He is not capable of maintaining his British ideals of love. He succumbs to parental pressure against his plans of marriage to Clara. He is unable to marry his sweetheart because of a tribal taboo which he dare not defy. He runs heavily into debt and for all his loud-voiced principles, is tempted into accepting bribes to supplement his salary. He ends up in Jail. The encounter of this village lad with western civilisation only leads to moral disaster. The novel contains number of proverbs used by village elders, the members of the union at Lagos and Obi himself.

Achebe's third novel is "Arrow of God", which takes us back to the pre-independence days of Nigeria. The locale is Umuaro, a compendium of six villages around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It tells us about the mind set of Ezeulu, the high priest of Ulu, a village god created for protection when the villages were under the constant threat of Abame Warriors. The novel revolves around Ezeulu, a man of great competence and who is surprisingly modern in outlook. Yet he pays for being presumptuous enough to assume the position of an arrow to wreck revenge on the villagers for an excusable fault. In other words, he tries to find a balance between his clansmen and the alien rulers, falls between two stools and is rejected by both. Thus he ends in the 'haughty splendour of demented high priest'.

The three heroes in the three novels Okonkwo the warrior, Obi the civil servant, Ezeulu the chief priest- are all recognizable warts and all. The land and the people leap to life in the background charged with the picturesque regionalism of local colour. Achebe writes as an African. There are no excuses, poses or subterfuges. He steers clear alike of exotic and sophistication in the use of the English language. He writes with a natural ease and directness. His style adapts itself to the demands of all kinds of situations. The Ibo tribe with all their angularities are summoned to life. The various events are made almost to enact themselves. Conversations are spiced with Ibo proverbs.

Achebe's fourth novel, *A Man of the People* was hailed as a novel with a prophetic end. It brings us back to the national politics and elections mismanagement and false promises made by leaders like chief Nanga to reap the best of the 'national cake', a euphemism for nation's wealth. Odili, the anti-hero starts villainously. But he ends up committing himself to the higher goal of the welfare of the people. Achebe creates Odili as participant narrator of the novel. Odili exposes the after-effects of the colonial rule. With the use of the first person for the first time in his fiction, Achebe adopts an innovative technique. He also uses rich proverbs, tales, songs and figures of speeches.

After twenty-one years of fictional silence, in 1987 Achebe published his fifth novel, "Anthills of Savannah". It deals with repercussions of military rule. It is a trend-setting book that depicts in detail, the pitiful predicament of a country despite an educated ruler. The ruler, an erstwhile military commander who comes to power by staging a bloodless coup with the help of a few like-minded friends, proves so sadistic and gets so intoxicated with power that he started killing anyone including his former close friends who came in the way of his ambition to stay in power permanently. Later he is killed by another military coup. Achebe has used the multiple narrative techniques in the novel. Unlike in his earlier novels, Achebe here is more concerned with the role of the writer than with the role of the speaker. This novel won Booker Prize in 1987.

Achebe has encompassed in his novels nearly one century of history of Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. He has not just observed and glorified the culture of Africa; he has given importance to the loopholes in it. It is clear that he has considered all the aspects of historical, political, economic, social and cultural ups and downs in Africa to weave a lengthy thread of story. That is why it is proper to consider both his 'content' and 'technique' are unique in African Literature. So he is ranked alongside of Wole Soyinka and Nadine Gordimer as one of the greatest African writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Nadine Gordimer said Achebe's fiction was "an original synthesis of the psychological novel, the Joycean stream of consciousness, the post-modern breaking of sequence" and that Achebe was "a joy and an illumination to read". The poet Jackie Kay hailed Achebe as "the grandfather of African fiction "who lit up a path for many others". He inspired generations of African writers and transformed world literature. He was the man who gave African a voice.

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## CELEBRATION OF THE LOSS OF VIRGINITY IN THE NOVELS OF CHETAN BHAGAT

*Jitendra Kumar Mishra*

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Chetan Bhagat is one of the most famous living novelists of India. He is a favorite of the youth and has many a time been crowned as an icon of them. Youth is his main theme because whatever he writes he associates it with the concerns of them. In all his novels he deals with nothing but the youth and their concerns. He tries to give voices to their unheard feelings and emotions and it is this reason that he is counted among the most preferred authors of the youth. In his novels he talks about lots of things including the youth and their troubles, tensions, joys and feelings etc. but one thing that is very common in all his novels is his celebration of the loss of virginity by his lady characters. All his ladies enjoy premarital sex but none of them regrets it rather feels proud having done it. Bhagat's writing is more feminine than masculine. He gives voices and shows his concerns more to his ladies than to his heroes. Like Shakespeare he too deserves to be blamed for creating better heroines than heroes (Shakespeare's heroines are considered better than his heroes).

Sex is something that enjoys the privilege of being considered masculine. A female, particularly in a country like India where male domination is an accepted trend in all norms of the society and life, is not supposed to make a demand for it. However it is not an genuine demand, there is something preoccupied in our minds that we daunt and discourage any such demand arising from the fair sex. It seems as if sex is something personal property or patent or fundamental right of men and women are nothing but a source which can be used any moment in any way. Bhagat has emerged as an iconoclast for this masculine illusion and has tried to feel and express the feelings and emotions of the ladies. He believes that women have equal right to demand for sex and perhaps she is the most bonafide candidate who deserves to initiate the talk regarding it.

Love and sex are no different things for Bhagat. He finds both these as the two facets of the same coin. Like head and tail. In our coins if we call the lion face head and the value print tail in his novels love is head and sex is the tail. The simulation is very apt as the lion faces or the head are the same in all coins but it is only its tail which determines its value, in Bhagat's novels love remains as head but it is only sex that makes his one story different from the other.

Bhagat celebrates the moment when his lady loses her virginity. Nevertheless, there is no sign of his intentional incorporation of such scenes in the novels but that is the very need of the story. Bhagat realizes that it is high-time to give voices to the hidden feelings of the fair sex because someone has to dare someday to expose their feelings or else they will keep burning within their heart like the embers beneath the coal.

In his debut novel *Five Point Someone* (FPS) Bhagat introduces premarital sex as a natural need in the youth. He is an open minded author who feels no shade of parochial preoccupation for sex before marriage. The day Neha Cherian loses her



virginity is a very special day in her family. It is the date her brother had committed suicide. Her mother has gone to “*that temple by the tracks*” (FPS:164) to sob for her son and her father is “*less than a kilometer away in his office*” (FPS:169).

Neha encourages Hari and both indulge in a premarital sexual activity. Bhagat plans this intercourse in Neha’s house. It is the celebration of her loss of virginity that Bhagat prepares her bed for Hari to content his mate in his professor’s house. He also exposes how demand for sex naturally grows in girls more dominantly than in boys. Hari has nothing of this sort in his mind when he comes to meet Neha but he has to surrender before her seduction. He says, “*We kissed, and then we kissed again. Then she held my hand and did something that she had never done before; she put it on her breast.*” (FPS:168).

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In Bhagat’s opinion girls are in no way inferior to boys. They are equal to them in all respects. He is an advocate to the liberation and empowerment of women but the pity is that he has equaled them only in doing wrong things and taking wrong turns. Neha has never smoked a cigarette but after losing her chastity she also wants to have a ‘*fag*’ like Hari. She enjoys her loss of virginity and thanks her partner, which shows her hunger and want for sex. When Hari says in an *understatement*, “*That was quite... amazing*” (FPS:169), Neha says, “*Thanks. I like it too.*” (FPS:169) boldly. The word “*Thanks*” is very important here which suggests how earnestly she might have pined for it after getting which she thanks her lover so deeply. It is just like thanking of a thirsty traveler who is in search of water and after a long search when somebody quenches his thirst he thanks the person heartily. In a way Bhagat is a facilitator who understands the need of his characters and provides it on time. In the true sense it is he who deserves the ‘thank’ of his ladies for gratifying and quenching their long pined thirst.

In *One Night @ Call Center* (ON@CC) Bhagat celebrates the premarital sex of Priyanka and Shyam. All their colleagues are enjoying DJ inside while they come out and enjoy sex in the *company Qualis*. In this scene also Bhagat gives the command in his lady’s hands. She is a common modern girl and not shy like the older generation girls. She asks Shyam, “*By the way, do you have condom?*” (ON@CC:104). It is as if she was making an enquiry about a pen or a chocolate or something the like. In this act of premarital affair the beginning is a credit to Priyanka. She starts kissing Shyam in his face after knowing that he had it. After finishing Shyam says, “*Amazing. That is simply amazing, Ms Priyanka.*” (ON@CC:104). Her reply is also remarkable like Neha’s. She says, “*My pleasure, sir*” (ON@CC:104). Premarital sex for her is no regret. She is happy to do it and thanks for it like any common help given to her by her colleague. Her response “*My pleasure, sir*” is a corporate response which shows that she is happy to perform it. Bhagat has successfully tried to describe the opinion of the youth about love and premarital sex. He finds sex as a common activity like smoking or taking a sip of wine. It is not untrue that our newspapers are full of such news like finding of condoms in toilets of call centers, academic buildings and other such places. However this is also remarkable that whenever Bhagat portrays premarital sex he presents it with their common consent. It is nowhere that he makes a pressure on any of the partners to surrender before the other except in *Revolution 2020*. Sex is no crime if it is committed with common consent. Bhagat is the creator of a new society where sex will not be seen like a taboo

but like a common source of pleasure like smoking cigarette or sipping wine which can be enjoyed by the partners anytime anywhere.

Bhagat's ambition to celebrate the loss of his lady's virginity is on its peak in *The Three Mistakes of My Life* (3MOML). His heroine Vidya is so anxious to lose her virginity that she chooses to do it right on her birthday. Moreover, she chooses her tutor and her brother's best friend to unburden her load of virginity. She is younger but bolder than all other lady characters of Bhagat. She rather seduces Govind and uses him to take off her load of virginity from her. She celebrates the loss of her virginity more than her birthday. She makes the preparations on the terrace and as soon as she finds the opportunity she takes Govind there and starts seducing him. Govind is a rational man he understands that it is wrong but Vidya does not let him think anything at all. She is a pretty little seductress. She seduces and succeeds. She knows pretty well that her parents have a bad nerve so they cannot climb up and her brother Ish is so much occupied in watching cricket match that he can come up but never. She has no care to celebrate her birthday with her parents but is anxiously waiting to lose her virginity in the light of her birthday candles. Govind regrets his deeds after finishing the course but Vidya is happy beyond expectations on the contrary. She thanks god for making her adult and feels happy after losing her virginity. She says, "Wow, I am an adult and am no longer a virgin, so cool. Thank God" (3MOML:201).

Bhagat does not know nor does he want to know the definition of love. For him sex is everything. He is a producer and propagator of modern and western thoughts and ideas. He thinks only in the way the western teenagers and adults think like. Still he does not realize he is wrong because he does not exaggerate the act. He writes only what he thinks true. In today's life young people are found craving for sex and quenching it whenever they get an opportunity for it. Bhagat's writing is basically meant for the youth. It matches with the youth mentality but it fails to stand on the moral expectations of the older generations. The youth finds it correct to enjoy sex in whatever way it is or with whomever it is but the grown up people do not give permission for this as they still think it as a sin. It is this reason that the cases of honor killings have increased in number after the publication of Bhagat's novels. Some people refrain from studying Bhagat's novels because they think Bhagat is a cheap author who sells his books on a cheap price for his cheap and wide popularity. They are not totally wrong if we take their reason hidden behind their neglect.

In his autobiographical novel *2 States* (2S) Bhagat enjoys the virginity of his beloved Ananya in her dormitory room before the pictures of her family members. In this novel he is somewhat on the ground and his heroine is not very anxious to lose her virginity but she is satisfied to begin it. She says after finishing, "This is my first time" (2S:26). In this novel Bhagat presents two scenes of premarital sex. In his former one where his lady loses her virginity he imagines the impossible meeting breaking the security of the IIM-A. The way he presents having sex in the girls dormitory suggests that IIM-A has no security for female and anyone can make entry to their bed anytime. He is an IIM-A pass-out and he knows the system better but the way he mentions it in the book nobody would trust an IIM girl in regard to her virginity and chastity. Nevertheless the trend has changed a lot and the same has happened with the mindset of the youth, no youth would still afford to pick up a girl

as his wife who has already had sex with someone else in her college days. By this story Bhagat has invited a big sign of interrogation on the chastity and fidelity of the girls studying in IIMs. Bhagat calls himself an advocate of the youth concerns but at the same time unknowingly he invites troubles for them. As his *Five Point Someone* and *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* have encouraged young girls to enjoy premarital sex but has at the same time annoyed their parents and invited unnecessary actions like honor killing for them; his *One Night @ Call Center* and *2 States* have encouraged premarital sex between colleagues and students together but at the same time ignited unnecessary breach between husband and wife and increased the cases of divorce and family breakings. It is another thing that in his latter two novels the partners marry together otherwise it would have roamed in the realms of suspicion and doubt for some time unknown and would end up in some other direction. However, Bhagat does not give any thought to the aftermath of the premarital sex relations. He thinks only about present. Future is his no concern. He is an amoral author. He has no sense of morality. Similarly he has no sense of what is called immoral. He is amoral. He is a sinner of ignorance but his sin can be pardoned as his intention is not to harm but only to entertain.

In his latest novel *Revolution 2020* (R2020) Bhagat has tried to imitate the age old tradition of love and sacrifice. Still, he is strict in regard to his celebration of premarital sex between his frantic hero Gopal and his most beautiful girl Aarti. In this story he has learnt from his past experiences and has tried to give this a new look as far as possible. In this novel Govind initiates the love and Aarti only cooperates him. Govind takes an elite class room in Hotel Ramada for five thousand rupees a night. It is the same hotel in which she works. Govind persuades her to have sex with him who ultimately surrenders before his demand. She objects to him but so mildly that it rather encourages him than to daunt. She is a cooperative partner who is ready to lose her virginity right in the hotel where she works. While removing her clothes Govind finds it difficult to remove it then it is Aarti who removes it for him which shows how much she is against establishing a premarital sex relation with him. Govind says, “*I went back to undoing her jeans. Girls wear the most unremovable, tight jeans in the world. I found it impossible to take them off without her help*” (R2020:221). He just says “*Could you?*” and she removes it for him with a giggle as if she were waiting for his instruction and testing his patience. He further says, “*My request brought forth a giggle. She wriggled to take them off. I waited and then drew her close to me*” (R2020:221).

Bhagat is an author who paints the scenes of premarital sex with utmost care and attention. But he forgets that what he celebrates before marriage is a sin in Indian society and deserves its place only after the marriage of the two. Bhagat is a creator of a new society which lives freely and does everything freely even sex. But he forgets that the society he has created cannot find its place even after attaining 2020 in the Christian era. Bhagat is a realist. He writes what he feels right. He is born in India but he does not have any sense of the moral values the Indian youth are expected to nurture. He is rather a perverted author. He is a victim of family violence. He has seen his father assaulting his mother. He has beaten up his father as he accepts in his autobiographical novel *2 States*. He is a product of B-school and has a business loaded mind. He knows the need and choice of the youth. He knows that people love to read about violence and sex. Therefore he offers his readers according

to their choice and as a result he is so famous. But it is a cheap popularity and fame. He writes only for entertainment without any sense of moral or immoral. Nobody can claim having learnt a single good thing from his write up. His writing is a seed of poison for the emerging nation, which if not taken in the right way, may end to a Talwar parents killing their own Arushi and much more.

Still Bhagat is a good entertainer. He is a good storyteller. He knows the heart of the youth. He talks about the youth and their feelings. He tries to tell the world about the existence of the youth and their desires. He perhaps wants the youth not to do the things his characters do. But the only thing is that he does not tell it clearly. Bhagat should not be taken as it is. It is only for him to present the things as it is. It needs a little of his readers' rationality to understand what he wants to say.

## NEW REALISM IN DAVID ALMOND'S KIT'S WILDERNESS

**A. Padma Priya**

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Literature depicts life - it is the understanding one may get from reading a literary work. Fiction is a flexible genre for a writer to apply the aspects of thriller, fantasy, horror, science or realism. In the contemporary world realistic features attract more; if it is in fiction then it is a cynosure. A realistic novel indeed gives a better understanding about life. It is always been pointed out for its realistic portrayal of life. Nilsen and Donelson in *Literature for Today's Young Adults* say, "The 1960's brought about the rise of what has been called 'new realism'. Writers turned to more serious coming-of-age stories liberating young adult literature. These books were classified as 'new realism', "as opposed to the romanticized stories that had been considered appropriate for children" (113). In that note new realism has explicit reality as a distinct feature. New Realism varies in definition accordingly to the field it occupies. In the dictionary of New Words, New Realism is a term used in British Labour Movement, both by the Labour Party and by its associate trade unions, to describe the way in which a number of hitherto fundamental socialist beliefs have been abandoned in the face of triumphalist Thatcherism, and the concomitant need to create a programme that will appeal to voters. Notable victims of the New Realism are mandatory nationalization ['clause four' Socialism] and unilateralism. Kagarlitsky says "the ability of people equipped with such ideas to attain power" -to regain power at virtually any cost (38). According to Schweller in his article "New Realist Research on Alliances: Refining, Not Refuting, Waltz's Balancing Proposition" says, "Neorealism's assumption that states seek to maximize their security (not power or influence) transforms classical realism from a game of pure positional competition to one of collaboration with mixed motives. The essential point is that, for neorealists, conflict and competition are framed in terms of self-preservation" (928). In Oxford Dictionary of New terms, Neo-realism is any revival of realism in fiction, especially in novels and stories describing the lives of the poor in a contemporary setting. The term is associated especially with the dominant trend of Italian Fiction in 1940s and 1950s led by Cesare Pavese, Alberto Moravia, and Elio Vittorini, and with the parallel movement in Italian Cinema of the same period, led by Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio de Sica. It may have a lot of definition, for "describing the lives of the poor in contemporary setting" is an appropriate one for the further development of the paper. The purpose of this paper is to elicit the New Realistic aspects in David Almond's *Kit's Wilderness* (2000).

1960s was the prime period in the flourishing of New Realism. It is understood from the historical reading of Young Adult Literature that the emerging of Problem Novels paves the way for New Realism. In "Contemporary Realistic Fiction: From Tragedies to Romances" it is clearly given as when in the late 1960s publishers began feeling comfortable in encouraging writers to create serious coming-of-age stories to be read by the teenagers themselves; they identified the books as New Realism or Problem Novels rather as the more literary term of *Bildungsroman*, which is formally defined as "Novels dealing with the development of young person usually from adolescence to maturity" (Nilsen and Donelson 144) . New Realist novels have literary



qualities which gives a different experience to readers. Like with logical flow of narrative, complex characters, insights into conduct of life, touches imagination and emotion, and plot stems from writers' social standard. *Kit's Wilderness* has the above mentioned literary qualities. Kit Watson is the protagonist. He is in Stoneygate to be with his paralyzed grandpa after the death of grandma. It is a new experience to Kit to play with boys and girls in Stoneygate. Kit meets Askew and comes to know about the Game of Death. He meets his other friends Jax a dog, Bobby Carr, and Allie Keenan in a den where they play the game of death. Since Kit is new to Stoneygate, and he tries to introduce his family proudly when Askew approaches him. On the other hand Askew replies that he knows everything. Kit is frightened when he initially sees Askew: "A thin mustache was visible on his lip. He held a sketch pad under his arm, had a pencil behind his ear" (9). However, Kit gets close to Askew when he says Kit looks like him. He comes to know the artistic skills of Askew when he views his charcoal paintings and some more paintings in his school drawing class. Kit's mother too appreciates Askew's painting and tells no one could be judged by appearance or by family. He comes to know about his ancestors through the paintings of Askew which depict the darker side: "They were dark things, black things: silhouettes of children or grey field; black slow river; black tilting houses; black scratches of birds in a sullen sky" (14). He has listened this earlier though his grandpa.

A plot stems from author's social standard is one of the new realistic features. Almond's interview ascribes that he is from Felling-on-Tyne and there is a pit disaster in 1812. Therefore naturally it is depicted in *Kit's Wilderness*. Almond reminds some of the incidents related to grandpa storytelling, and an Ammonite treasure which Kit holds: Once grandpa gave a rectangular coal looks like a tree bark and showed him an ammonite which lives in sea: "The sea came in and flooded the place and the trees fell down and time passed the sea laid down sediment that turns to rock and the earth churned and laid down more rock and time passed and the rock thickened and pressed down on the ancient trees and animals and time passed and passed and turned them all to coal" (43). Portrayal of reality in contemporary setting is revealed through Askew's characterization. Askew shares an equal place like Kit in the novel. He may not be the protagonist while not an antagonist. He is a kind of young adult who is away from the society. Protagonist will get a temporary relief through the unconventional person out from the family in new realistic novels. Almond depicts Askew as one such person. When Kit walks with his grandpa in a casual talk, they reach a cul-de-sac where Askew's house is situated. Kit is exposed to a strange atmosphere where he sees Askew's mother near window. They meet Askew's father and grandpa gets nostalgia about the artistic skill that comes from generation to generation. Similar to Askew Kit has a friend namely Allie Keenan, for she is full of life. She is also one among the person who plays the Game of Death. When Kit is at the midst, he is confused with the Game of Death, whether a person could come alive after death. It is Allie Keenan who unlocks that there is no such game and it is full of pretension. Kit again engages in the Game of Death in the den with Askew. He finds it difficult to come to normal position, for everything comes as illusion in front of his eyes. Kit experiences it to the extreme that he could see the children who died in the Pit disastrous. It shows that he is in the residue of Game of Death. The sequence which Almond depicts in the form of the Game of Death touches the sense of imagination and emotion of the readers. He rekindles it by

focusing on the protagonist's writing skill. Kit is good at writing stories which he hears from his grandpa. It is proved that he is good at writing, when he is appreciated by his teacher Burning Bush. Kit is inspired by a point which his teacher says on story: "All writers write down stories they heard. Writers have always done it. The greatest writers like Chaucer, or Shakespeare. It's how stories work. They move from person to person, get passed down through the generations. And each time they're written down they're a little different" (55). Kit creates two characters namely Silky and Lak. Later in the novel the story of Lak comes near a sub-plot of *Kit's Wilderness*. Page | 29

*Kit's Wilderness* has an insight, a vital literary quality a new realist novel has. It is attained by the readers though the issues like depiction of unhappy and unstable family, emphasis more on people's economical, emotional and social problems when they read a work. Almond brings the insight through the characterization of Askew. Askew is brought up in a harsh setting: his house is located near a river bed where no one goes to his house; his father is a drunkard. Understanding of the explicit reality of life is possible through knowing the life of people who is economically backward. Their life is filled with despair and unhappiness. Though the young adults have both parents they find it difficult to make both ends meet. And this is the main cause of their unhappiness in the family. The young adult belonging to this family set up faces a lot of emotional problem. Askew encounters one such condition in his family and when he is among peers. He is beaten up by his father Jack Askew when he is in drunken state:

*"Askew reached the fence. The man grabbed his son by the throat, pulled him close. We saw his bare teeth, saliva dripping, and his great flushed face. He snarled into the boy's ear. Askew looked down, hung his arms by his side, tried to turn his face away, but the man kept dragging it, slapping it back. He whispered gripping the boy's throat lighter, laughed and snarled. Then he let go, reeled backward, caught the fence, stood upright, spat, smoked, staggered on along the lane". (46)*

It makes him emotionally weak and the stress is reflected negatively when he is with his friends. Askew stays alone and longs for care. Kit always supports Askew to recover from his emotional trauma. When the members of chamber in school enquire on Askew's strange Game of Death and his improper attendance to school, Kit gives a positive view on Askew. He also finds that Askew is in need of love and care, whenever Askew shows anger towards him:

*"No", I said, "He isn't evil. There's good in everyone. There's good in Askew. He's just different from the rest of us. And it was just a Game". (76)... He grunted again. He wanted to hurt me with his grip, wanted to frighten me with his eyes. But I could feel that his grip was also a way of clinging time that his eyes were also filled with yearning. It was Askew who needed someone to protect him, Askew who needed love. (89)*

Young readers may get an insight about their peer friends like Kit and Askew when they come across these pages.

Almond brings out the passionate relationship between grandpa and Kit and a good friendship with Allie Keenan. He brings the triangle Kit, Grandpa and Allie Keenan in a unique way which may give an emotional insight to young readers.



Grandpa helps Kit to build his story about Lak and Silky. He takes Kit to wilderness and tells him historical and past references. Readers may wonder on Almond's narrative sequence, for one could find difficulty in separating the blend between Kit's imagination, illusion and the main plot. Often it is through Grandpa he unfolds the clarity. When Kit wants to build on the character of Lak he refers to Grandpa about Askew's family. He comes to know Askew, as man, was there:

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*Askew was the man that burrowed through till his hand was bleeding. A fighting man, Spent six months in Durham jail for thumping a lad a half to death outside the Fox one night. "Thing is he's never had a proper childhood, not with that for a father. The baby inside him never had a chance to grow... I thought of Askew, of the fear and revulsion he caused around him... Where was the baby in him? And I thought of Lak, whose baby was so obvious, held inside the bearskin. (110)*

Kit usually discusses his writing with Allie Keenan. She is distinct for her liveliness and has a plan to participate in drama where she is a queen who does magical tricks. Whenever she visits Kit's house, she will have a good talk with Grandpa. Grandpa has started forgetting everything at a certain point. Kit tells Allie Keenan to do magical tricks to bring back Grandpa's memory. When Grandpa gets cured he used to mock at Kit to hold Allie Kennan.

Allie Keenan plays a vital role in helping the readers to juxtapose the state of Askew and the story of Lak. Almond maintains a logical sequence which elevates the plot. Almond uses first person narrative which is one of the typical characteristics of New Realism. Through Kit, Almond brings young adult's view on friendship and the freedom they expect. Kit is used for this narration. He remembers that when Askew called him to play the Game of Death, he called him to play the Game of Life. He brings out similar incidents in the story of Lak. Askew disappears suddenly from Stoneygate with his dog Jax. Police are in search of him. Kit tells Allie Kennan about his final part of the story of Lak. His protagonist Lak is facing a challenge to bring the baby sister safe to his place. He also tells Lak's mothers cry bring him back lingers in his ears. Kit tells confidently that Lak and his baby sister will reach home safe so as Askew: "I think if Lak and his sister're safe, then Askew'll be safe. And if he's safe, they'll be safe". She stared at me. "Jeez, Kit. What do you mean?" "I'm not sure", I said. "But I'm sure it's true" (154). Kit's Mum and the people in Stoneygate look at Askew's painting and feel for his mother's state and his disappearance. Kit is not able to sleep at night where the state of Askew's mother with a baby and Lak's mother longing for her baby disturb him. Kit goes in search of Askew with Bobby to a cave. He finds Askew with Jax and some mysterious bones around him. He tries to convince by revealing that he is writing a story and waiting for Askew to paint more: "I told the story to the two of them. I squinted, met her eyes saw her joy at Lak's victory over the bear, her wretchedness at the return to the empty cave... Bring them home, Bring them home" (193-94). Askew listens everything about Lak, his struggle and his victory. He also says that there is a person to invite Lak. When the story ends Kit finds Askew was sleeping, for he believes that it will bring a change in him. Allie brings news that Kit's parents are searching him. Kit brings back Askew to Stoneygate: "And we walked on towards Stoneygate, the blackened boy with bone necklaces and painting on him, the good-bad ice girl with silver skin and claws, the wild dog Jax behind, and me between with ancient pebbles in my palm" (206).

Though Kit could not share his experience on the Game of Death to people who asks him, he has them as treasure. He gets a satisfaction that Askew is safe and back to school. The words of Grandpa to Kit will be best words to conclude: "Everybody's got the seam of goodness in them, Kit", said Grandpa. "Just a matter of whether it can be found and brought out into the light" (110). The New Realistic features in the novel may bring connectivity with young readers. Almond uses limited characters and the first person narrative to bring the plot with clarity.

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## AN APPLIQUE OF FOUCAULT'S THEORY OF POWER: A NEW HISTORICIST PERSPECTIVE OF MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S ANIL'S GHOST

**S. Arockia Nirmal Dorothy**

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In a country like Sri Lanka, the factors deciding the division between the majority and the minority are race and language. The rupture between Sinhalese and Tamil is evident since the wake of freedom in 1948 and politics plays a vital role in maintaining that division. The government is in the hands of the powerful majority. When the threat for life is foreseen by the common man, he becomes agitated, resists against power. Depending upon the strength of the oppressor and the oppressed, the fate of the nation is either changed or modified. The killings happen for the sole purpose of attaining power. The power relation is such that it can happen at various levels like i) family ii) politics iii) gender and so on.

Michel Foucault, the renowned critic of New Historicism, is known for his analysis of power relations. For Foucault, "The analysis of the mechanisms of power . . . concerns itself simply with knowing where power happens, how it happens, between whom, between which point and which point, according to which procedures and with which effects" (STP 3-4). The following are the characteristics of power which are extrapolated from Foucault's *The Will to Knowledge* (1998) and *Discipline and Punish* (1977):

1. The impersonality, or subjectlessness, of power, meaning that it is not guided by the will of individual subjects (DP 26; SD 29; WK 94)
2. The relationality of power, meaning that power is always a case of power *relations* between people, as opposed to a quantum possessed by people (DP 27; WK 94)
3. The de-centeredness of power, meaning that it is not concentrated on a single individual or class (DP 27; PK 142; SD 27; WK 94)
4. The multidirectionality of power, meaning that it does not flow only from the more to the less powerful, but rather "comes from below," even if it is nevertheless "nonegalitarian" (DP 27; PK 142; WK 94 [quoted])
5. The *strategic* nature of power, meaning that it has a dynamic of its own, is "intentional" (DP 26; PK 142; WK 94 [quoted])

Foucault's additional stipulations are that power is

6. Coextensive with resistance (WK 95; PK 142)
7. Productive, producing positive effects (WK 94)
8. Ubiquitous, being found in every kind of relationship, as a condition of the possibility of any kind of relationship (WK 94; PK 142) (qtd. in Kelly 37)

Analysing Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* by applying Foucault's theory of power relations brings the following to the forefront. The mechanisms of power operate in the Sri Lankan political arena where the government is faced with problem from the sides of anti-government insurgents in the south and the separatist guerillas in the north. The climate is quite murky and Anil is supposed to be the torch-bearer of truth. Anil is teamed up with Sarath Diyasena and it is Sarath who makes the state of war quite explicit to her in his dialogue.

The first principle of Foucault, the impersonality or subjectlessness of power, means that it is not guided by the will of individual subjects. The impersonality of power thus implies that it cannot be possessed; it can only be relational, residing in the interstices between individuals. If it resides in individuals they will possess it. The so-called center is de-centered and the marginal comes to the centre and again de-centeredness occurs, this time the marginal who came to occupy the centre goes to the periphery. Therefore, there exists no centre as such. In Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, the government is countered by the separatist guerillas and the insurgents. The power of the rebel guerillas is such that they "controlled all roads after dark, so even the army didn't move at night" (AG 239). Sarath puts forth the atrocities by all the three in the following words: "Everyside was killing and hiding the evidence. . . . the government was not the only one doing the killing" (AG 17-18). Thereby, it is proven that the control established by the government is smashed by the counter-actions of the oppositional parties.

Another example of the impersonality of power and de-centeredness is evident in the suicide attack on President Katugala. When complaints are sent from Amnesty International and other civil rights groups, UN expects an answer from the Sri Lankan government. President Katugala who claims no knowledge of organized campaigns of murder in the island is shredded to pieces by a human bomb. Assassinating the President in a highly protected zone is a clear indication of the resilient nature on the part of R\_\_. To intrude such a place with all the paraphernalia of devastation sewn onto him is a clear indication that power works in reverse.

Yet vital evidence from the text is where a common man kills a police officer in the dark tunnel passage of the train journey. It is a planned and executed murder which the man completes in two minutes as they travel through the tunnel. These examples are adequate to prove the multidirectional nature of power.

As far as Foucault's second point is concerned, "Power" means "power relations". For him, "Relations of power are interwoven with other kinds of relations (production, kinship, family, sexuality) for which they play at once a conditioning and a conditioned role" (PK 142). And, "Power exists only as exercised by some on others, only when it is put into action" (EW3 340) (Kelly 66). In Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, when the force relations involve in the process of "conditioning and conditioned role", the term "domination" gains currency and inevitably gives way to violence. As summarised in Kelly, according to Foucault,

*In the modern period, . . . sovereign power has been supplemented . . . by two new technologies, namely discipline [micropolitical] and biopower [macropolitical]. . . . The*

*technology of discipline encompasses techniques of individual surveillance and dressage. Biopower involves techniques of mass surveillance, such as the census, and of mass control (SD 254). (43)*

In order to execute these two technologies, “subject” is essential. For Foucault, “Subject” has multiple meanings in relation to power. In his essay titled “The Subject and Power”, Subject could mean the subjection of men, meaning their constitution as “subjects” and subjection [*assujettissement*] of the subject to the order of the law” (EW3 331) (Kelly 88). Hence, Subjectivity is a matter of one’s relative position in society. For Foucault, subjectivity is constituted specifically in connection with certain precise, historically-constituted “experiences.” (Kelly 92)

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Sarath is the Subject whose subjection and subjugation are well expressed in his combined project with Anil Tissera. He is aware of the possible outcome of their work and the way it will affect both once truth is revealed. As Anil and Sarath start their investigation on the three skeletons by name TINKER, TAILOR, and SOLDIER, Sarath informs and warns Anil that they are going to work in “Bandarawela caves, a government-protected zone”(AG 21). No one can have access to this area. The near impossibility of getting at the truth in a war-torn country like Sri Lanka is forewarned by Sarath time and again. With great difficulty he gets the permit to work in the caves.

It is customary on the part of Anil to tape everything that Sarath tells about archaeology in certain parts of the island. Once Anil asks him about the Silver President: “What was Katugala really like?” (AG 45), Sarath’s reaction is typical of a socially-conditioned individual. The intimidation is ever present in his mind that instead of giving an immediate reply to Anil’s question he asks, “Is your tape recorder off?”. He is unaware that the machine is switched off an hour earlier. The continual insistence on the fact that the tape recorder is off while talking informs the readers that the social conditioning has gone deeper into the psyche of Sarath.

After a few days’ visit and excavation in the Bandarawela region, Anil discovers a fourth skeleton and makes the observation that the trace elements in the body do not belong to them. She concludes that it is no ordinary murder or burial. The victim was burned alive. The fear of talking such political matters aloud is so ingrained in Sarath’s system that even after traveling six hours away from Colombo, he whispers to Anil on this issue. As Sarath explains his fear about the government, he carries the notion of fear to the people around him. Having located the area of SAILOR’s origin to be Ratnapura, when the investigation moves closer to TRUTH, Sarath tells Anil to break contact with Chitra, who has helped Anil in proving the pollen grains from the body of SAILOR. At another instance, when Sarath and Anil are returning from Banderawela, soldiers check their identity cards. Being doubtful they begin to check Anil completely. Whereas Anil is irritated, Sarath stops her, “Don’t do anything” (AG 163). In this way, he instills fear in the mind of Anil. This is what expected of every citizen in a fear-filled, chaos contained land like Sri Lanka. When Sarath gains courage to rebuild the head which will ultimately speak truth for mankind, Anil stops him, “Please, don’t do this” (AG 186) and this hesitation on the part of Anil is expected, for Sarath has successfully passed on the element of fear to his co-worker Anil. She has come originally to find out truth is reluctant now. All this



subjugation and subjectivation attain peak when Anil listens to Sarath's message after her bitter experience of getting confiscated of all her reports in Colombo by the army officials. The words spoken by Sarath reveal every other Sri Lankan citizen's fear and threat for life:

*. . . This is not any skeleton but Sailor. It's your twentieth-century evidence, five years old in death. Erase this tape. Erase my words here. Complete the report and be ready to leave at five tomorrow morning. . . . Do not leave the lab or call me. (AG 284)*

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Sarath's death in the end and Anil's anonymous disappearance prove the existing threat for their life in Sri Lanka. Thus, it is evident that the characters in *Anil's Ghost* carry an element of fear in them.

The second new technology, Biopower [macropolitical] involves techniques of mass surveillance and of mass control. Mark G.E. Kelly's explanation: "they are used together in tandem, but require a device to separate those who are subject to the lethal technology of sovereignty, namely criminals, proscribed ethnic groups, and foreigners, and those who must be "made to live" by biopower—for Foucault, this device is *racism*" (SD 256 . . .)" (43).

According to Jon Simons, Foucault's concept of 'Biopower' includes genocide. He (1995, 42) cites Foucault's (DP 308) descriptions of discipline as involving "insidious leniencies, unavowable petty cruelties" (Kelly 128). In *Anil's Ghost*, the unspoken, unavowable cruelties in the form of images are carved into as well painted on rock. Years ago, during the student days, Sarath along with Palipana learns about the atrocities of the government through the cave paintings that have evidences of genocide. The following lines from the text prove the fact:

*These were discoveries made during the worst political times. . . . Those images in caves through the smoke and firelight. . . . Mass disappearances at Suriyakanda, reports of mass graves at Ankumbura, mass graves at Akmeemana. . . . The disappearance of schoolboys, the death of lawyers by torture, the abduction of bodies from the Hokandara mass grave. Murders in the Muthurajawela marsh. (AG 156-157)*

The powerful government, with the help of army, has undertaken the measure to do the ethnic cleansing: "In 1989, 46 students attending school in Ratnapura district and some of the staff who worked there disappeared. The vehicles that picked them up had no number plates. A yellow lancer had been seen at the army camp and was recognized during the roundup. This was at the height of the campaign to wipe out insurgent rebels and their sympathizers in the villages. Ananda's wife, Sirissa, disappeared at that time" (AG 185) and later on the bodies of the victims of politically motivated murders are washed ashore. Evidence of similar type is found along the pages of the entire book. Even after Sarath's death and the assumed departure of Anil's visit, the same cruelties continue to happen. As Ananda goes to Buduruvagala to reconstruct the Buddha statue, he witnesses genocide and sends reports to the civil rights authorities. After reading the evidence given in the above references, one can conclude that Foucault's idea of disciplining through Biopower can never be applied to Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, for the victims are innocent. The uncontrollable atrocious acts from the side of the government imply that they try to

prove themselves to be the most powerful. This ethnic cleansing happens largely due to fear that the oppressed will topple them down and reverse their position of “Powerful” to “Powerless”, from being an “Oppressor” to the “Oppressed.” This idea brings Foucault’s third notion of decentredness of power into the forum.

Resistance being the next characteristic, the readers may take Foucault’s words as the guiding light to analyse the novel:

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*Where there is power, there is resistance. . . . We are necessarily “inside” power, that we cannot “escape” it. . . . They can only exist via a multiplicity of points of resistance, which play, in power relations, the role of adversary, target, support, or handhold (VS 125-27; cf. WK 95-96) (Kelly 106-07). Otherwise, “it would just be a matter of obedience.” (EW1 167) (Kelly 107)*

The power always expects the individual to do nothing against it and remain falsely polite making no reaction and thereby approving of all that the powerful does on the powerless. It eventually results in micro- and macro-resistance. The inevitable resistance to power at the personal level is what one might call micro-resistance. There is no guarantee that it will therefore constitute resistance at the macro-level too. It is also to be noted that when it is regularly produced it can be anticipated at the macro level. However, when it is regularly produced aiming at a change at the level of macro-power, it has to be strategic in nature the same way as power. To quote Foucault, “To resist, it must be like power. As inventive, as mobile and as productive as power. It must organize itself, . . . and distribute itself strategically” (DE2 267; cf. FL 224) (Kelly 111).

When the individual is overloaded with suppressed emotions, incapacitated to bear it anymore and any longer, he automatically thinks of counter-power. Before thinking of counter-power, one has to reach a balance with it. When Anil says that she wants to come back to Sri Lanka, her resilience boosts up Gamini’s spirit who eventually speeds up the process, “He went over the reports and the photographs of the dead, confirmed what was assumed, pointed out fresh scars caused by acid or sharp metal, and gave his signature. He was running on the energy of pills when he arrived to do this, and spoke quietly into a tape recorder left for him by an Amnesty man” (AG 213). He grabs everything “and collect[s] as evidence, everything that could be held on to in the windstorm of news was copied and sent abroad to strangers in Geneva” (AG 42). By giving his interpretation and signature, he authorizes the report. In a way, this will bring change at the level of macro-power. By being strategic he becomes a perfect participant in the war. To win this war against humanity, counter-power is the only effective weapon. Of course, the unseen resistance from this emotionally serious man does help in making a move in Geneva. While Gamini adopts a different form of resistance, Sarath in order to protect himself adapts a separate way. In the Armoury Auditorium, he questions Anil and forces her to leave the report and tape recorder there with the officials. Standing outside the building, he slaps her hard and makes her do what is expected of her. The ultimate strategy behind all his actions is realized later when Anil discovers SAILOR and the tape recorder inside it. The mystery behind his stunning behaviour is unraveled. The risk involved in his actions is evident when Gamini confirms Sarath’s death. As Mark G.E. Kelly rightly puts,



*Counter-power is power in two directions: it is power in that it implies the regulation of people towards its strategies, occasioning its own sub-resistance, and it is power in that it is acting upon the actions of agents outside its own strategy, in attempting to retard or change the behaviour of people perpetrating the strategies of power it opposes. (112)*

Anil plays the role of catalyst that triggers both the brothers in right direction. The macro-resistance in this twentieth century is a far-fetched notion. The possibility of having such macro-resistance is comparatively high with monarchy than with the twentieth century modern nation. In the Sri Lankan political set up the people are denied the right to speech. The power ultimately aims to destroy interpersonal relationship. Unable to express their feeling, in their dumb recalcitrance, they express their emotions in artistic forms. Palipana and Sarath witness it.

The reason for resistance is very simple. Mark G.E. Kelly rightly quotes Deleuze (1982, 92), who says in exegesis of Foucault, "Life becomes resistance to power when power takes life as its object": all life contains a kernel of unpredictability and adaptability that can pose a problem for what tries to dominate it" (116). Knowing the risk involved in their actions, the characters in the novel still purge themselves into it. The Foucaultian aim of fighting against specific forms of power is not to get rid of power forever, but only to modify the network of power relations in such a way as to change the power with which we are at that moment concerned: "I think that, in fact, the will not to be governed is always the will not to be governed like this, in this way, by these people, at this price" (Foucault 1990, 59; cf. PT 72-73). (Kelly 113)

Above all, resistance has a simple purpose, liberation. Both, Micro and Macro-resistance strives to achieve liberation. Sometimes, the incapacitated individual, like Ananda Udugama, who is unable to express his anger, takes up suicide to be his final resort. This attitude will indirectly strengthen power. Actions of Sarath and Anil will limit the relations of power. Wherever power is exercised, one will find resistance, for the universe itself contains the germ of resistance in it. Lastly, power is ubiquitous, found in every form of relationship. The evidences are,

1. Anil's desire to get the name from her brother.
2. Palipana's mastery over his subject and authority over knowledge.

In the first instance, Anil had been given two entirely inappropriate names by her parents whereas she begins to desire "Anil", her brother's unused name. She tries to buy it from him from the age of 12. Being elder to her, he exercises power and refuses to give her the name. She cajoles him with the promise of supporting him in all family arguments. When he is relentless, she wants to be strategic in her approach and bribes him through all means. She stops to respond when called by either of her given names, even at school. She even refuses to add an 'e' to 'Anil'. The power relation between brother and sister, between parents and their daughter is de-centered when she gets her name changed in her passports, school reports and application forms.

In the second example, the epigraphist Palipana who is the main force of a pragmatic Sinhala movement is deeply knowledgeable about the context of the ancient cultures. By 1970s, Palipana has become the most respected of the Sri Lankan group for his views and ideas helped to prove the international conferences that Asian culture is older. With his students he is too strict that he verifies and confirms all the archeological data proposed by his students. Such a man's position is reversed when one of his students opposes him. In one of his interviews, Foucault says, "if I use my age, my social position, the knowledge I may have about this or that, to make you behave in some particular way—that is to say, I'm not forcing you at all and I'm leaving you completely free—that's when I begin to exercise power" (Kelly 13). Palipana's protégés have seen this act by the master as a betrayal of the principles on which he had built his reputation. Since no one admired this strange act, he retreats physically to a forest monastery. It is the effort on the part of a pupil which prevents the world from moving in a wrong direction. The decentredness of power is shown again.

Thus, the eight yardsticks (i) the impersonality or subjectlessness (ii) relationality (iii) decentredness (iv) multidirectionality (v) strategic nature of power have positive results. In addition, power is (vi) coextensive with resistance (vii) productive (viii) ubiquitous. Ondaatje being a 'theorist of power' has employed all the eight yardsticks in his novel *Anil's Ghost*.

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## REDEFINING THE CHARACTER OF D.H.LAWRENCE'S MIRIAM IN 'SONS AND LOVERS'

*Manali Karmakar*

### Introduction

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D.H.Lawrence's third novel 'Sons and Lovers' published in 1913 is an intense study of family, class and personal relationships. From the publication of the novel, till date, most of us would like to read the novel as a son's intense love for his mother. Paul Morel's relationship with his mother stands as a barrier in his love relationships. Throughout the novel we are concerned with Paul's growth and denouement, while diminishing Miriam, whose existence in the novel is blurred by Paul's suffering and mental trauma. But in a post-structuralism era it is time to question the dominance of Paul as the centre of the story. This paper has made an attempt to redefine Miriam and to nullify the arguments made by a few critics as Louis L.Martz that Lawrence has done injustice to the portrayal of Miriam in 'Sons and Lovers'. The focus of the paper is to justify Lawrence as a writer who has discussed the hidden truth of his life with honesty.

Louis L.Martz in his essay 'A portrait of Miriam' (1988) writes that Lawrence has tried to blur the actual image of Miriam by "over participation". Lawrence is actually preparing the ground to put the burden of failure on Miriam's shoulders. It is through Paul that Miriam is projected. Feminist critics like Kate Millett and Faith Pullin too consider that Miriam is projected in the novel as 'a disciple of Paul'. They have seen the woman merely existing to serve Paul. But an intense re-reading of the novel will help the readers to read the novel from an entirely different perspective. Taking the stance that the novel can be considered as Lawrence's attempt to revisit his own life, it can be argued that Lawrence has done a true justification with Miriam. She is not portrait as a 'disciple of Paul' rather she is drawn as a woman of strong character. Lawrence has given enough space to the readers to make a judgment of their own. Paul grows but his growth stops when Miriam is introduced to the readers. From the chapter 'Lad and Girl love' it is Miriam who grows. Miriam should not be considered as a static character; rather it is Paul who turns out to be a static character. As the novel gains its momentum, Paul has a decline.

Lawrence has honestly tried to give a clear picture of Miriam. She is introduced as a girl of romantic nature. "The girl was romantic in her soul." And later in the novel Miriam is described as a girl who craves for knowledge.

*She wanted to learn, thinking that if she could read...she was mad to have learning where on to pride herself. For she was different from other folks and must not be scooped up among the common fry. Learning was the only distinction to which she thought to aspire. (Chapter 7, Lad and Girl Love)*

Thus it can be seen that from the beginning Miriam is given a very prominent status. She is not considered an ordinary girl possessing ordinary characteristics. She is different and this distinct status of Miriam is not challenged throughout the novel. At this point, it can be argued that Faith Pullins argument that Lawrence has portrait Miriam who lacks intellectuality is not valid.

In the novel we encounter three women characters. Mrs Morel, Clare and Miriam but if we can sympathize with any of the above characters then it is Miriam. Lawrence has taken the pain to draw Miriam in such a way that each and every incidents in the novel drives us to sympathize with her. Which we definitely do not feel for the other two characters. Each and every incident in the novel has made Miriam crystal clear. It is true that in many parts of the novel there are a few sections which portraits the weaker part of Miriam but it should be taken into consideration that "Sons and Lovers", is D.H.Lawrence self discovery novel. Here Lawrence has struggled to come in terms with his own experiences. Hence when Paul said, "*she was cut off from the ordinary life by her religious intensity which made the world of her either a nunnery garden or a paradise...*" (Part 2, chapter 7). This may be considered as the perception Paul had when Lawrence actually had relationship with Jessie Chambers. His understanding of the situation when it actually occurred will be quite different from his understanding when he was writing the novel. So he placed the actual portrait of Miriam and what Paul thought about her side by side. There is a constant attempt made by Lawrence to re-evaluate his own experiences.

When Lawrence was writing the novel, he has the realization that his intimate relationship with his mother made a failure and this aspect of his life becomes clearer through Paul's position in the novel. The entire love relationship with Miriam actually projects Paul's failure. Paul's Oedipal complex could not be projected so well if Miriam would have been erased from his life. Miriam is portrayed with all her vitality. She was young, beautiful and attractive. She truly loved Paul, whereas Paul is always projected as a person struggling with each and every circumstances of his life. In one sentence he can be considered as an escapist.

*Then she raised her head and looked into his eyes with her full gaze of love. The blaze struggled, seemed to try to get away from her, and then was quenched. He turned his head quickly aside. It was a moment of anguish. (Chapter 11, Test of Miriam)*

If the relationship between Paul and Miriam failed, it is Paul who has to be blamed. All the time the failure is on Paul's part. His love for Miriam is always accompanied with words like 'difficulty', 'fight', 'deflated love', and 'torture'. He failed to carry the relationship in a normal manner. This is explicitly revealed in the chapter 'Test of Miriam'. The title of the chapter is ironical, though the chapter is named 'Test of Miriam'; it is actually the test of Paul. The chapter opens with a few questions raised on Paul's character.

*Then why couldn't he bring it off? There was an obstacle and what was that obstacle? It lay in the physical bondage. He shrank from the physical contact. But why? (Chapter 11, Test of Miriam)*

There is a constant tug of war inside Paul. If the novelist is asking question on Paul's incapability, he is actually justifying Miriam's position. Lawrence has presented in front of the readers circumstances when Paul shrink from Miriam and asked her to leave him alone.

*He could not meet her gaze. Her dark eyes full of love, earnest and searching, made him turn away...He could not bear it. 'Leave me alone-leave me alone', 'he wanted to cry' but she wanted him to look at her with eyes full of love. (Chapter 11, Test of Miriam)*

It is Paul who faces the conflict *“Back again he had to torture himself into a sense of responsibility and hers.”* The detailed description of the relationship between Paul and Miriam, and the honesty with which Lawrence has presented to his reader, project the weaker part of Paul’s life. If Lawrence, the narrator, who is also playing the role of Paul, actually tried to diminish the character of Miriam, he would have never portrayed Miriam so distinctively. Rather he would have molded the character according to his convenience. As the novel progresses towards its end, Paul diminishes in contrast to Miriam. Towards the end Paul is not even in the position to justify his own decision. When Paul went to Miriam to put an end to his relationship with Miriam, he could not offer a valid reason, why he wants to end the relationship. The only word he stresses is, *“I don’t know”*. His statement makes Miriam angry and she calls him an *“unreasonable child”*. Paul is drawn in front of the reader not only as a person who fails to make a stand point but also as a man who lacks maturity.

*He was like an infant which, when it was drunk it’s full, throws away and smashes the cup. She looked at him, feeling she could get hold of him and wring some consistency out of him. But she was helpless. Then she cried. (Chapter 11, Test of Miriam)*

Apparently it seems that Paul breaks the relationship and he consider Miriam responsible for the failure but in his deep conscience he is aware of his incapability and this self-realization kills Paul inwardly. He never ever thought that Miriam is aware of the inner battle which he is fighting every day. But Miriam in one sentence makes Paul realize that she was aware of his mental state. *“Always- it has always been so!” she cried. “It has been one long battle between us- you fighting away from me.”* Miriam stands as a powerful character who has a complete hold on Paul. Paul had a notion that it is Paul who is testing Miriam but the actually situation was other way round. Their quarrel bring out of Miriam the truth that it was Miriam who is testing him.

*“He sat silent in bitterness...she had really played with him, not he with her.”*

In each and every step, Paul tried to give an excuse to Miriam regarding their relationship. *“But we’ve had some perfect hours, some perfect times, when we were together!”* He pleaded and Miriam blamed him, *“Never! She cried; ‘never! It has always been fighting me off.’”*

Lawrence portrayed Miriam as a mirror in which Paul’s true character is reflected clearly. Miriam grows up from a timid, shy girl to a matured young woman with a voice. She points out Paul’s fault. It is Paul who lacked the capacity to read Miriam. Miriam has a perfect understanding of Paul’s character. The closing of the novel is strikingly important. Paul is shown as a failure without any goal in life, where as Miriam is portrait as an independent woman. And she had the capability to support Paul. She has an authoritative voice of which Paul is afraid. Paul fears that Miriam would make him her slave, *“...you want to put me in your pocket. And I should die there smothered.”*

The story line is built by Lawrence and gives a clear picture of what has actually happened between Paul and Miriam. Actual circumstances are so wonderfully portrait by Lawrence that whatever argument Paul has given against Miriam stands out as, just an excuse. If Lawrence wants to justify Paul’s actions and



blare the image of Miriam, he would not have consciously make the reader aware of the above mentioned passages in which readers' sympathy is always with Miriam and not with Paul. In reality Lawrence has failed to justify Paul.

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## RELIGIOUS ETHOS IN “I SHALL NOT HEAR THE NIGHTINGALE”

*Dr. P. K. Jain*

Khushwant Singh is a writer who believes in quality. He through his novel tries to bring out what he has seen, felt and what he wishes to bring to his reader's knowledge. He has knowledge of various languages like Urdu, Hindi, Gurumukhi, etc., but he prefers to write his novels only in English, as he himself says, “I write in English because it is the only language I can express myself in and gives me the widest readership.”<sup>1</sup> His writings are therefore world famous and he has gained popularity only by the publication of four novels.

Mr. Singh stayed also in west, therefore his works are blend of both East and West. As Mr. V.A. Sahane says, “Khushwant Singh's mind and personality have been moulded by western education and culture, but he is at heart a Sikh and an Indian.”<sup>2</sup> His work is therefore a reflection of his East and West influences. He himself says, “I am the product of both East and West.”<sup>3</sup> But as V.A. Sahane says he is at heart a Sikh and an Indian, it is applicable in his novel, “I shall not hear the nightingale”, where he displays a Sikh, a Hindu, and a Christian family with religious and social views as are present in Indian families.

His novel I shall not hear the nightingale is a testimony to the fact that Mr. Singh a deep knowledge of various religions. He studied and attended Bible Classes, while working on the Sikh scripture; he studied the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharat and also various religious books of Jains and Buddhists. In I shall not hear the nightingale Mr. Singh has given a description of a Sikh family, a Hindu family and a Christian family, their traditions and customs. In the beginning of the novel Mr. Singh has provided a note in which he has mentioned the meanings of various words and phrases, which he has used in the novel. These words and phrases like, “Pershad” – a syrupy batter made of flour, sugar and clarified butter; “Adi Granth” – Holy book of Sikhs; “Sat Sri Akal” – God is truth; “Wah Guru Ji Ki Fateh” – and victory be to our god; Memsahib – White woman; Sardar Sahib – all Sikhs, etc. This novel clearly reflects the view and faith of Mr. Singh in Sikhism. In a brief but notable reference to Mr. Singh, Anthony Burgess comments on the high quality of his creative work : “The most notable writer from Punjab is undoubtedly the Sikh Khushwant Singh, who I shall not hear the nightingale is a fine Chronicle of life in a Sikh community in the period of 1942-43. We have here a formidable novelist who writes too little.”<sup>4</sup>

Religion forms the substratum of the novel, I shall not hear the nightingale. Khushwant Singh does not wear the moral blinkers with which to view all the characters; but he does establish a scale of values to judge various characters. In evaluating the characters, religion in its formal aspect and in the sense of a practiced morality forms an important consideration.

Sikhism is interwoven in the plot of Nightingale and it is reflected in the character of Sabhrai. Rosanne Archer says while pointing some feelings of the novelist, “..... The book is saved somewhat, however, by an easy style and by the

charm and interest of its picture of Punjab land and the Sikh people.”<sup>5</sup> Only the women characters of the novel are religious. In India we find that women are more religious than men. The percentage of religious women is higher than that of religious men in India. It is the tradition and culture of Indians to believe in god a lot. Women in old age become more religious; they spend most of their time in reading holy books, praying to god, attending religious ceremonies, etc. The same type of realistic woman is portrayed in the novel who is named Sabhrai. She is a middle-aged woman who has a son Sher Singh, a daughter-in-law-champak, a daughter – Beena and is married to Buta Singh. She is the only one who holds every member of her family together.

Sabhrai, Buta Singh’s wife, is the moving spirit of the family. Other religious characters of the novel are Shunoo, a maidservant of Buta Singh’s family. Sabhrai is deeply religious lady, and the sacred Granth Sahib is the source of all knowledge and enlightenment for her. Although she is uneducated woman, even though she has an extra ordinary profound and instinctive understanding of life. Religious is one aspect of her life, which gives her a sense of security in the odd days of her life, when she faces different crises of her life. Mr. Singh himself says that Sabhrai feels that god has special concern for the well being of her family. “She had infinite faith in the Guru and was sure of his special interest in her husband and Children.”<sup>6</sup> Due to this she has deep faith in god and performs all rituals of her religion. Every month she arranges, the first – of – the month ceremony, in which after the reading of Granth Sahib, Pershad is distributed to all the members of the family and servants. Shunoo the maid servant of Buta Singh’s house also help Sabhrai by cleaning the place where Granth Sahib is kept and also prepares Pershad for the pooja. Charanjit Kaur rightly says, “Rituals are not mere ostentations for her, but they are part of the deep faith which forms the source of her strength and moral force, and which sustains her during the period of crisis in her life.”<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Singh also provides Sabhrai sixth sense, which goes to the people of deep religious convictions, through which she saves her family from crisis. At the time when her daughter Beena and her daughter-in-law were in Simla with Madan, and it was the time of Sawan (monsoon), she realizes that sawan is the month of lovers, she feels that it is the time when her daughter needs god’s care she senses the danger and notes the message of Guru for the girls. She open the granth and finds this verse:

“ O, Black Buck, why lovest thou  
The Pastures of fenced – in- fields?  
Forbidden fruit is sweet but for a few days  
It entices and ensnares  
Then leaves one sorrowing.”<sup>8</sup>

It makes her uneasy and she is worried much about her virgin daughter and she goes to Simla as a guardian angel.

It is Sabhrai who appears as a three-dimensional character in the novel. She is the female spirit who becomes the saviour of all the lost souls. She embodies the instinctive understanding of life and the wisdom of the race. She has closer

resemblance to Ruth Wilcox, in Forster's *Howard's End*, who is great redemptive character and represents the value of old English countryside. Ruth embodies the ancient culture of the race, whereas Sabhrai embodies the Indian Culture of her time. By virtue of her moral rigor and deep faith in her religion she becomes a towering figure of the novel.

When Sabhrai was at Simla, she receives a telegram from her husband Buta Singh asking her to return home. The telegram itself makes her think that everything at home is not in order. It is due to her intuition she realizes that something has gone wrong back at home, and it invades her serene and religious world of moral values. After her return she comes to know about her son's arrest, in the murder case of Jhimma Singh. She at once wants to meet her son in the jail but before that she reads the Granth, which she reads non-stop.

Sabhrai thinks that reclamation of the lost souls is only possible by the suffering and self-denial, and therefore she decides to spend the long cold winter night in the precincts of the Gurudwara in search of the word of God. She spent the whole night in the holy place where the Granth was kept wrapped on a low cot. After the passage of night she speaks to herself and questions herself : had she lost faith ? At the same moment she recalls that she has seen divine hawk perched on the pinnacle of the golden dome of the temple. She recollects the vision of Guru Govind Singh, the great martyr who had lost his four sons in the crusade against fanaticism and religious bigotry. She recites the following verse;

“Eternal God, who art our shield,  
The dagger, Knife, the sword we wield  
To us protector there is given  
The timeless, deathless Lord of Heaven..”<sup>9</sup>

After finishing her prayer Sabhrai gains hope and confidence to her anguished heart and then goes to the jail to meet her son, Sher Singh.

Shunoo is the other woman character who has faith in religion, but has blind faith in religion and Godmen. She is the maid servant in Buta Singh's house, and assists her mistress Sabhrai in religious rituals. She has more faith in religion curing of diseases than in medicines.

Shunoo is fat middle-aged woman, who once in the absence of Sabhrai bossed over the servant boy Mundoo. Mundoo becomes angry due to Shunoo's bossing and as a clever trick, pours a strange mixture in her drinking water vessel, when she afterwards comes to know about her mysterious ailment, she decides to speak to Peer Sahib, a Muslim divine, to get a cure of the disease. She does not want to go to a gynaecologist for the treatment; this shows her blind faith in God and Godmen.

Peer Sahib is young man of thirties, he seduces Shunoo by first calling her “daughter”, and he has sexual relationship with Shunoo. This love episode of

Peer Sahib and Shunoo comes as a shock to the readers who have deep faith in religion and Godmen, who are after all men. He writes,

“The two lay on the hard brick floor of the starlit courtyard till the early hours of the morning with only the slumbering sparrows the winking oil lamps on the Hazrat Sahib’s tomb to witness the going on. Not a word of affection or explanation passed between them”.<sup>10</sup>

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This episode shows Mr. Singh’s irony for religion. According to V.A. Sahane, “In moments of infatuation and physical passion, neither religion nor God commands reverence, and unholy alliances are contrasted and formed in the temple of the omnipresent and omniscient God. This naked and bitter fact of human existence is effectively exposed by Khushwant Singh in the scenes between Shunoo and Peer Sahib.”<sup>11</sup>

Another religious character of the novel is Mrs. Joyce Taylor, wife of the Deputy Commissioner. She is a devoted Christian lady, this character shows Mr. Singh’s knowledge of Christian religion. When Sabhrai returns from Simla after receiving the telegram from her husband Buta Singh, Mrs. Joyce Taylor goes to receive her at the station, and prays to God to give her light and hope in that dark and depressing hour. John Taylor and his wife Joyce Taylor both carry the spirit of Jesus Christ in them, and Mr. Taylor tries to release Sher Singh, son of Sabhrai and Buta Singh. This release of Sher Singh comes as a Christmas gift to Buta Singh and his family by Mrs. and Mr. John Taylor. This Christmas gift seems the efficacy of Guru’s word. V.A. Sahane says, “The Guru’s word thus proved extremely efficacious in the most intangible and incomprehensible manner, baffling all rational predictions. The mystical powers of Sabhrai triumphed over the worldly, mundane powers of administrators, and, in a curious and unpredictable way, good resulted from the interaction of the forces of violence and evil on the one hand and humanity and natural justice on the other.”<sup>12</sup>

These characters of the novel *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* are religious and moral. They are portrayed by Mr. Singh without any repugnance towards them. They behave in the way, a person with ethical and moral values behaves, and therefore it seems Mr. Singh has presented these characters with religious values in mind. Sabhrai brings out the social and religious values of pious and religious Sikh woman. On the other hand Mrs. Joyce Taylor brings out the social and religious values Christian woman and norms of the British society. Though she is a Britisher and at the time when this novel was written, they hated Indians, even though she helps Buta Singh’s family at the time of crisis and consoles Sabhrai when her son was in jail. In the end when Sabhrai dies, she comes to console her family and praises Sabhrai for her good nature. When Buta Singh asks her for her advice to erect memorial for Sabhrai, she promises to help him and assures him to let him know what is needed in the city so that the object of charity not be lost.

This novel is therefore a propensity of religion. It shows the interest of Mr. Singh in delineating characters with moral, religious and social values. The title of the novel itself brings about the moral of the story. It is the character of Sabhrai, which holds all the characters together and provides unity to the novel. Love and

faith are the supreme values which author wishes to project through the personalities like Sabhrai in the novel *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale*.

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## TONI MORRISON'S "*BELOVED*": INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES AS AGENTS OF RESISTANCE

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### Introduction:

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Born on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio, Toni Morrison is an American novelist, editor and professor. In her work, she examines the lives of black characters who struggle with identity amidst racism and hostility.

*Beloved* (1987), explores love and the supernatural. The main character, a former slave, is haunted by her decision to kill her children rather than see them become slaves. Three of her children survived, but her infant daughter died at her hand. For this spellbinding work, Morrison won several literary awards, including the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. The book was turned into a movie in 1998. The novel is part ghost story, part slave narrative, part history book, part tribute, part warning, and part celebration. It is a story of failure and triumph, of commodification and resistance. It is all of these and none of these. Beloved, the character is part ghost, part slave who has both perished within and survived the treacherous voyage from Africa to America, the Middle Passage<sup>1</sup>, part Sethe's daughter returned from the dead, part past, part future, part no one, and part everyone. She is all this and more.

The inspiration for Toni Morrison's novel, *Beloved*, is just as simple and complicated as the character of Beloved. While she was working at New York's Random House Publishing, Morrison edited a collection called *The Black Book* (2009), which chronicles black life in America. While editing this text, she noticed a factual account of a Kentucky slave woman named Margaret Garner. The newspaper clipping that captured Morrison's attention wrote of how this slave woman escaped from Kentucky but was recaptured in Cincinnati under the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, which allowed slave owners to recapture escaped slaves even in states where slavery was outlawed. Rather than return to slavery, Margaret Garner killed all four of her children; she attempted to kill herself but was prevented from doing so and consequently was returned to slave life in Kentucky (Grewal 157).

The story of Margaret Garner became the inspiration for Morrison's novel, *Beloved*. Morrison nonetheless treats the newspaper article with suspicion and does not use all aspects of the story verbatim. In the novel, Paul D refers to the newspaper clipping on Sethe and thinks to himself; "There was no way in hell a black face could appear in a newspaper if the story was about something anybody wanted to hear

It would have to be something out of the ordinary - something white people would find interesting, truly different, worth a few minutes of teeth sucking if not gasps" (156). Perhaps abolitionists appropriated Garner's story and published it in order to convey the immorality of slavery to a white audience. Edward Bodwin, who represents the abolitionists, recalls Sethe's trial and the way in which "the society

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<sup>1</sup> The Middle Passage was the stage of the triangular trade in which millions of people from Africa were shipped to the New World, as part of the Atlantic slave trade. Ships departed Europe for African markets with manufactured goods, which were traded for purchased or kidnapped Africans, who were transported across the Atlantic as slaves; the slaves were then sold or traded for raw materials, which would be transported back to Europe to complete the voyage

managed to turn infanticide and the cry of savagery around, and build a further case for abolishing slavery" (260). Moreover, Morrison posits that abolitionist literature did not capture the true horrors of slavery for the writers did not want to offend the white audience. Although the newspaper article tells the story of Margaret Gamer and infanticide, it would not include a detailed or graphic account of the incident. Often graphic details were omitted and replaced with a blanket statement describing them as 'proceedings too terrible to relate'. Morrison, on the other hand, describes Sethe's actions including Beloved's murder in great detail, as well as exploring the causes and the consequences of the infanticide. Morrison states that the project of *Beloved* "becomes how to rip that veil drawn over [these] 'proceedings too terrible to relate' (Grewal 157).

Perhaps slave owners, like the abolitionists, also appropriated this story for their own purposes, in this case, to justify their stigmatization of African-Americans as beasts who could kill their own children. The character of schoolteacher represents this group; upon witnessing Sethe's act in the woodshed, schoolteacher believes that this is what "[happens] when you overbeat the creatures God had given you the responsibility of and that "you just can't mishandle creatures and expect success" (151). In fact, by claiming responsibility over Sethe, schoolteacher has also claimed responsibility for her act: the murder of Beloved. Again, Morrison speaks of how, in writing *Beloved*, her job was to write of these violations, perpetrated by those such as schoolteacher, that nineteenth century abolitionist literature and even slave narratives refused to include.

### **“Beloved”**

*Beloved* is a troubling novel because of the trauma of injustice and oppression contained within it; however, the resilience of the human spirit also occupies the text through Morrison's powerful rendering of characters such as Sethe and Paul D. *Beloved* lends itself to a critical analysis because of the tension between suffering and survival, horror and hope. Despite the cruelty that is inflicted upon the slaves within this text by both their masters and one another, *Beloved* contains a strong thread of hope exemplified by the endurance of Sethe and her loved ones. *Beloved*, both the text and the character, is powerful because of its complexity and ambiguity. Morrison has created a story of a legacy that no one wants to remember and no one can forget. The spirit of *Beloved*, then, is the past of slavery that this novel forces all of us to confront. By piecing together the disparate narratives of the marginalized such as ex-slaves, white indentured servants, and a tribe of Cherokee who would not sign the treaty, Morrison presents us with a novel of the evil people are capable of and the depth of compassion within the human soul. In *Beloved*, Morrison not only writes of the betrayals that tear people apart, but also the bonds that forge them together. Her novel traces the journeys of Sethe and Paul D, who are born into slavery, yet finally escape it and, through their own self-determination and Beloved's intervention, and intimacy with one another. Their love allows them to become self-defining and allows their bodies to become agents of resistance rather than bodies that contain the inscriptions of the commodification that is slavery.

In *Beloved*, Morrison explores issues of slavery, including its effects on both the perpetrators and victims. The resistance to the trauma of slavery includes physical resistance such as escapes and uprisings that exemplify the way in which

bodies are agents. In this novel, resistance is also psychological and involves Sethe and Paul D's repression of a traumatic past and their struggle against the relentless power of memory. Resistance also operates as both individual and collective alliances and solidarity. Lastly, spirituality in the form of faith and love also functions as a key aspect of resistance and hope within *Beloved*.

Throughout *Beloved* Morrison presents us with powerful, resilient individuals, yet she also asserts the power of the community. Conversely, Morrison is careful to idealize neither the individual characters nor the communities in which they live. The Sweet Home slaves are forced into a communal setting as laborers upon the farm; their community is not automatic but, rather, the care and respect exhibited towards one another is an example of agency within an environment that allowed these characters so few choices. Despite their desires and impulses, the Sweet Home men choose to let Sethe decide on a mate rather than enforce their will upon her. Similarly, the slaves plan their escape together but allow one another to decide on their own whether or not they will participate in the plan. Schoolteacher is aware of the community that has developed on Sweet Home and resents the bond shared by the Sweet Home men: "Once he saw them playing - a pitching game - and his look of hurt was enough to make Paul D blink" (220). The Sweet Home slaves are forced to live with one another, yet still forge a community based on mutual respect and caring. Bluestone, on the other hand, is a community of African-Americans formed of their own volition outside of the parameters of slavery. Bluestone residents usually help one another without being asked and keep their doors open to friends and neighbors. Nonetheless, Morrison does not idealize this community but instead presents us with issues of pride, jealousy, and betrayal. Indeed these issues operate on an individual level as well and Morrison is also wary of individualism; she states her concerns in *Playing in the Dark*:

*[Morrison wonders] whether the major and championed characteristics of our national literature - individualism, masculinity, social engagement versus historical isolation; acute and ambiguous moral problematics; the thematics of innocence coupled with and obsession with figurations of death and hell - are not in fact responses to a dark, abiding, signing Africanist presence. (5)*

Indeed, Morrison problematizes characteristics such as masculinity through the rendering of Paul D and individualism through asserting the vital need for community and camaraderie. According to Virginia Heumann Keaney, "The discourse of slavery privileges humanity, autonomy, and participation in a family - by denying these values to slaves" (670). The discourse of slavery values autonomy and freedom in part because of a slave population that was manifestly un-free. Morrison endeavors to deconstruct this valuation of autonomy for it is based on the oppression and enslavement of African Americans. In an interview with Elsie B. Washington, Morrison states that "being self-sufficient, having no group you're dependent on" is "a spiritually dangerous position" (Taylor-Guthrie 238). Even though Morrison problematizes the valuation of autonomy, the power of the community is not idealized and Morrison is careful to assert that a community without respect for its individuals is just as dangerous as an individual who does not affirm the importance of the community in which he or she lives.

The most poignant example of this is when the community betrays and rejects Sethe by intentionally failing to warn the residents of 124 of the approaching schoolteacher and his slave catchers. Stamp Paid is aware of the toll the community's betrayal took on Baby Suggs:

*To belong to a community of other free Negroes - to love and be loved by them, to counsel and be counseled, protect and be protected, feed and be fed - and then to have that community step back and hold itself at a distance - well, it could wear out even a Baby Suggs, holy. (177)*

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To be part of a community is a vital and significant aspect of one's selfhood; as a result, the self that Baby Suggs began to form after leaving Sweet Home disintegrates when she is shunned by the townspeople that she had loved, counseled, protected, and fed. Morrison is careful not to dichotomize the individual and the community. They are not presented in contrast as a duality but, rather, they exist together, and it is this interdependency that functions as a vital aspect of both conflict and resolution. By demonstrating the townspeople's behavior after the feast, Morrison implies that the community that acts against the individual is complicit with a social order that perpetuated the murder of Beloved. In the end, the community redeems itself when the townspeople assist Denver and Sethe by providing food to the starving and destitute family when asked and, soon after, by ridding 124 of Beloved.

### **“Beloved” as a Slave Narrative**

Although *Beloved* contains narratives of betrayal by the black community and exploitation by the white community, there are far more examples of the positive power of community and both individual and communal solidarity. When the Sweet Home slaves plan their escape they function together in solidarity and even change their plans to accommodate a newly pregnant Sethe. However, during the escape, the slaves are divided and conquered, resembling the slave trade and the way in which individuals were segregated from family, loved ones, and even linguistic communities. This segregation of individual slaves was a strategy through which slavers attempted to isolate the enslaved Africans so the possibility of rebellion and insurrection is lessened. Yet, resistance still occurred, ranging from organized escapes such as the one attempted by the Sweet Home slaves to more subtle strategies such as the use of a distinct language encoded in work songs and spirituals. In order to survive and escape their oppression the slaves needed to form a community and function in solidarity. During the escape from Sweet Home the slaves are separated and most do not escape; it is the Sweet Home men who fare the worst: Paul F is beheaded and hanged, Sixo is burned and shot, Halle goes mad before he even attempts to escape, and Paul D is captured and sold to a ruthless slaver, Brandywine, whom he attempts to murder. It is only the children sent ahead who escape and the two pregnant women: the thirty-mile woman, Patty, and, of course, Sethe. Yet the children are not safe, for twenty eight days later, schoolteacher attempts to reclaim the family and return them to Sweet Home, in accordance with the Fugitive Slave Act. It is Beloved who is murdered as a result and even the house number on Bluestone Road, 124, indicates her absence: the third number in the sequence is missing just as the third child of Sethe's four offspring is absent. As for the thirty-mile woman and her child, Seven-O, her story, like that of many slaves, is not told. In fact, Paul D and Sethe do not ever mention her.

Both of the central characters in *Beloved* lead solitary and isolated lives for eighteen years: Paul D travels alone, never staying in one place for long, and Sethe, ostracized by the community for the murder of Beloved, lives an alienated life in 124. Perhaps this is why the love affair between Paul D and Sethe is so comforting and hopeful, for now Paul D has found a home and Sethe has admitted her need for another and found a partner without leaving the familiarity of 124. Linden Peach asserts that the "main subject of the novel" is "the reclamation of a sense of community and solidarity in the face of fragmentation and isolation" (101). It is these encounters and experiences of community and solidarity, the help of a sick Cherokee band and a runaway indentured servant girl and the assistance of other slaves such as John, Ella and of course Stamp Paid that solidifies Morrison's assertion that individuals cannot exist in isolation and that, more importantly, solidarity and alliance are key aspects of resistance and survival.

Like her inclusion in *Beloved* of an alliance between Africans and First Nations people<sup>2</sup>, Morrison writes of another alliance: the mutuality and shared experience between indentured whites and enslaved Africans. More specifically, Morrison includes the narrative of a young white indentured servant, Amy Denver, who is also on the run from an abusive and malicious owner. Amy assists a pregnant Sethe and allows the runaway slave to continue on her journey. As with even the most benevolent white characters, Morrison is careful not to portray Amy as an idealized and prejudice-free Good Samaritan.

In fact, the first thing Amy asks Sethe is if she has any food because Amy is hungry. When Amy realizes Sethe does not have any food, she is about to leave the "nigger woman" (32), as she calls her, to die alone in the bush. Indicating a lack of trust and familiarity, Sethe does not give Amy her real name and tells her to call her "Lu". Amy then questions Sethe about the father of her child and Sethe, again, refuses to reply. In her ignorance, Amy mistakes the silence for unawareness and states, "You don't even know" (78). Amy recalls another black woman who used to occasionally work for Mr. Buddy and states, "She don't know nothing, just like you. You don't know a thing" (80). Amy projects her own insecurities and ignorance on Sethe, and also reveals how self-protective the enslaved have to be. Ironically, both Amy and Sethe know of abuse, degradation, and enslavement. They have more in common than Amy wants to believe, for this awareness would make her cognizant of her own desperate plight. Indeed, this lack of awareness and hostility was promoted by masters such as Mr. Buddy who had much to lose if an alliance between poor whites and enslaved blacks was to be formed.

Yet despite her condescending and seemingly callous ways, Amy makes insightful statements that foreshadow Beloved's death and subsequent return. She says to Sethe while she massages her feet, "Anything dead coming back to life hurts" (35). Indeed, Beloved's return from the dead hurts all involved. Denver realizes the wisdom in her namesake's words and thinks, "A truth for all time" (35), thus universalizing the words of an indentured servant girl. Amy also states, "Can't nothing heal without pain" (78), foreshadowing the pain Sethe will endure before beginning to forgive herself for murdering her baby girl and also referring to slave trauma itself. We see a tender moment between the two young women when Amy

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<sup>2</sup> The First Nations are the various Aboriginal peoples in Canada who are neither Inuit nor Métis.



discovers the lash wounds on Sethe's back. The most profound statement Amy makes is her description of Sethe's tortured back.

Significantly, Amy is the one who describes Sethe's back as a chokecherry tree; Amy is the one who creates this image for it is one that somehow reminds her of her own tribulations. Rafael Perez-Tones writes, "Both Sethe as a black slave and Amy Denver as a white indentured servant know the bonds of slavery, of sexual violation" and, as a result, "the marks of slavery inscribed on the one are transformed by the other into signs signifying an image of fruition instead of oppression" (697). Sethe and Amy also witness the enslavement and deaths of their mothers. Here, both commodification and the resistance to it across racial lines. From the wounds on Sethe's back, a nihilistic mark of torture, Amy invents the image of the tree, a nurturing symbol of Nommo<sup>3</sup>; moreover, she also reinstates herself as nurturer in caring for Sethe and literally assisting the birth of Denver. By assisting Sethe, Amy demonstrates agency in willingly caring for another despite her denial of a maternal role through the assertion that she "been bleeding for four years but I ain't having nobody's baby" (83). Upon seeing Sethe's lashed back, Amy understands the meaning of the wounds, the connection between them, and she is, for once, silent.

The sympathetic yet, at times, callous character of Amy, thus relates to their mutual oppression and enslavement and also relates to the abuse to some degree and states, "I had me some whippings, but I don't remember nothing like this. Mr. Buddy had a right evil hand too" (79). Amy dresses Sethe's wounds with spider webs and, here, the webs symbolize the interconnectedness of these two women and their shared experiences. Amy is desperate for her story to be passed on and instructs Sethe to tell Denver of her. She states, "You better tell her. You hear? Say Miss Amy Denver. Of Boston" (85). And so Amy's story is passed on.

Later on her journey to 124, Sethe encounters other escaped slaves who also assist her. Thus the discourse of slavery meets "the discourse of black solidarity" in which "slaves and ex-slaves depend on, and risk themselves for, each other...One material practice of this discourse is the Underground Railroad" (Kearney 672). Stamp Paid, Ela, and John are all a part of the Underground Railroad<sup>4</sup>. Yet, again, none of these characters are idealized, for it is Stamp Paid who informs Paul D of Sethe's past actions, and it is Ella who leads the community in shunning Sethe. Sethe's initial encounters with these people are filled with benevolence and she meets Stamp Paid for the first time when he helps her cross the Ohio River. Stamp says, "Watch out for that there baby" (91) and this is when the bond is forged between Stamp Paid and the baby girl, Denver. Shortly thereafter, Ella and John provide Sethe with clothing and food and take her the rest of the way to 124. It is Ela who leads the community in ostracizing Sethe because of the way in which Sethe "got out of jail and made no gesture toward anybody, and lived as though she were alone" (256). As a result of Sethe's "prideful" and "misdirected" behavior, Ela says she

<sup>3</sup> The Nommo are ancestral spirits (sometimes referred to as deities) worshipped by the Dogon tribe of Mali. The word Nommos is derived from a Dogon word meaning, "to make one drink," The Nommos are usually described as amphibious, hermaphroditic, fish-like creatures. Folk art depictions of the Nommos show creatures with humanoid upper torsos, legs/feet, and a fish-like lower torso and tail. The Nommos are also referred to as "Masters of the Water", "the Monitors", and "the Teachers". Nommo can be a proper name of an individual, or can refer to the group of spirits as a whole.

<sup>4</sup> The Underground Railroad was a network of secret routes and safe houses used by 19th-century black slaves in the United States to escape to Free states and Canada with the aid of abolitionists and allies who were sympathetic to their cause.

"junked her and wouldn't give her the time of day" (256). Even more ironic is the fact that Ela is disturbed by Sethe's desire to be alone and not ask for the community's assistance when it is the community's negligence in failing to warn the family of impending danger that resulted in the tragedy in the first place. Morrison constructs Sethe as a woman who possesses fierce determination and stubborn pride. In speaking of her escape, Sethe insists: "I did it. I got us all out. I had help of course, lots of that, but still it was me doing it; me saying, Go on, and Now" (162).

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Baby Suggs, however, knows the price of pride and muses, "Nobody could make it alone...You could be lost forever, if there wasn't nobody to show you the way" (135). Baby Suggs throws a feast in celebration of Sethe and her children's arrival, yet because of the "reckless generosity in display at 124", the townspeople "whispered to each other about fat rats, doom and un-called for pride" (137). This is the beginning of 124's alienation from the community that is finalized when Sethe returns from jail and "[tries] to do it all alone with her nose in the air" (254). The community's ostracizing of 124 is debilitating, for "the marginalized discourse of the black community conveys solidarity and support not only through material practices of helping and sharing, but also through the social relations which nurture the individual's sense of self" (Kearney 685). If one's subjectivity hinges on social relations, then rejection from the community may lead to the destruction of the self, and Sethe is clearly in danger of self-annihilation. Leading the way is Ela, a complicated figure who first assists Sethe, then alienates her from the community, and, in the end, leads the townswomen in exorcising Beloved from 124.

Ela compares everything to "the lowest yet" (256) referring to how "her puberty was spent in a house where she was shared by father and son...against whom she measured all atrocities...Nothing compared to 'the lowest yet' (256). Yet, Sethe's torment by Beloved comes close and therefore Ela decides to save Sethe for she "[does] not like the idea of past errors taking possession of the present" (256). Ela functions as a foil to Sethe in that she disavows love and intimacy stating, "If anybody was to ask me I'd say, 'Don't love nothing' (92), whereas Sethe's love is described as "too thick". However, both women share a common history of suffering and a common past of abuse and degradation. Despite the presence of so much suffering, Beloved is a narrative of pleasure as well as a narrative of pain. Within Beloved, Morrison unites diverse narratives that are filled with both pleasure and pain: Sethe and Paul D's pasts are filled with loss and suffering, yet their future comprises a love story. In fact, their union represents not a merging of stories but rather companion pieces, each needing the other; Paul D "wants to put his story next to hers" (273). While uniting the stories of Sethe and Paul D, Morrison simultaneously tells the stories of the Sweet Home men and women, of Amy Denver, and of the Cherokee tribes people. *Beloved* is a narrative of interconnectedness and Morrison traces the way in which these seemingly diverse people's stories are linked, are part of a shared history. Perez-Torres writes of how "the storyteller draws on the voice of community. Most significantly, the storyteller creates community" (702). Indeed the many storytellers and stories within *Beloved* create community in that they contribute to a community of both suffering and resilience.

## Conclusion

Within *Beloved*, there are many voices, many storytellers, and many communities. Morrison asserts the strength and necessity of solidarity while creating a plurality of narratives. The result is a collage of voices, not a set of disparate tales nor a master narrative that denies the stories of many people and denies the possibilities that diverse narratives offer. Perez-Torres posits that Morrison's novel functions "to unite the individual and the world in a meaningful relationship that strengthens individual self-identity and fortifies identity and power for the community (706). I believe Morrison goes further and suggests in *Beloved* that an individual's subjectivity can be formed only within the relational context of the community, whereas the community's power hinges upon the individual identities and strengths of each of its members.

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## POST-COLONIAL ASPECTS IN GIRISH KARNAD'S *TUGHLAQ*

**Dr. B. J. Geetha**

Works of literature that are defined as postcolonial often record racism or a history of genocide, including slavery, apartheid, and the mass extinction of peoples. Critical response to these texts is often seen as an important way to articulate and negotiate communication between writers who define themselves as postcolonial and critics who are not part of that experience. Gina Wiskersays in her introduction to *Post-Colonial and African American Women's Writing* that the indictment present in many postcolonial texts tends to produce guilt or feelings of inherited complicity in many readers. Also, although writing about these texts may raise the level of awareness of both the texts and their writers, some postcolonial writers see reflected in this activity an arrogant assumption about the need for noncolonial cultures to recognize postcolonial writers. Similarly, other critics have noted that critical response that focuses entirely on the essential nature of black or Asian writers may also serve to marginalize their writing by supposing their experiences as largely a product of being "other" than European.

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Girish Karnad is one of the greatest of Indian dramatists writing in English. He has to his credit some of the best plays; *Yayati*, *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana*, and so on. He himself has translated *Tughlaq* and *Hayavadana* into English, while the first one has been translated only into Hindi. Myth, history and folklore form the basis of these plays. Karnad is a versatile genius. He is a film producer, an actor and a TV artiste and a playwright of plays. His *Tughlaq* has been immensely popular and it raised him at once to the front rank of Indian dramatists in English. Today he towers head and shoulder above other writers in this field in India. Karnad's play *Tughlaq* is the first in 'New Drama in India'-a series which will comprise outstanding, contemporary Indian plays.

Modern Indian drama flourished in the sixties in regional languages other than English. Oxford University has launched "New Drama in India" in this series *Tughlaq* is published; it is first written and staged in Kannada and later translated into English by Karnad himself. *Tughlaq* is a masterpiece of historical drama, it dramatizes the machiavellian of Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq who reigned in the 1,300's and is perhaps one of India's wildest rulers. The play is made up on thirteen scenes and is constructed in what westerners would recognize as a loosely Brechtian rather than Aristotelian way, but the scenes relate to each other like intricate moves in a deadly chess game. Though *Tughlaq* is translated into English by Karnad it has all the merits of original writing in English and does deserve a place in Indian drama in English. Its principal claim is that it is one of the most successful attempts made in India to produce a genuine history play in English. *Tughlaq* has to be called a historical play because the principal character is a historical figure and the events which constitute the play's framework are historical events. It is much more than an ordinary chronicle play because it is not just a sequential presentation of facts and events taken from recorded history but a very imaginative reconstruction of some of the most significant events in the life of a great king.



*Tughlaq* is a personal tragedy, the tragedy of the protagonist has involved no distortion of the original history model not many exaggeration or departure from historical facts. Though *Tughlaq* is a historical play; it is more than a study of historical events. The play provides an interpretation of human character in its width and depth. There is an apparent whimsicality of the ambitious emperor whose ideal and understanding of life make even his failures seem glorious. Karnad's play is modern and he uses the conventions and motifs of folk art. The various conventions the chorus, the music, the apparently unrelated comic interludes, the mixing of the human and the non-human worlds permit a simultaneous presentation of alternative points of view. Like Bertolt Brecht, Karnad strives to break the illusion of the theatre by which the spectators become so engrossed in a play. Like Brecht, Karnad leaves the stage apparatus visible, presents synoptic announcements, and has narrators directly talking to the audience. All this compels the audience to respond intellectually to the action of the play and to question it, instead of responding emotionally and merely accepting it.

The plot of *Tughlaq* by no means, is called Aristotelian. The playwright flouts the unities of time and place. The action of the play takes place first of all in Delhi in the year 1327, then on the road from Delhi to Daulatabad and lastly in an around the fort at Daulatabad five years later. The characters are shown conversing with one another and giving information about the parricide and fratricide by the Sultan, and the death of Sheikh-Imam-Ud-din. Only the gruesome murder of the trusted lieutenant of Shihab-Ud-din is enacted on the stage by the Sultan. Karnad's art of characterization is based on the principles of life which is an amalgam of contrasting elements. We can see the contrast between Islam and Hinduism, between idealism and practice, between the real and the unreal, between loyalty and treachery, between religion and politics along with parallelism is highlighted by Karnad to make the play interesting and to show that in politics idealism does not work and that trust does not necessarily beget trust.

*Tughlaq* is a political allegory and the allegory must be unraveled to compare it with the post-colonial situation in India in the nineteen sixties. To stress the point it is necessary to recall, Karnad's word that *Tughlaq* is contemporary, referring to the sixties.

*My subject was the life of Muhammad Tughlaq, a fourteenth century Sultan of Delhi, certainly the most brilliant individual ever to ascend the throne of Delhi and also one of the biggest failures. After a reign distinguished for policies that today seem far-sighted to the point of genius, but which in their day earned him the title 'Muhammad the Mad' the Sultan ended his career in bloodsheds and political chaos. In a sense, the play reflected the slow disillusionment my generation felt with the new politics of independent India, the gradual erosion of the ethical norms that had guided the movement for independence and the coming to terms with cynicism and real politik. (Pandey 26)*

India after holding freedom in her hand, overwhelmed and not knowing what to do with it, or how to go about it. The agile vermin in the nation took freedom over in their hands which resulted in India the post-colonial situation which runs parallel to the one in Nigeria- a post-colonial situation described by Soyinka in *Kongi's Harvest*. Just as *Tughlaq's* ambitious projects for an ideal welfare nation, granting of

democracy to all, patronage to the poor, the learned, and the pious, and the repressions of the revolutionary, privileged and conservative classes, threw the machinery out of gear, to a worse state of affairs, so too did independent India's goals-Pre-Independence dreams, translated into action throw India off the track, to a predicament worse than that before Independence.

Ruling India is an exercise in hegemony as the nations is a confederation of different units, historical or regional, especially historical. They have been grouped, and regrouped under different alien unifying forces like the British. One reason for the failure of independence in India or under Tughlaq is the fact of the states under the banner of nation being heterogeneous-jig-saw pieces put together. With freedom from the alien, under hope of new freedom Pakistan left the Indian Federal Republic.

Similarly Tughlaq could not retain the territories he had annexed especially in the south. Tughlaq dreamed of establishing an ideal state; therefore he achieved the logical shifting of the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad which is in central India. He levied heavy taxes and waivers, and introduced printing of copper coins without government seal and treating it on par with silver coins. These were well intentioned, but unleashed anarchy, corruption and inflation. This situation in the fourteenth century is a direct parallel to the situation in the sixties of the twentieth century where well-aimed policies misfired, and anarchy, corruption and inflation seized India. It becomes necessary here to stress that the attempt of this study is to see post-colonialism in India as it is gleaned through the play *Tughlaq*.

In the very opening scene of the play an old man exclaims, "God, what's this country coming to!" (1.1). This is exactly the question in the mind of everyone in India in the Post-colonial regime. The play also marks adoption of a particular kind of colonialist thinking by the protagonist that leaves no space for cooperation, mutual understanding and reciprocal attitude. The relevance of post-colonial perspective for the study of the play also becomes an imperative when one sees how Tughlaq's approach resembles that of the British Imperialists, "colonialism created non-mutual and hierarchical relations in which the colonizer was always inescapably the self to the marginalized other of the colonized" (Neb, 59). In the play, Tughlaq represents the colonizers with their monolithic, authoritarian and unitary approach to centralize not only power but human thinking also. The consequences of this attitude that result in bloodshed, rebellion and anarchy in Tughlaq's regime exhibit the failure of this phenomenon carry a message significant for the development of society.

L.S. Gill has rightly pointed out certain parallels in Tughlaq's regime and post-independence Indian political and social reality:

*His (Tughlaq's) policy to shift the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad and change the currency, etc., remind of the new experiments introduced in the independent India. The socio-economic measures in the form of Five year Plans, the introduction of democracy, the rough newly framed constitution and many more new national and international policies formulated by its rulers and the inherent contradictions in them are implicitly commented by the playwright. (Neb 58)*

Wading to power through blood-bureaucracy seizing power-and keeping it through repression is another post-colonial feature. At this point, it would be

emphasized that this study makes the worlds bureaucracy in the twentieth century, interchangeable with the name Tughlaq who is its fourteenth century corresponding element. Thus, Tughlaq is believed to have won the crown through killing his father and camouflaging it as the result of an elephant running wild and killed his father.

To safeguard his position which is obviously becoming weaker with the uprisings in the Deccan he makes a move to send his friend Ain-ul-Mulk dislodging him from his place, Avadh. He also intends to send Sheikh Imam-un-din to Ain-ul-Mulk as his ambassador. Tughlaq knew that Sheiukh-Imam-din resembles him that may help him to eliminate his worst critic Sheiukh-Imam-din at one stroke. The shrewd Tughlaq senses an opportunity and patches up with his critic and ensnares him to go to Avadh to meet Ain-ul-Mulk as his ambassador but killed Sheiukh-imam-un-din in ambush to get rid. Tughlaq, later on goes for a state mourning accorded to Imam-un-Din. This political strategy is nothing but his hypocrisy -post-colonial nations abound with such scheming strategies.

The other major feature of post-colonial regime is non-alignment policy which has been prevailing in India and many other Third World countries. There is ample evidence in the play for such non-alignment. Shibah-ud-din and the Amirs get into a consensus to murder Tughlaq during prayer time when they pull their daggers as Tughlaq is praying in order to murder him suddenly about twenty Hindu soldiers step out from behind the curtain drawing their swords. All except Shihab-ud-din are taken away by the soldiers. Tughlaq continues praying undisturbed; and unconcerned. Only after his prayers are over he steps down to meet Shihab-ud-din. Ratansingh, one of the conspirators in the murder scheme, has already intimated Tughlaq the impending danger. Is this breach of trust, or a sound espionage system? Perhaps it is both, rife as they are in the power-obsessed post-colonial age.

Bribery seems to be the force behind everything then, as now, in the post-colonial period. Tughlaq hints at inflation too- another malady of the post-colonial times. He knows it only too well, because he himself has been minting copper coins by the cart-loads-counterfeit money. Thus, bribery, inflation, counterfeit money minting all stalking post-colonial state-are prevalent. Innocent lives are lost, or get killed in the course of fulfilling the whims of a ruler; in this case, because of moving amidst great hardships and against great ordeals to fulfill Tughlaq's desire to evacuate Delhi and make Daulatabad his capital. The over-enthusiastic policy of upholding the cause of the minority as a policy is portrayed, only it is reversed in comparison to the post-colonial era.

Aziz, the dhobi, sums up the entire situation in Delhi which is also the identical post-colonial experience. It is almost an epigrammatic description of post-colonialism-almost in Baconian style, describing post-colonialism. The mention of the word Delhi, and its repetition, fixes firmly in the mind the capital as the source of power or the place where power is vested: the bureaucracy. 'Politics' is the den of, or the gold mine for, power-mongers. It promises all that Aziz lists out accurately. If Politics is the refuge of a certain category of people as claimed by the ancients, it is vindicated here by Aziz seeking it and reveling in. Thief he is and he fits in perfectly in politics and the added clause 'gets them' underscores the fact these things are given to thieves without the effort or punishment. What is noteworthy is that this summing up of crass politics, especially post-colonial politics, which is what this play

is all about. what is this game of politics is all about under post-colonialism is given in grand detail -the destruction and total annihilation of any values; and might and wealth being decisive factors, mania for power and position being an end in itself instead of a means to better life for a nation and its people. It is indeed a fantastic goal for many.

The post-colonial state is not impregnable. It is hollow from within. It is the natives dragging ruin upon their heads and not the outsiders. Death-wish predominates in the psyche of such world in preference to shameful ruin affected by fellow-natives. "... we shall be far, far happier when that python (tunnel) breaks out and swallows everything in sight" (7. 32 ). The python inside the fort is the tunnel and symbolizes the hollowness inside the post-colonial vessel. The post-colonial state precipitates the drain of the intelligentsia- they are exiled or seek exile unless they pander to the state and rise; as a consequence thus Najib is murdered.

Power is infallible-the post-colonial Infallibility Decree! Aziz expands on this point and illustrates it, much to Aazam's disgust. "one should be able to rob a man and then stay there to punish him for getting robbed. That's called 'class'- that's being a real king" ( 8.43). This is another neat summing up of post-colonialism as it exists. Inflation is another major problem and set back in Tughlaq's career. According to the Vizier it is estimated that five hundred carts of counterfeit copper coins keep arriving every day. The Sultan is charged with the legalizing of robbery, and of the situation in getting out of hand. Anarchy is in full sway. Added to this is death of the multitudes. The rich continue to be rich-food is available only in the palace and for the Amirs; the poor become poorer and die. Inflation ravages to the point of twenty silver grains being paid for 'a fistful of wheat'. "The roads are lined with skeletons" due to starvation resulting from artificial famine. Artificial scarcities of food along with all the features described above are attendant in a post-colonial society. Everyone in the Tughlaq's regime is turning against him but he is not frightened. He is rather unperturbed. If anyone rises against him he has answer or action ready. Muhammad resorts to a policy of "Not words but the sword". He admits he killed for power, and that is why his sultanate has become a kitchen of death, but he does not desist even now.

Aziz who masked like Ghiyas-ud-din is ripped apart of his mask. He is proven himself an equal match to Muhammad in intellect and wins his admiration. He traces his progress in detail and establishes the fact that he rose to the present position of a State Guest as Ghiyas-ud-din in Tughlaq's court by being a true disciple of Tughlaq's own moves. The message across the whole last scene is that, through sheer intelligence and unscrupulousness, through resourcefulness and ruthlessness one may ascend to the height of power and stay there. This is the ruling principle for ruling a people. This has been colonial experience. Politics, of the most degenerate kind, is the means and the end because it assures power. What the alien left behind was a people united against a common enemy. What post-colonialism has done is to divide the native into power-mongering groups wielding power over the divided and weak sections of society. This then is the post-colonial experience. This is seen through a span of twenty years in the reign of Tughlaq, five hundred years ago. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, 'let us get the Government of India in our own hands and everything will be all right'. There could be no great superstition than this".

Tughlaq's reign like king Solomon's began in glory but ended in near failure. Solomon failed for the heavy taxes which he had to impose upon the tribes in order to raise money for the magnificent temple which his father: David, had long dreamed to build in Jerusalem. This made him unpopular.

Tughlaq is always conscious of his role as shaper of history, as Prime Minister Nehru was ever preoccupied with India's "tryst with destiny." However, the sultan's lofty view of himself and his empire is not only expressive of the juridical and cultural ideals of Indian monarchy but also complicitous with the idea of unquestionable royal authority. Power can be violent and coercive when the idea of government (a structure of actions upon other actions for desired outcomes) is frustrated.

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## POST MODERNISM AND FEMINISM IN THE SELECT POEMS OF SYLVIA PLATH

*N. M. Shalikabanu*

### Introduction:

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The term 'Postmodernism' is applied to many areas of human activity, including, art, architecture, literature, film, and music. The late 1960s and 1970s witnessed various artistic, literary and cultural productions which may be called 'postmodern' but the concept became a subject of academic study and discussion in the 1980s. An interest in the nature of language and the relationship between language and reality is another significant concern of postmodern thoughts. These issues were taken up by a movement called 'Post Structuralism', emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s. One of the basic tenets of poststructuralist thought is that language creates and shapes reality.

Postmodernism, like modernism follows most of the same ideas, rejecting boundaries between high and low forms of art, rejecting rigid genre distinctions, emphasizing imitation, parody, irony, and playfulness. Postmodernism art and thought favor reflectivity and self consciousness, fragmentation and discontinuity, ambiguity, simultaneity, and emphasis on the restructured dehumanized subject.

Both modern and postmodern literature represents a break from 19<sup>th</sup> century realism. David Lodge identified six narrative strategies generally used in post-modern fiction: Contradiction, Permutation, Discontinuity, and Randomness and the Short-circuit.

Modernism tends to present a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history an example of this being T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" which presents that fragmentation as something tragic, something to be mourned as a loss. Many modernist works try to uphold the idea that works of art can provide the unity, coherence, and meaning, which have been lost in most of modern life; art will do what other human institutions fail to do. Postmodernism in contrast doesn't lament the idea of fragmentation or incoherence but rather celebrates that.

For post-modernism, realism is just an incoherent deluding notion and points a radical indeterminacy. The post modernism had slight traces of modernism. So, a short outlook at the modernism is indispensable.

Pound and his associates exerted influence on the development of American modernist poetry. He moved to London shortly after completing his University studies to begin a 'Revolution' in poetry and joined his erstwhile partner Hilda Doolittle (1886-1961) and with Richard Aldington, codified the Imagist Manifesto in 1912. This Manifesto envisioned poetry focused on the 'Direct treatment of the "thing" whether subjective or objective poetry' that does contribute to the 'rhythm' (Ian Mackean, p.223). Though Pound quickly eclipsed the terse extremes of Imagism and another similarly conceived mode of poetry 'Vorticism' (ibid, p.223), he and his circle consistently tried to purge poetry of the prolixity, verbosity and hackneyed



presentation of morality – in – meter. T.S. Eliot's 'the Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' in 1915, Robert Frost (1874-1963), Amy Lowell (1874-1925), William Carlos Williams (1883-1963) were promoted by Pound.

T.S. Eliot shook the world of poetry with his publication of "the Wasteland" in 1922 which detailed the ravages of modern life in London 'wasted' by war. He became the elder statesman of a generation of formalist poets who pursued a style designed to be appreciated according to the principles of what was called 'the New Criticism' which paved the way for studying literature that privileged the image, the symbol, the paradox, the allusion, and saw poetry in an almost scientific manner of study.

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In such a formalist aesthetic, the knowledge and study of a particular poet history, personality and proclivities took a back seat. 'Poetry is not personality, but an escape from personality', Eliot asserted (*ibid*, p.224). Many American poets flourished in the new critical emphasis on the formal aspects of poetry and they were Marianne Moore (1887-1972), e.e. cummings (1894-1962), John Crowe Ransom (1888-1974), Allen Tate (1899-1979) and Randall Jarrel (1914-1965).

By mid-century, the dominance of the American poetry scene by formalist, New critical modes of composition gave rise to a need for new 'revolutions' in poetry, especially by younger poets who wanted to return to the personal and the experimental. In 1950s, the group of writers known as Beat Writers, most notably, Jack Kerouac (1922-1969), Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) and William Burroughs (1914-1977) tried to reduce poetry and prose to its bare essentials. The 'essential' (*ibid*, p.225) which meant the spontaneity, feeling and message that the poetry offered a window to a sense of disaffection with the increasingly capitalist, conservative, suburban dreams of the majority of Americans and the menace of American Cold War politics. Ginsberg's 'Howl' (1956) shook the poetry world with its wild, unrestrained Whitmanian rage against the machine of America.

The establishment of 'Confessionalism' marked a remarkable shocking to the mid-century and it was brought out by Robert Lowell (1917-1977), a poet who originally wrote formalist verse, and the poetry was soon identified as Confessionals. Lowell's 'Life Studies' (1959) embraced it, talking of his mental illness, his marital strife and other personal problems as a way of achieving a new sort of 'honesty' and 'universality' in his poetry (*ibid*, p.226). Confessionals often deals with real biographical events, real life relations and hidden feelings. W.D.Snodgrass (1926), Anne Sexton (1928-74), Sylvia Plath (1932-63) and John Berryman (1914-1972) were influenced by Lowell. Then 'Surrealism' gained its force.

The Post-Modernist period, stretching from 1945 to present, was known for its opportunity and change. Poetry during the time period was influenced by the many events occurring in society. The Second World War had just ended and it was a prosperous time for most of the world.

Feminism refers to movements aimed at establishing and defending equal political, economic, and social rights and equal opportunities for women. Its concepts overlap with those of women's rights. Feminism is mainly focused on women's issues, but because feminism seeks gender equality, some feminists argue that men's

liberation is therefore a necessary part of feminism, and that men are also harmed by sexism and gender roles. Feminists, persons practicing feminism—can be persons of either sex. Feminist theory emerged from these feminist movements and includes general theories and theories about the origins of inequality, and, in some cases, about the social construction of sex and gender, in a variety of disciplines. They have opposed domestic violence, sexual harassment and assault. The History of Feminism involves the story of feminist movements and of feminist thinkers. Depending on time, culture and country, feminists around the world have sometimes had different causes and goals. Most western feminist historians assert that all movements that work to obtain women's rights should be considered feminist movements, even when they did not apply the term to themselves. The History of the modern western movements is divided into three "waves". Each is described as dealing with different of the same feminist issues.

The first wave refers to the movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which dealt mainly with suffrage working conditions and educational rights for women and girls. The second wave (1960s-1980) dealt with the inequality of laws, as well as cultural inequalities and the role of women in the society. The third wave of feminism (late 1980s-early first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century), is seen as both a continuation of the second wave and a response to the perceived failures. The terms "feminism" or "feminist" first appeared in France and The Netherlands in 1872, Great Britain in the 1890s, and the United States in 1910. The Oxford English Dictionary lists for the first appearance of "feminist" and 1895 for "feminism". The UK Daily News first introduced "feminist" to the English language importing it from France and branding it as dangerous. In economics, they have advocated for workplace rights, including equal pay and opportunities for careers and to start businesses. In these suffocation atmosphere women to become as poets or writers was a great achievement.

The most important women writers were Emily Dickinson, Anne Sexton, and Virginia Woolf etc. Of course, Sylvia Plath is the modern version of Emily Dickinson. Anne Sexton poetry include her suicidal tendencies, long battle against depression and various intimate details from her own private life, including her relationship with her husband and children. Virginia Woolf was a pioneer in the woman's suffrage movement, and through her literature she has changed the perceptions and views of women writers during the 1930's. As Woolf said, "for most of history, anonymous was a woman" (Woolf, 1929) due to the advancements in literature, women no longer go unnoticed and anonymous. In her essay 'A Room of One's Own' she discusses the hardships of being a woman writer. By revealing Woolf's hardships, she exploits fears, inhibitions and struggles that she, and other women writers, faced in the 1930's. Often times the reasons why women authors were fearful of telling the truth and writing, is because they could not stand up to the scholarly aspects of males. Woolf states, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Woolf, 1929). She is implying women must be able to have their own space, i.e. a room of their own. During this time, women were viewed as possessions, the males owned the women. Very rarely did a woman have her own space where she could turn on the lights and close the door from any distraction, such as the duties of being a housewife. She pounces on men as the women of her time were used as

window dressings, staying at home and taking care of the household and child meeting the expectations of the man.

Through Dickinson's imagery of death the lonely life of women emerges. The most poignant aspect of Dickinson's use of death is that women only must live under these circumstances. The men of modern, patriarchal societies go through this act of separation only when they die and become unconscious of their state. In "Success is counted sweetest," Dickinson gives us a glimpse of what it means to experience life as a woman, separated from the successes and victories made attainable only to society's men. She further shows us the bittersweet wisdom that women come to possess from living this reality. For a woman, living such a hollow existence hurts as much as hearing the trumpets of victory as she lays dying, knowing that she will never be able to celebrate that victory with her comrades. In the same vein, "The bustle in a house" shows the empty, separate, and cold mentality that the majority of society has towards a woman's position in society. She again uses death imagery to illustrate her point. The majority of society sees a woman as a dead family member, someone they must forget, sweep up, and someone for whom they must put their love away, never to use again. As depressing as these comparisons may sound, if we consider the lives women lived in the 19th century, it becomes understandable how most would view life this way. Today, by contrast, women's roles have come closer to being equal to men's in our society, yet they are still striving for full equality.

Sylvia Plath was a female poet during this time period. Some of Plath's work is directly related to issues developing in society, while others were influenced by her truly troubled life. Being a woman, Plath was always interested in the constant fight for women's rights. After the war, women's liberation was one of the many issues that demanded change. The poem "The Applicant" portrays how Plath personally felt about women's rights, specifically dealing with male dominance in marriage.

To bring teacups and roll away headaches  
And do whatever you tell it. (Applicant)

The fight for women's rights developed after the war had ended, but Plath was also around to witness the horror of the war. Plath was especially moved by the Holocaust. She used references to the Holocaust numerous times in her works. One of her most famous poems "Daddy" explained how hurt and depressed she became after her father's early death.

I was ten when they buried you.  
At twenty I tried to die  
And get back, back, back to you. (Daddy)

Plath reference's to the Holocaust in this poem to show how much aggression and betrayal she felt as a result of her father's death. Her father's death, her struggle for success, and her failed marriage with poet Ted Hughes, all contributed to Plath's need to portray her feelings in her poetry. As a confessional poet Plath wrote the poem "Edge", which truly shows how confessional Plath is. This poem shows the depression that took over her life as she talks about her want for death.

Sylvia Plath, writing in the Post-Modern society, created her poetry to represent the time period by supporting women's liberation, recalling and relating to World War two and the Holocaust, and proving to be one of the many successful confessional poets of the era.

Sylvia Plath in "Lady Lazarus" focuses on different elements of her reality and exposes them in her own subjective way, adapted to her own experiences. This dramatic monologue may receive multiple readings based on Plath's experiences, namely one may focus on different fragments of her reality and moments of her life. In this way, Plath's poem brings together her experiences both as a postmodern artist and as a female poet.

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The fragmentation of the human body that Plath suggests and also the references to the NAZIS may allude to World War II.

A sort of walking miracle, my skin  
Bright as a Nazi lampshade, (Lady Lazarus)

It seems that Plath was influenced by the war and the NAZIS' extermination of Jews during the holocaust. Based on that historic event, not only does she express her oppression that made her want to be reborn, but also it may be a direct reference to her contemporary reality. Precisely, as a postmodernist, Plath experiences the world as a fragmented place, where loss of values and dehumanized reality cause disorientation (Klages 23)

In relation to Plath's fragmented images one may juxtapose Picasso's "Guernica." Similarly to Plath, Picasso also fragments the human body in the context of war. Precisely, on the one hand, Plath describes fragments of human body or she directly refers to NAZIS' extermination of Jews. On the other hand, Picasso presents fragmented human bodies, suffering, and death. Thus, both works of art may be regarded as an outcry against war.

Plath not only deals with the human body and its relation to her contemporary reality but she also personalizes this experience that her soul is put through. More precisely, Plath chooses the element of death as a dominant one in her poem "Lady Lazarus", for Plath death used to be an experiment, an experience and a condition she wanted to live. Due to the fact that "in Plath's case, we cannot separate the lyrics from their autobiographical context" (Rosenblatt 21), in that poem she describes her personal relation to death. Sometimes the poet's voice becomes one with the voice of the persona of the poem, presenting an individual that had attempted to commit suicide and who feels death close to her in every aspect of her life. Thus, Plath attempted to deal with her inner concerns; like her breakdown and her suicide attempt, as she "could not escape her childhood experiences, fantasies and feelings as they come to dominate her mental life" (Dorsey 80) adding in this way a lot of personal elements in her poem.

The poem also involves the question of gender. As a female poet, Plath exposes her concerns from a feminist viewpoint and her gender seems to affect her verses.

The circle of death and rebirth in the poem may also be an allusion to female postmodernists' aims.

Beware  
 Beware. Out of the ash  
 I rise with my red hair  
 And I eat men like air. (Lady Lazarus)

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As they tried to re-envision what woman is and re-construct the female identity in art, the pattern of death and rebirth evokes a more powerful presence of women. Thus, based on the pattern of death and rebirth, one may claim that although the body was fragmented and treated meanly, women managed to find their place in the postmodern world, as if they were reborn.

The "bee" and the "spider" have, of all Plath's other poetic contents, a highly fascinating influence on her feminist views. These Nature's 'male haters' are so frequently mentioned in her collection of poems that a special attention needs be directed to them<sup>5</sup>. The 'bee' and the 'spider' as both images and symbols hold for Plath a unique feminist significance. She mentions the words "bee" and "bees" 17 times and tries to identify herself with this productive insect as it has the inborn ability to build up a male-free existence. Hence, she never hesitates to announce that

Into which, on warm days,  
 They can only carry their dead.  
 The bees are all women,  
 Maids and the long royal lady.  
 They have got rid of the men,  
 The blunt, clumsy stumblers, the boors. (Wintering)

The "bees got rid of the men" is for Plath a great achievement towards attesting the female potential of establishing a sound community ruled by "regularity and discipline", in Jacqueline Rose's words.

Though there are views that have related Plath's interest in bees to her father's scientific field in bee's studies, yet such views fall short of significance when checked against the poet's specifically feminist reference to them. P. R. King senses this reference when he attributes it to Plath's own search for an independent feminist identity: "The bees, as reality outside her," King explains,

are a mysterious source of both sweetness and danger. They are also herself in her task of recovering a sense of identity—creatures who are prepared to kill to protect their hives, in the same way as she has expressed her lost sense of meaning.

More to the point, Plath's interest in bees substantiates her wish of retaliating the male apparatus of subjugation practiced daily by her own family patriarchy and her contemporary society. She wants to be the queen of her own world, rule and define her own identity and draw the lines of others' destiny: "I want, I think," Plath



explains, " to be omniscient ... I think I would like to call myself the girl who wanted to be God...." .

In addition to the bee imagery, that of the spider also pervades Plath's poetic discourse. It is an ugly insect in comparison with the bees, nonetheless the spider inspires Plath's reactionary views against male presumptions. The word "spider" and its derivations are mentioned 19 times throughout Plath's poetry, a fact which confirms her special interest in the connotative significance of the imagery associated with this insect . The spiders symbolize for Plath the power of creating through destroying others to prescribe a different destiny for them. Spiders are all "women" in the same way bees are, i.e., female insects, or "widows"(Spider, 1956). The spider is, in this context, a strong representative of imminent "Death with its many sticks" (Totem, 1963).

The transformative power which the spider exerts upon its victims provides good material for the poet to muster for her feminist cause. This weak boneless insect is reintroduced by Plath as determined and cunning as it "squint[s] from the center field" (Totem, 1963). Through its internal power, the spider can silently and diligently change and reproduce other objects; hence female determination and aptitude in human societies as Plath seems to suggest. She even exaggerates the spider's authority as it "spun the cosmic web" in which all should follow the new rules—the spider's.

Female though it is, this predator-spider evinces fear in its victims the moment they are plunged in any unwanted confrontation with it. It shows them "its many arms" that are "multiplied" through fear and confusion "in the eyes of the flies" (Spider, 1956):

Widow. The bitter spider sits  
And sits in the center of her loveless spokes.  
Death is the dress she wears. ...

(Spider, 1956)

Plath's appeal to the destructive capacities of both the spider and the bee should not be held as her entrenched wish to inflict death or destruction upon others. It is clear enough that she wishes to underline the competence women have and that which is ignored by masculine prejudice. As did her life, Plath's poems show a woman's tremendous need for psychological, temporal, and physical room, for time and space in which to breathe, in which she can be herself without pressures from society, fathers, husbands, and children. Her poems show the need to escape from the frustrations a woman endures in her responsibilities amid the hive-like frenzy of demands from others. In "The Beekeeper's Daughter" and "Wintering," Plath imagines such freedom and portrays the serenity of virginity and isolation in a world without men.

## Conclusion:

Taking all the above into consideration, one may conclude that Plath's poem anticipates postmodernists' concerns, namely personal confession, questions of



femininity in art and loss of values caused by war. Thus, although Plath kills herself and tries to escape oppression through a death and rebirth pattern, she has evoked important concerns of her time that is the reality of her time.. As a mind in crisis, she seems to face a mental breakdown by relating it to the crisis that world around her experiences. Plath considers death as a solution, which however is not treated as a dead-end but as a means to gain a new and more intense existence. Eventhough, Plath has expressed her personal experiences in the poems she created, they are acting as mirrors reflecting the age she lived which inturn proved her as a postmodernist.

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## HOW *ONE FOR THE ROAD* DOES MANIFEST PINTER'S PERSPECTIVE ON TO THE ABUSE OF POWER?

*Masoumeh Khalkhali Rad & Masoumeh Sohrabi*

### Introduction

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Harold Pinter as a British playwright, poet, actor, director and political activist was a central figure in the generation of post 1956 artists and one of England's leading dramatists during 1960s. In 1947, for the second time Pinter refused National Military Service, this was an early sign of his oppositionalism against war and violence. In December 13, 2005, he received the Nobel Prize in literature from the Swedish Academy. This academy states that: "Harold Pinter is generally regarded the foremost representative of British Drama in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is probably the subject of more academic commentary than any other living playwrights". (Peacock, 138)

Harold Pinter had three different phases in his artistic life during which he invented two new dramatic styles known as *comedy of Menace* and *Pinteresque Theater*. These two styles reflect socio-political theater. Socio-political matters as a recurrent theme in his recent plays aims to show his attitude toward the abuse of authority. Socio-political Theater refers to a kind of drama or performing art which emphasizes a political issue as its plot or theme. It tries to produce plays with the aim of giving wider and deeper awareness of the necessities and possibilities which are needed to change the present society. This kind of theater focuses on specific social abuses as a sign of a deeper illness, such as injustices and abnormalities at the heart of society's basic power structure, of course without stepping over or attacks on the fundamentals of the society.

*One for the Road* is one of Pinter's plays and can be classified as a socio-political theater because it acts as a medium for showing social changes, movements and human beings capabilities of lust for power. *One for the Road* is a short and one act play with limited characters but its theme have been rooted from today's complex and thinkable political affairs. Behind its simple face, it wants to portrait deep political problems that are hiding themselves behind the surface matters. *One for the Road*, considered Pinter's statement about the human rights abuses of totalitarian governments.

This study deals with the abuse of power and authority in *One for the Road*, which was written in 1984 and dramatizes political tortures. It demonstrates how torturers invoke god and the country in other to justify their actions. For better understanding the purpose of the writer Michel Foucault's theory toward the use and abuse of power, Antonio Gramsci's Hegemony and Homi Bhabha's Post -colonial theories toward colonizer and colonized societies and hybridity will be helpful during this study. The present project is a descriptive library research that frequently makes use of secondary sources available on the issue in addition to the plays and the playwright in question. Although is qualitative and the basic approach is political but since the data are unstable and changing, it may use other approaches and library theories to support the discussion where necessary.

## Discussion

A totalitarian state is a modern autocratic government. It is a phenomenon of the twentieth century in which the state involves itself in all facets of society, including the daily life of its citizens. A totalitarian government seeks to control not only all economic and political matters but also the attitudes, values, and beliefs of its population, erasing the distinction between state and society. The citizen's duty to the state becomes the primary concern of the community, and the goal of the state is the replacement of existing society with a perfect society. The word "One" in the title of the present play is very important and will say everything about the rest of the play. "One" refers to one person who is permissible for making every decision. It shows the Dictatorship nature of the play. Dictators compare themselves with the only God. The political power acts as a God in the totalitarian society. There are of course differences among totalitarianisms, not only in ideology but in practice. Tajo in Japan, Mussolini in Italy, Hitler in Germany and Stalin in Russia all were different from one another. Committing crime for keeping power is the best feature in these systems under the name of democracy. Perhaps the most comprehensive characterization of a liberal civilization is that it is one in which institutions fortify freedom of mind and contribute to the enrichment of individual experience.

The individual, from this point of view, is not a mere biological organism or an undifferentiated unit of a herd but he is a social creature capable of acquiring a distinctive personality and of giving rational assent based of the fruits of his experience to the kind of institutional world in which he lives. So individual has a right in society but in totalitarian states there is not such right for individual freedom of speaking, thinking and living (Hook 147). Torture is almost universally considered to be an extreme violation of human rights by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The play takes place in a room in a house during the course of one day, morning, afternoon or night, but the location of the room is unspecified. The furniture in the room, a desk and a machine used as a telephone intercom, and the bars on the windows, as illustrated by the premiere production photographs, suggests that the room in a domestic house has been converted into an office and that the house functions as a prison. It dramatizes the abuse of authority. *One for the Road* is the story of Gila and her husband Victor are separately interrogated by Nicholas, they have been tortured, and their life is completely damaged and broken. This one act play has four characters, included: Nicholas (forty years old), Victor (thirty years old man) Gila (thirty years old woman) and the seven years old son, who have called Nicky.

The most interesting point is that both torturer and family's little boy have the same symbolic names with the same symbolic meaning, Nickolas and Nicky. Nickolas for torturer who is older and from Homi Bhabha's point of view acts as a colonizer and Nicky who is a little child and acts as a colonized individual. The meaning of both Nickolas and Nicky refer to victorious people. But among them who will be the real victorious man? Nickolas as a torturer and colonizer thought that he won the game but real winners are victor's family and more than anybody else, Nicky won the game. In this kind of totalitarian societies, colonizers attempt to marginalized minority and build a new hybrid culture. (Booker, 154)

Pinter tried to make the names non-specific, but almost certainly is not unaware that both the colonizer( torturer Nicholas) and colonized( child Nicky) share a common name, suggesting perhaps that different circumstances interchangeably find them in reversed positions. *One for the road* is Pinter's the most brutal play. All of the aspects in this one act play show the crimes of the totalitarian states. A man tortured physically and mentally is reduced to conformity. The context of the play is explicitly state terrorism, a man is arrested by soldiers who damage his home, rape his wife and kill his son but the setting is a conventional business office and the nationality of the man is left blank. Giles Gordon in *Power, No Glory* mentioned, Pinter's use of language, words, sentences and even the pauses between syllables in this short play is as honest as ever but what perhaps is new, is a destroying moral face. Nicholas is the head of the secret or maybe not secret police in a country that could be and probably is anywhere which is not to say anywhere but everywhere.

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The torture in *One for the Road* is entirely verbal. The crime is not stated less an accidental or devious omission than to emphasize Pinter's view that the world is increasingly a police state that if those who control it don't like your face, your politics or your style, you are better off head. Nicolas hates his victims too, for having used their minds or their intellectuality. Michel Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punishment* tried to describe the historical movement through which prisoners physical punishments were replaced with more subtle techniques. He argues that in the modern world power is not less pervasive but it is however more subtle and less visible. He believes that the original nature of the torture and punishment refers to keeping power. Torturer for keeping his state punishes the colonized, sinless individuals. *One for the Road* is Pinter's most horrible play; it floods the mind with despair, the eyes with tears, the stomach with sickness and the heart with dread. In this play, words and language fail to unite the characters in any kind of understanding that sense in the other words they are weapons for destruction.

Prentice notes at the end they learn they are free but their child is dead. Pinter dramatizes this play for the people without choice or anyway to defend themselves against the abuse of authority and totalitarian states or in better word political power. In an unequal competition between the torturer and people, Pinter can easily squelch the fractal geometry operates here to reveal even more nakedly the insubstantial identity of brutalizes. *One for the Road* is a battle between power and powerlessness. This injustice battle ends to the victory of power over powerlessness. Nicholas is a man who believes that it is right for him to possess his power because he believes he is acting for his country legitimately and properly. Nicholas also cheerfully identifies himself as liking the ordinary living things of life, nature, trees, and things like them: "you know, old chap, I do love other things, apart from death. So many things, Nature, Trees, things like that. A nice blue sky. Blossom"(Pinter plays 231).

Danger enters when identity, the self, is so inextricably equated with country, and cause that country, and cause supply the whole identity and meaning of life. The torturer lacking the consciousness of the falsity of that equation basic to any other self-knowledge remains unable to act otherwise than as he does. Danger is compounded by habit (Prentice 247). Pinter believes the audience's fear is for not only the victim, but also fear born of recognition of them as interrogator, because of thinking the joy of having absolute power. Nicholas declares that: "which sides do

you think God is on?" (Pinter plays 224). Nicholas believes God is on the side of the state not the dissidents because he continues that: "the state's business is to cleanse the world for God"(Pinter plays 226). Gordon notes for Pinter Nicholas religion references, seem financial not merely approving, as associated these days with Middle East countries, yet Pinter would stress that the setting could still be almost anywhere in the world today, where unfortunately such religion ideological and other anti-intellectual fanaticism is all widespread is all too widespread( 136). God is a symbol of power and Nicholas by calling himself as a God wants to insist on his power and Victor's powerlessness. For Nicholas, religion and national patriotism are fused. Pinter's recent portrayal of religion consistently aligns religion with that fanaticism which provides those in powers with moral justification to oppose those who do not subscribe to their religious beliefs. Nicholas establishes one cause for Victor's detention with the accusation, "you are not a religious man, and I take it?"(Pinter plays 224).

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The title, *One for the Road*, suggests that there is no road ahead for Victor and Gila. At another level, given the claustrophobically sealed interrogation room only a one way road opens for Nicholas. In an imperialism society just one person should be a decision maker and run his society. But he has no way of knowing that the very sources which supply his total power set him upon a fixed course which admits no change in direction or self. The dominant belief in totalitarian society is that they are the owners of everything and individuals must live and think according to these owners. There is no institutional provision for freedom of choice, without which genuine individuality is impossible (277). Pinter's *One for the Road* focuses on death by torture and what may be worth than death, the irreparable and irrevocable brutalization of those who survive torture that gray area, an extension undeclared war and self-sanctioned by those appareled in the vestments of power seized in political and religious conflicts around the globe. According to psychological criticism, Nicholas is a symbol of repressive conscience. The forces of Eros and Thanatos, battle against each other. Thanatos invariably seizes all power to destroy whatever Eros can build, and then claims Eros's desire and ecstasy for its own. The seemingly irreconcilable warring opposites require that the forces of Eros recognize the extraordinary and tantalizing power of the Thanatos(Prentice 317).

Gramsci, leading Italian Marxist, identified two quite distinct forms of political control: domination which referred to direct physical coercion by police and armed forces and hegemony which referred to both ideological control and more crucially, consent. He assumed that no regime regardless how authoritarian he might be, could sustain itself primary through organized state power and armed force. By hegemony Gramsci meant the permeation throughout society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations. (Gramsci's Hegemony, theory and Ideological Role, 144)

## Conclusion

Authoritarian states have two ways for torturing innocent people: verbal or physical or direct or indirect ways. *One for the Road* is a political metaphor, implicitly critical of abuse of authority. It involves process of physical and mental torture. So this one act play shows both physical and mental torture and because of this reason it is called the most brutal play by Pinter.



As it is clear from the title of the play just one person will be permissible for continue the road and it is one of the most important characteristic of every totalitarian society. It shows a conflict between power and powerlessness. Human right is meaningless; they even invoke God in order to justify their actions. This play is about the annihilation of a family included: father, mother, and a little boy by an interrogator who acts because of his country by the aims of cleaning his country from the enemies of the state. According to Gramsci, Foucault and Bhabha just "One" person is a decision maker in every totalitarian society.

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## PORTRAYAL OF R.K NARAYAN'S WOMEN CHARACTERS IN THE LIGHT OF FEMININE UPSURGE IN INDIA

*Dr. Swetha Rathi*

### Introduction

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Savitri, the main protagonist of *The Dark Room*, is one of the few women in Narayan's works as a wholly who also provides the main perspective and point of view in the novel. She is seen from the inside. Compared to Rosie and Daisy who are more complex women characters, Savitri is simpler. Narayan presents her as rebellious, but in the end, two powerless to subvert.

We have Savitri surrounded by many minor female characters who present a contrast and present us a complete picture of women in the orthodox milieu of Indian society i.e. upper class, middle class Malgudi, in the later 1930's. She is contrasted first with her two friends, Gangu and Janamma who are at the two extremes of traditional female society. Janamma acts absolutely to rule.

*"As for me, I have never opposed my husband or right. It is wife's duty to feel so."*

Gangu, on the other hand, is an eccentric, whose trendy husband claims to be a champion of women's rights. Yet her lifestyle is within the demanding standards of the community. She was tolerated in the Extension. She was interesting. Will all her talk, she was religious visiting the temple regularly, and she was not immoral. Savitri is placed somewhat between the two: she is fascinated by Gangu but she obeys Janamma. Unlike Gangu her life is ordered and arranged around her family, but unlike Janamma, she can be critical of her husband, Ramani, and she has her own forms of protest against him.

All three women, however, being traditional wives are contrasted with the ambiguous Shantabai who has few traditional Kinship ties. Can we believe her when she says that she was married young to her cousin, a gambler and a drunkard, whom she left at the age of 18 because he would not change. Her parents would not accept this and so she was forced to leave her parental home. She has managed to pick up a B.A degree, yet drifts from one job to another. Most of all she contrasts with Savitri because she lives from day to day on makes life philosophy without apparent commitment or responsibility.

*"Dead yesterday and unborn tomorrow. The cup of life must be filled to brim and drained. In to this universe and why not knowing.....i am as wind along the waste."*

Shantabai manages to keep afloat only through her comic illusions of emotional independence, her financial position is entirely precarious, and depends on Ramani's attachment to her. Shantabai has not been given an indepth portrayal. Her life is under a shadow. It is Savitri who links herself with Shantabai with brutal insights.

*"The prostitute changes her men, but a married woman does not, that is all, but both earn their food and shelter in the same manner."*

Narayan also provides a contrast between Savitri as high caste woman and Ponni as a lower-caste woman, further clarifying Savitri's predicament. Ponni is both contrasted and linked with Savitri. Ponni not only stands up to her husband; she can not be oppressed intimidated by the male world. In this she is far more free than Savitri and Shantabai. She is the only one in the novel who genuinely attempts to help Savitri find the life of independence she wants, at the same time respecting and safeguarding the privacy she needs. She tells the priest.

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*"You can see her and take her in good trust and on our word, and if you find anything wrong with her, you can dismiss her. There are questions which hurt one, you must not ask them."*

Thus Ponni alone is given that extra dimension of sympathy. This throws into relief the impossibility of this friendship across caste and class; and therefore of Savitri's profound loneliness when she returns home to Malgudi.

The core of the novel examines Savitri's attempt to assert her independence and her failure in this. The two dark rooms in the novel are crucial in symbolizing this conflict. The dark room in the house, next to the store, is where Savitri withdraws in protest against Ramani's treatment of their son. She withdraws from all responsibilities and merely lies there with her face to the wall withdrawn into herself. Narayan tells us nothing of what goes on in her mind at this time. We are made more aware of what goes on in the household, for she remains its centre. The cook revels in his temporary freedom. Ramani demonstrates his clam indifference by whistling loudly within hearing of the dark room. The children are distressed and frightened at first. Savitri's withdrawal is a disturbance of family life, not a serious threat of disruption. The dark room is within the house, surrounded by the family. It implies a limited privacy and a limited protest. To her it is emblematic of a depression of spirits. Ramani calls it "crude sulking."

When she leaves Ramani, she has gone far beyond merely protesting against her husband's bullying ways. She first of all insists that he should change his way of life and give up Shanta Bai, whom she describes his harlot; when he objects, she castigates him for his impurity and refuses to be obliged to him or to anyone else for food and shelter. From this point on comes the realization that a married woman and a prostitute both earn their food in a similar manner. It never occurs to her to consider her contribution to the family as wife, mother and housekeeper as being of any economic value. Narayan places Savitri's moral dilemma as the pull between suddenly experienced individualistic notions, which she formulates in rigorous terms. No one who could not live by herself has a right to live and the traditional belief of her place in the family and of the sin of taking back to a husband and disobeying him.

The second dark room in the novel clarifies and questions Savitri's apparent and brief achievement of that right to live. When she finally gains employment at the Murugan temple, she is forced to live in the shanty at the corner of the temple corridor. It is a kind of a store, where the pedestal for carrying out the image in processing it is kept. It is a place where very little priest says that he is giving it to

her as a special concession but all the same he makes it a condition of her employment there. Savitri accepts knowing that it is the lesser charity. If not here, she will have to live either at Ponni's or the priest's house.

We see that Shantabai also acquired a room in the place of her work. It was entirely because of Ramani's concession. She displaces the watchman who has been living there and inconveniences the other members of the staff. The room is fitted up with Savitri's favourite pieces of furniture. This she considers her home. We find that when Savitri left Ramani, she claimed that she would rather live and die under the sky than be obliged to any man. She achieves this very briefly, for a single afternoon at the temple. She had a short sense of victory but her one night in the second dark room, within the temple shanty, is a final and frightening encounter with the implications of her choice to live alone and she is defeated. We did not know what she thought when she was in her first dark room within her own house. But we are made privy to her inner conflict. Slowly and painfully comes the realization that she can not after all live without the supports of her home and family.

*"I am like a bamboo pole which can not stand without a wall to support it. This is defeat and I accept it. I am no good for the fight."*

## Conclusion

Thus this paper brings out the predicament of certain women of that particular time, attempting to live a life of independence. In Narayan's own formulation, a middle class woman from an orthodox society is victim of the circumstance: either she must live within society by accepting its norms or she must leave it altogether, in which case she can be supported only by her own inner resources. Shantabai and Savitri in fact are seen to balance each other, each losing out in one way or another, both are victims. Savitri can manage a minimal economic independence, but emotionally she is still bound. Shantabai apparently enjoys her emotional independence. Shantabai is wind along the waste. Savitri is bamboo pole.

The novel ends pessimistically. Savitri accepts defeat. It is quite clear that the liaison between Ramani and Shantabai will continue and that Savitri is too powerless to intervene again. All this falls within the paradigm with which Narayan began the book.

We intend to bring the women out of pall of oblivion and see whether or not they are substantial human beings with sparks of revolt and with desire to ride over the crests of Patriarchal set-up. It is a presentation of bold women as well as timid women as if a compromise between boldness and timidity.

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## CHALLENGES OF LARGE HETEROGENEOUS CLASSES – A CASE STUDY IN E1 CLASSES OF RGUIT R.K.VALLEY. RGUKT

**B. Sreekanth Reddy**

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The two words large and heterogeneous are quite different, but we consider them as one in the present context. These two features coincide often. Large classes are almost invariably heterogeneous, and are a source of problems and challenges. Many ELT professionals encounter these heterogeneous classrooms, so a discussion of these problems and ways to overcome them will be of great help to many ELT professionals.

The concept or idea of the word 'large' is relative and may vary from place to place. In many colleges around 50 students may be a healthy strength. But in RGUKT each Engineering classroom has 68 students. This context offers a great challenge to the teacher in order to handle the E1 (1<sup>st</sup> year Engineering) classroom students.

**Heterogeneous classes:** - A 'heterogeneous' class is one that has different kinds of learners in it. In fact each and every class is heterogeneous, since no two individual learners are exactly similar. Majority (85%) of the students hail from rural background, hence learning and mastering English is a major challenge for them. At the same time there other students (15%) who hail from sound academic background. So it is a challenge for the teacher who has to modulate his teaching strategy based on the mixed abilities or mixed composition of the classroom students. Therefore these large heterogeneous classes present special problems for both teachers and learners. Indirectly mixed learning abilities of the students also affect the way teachers teach. The teacher has to constantly review his style of teaching keeping in view the mixed learning capacities of the students.

The reasons for the diverse learning capacities of the students in a heterogeneous class are due to the following factors:

- Language – Learning ability.
- Cultural background.
- Attitude of the learner
- Mother tongue
- Intelligence
- Motivation
- Interest
- Age / maturity

All the above factors affect both the teacher as well as the students in the teaching learning process. These differences can give rise to some problems or challenges. Most probable issues that crop up in heterogeneous classes are:-

1. **Discipline** – Due to the large strength of the students, maintaining discipline among the students in the classroom is a major issue.
2. **Assignments** – Both, allotting the assignments and correcting them on daily basis is a herculean task.
3. **Ensuring Effective learning for all** – The heterogeneous class is a mixture of dull, average and bright students. Due to the large size of the class, teacher may not be able to vary his teaching methodology according to the demands of the students. Also ensuring that each student has learnt or is learning is very difficult. The teacher cannot guarantee the fulfillment of the concept.
4. **Materials** – Usage of teaching aids and authentic material may not be possible for a large class. In many cases the limited photocopies of the teaching aid or activity may not reach each and every student.
5. **Individual awareness** – Allocation of personal attention towards students is a major challenge in large heterogeneous classrooms. There are some slow learners who need personal care, advice and guidance of the teachers, but it is almost impossible to give individual attention in a large class. Even if the teacher is interested, sufficient time may not be available.
6. **Students participation** – Due to the large strength of the class, teacher may not be able to engage all students in an activity. If he engages then there may be chaos in the classroom. More over it consumes a lot of time. Ex – In a class of 70 students, it takes 70 minutes for a JAM session. For feedback it takes another 30 minutes. The teacher may be exhausted for such lengthy sessions.

But somehow we have to accept the challenge and overcome this hurdle of large heterogeneous classes. Before trying to solve the problems, we tried to pool up the challenges and categorize them into groups, because many of them are interdependent – Very important, Important, Least important

**Very Important:** - These are several issues which need immediate attention and action

- Effective learning for all
- Materials
- Interest
- Discipline

**Fairly Important:** - These issues are to be dealt with but are not of top priority

- Individual awareness
- Participation of students
- Assignments

**Least Important:** - These are least significance; these issues can be rectified if the serious issues are effectively resolved.

Similarly all of us can pool up the issues and challenges and categorize them. After that we can brainstorm over all the issues and come up with various alternative solutions. After a lot of brainstorming, the following feasible solutions were accepted for implementation.

### Probable solutions to the above mentioned challenges:-

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1. **Discipline:** - These problems are mainly caused by boredom and lack of challenges. These can be overcome by varying the tasks and content materials. The students should be kept busy with the content, so the teacher should design and come up with various interesting and challenging tasks.
2. **Assignments:** - The teacher can form study groups comprising of mixed abilities. Utilize the help of the bright students in correcting as well as guiding the slow learners to improve. In this way slow learners don't feel shy to get their doubts clarified.
3. **Interest:** - Interest is the mother of all knowledge. So try to come up with innovative ideas and make the activities more interesting and provide variety, involve students – their ideas, opinions and experiences. Make use of open ended tasks. Sometimes giving away gifts to winning groups, or novel ideas can boost interest in students.
4. **Ensuring Effective learning for all:** - All the students may not participate in the learning process. There may be many reasons such as shyness, fear, etc. So the teacher should not force the students but ensure that he gives minimum but compulsory participation. The strategy of compulsory plus optional tasks allows learners to decide for themselves what quantity of content and level of challenge to aim for. These activities help us to make procedures more flexible and enable the learners to adapt themselves to the tasks more effectively.
5. **Materials:** - Text book materials are homogenous and are often needed to be supplemented by authentic teaching aids in order to add interest and get more participation from the students. One picture is better than ten thousand words. So use authentic materials such as magazines, newspapers, posters, video clips, etc to make the materials more lively and interesting.
6. **Individual Awareness:** When students are engaged in collaborative activity such as pair work, group discussions, etc, the teacher can go around the class observing each pair of students and sometimes talk to them personally for a brief talk. Individualized reading or writing provides a chance to know about the individuals. Allotting assignments are one of the ways to give personal attention to slow learners. Similarly allotting a diary and regular follow up of these students can be fruitful.
7. **Participation:** - Students' motivation can be raised by engaging them in a collaborative and individual task, open ended cues, JAM sessions, Group Discussion can ensure students participation. Before teaching anything, tell about the importance of that topic or concept and its application. This may create

interest and the student will actively participate in the teaching – learning process.

### **Conclusion:**

Large heterogeneous classes are mostly problematic and challenging, but they have their own advantages as well and can be used to solve our problems. But it is up to the teacher to treat large heterogeneous classes as a problem or a challenge.

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### **Optimistic view of large heterogeneous classes:-**

1. Such classes provide rich pool of human resources. The individual may share life experiences, knowledge, opinions, ideas, interests etc
2. Educational exchange of values ; co-students get to know each other's values, personalities, culture and thereby increase their own knowledge and awareness of one another. Develop tolerance and understanding
3. As the teacher cannot attend to each and every student, the students can organize and help themselves by self teaching and peer teaching. It fosters an atmosphere of collaborative and co-operative learning.
4. These heterogeneous classes are more challenging and interesting to teach, it provides great opportunity for creativity, innovation and enhances professional development.

### **Large heterogeneous classes – Recap of some innovative teaching solutions**

- Vary your topics, methods
- Make activities interesting
- Encourage collaboration
- Personalize
- Use compulsory plus optional instructions
- Use open-ended cues

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## **A TEACHERS VIEW ON STUDENT'S ENGAGEMENT IN A TECHNOLOGY ORIENTED CLASS ROOM**

***Dr. P. Annapurani***

### **Introduction**

English has an overwhelming presence globally and the English-language learners include one third of the world's population (Graddol 1997). The demand for English in Indian education increased when the Indian economy was opened up for globalization and it was perceived that English would open up global opportunities (Das 2005). English-speaking countries divided the English language capabilities of people into two. One, people who like to live in English-speaking areas and the other as people who do not want to live in English speaking areas. The divide between them is in the terminology, qualifications and applications of the English language. English plays an important role in non English-speaking countries as English is a necessary and important part of education for careers in international organizations. Many models of simplified English were suggested or developed for international communication. English teachers teach English with a view of transforming learners towards globalization. This study recommends English language Teachers on the use of computer assisted instruction in their teaching methods.

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This research work further aims to find gaps in providing practical strategies for English teachers on teaching the language. This work also discusses on-line teaching methods of English as another major source for language learner assuming students would be able to learn English in a better and comfortable way. Teaching English is one of the most challenging tasks since the quality of learning outcomes is dependent on the teachers individual abilities and skills. Teachers are the backbone in any system of English language teaching. Various factors contribute to a wanting standard in English language and varies from place to place. Teachers find it difficult with unmanageable numbers, poor classrooms, poor motivation, lack of support. The intellectual challenges and pressures when the syllabi is not properly defines is also an important factor. Such factors interfere with the teaching of English (Mohammed, The Hindu, 1995). Generally, the teachers of secondary level are found to be less competent in teaching the language due to many reasons. The Oral and reading competencies of these teachers are poor (Franklin, 1997, P. 246) and they do not have a clear picture on the aims of teaching the English language. The teachers are used to dividing the student's timetable in order to keep them busy fearing trouble from the higher authorities. Students inherently are found to be incompetent in English due to this lack of skill-oriented English teaching. Therefore an empirical study of language skills is essential and its proper application to learning outcomes is necessary.

### **English and Computers**

English is a global language in a multilingual country, English is considered a symbol of social status and family prestige. The demand for English Medium in schools continues unabated where higher fees is not a restraint. Success in the job and marriage market is equated with the fluency of English (Prabhala, The Hindu, 1994). English is a passport to a better job and a better life. English and computer knowledge go together. Computers have a role in improving services by empowering



them to access information and knowledge. Computers cover the set of activities that facilitates capturing, storage, processing, transmission and display of information by electronic means. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2002) defines computing as a combination of manufacturing and services industries. Computers service rural communities for enhanced opportunities by access to market information.

Computers also help rural communities by the use of government services. A number of important factors prevent rural communities of developing countries from reaping benefits of computers. People in developing countries have little opportunity to connect to the Internet. They are unaware of socio-economic benefits and stimulus to good governance that ICTs can bring. The quasi-absence of demonstration projects in some countries, very limited information is available to assess and to advocate the impact of computers for development. India has a strong IT industry but access to computers remains very low, particularly in rural areas. The knowledge of English in the rural areas is another major hurdle in India. English skill is a transferable skill. Different English-teaching situations prevail like teacher's proficiency in English, a pupils' exposure to English outside school. The aim of English teaching is to encourage and enrich multilingual talents. English Teaching has its own set of problems of inadequate quality in poor infrastructure or insufficient and poorly equipped teachers. The quality and extent of learner achievements are primarily based on the teacher's competency. Though English in India is taught in each and every state, it remains a complicated task and Regional languages cannot attain the status of English in academics. Quality English computer based education in rural areas creates equal opportunities to participate and benefit from India's economic growth. Innovative methods for overall development empowers rural India to meet future challenges, since quality education is the only ladder that can help the rural climb up.

### **Literature Survey**

Computers impact on learning specially in computer assisted learning, online Learning, virtual learning, digital training, etc. The review allows us to go beyond traditional approaches to Learning. E-Learning cannot be analyzed as a single unit (HELIOS (2006:37). Interactive learning content is not confined to classrooms only as students access it from their own Computers. Non-formal and informal learning's are a crucial parameter for the future of learning (Punie & Cabrera 2006). Teachers need the knowledge and time to "adopt" Computers in their daily practice. Empowering teachers to use Computers is fundamental (HELIOS 2006: 16; Cartelli, 2006). Today's teachers need to learn and teach with digital technologies which they are unaware. Teacher should be made to have complete mastery of Computers as pedagogical tools. In the review of research on teacher's education (Fisher et. al 2006), two different views on how to develop a teacher on digital technologies are distinguished: retooling versus renaissance.

Digital competence learning to learn Evaluation is therefore defined as distinct from assessment and beyond the scope of this literature review. Assessment can contribute to evaluation. The literature review builds on an earlier review of the assessment of key competences (Pepper, 2012, in press) and also incorporates research on 'computer-based assessment' or 'e-assessment'. Busuttil-Reynaud and

Winkley (2006), defined an assessment using information and communication technology to present information or record, analyze, report or feedback on responses, drawing an earlier review of the e-assessment of key competences (Redecker, 2012, in press). E-Learning or Computers-enabled Learning are used for a shift in education and emphasize on “learning” from “teaching” (Fisher et al 2006: 1). This Research looks at available evidence for the diffusion of eLearning and addresses access/ use in education and training with reliable and comparative data available. Most studies agree to the traditional approach of counting the number of Computers and based on the number of students in the classroom. Tertiary education Computers usage is most diffused, supported by public and private investment. The level of usage of Computers for learning and related investment is low. Very limited percentage of the adult population uses the Internet. The spread of eLearning, a significant part of the learning content is transmitted via the Internet is used by a modest population.

The generic use of the Internet for learning is widespread amongst students. Most users of the internet appreciated the advantages of eLearning over traditional ways of learning. Different factors must be taken into account when elaborating such efforts: access (to Computers and to eLearning providers), competence (Computers skills) and motivation (for engaging in learning via Computers). Specific combinations of these factors could then be developed to target specific groups in order to overcome the barriers that prevent these people from benefiting from the potential of the Internet for lifelong learning (Gareis 2006). Informal and nonformal eLearning activities could indeed be dramatically increasing according to HELIOS, 2006: 11-12) and it might be true that changes are taking place at a much faster pace in informal learning than in the evolution of formal learning systems. A closer look at such activities and implications for learning is needed. The vision of “Computers and learning could be realized through a proactive strategy that anticipates future learning needs and requirements instead of reacting to new requirements (Punie & Cabrera 2006). A number of statements have been made by renowned experts in educational disciplines and systems, which call for revolutionary changes. Computers can definitely help in organizing and providing structure for material to students. Computers can be invaluable with automated translators for learning’s to the real world (Visions 2020: Ruzena Bajcsy). An intelligent environment could facilitate the sharing of experiences (Burgelman & Punie 2006). Computers can help to overcome enemies of learning namely “isolation and abstraction” (Visions 2020: Chen & Arnold). A key objective of learning will be to obtain and create knowledge at the right place embedding the learning processes for all ages. In colleges, student projects can be monitored with real time assessment, evaluated on the work and their communication styles. Teachers and learners can call on a variety of human tutors, counselors and experts and summon a variety of automated help systems (Visions 2020: Randy Hinrichs). Finally, the role of Computers future learning can also be seen in the light of its contribution to emancipation, empowerment and self-fulfillment. Learning objectives such as social competence, critical thinking, and knowledge sharing and cooperation techniques will become more and more important and the future of learning cannot avoid asking the fundamental questions about the objectives of learning (Punie & Cabrera 2006).

## Teaching Methods

There are different theories, approaches, and methods developed in the history of language teaching. Starting from Classical methods like Grammar-Translation Method or Direct Method or the Audio-Lingual Method, to the more recent methods like Communicative Language Teaching all teaching methods have enriched the lives of language learners and teachers. It is dependent on the teacher to choose and apply a method or approach. Various methods of English language teaching have various qualities. It is better to use the best method suitable to the target audience. The traditional methods use in English language teaching can be classified as Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method., Dr. West's Method, Audio-lingual Method and Bilingual method.

An Approach is not method of teaching but the way to teach or a technique of teaching English. It is an experiment for teaching or learning a language. There are mainly three types of approaches to Teaching in English, Communicative Approach, Structural Approach and Situational Approach. All methods and approach are useful and good though each method or approach may have demerits.

For achieving teaching objectives, the teacher should be flexible in the use of methods and approaches. There is no single teaching method that can satisfy all learning situations. Using a combination of various methods in the classroom is the best way to teach and specially an Indian Teacher of English Language.to teach English as a Second Language.Any English curriculum based on the principles for language teaching and acquisition can allow varieties in implementations suitable to native needs with illustrative models for use. English does not stand out and has to find a place along with native Indian languages. A curriculum perspective can be acquired through various meaning-making contexts. English teaching with multi-lingual's can enrich the native language abiding with the national vision. The Second-language pedagogy can meet the most stringent criterion for global success by demonstrating spontaneous and appropriate use of everyday activities. This feat can be achieved using a native language (Chomsky 1975). This small level of proficiency allows comprehension and production of language with real life as against merely passing examinations. Spoken language skills can be built on this basic proficiency like Tourism. English education built on native language ability can enrich the acquisition into academic knowledge is a "cognitive academic linguistic proficiency" ( Cummins 1979). The natural thinking skills are more and spontaneous in a native language. If the level of linguistic proficiency in the native *language* is absent (reading and writing) then the transfer to the second language fails.

## Need For Innovation in Language Teaching

English Language Teaching cannot be confined to classrooms alone. In developing countries English is taught through literature. Students learning other disciplines through the medium of English are unable to write and speak English correctly. It is essential that learners of English be trained on English for communication. The curricula should be formulated to focus on the practical use of English language. Learners need to be trained to think and visualize their experiences and to articulate them in English. Learners interest in plain and simple English can be encourages. This approach will be found highly beneficial for learners

since it requires them to communicate what they want in simple words rather than long and long English words. The teacher's role is simplified by correcting the learner's acquisition. The English language can be made more user friendly, the teacher can use English as frequently as possible for interaction with the learners. Casual and informal talks with the learner presenting with new vocabulary, asking queries and correcting errors can further hasten the process. Involving the learner in day to day classroom activities gets them out of a shell and makes them more proactive. Pseudo situations in class for practice makes learners participate and use sentences to fir the roles in the situation. It is impossible to communicate without proper pronunciation, since it lends a meaning to the message. The teacher can focus on the phonetics while the learner is speaking and Emphasize on the stress patterns, the feature of any language.

### Factors Affecting English Language Training

Several factors need to be considered while imparting English language Training.

- **Rich-Input Environments:** Communicational environments with rich inputs are required for language learning, since language learning is implicit. Students comprehend and communicate by listening or reading and an input-rich curriculum lays the foundation for a spontaneous language growth and understanding spoken and written language. This acquired literacy can be meaningfully integrated into such a curriculum. Many researchers (Prabhu 1987, Krashen 1985, Elley and Mangubhai 1983) have stressed that language is acquired when attention is paid to the meanings of messages. Researchers have also stressed the need for a balance of explicit skills instruction and a strongly meaningful language-learning environment (Adams 1990; Snow, Burns and Griffin 1998; Stanovich 2000). Thus the focus of literacy needs to be skillful and meaningful. The burden of a language is the burden of incomprehension, when , a language is taught on a set of rules. A learner perceives a language input as meaningful when it comprehends his knowledge. This input can be provided in classrooms and also be made available for the learner's initiative, in a variety of ways. For example Interactive Radio Instructions, the Task-based Communications and a complete Language narrative.
- **Building Awareness:** Regardless of the class familiarity with the language can be built by spoken or written inputs for meaningful situations. The learner builds up a working knowledge. The learner is exposed to an adequate amount of the data of the language to be learned" (Rutherford 1987: 18), The data provided by a single textbook for one year may be inadequate. The shift from mastery of the text book to a regular but meaningful exposure of the language has positive implications. The inputs for the learner can be print materials in English and parallel materials in more than one language with media support as magazines, newspapers, and audio cassettes. Any authentic materials can be used as a source of support. It is better when a learner learns his native first before attempting second-language learning situations. The inputs serve as a base when the learner attempts production. The initial

production may be very low, a few words or small pieces of text. The classroom must acknowledge and insist on early production for an exposure to the understanding of the language. The production can also be learning of rhymes and poems of a language or greetings and requests, etc. built arbitrarily or imagined situations. This pseudo-production motivates the learning approach and the learner attempts a complete production. Pseudo production can also be on known sources like enacting of plays. Theatres can be a genuine class activity to promote the learners engagement with the language. This can be built further by the study of rhetoric along with grammar. .

- **Teacher Deficiencies:** A language teacher's limited language proficiency is a limiting factor (cf. Krishnan and Pandit (2003). Such limitations can be complemented in many ways.
  - Radios can be used to deliver simple spoken language contexts for language acquisition of the learner and teacher
  - Story reading habits can be cultivated in a classroom within a Whole Language perspective (Jangid 2005). This can build language proficiency and skills of teachers. The reading habit energizes the acquisition process.
  - Oral Speeches by Teacher: It requires basic competence in the teacher but does not require a specialist knowledge of grammar or literature. Prabhu (1987)
  - Innovative approaches and methods can be mutually supportive within a broad cognitive philosophy by incorporating Vygotskian, Chomskyan, and Piagetian principles.
- **Existing Resources:** Any classroom should impress on the need to communicate. All the resources available should be made available to the learner to tune up linguistic capabilities. Existing linguistic abilities of learners when unused deprives a resource and separates the learner and the learners fails to make a comprehend the new language and their mental knowledge.
- **Visibility Environment:** Many activities can be assigned to the learners like charts, display signs, charts, labels and notices. The learner is ware of the subject and creates these articles based on his knowledge. Dictation is also a whole-language activity that requires the learner to understand text reformulate it in writing (Davis and Rinvoluceri 1988).
- **Higher Language Skills:** Lexical knowledge is central to language learning. Grammar is learned once but learning vocabulary is a lifelong activity (Schmitt 2000: 4). The learner can build the higher-order skills independently, with some guidance from the classroom. Research has shown gains are greater when the language instructions move away from traditional approaches. (Fawcett & Nicolson 1991, Snow 1991).
- **Critical Thought Motivation:** Learners can be introduced to tasks and activities like public speaking and debating instead of writing essays. Exposure to well known speeches and drawing inferences from them also creates a sense



of interesting learning for the learners. Grammar can be introduced after the learner acquires a basic level of linguistic.

- **The Native language:** The native language can be used to explain and translate texts before dictating answers for questions. It can be used alongside English for discussion and understanding of the subject Prabhu (1987); The usage of two languages in a classroom can help the Native language provide background information to English (Krashen 1985: 94). The amount of usage of the native language can be by
  - **Removing barriers:** English teaching can occur simultaneously with the first language(s) to create awareness of the real world to the learner (Das 2005). Material has to be designed to promote multilingual activity and correct methodological guidelines have to be worked out in cooperation with language teachers for linguistic purism (Amritavalli and Rameshwar Rao 2001).
  - **Reading:** Reading skills are transferable and reading in one language improves reading in general (West 1914)
  - **Using a Known Language:** The learner becomes more comfortable in a language already acquired for the reconstruction in English. Imperfect attempts can be supervised and corrected by the teacher.
  - **Bi-lingual Texts:** Bi-lingual; curriculum or text books for learners also help them comprehend the English
- **Instructional Medium:** It is difficult to provide a usable language context of English other than English. The current model is the teaching subjects in a non-English language (Amritavalli 2001). The usage of texts from Indian English writing and translations from Indian languages can be encouraged. There has to be interaction between First languages and English in terms of parallel text (Text in first language and translation in English).
- **Textbooks:** Curricular freedom is not possible in the presence of a single prescribed text. The older education system in India had practices of choosing from a range of available texts to answer examinations. Language content has to be dynamic in nature with exposure to current occurrences instead of using single text that is mastered. This will prepare the learner for unseen or sudden comprehension passages. Preliminary research exists on the usage of learner-chosen texts (Kumaradas 1993). Learners carry books, articles or jokes to the class for sharing. Stimulating a search by encouraging learners to find suitable material culminates in extensive reading. The learner also refers to “guides” which simplifies the pre-chosen curriculum texts.

## Technology in Classrooms

Current classrooms differ greatly from the past. Though textbooks remain a chief source for learning, technology is fundamental to preparing students for careers. Studies indicate improved student achievements. The introduction of technology in classrooms has many benefits for learners and teachers. The learners feel they are learning something new in addition to the language. The teachers benefit as they do

lesser explaining. Examples of technology in class rooms are PowerPoint presentations, Computer Based Training (CBT) programs, interactive DVDs, on-line resources and many more.

- **PowerPoint** software enables users to create presentations involving text or images and a degree of animation in slides. Power point slides helps teachers prepare subject explanations the way they visualize, involving citation as text or images or even voice. Learners become actively engaged in the lessons and listen to the subject matter.
- **E-learning** is the learning with an electronic dimension where computer based activities can be integrated with practical situations in classrooms.
- **Computer-based training** services execute training programs on a computer relating to the subject. It is effective for training people to use computer applications before integrating applications for learners.
- **Web-based training** similar to computer-based training; but delivered over the Internet using a web browser. It is used for interactive training. E-learning provides learner and teacher capability to research and collaborate with an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences.
- **Mobile computing** Permit of Mobile computing helps learners to get in touch with their staffs even after college. It also helps create a relationship between the learner and teacher. student and the staff.
- **Digitized board** is a smart interactive white board. It is a good example of classroom technology and a preferred form for teachers since it is a huge white board to project contents from a computer.. Power point presentations and live internet data can be displayed with sound.
- **Computer Networks** provide common content that can fired from one place to all the computers on the network at the same time.
- **Hard drive** is an excellent storing place of learners material and exercises. It can avoid papers and books for simplicity. A monitoring system can be created for control.

### Student's Engagement In A Technology Oriented Class Room

Engagement is difficult to define operationally. Students are engaged when they devote substantial time and effort to a task and the quality of their work seems to have significance beyond its personal instrumental value (Newmann, 1986, p. 242). Student engagement is recognized by teachers and researchers as an important link to a student's achievement and learning outcomes (Filby, Marliave, Cahen & Dishaw, 1980, Capie & Tobin, 1981, McGarity & Butts, 1984). Studies investigating variables such as teacher management styles (Tobin, 1984), student grouping (Anderson & Scott, 1978), instructional activities (Delquadri, Greenwood & Hall, 1979), and even the day of the week (Cornbleth & Korth, 1979) affect student engagement. To make a class room technology oriented, first the teachers must learn multiple new skills within a vast array of hardware and software and keep these skills updated in the face of rapid technological change.

To create technology products a faculty must use new skills within an array of hardware, software, and peripherals with updates. Continual, large-scale upgrading of technology skills has increasingly resulted in a reduction of time to focus on

discipline, teaching, and research activities. To engage the students with online resources and innovative teaching technologies, the college administrators are asking the faculty to be aware and update the new technology at hand. In a technology oriented class room the students have a constant access to a multiple technologies and they involve themselves in the medium that best supports the particular learning goal. This study also concentrates on the engagement of students in technical oriented class rooms and how it differs when it compared with traditional methods of teaching. Technology has given a key stone to methods in teaching English. Here the teachers have a very good opportunity to deal differently with the students. Technology has put a foundation stone to new methods of teaching English, in which teachers get opportunities to deal differently with students of different abilities. Present scenario in education is quite different from traditional methods. The teacher is the individual resource of information in traditional method, the students have little participation and contribution in the class room. They reflexively participate with varying degrees of attention. Those with poor observing skill and knowledge do not benefit much, they become a silent observer.

The teacher only plays the main role and speaks for an extended period of time. The students are not given a chance to act together or work together. Technology oriented teaching is more on student / learner centered one. To enhance the traditional teaching, technology gives a hand and supports to make sure the learners participation in class room. And they are actively engaged with the technology to enhance the skills, whereas the teacher take up the role of a guide. English language is used for an immense variety of purposes. A common impediment in communication is poor listening. It needs a conscious attempt to understand the sounds, comprehend the meaning of words, distinguishing and reacting to the message. While listening the students must be familiar with the topic and they must go deep into the context. They should interact and share general ideas in the text. The students should be more creative and innovative enough to expand the text. They should develop their skills in vocabulary building, pronunciation, speaking other topics related to the text etc. Though teachers and students interact in a traditional class room but technology plays a vital role in improving students listening skills.

The students can be engaged by making them to listen to sports commentaries on television or radio. The teachers can make the students to listen to recorded telephone conversation or an famous personality interview, spoken by native speakers. And another innovative way to enhance their listening skill is recording and listening his / her own speech, this will help them to correct mistakes. Interactive practice like listening comprehension passage and answering the questions will help to enhance the listening skills. Reading is an active skill that involves the reader, the text, and the interaction between the two. Reading skills acquisition is an important aspect of (L1) as well as second (L2) or foreign language (FL) literacy. Reading is a dynamic and interactive process, with the use of a variety of skills and strategies with acquired background knowledge, To enhance the knowledge of reading and writing skills of the students the teachers can use innovative techniques in their class room. E-mail is the best application of this century. Language teachers can propose e-mail based exercises in their curriculum. They can encourage the students by telling them to submit their assignments and

home work through E-mail. They can also engage with some interesting debate topics with other students through e-mail. This will encourage the students to discover their potentials. As a result they will learn new vocabulary and they can also develop their writing and reading skills. Additionally, E-journals and E-books play a vital role by providing new words and new meanings for already existing words. E-journals and E-books give an experience of printed book and it is a source of information with various information and current awareness, teaching, learning and other communication.

Given this emphasis on time, it is not surprising that the introduction of any innovative teaching technique or tool will be closely followed by studies to determine how the innovation influences time-on-task or academic learning time. Researchers have examined how technology influences time-on-task in special education classes (MacArthur, Haynes & Malouf, 1986, Perkins 1988), mathematics (Bright, 1988), reading (Zuk & Danner, 1986), and English (Latham & Stoddard, 1986). The students' interest and enthusiasm in a technical oriented classroom may lead the teacher to accept that technology oriented teaching will increase student engagement.

## **Analysis and Results**

The research is based on the survey by questioning method, keeping in view of availability of the resources with a sample of Two hundred plus students doing their B.E from above 5 colleges of Chennai, Tamilnadu. The questionnaire contained five questions at two levels in the form of Yes or No format, regarding the teacher's ability in using technology oriented teaching in the class room, usage of computer oriented traditional methods in English learning, benefits in computer oriented traditional methods in English learning, usage of online resources in English learning and perceptions and expectations in ICT usage in learning and teaching.

Data collected for the studies included questionnaires, interviews and classroom. None of the students were aware of being observed and analyzed during the data collection procedures. The project was conducted with the analysis of a range of paper based and evidence collected by scholars providing written reports of their uses of ICT usage and have attended seminars and conferences to discuss their work which has been documented. A questionnaire was designed to collect evidence from English language students and other educators about their ICT experiences, expertise and use in teaching. The main sections in the questionnaire are shown in Table 1

**Table 1 - ELT in ICT Education Questionnaire**

Set No	Title of the Set	Number of Questions
1	Teacher's ability in using technology oriented teaching in the class room.	5
2	Usage of computer oriented traditional methods in English learning.	5
3	Benefits in computer oriented traditional methods in English learning.	5
4	Usage of online resources in English learning	5
5	Usage of ICT in English learning	5

## Results

In this section the analysis of the questionnaire and existing material, relevant to the focus of this work, is presented. The variables used are the teacher's ability in using technology oriented teaching in the class room, usage of computer oriented traditional methods in English learning, benefits in computer oriented traditional methods in English learning, usage of online resources in English learning and perceptions and expectations in ICT usage in learning and teaching. The first part of the questionnaire which is used to bring out the teachers ability in using technology for teaching. This questionnaire also brings out the barriers using technology in teaching. The finding gives us a conclusion that majority of the teachers have taken training courses to learn how to use Internet for teaching. The majority of the teachers have agreed that computer oriented teaching in class rooms will be helpful. All the statements are directly or indirectly connected with the methods of computer oriented English language teaching. of computer oriented language teaching. The barriers mentioned by the teachers were lack of skills and knowledge, lack of technical support and lack of institutional support.



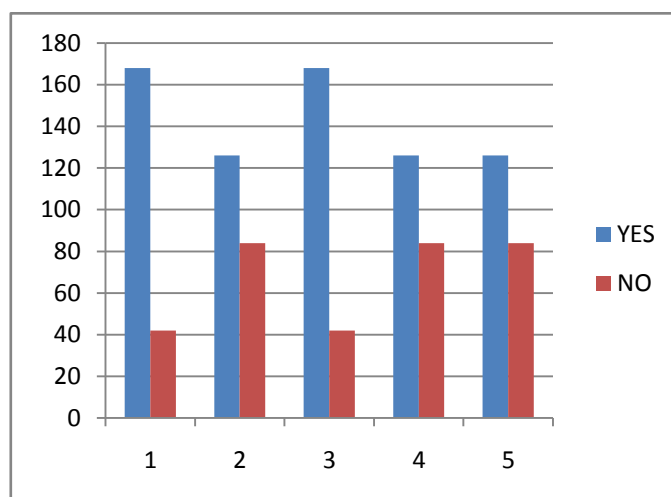


Figure 1 - Questionnaire on the teacher's ability in using technology oriented teaching in the class room

Figure 1 indicates that more than 80 per cent of the teachers have shown their interest on technical oriented language teaching. Though teachers actively participate in using the technology with pedagogy, most teachers feel that they lack technical knowledge and skills for optimally integrating the facility into teaching. One of the teachers admits, *'I frequently use technology to support my teaching but, I am only able to use basic computer programs such as email and Power Point. I never use other programs such as teleconference.* Teachers also accept that using technology oriented teaching aids will make their teaching effective and alive. Use of technical oriented aids prevents monotony and indiscipline of student because it creates interest in student to know something. Thus it is helpful to make the students and teaching very interesting. The bar charts indicate the variables used for the research findings. These variables signify the teacher's interest in the application of using computer oriented language teaching.

All the charts and graphs imply the core idea of inculcating the awareness of computer oriented language teaching. The computer oriented language Learning (TeL) is a platform for providing Internet enabled Education. Its significance has increased as the usage of Internet in the class room clearly indicates the worldwide acceptance of it as a communication tool. Technology oriented language Learning uses Internet as a medium in the class room for learning English language. It also gives an innovation in the area of our traditional education system by being learners centric rather instructors centric. This happens with the support and power of Internet Technology. The Technology oriented language learning has laid a new path in education. All the questions are related directly or indirectly connected with the usage of internet by the students in the class rooms. Generally all students have a strong desire and developing attitude in accepting a computer oriented language learning. The major part of the students accepted that there are many advantages in using internet in the class room will make their learning more interesting. Students accepted that technology can personalize content and anticipate their future information learning needs.

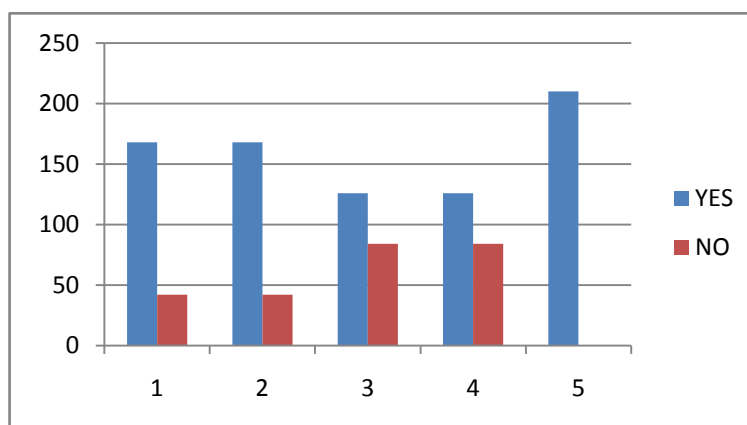


Figure 2 - Questionnaire on the usage of computer oriented traditional methods in English learning.

Figure 2 indicates that more than 90 per cent of the students have shown their interest on technical oriented language teaching. Moreover, discussions of the benefits of computer technology included the exploration of the application of certain technologies in specific language areas. Hypermedia technology was discussed as a tool to enhance vocabulary learning (Liu, 1994), and reading comprehension (Hult, Kalaja, Lassila, & Lehtisalo, 1990). Chun and Plass (1997) considered the potentials of using video and audio to support text comprehension. Kramsch and Andersen (1999) argued that multimedia technology could provide authentic cultural contexts that are important for language learning. Repeated exposure to the same material is beneficial or even essential to learning. The students accept that technology with computer assisted will carry out repeated drills because the machine does not get bored with presenting the same materials and exercises for students. And it can also give an immediate non judgmental feedback. But there are students accept that they lack of computer literacy and could not be assessed by current software. These variable gives a clear picture that many students support the widest use of technology oriented language teaching in the class room.

The Usage Of ICT In English Learning questionnaire aims to find out perceptions and expectations in ICT usage in learning and teaching. Students should their most sincere views to the questions below. The information or Views are confidential. Current advances in ICT have changed the roles of language teachers and learners. Learners are expected to be active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients since they control their own learning in a technology-enhanced learning environment (Brown, 1991). In the current era, the rapid growth of information and communication technology (ICT) has made great education field. The Internet, mainly, has become a powerful tool for communication. Along with the effect of the Internet worldwide, the extensive and effective use of computers at class rooms had a significant influence on educational environments. Major students accepted that the ICT classes will increase their communication medium between them and their teachers. And the major part of student agreed that they can improve their communication skills, practical and subject knowledge.

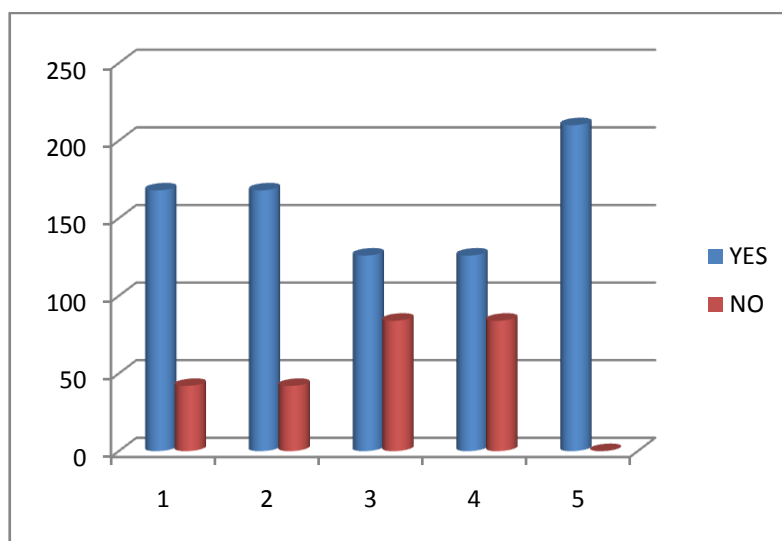


Figure 3 - Questionnaire on the usage of ICT in English learning

This graph gives a vivid picture that in the ICT classes, student have access to the most up to date sources and information rapidly. They also accepts that there may be may resources in the net they can select the ones that fit better for them according to their age, level and abilities. Many ELT resources on the Internet can be found like group discussions, interactive book reading, talking books. But some student argued that not all the materials available in the internet can be seen as useful or reliable and they cannot effectively used in the class room. But the major supported that the use of ICT in English language teaching provides an interesting learning atmosphere.

## Conclusion

The benefits of technology can be attained only hen teachers know to use the technology well, technically and pedagogically (Achacoso, 2003). On the other hand, computers are not able to replace teachers in every respect as Richard and Janice Schreck point out, “Computers do not have abilities like a human instructor in interpreting facial expressions that indicate confusion or distress, or clarify when the need arises” (1991: 478). Computers need to be complemented with other techniques. In other words, the presence of technology does not automatically promote the benefits for teaching and learning. Technology’s use influences outcomes. Many educational institutions spend on and believe that the mere presence of technology can automatically enhance teaching and learning quality resulting in limited success. The ultimate conclusion that emerged from the findings of the study is that the content, process and outcome of educational institutions are called for revamping because of the growing impact of the ubiquitous information technology on teacher education. To respond to these changes is a major challenge before the teachers teaching English Language. Several researches have indicated that teachers’ lack of knowledge and skills have become primary factors in failure of a computer technology integration program in the institution Many teachers can only operate basic computer programs although the computers they use can provide them with more advanced facility. The lack of time is also often considered as a problem by

teachers in their technology mediated teaching. They are often loaded with too many teaching hours or other activities outside their teaching responsibility, have lesser time to plan, prepare and develop their technology mediated teaching. Preparing to teach with technology requires a longer time than the teaching without technology. The study indicates the positive impact on computer oriented language teaching in class rooms. By looking effectively in to the impact of technology in the class rooms our research shows that the main factor is not the novelty of the computer but rather the way in which the technology is being used in class room is essential. If the class room fails to emphasize technology in language teaching they will waste time and resources.

### **Suggestion for Language Building**

**Native languages** spoken in large numbers play a crucial role in English education and the Multilingual formula can be applied by Investing in translations and circulating important books. Developing countries depend on their own language for socio cultural base of development, importing ideas and technology when needed. A common language for India can be emphasized and translations in English done for international communication.

**Building Relationships** can help Language learning by being an Empathic Language Partner in the native language. Relationships helps people communicate freely and when reciprocated the bonds are stronger. Encouraging Regional languages with English helps build a relationship.

**Responding and Taking Turns** in language learning by being an Interactive Language Partner helps. The learner tries to communicate and then responding by initiating a new communication. English and native languages can respond to each other by mutually translating contemporary text.

**Respond to Nonverbal imitations** Learners can be put through an exercise of decoding non-verbal communication and express in English language.

**Parallel Talk** Demonstrating situations and responses to situation by the teacher gives an impetus to the learner to imitate and try the language, maybe initially in the native language but later in English.

**Practicing Rich and Varied Vocabulary** Introducing new words of vocabulary in classrooms and their usage will encourage learners to find the meaning from dictionaries and encyclopedia's and use them after understanding them.

**Language rich routines** Presentations on language rich routines can make a classroom interesting, since new knowledge is presented and learners may probe the routine and internet for answers.

**Joint Attention Strategies** Making learners give an extempore speech on a variety of topics which makes them respond to real time scenarios and draws the attention of the class.

## Suggested Teaching Styles

- Dual-teaching – Teachers share responsibility for planning and teaching students
- Pair teaching – Teachers take turns teaching. One teacher takes responsibility of delivery while the other takes responsibility for instructional strategies.
- Parallel teaching – Teachers divide class into two groups with each teacher assuming responsibility of the group.
- Shadow teaching – Teacher re-teaches the concepts taught by another teacher.

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## Instructional Responsibilities:

- Plan and deliver instruction on language content developed from e-resources
- Install researched-based practices.
- Incorporating technology into instructional deliveries.
- Assessing students regularly on their progress.
- Formally report student progress.

## Assessment/Evaluation

Establish and implement uniformity in assessment of English proficiency in listening, speaking, writing or reading.

- tests/quizzes
- observations on student activities or seminars
- Introduce and head research projects to apply research and presentation skills.
- Update new vocabulary and ask the students to create notes
- Benchmarking : interviews, peer reviews, debates, etc.

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## REJUVENATING THE CAMOUFLAGED ABILITIES OF WEAK STUDENTS IN MIXED-ABILITY EFL CLASSROOMS –A SCHEMATIC APPROACH FOR TEACHERS

**Dr. V. Sudhakar Rao**

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Teaching English Language to the mixed ability students of undergraduate level for comprehending the content could be a complicated endeavor. Also, making certain that in a mixed-ability class, every student has access to academically intricate learning tasks and to equal participation could be a significantly valued objective. This paper focuses on how to arrange the mixed ability class and how to support weak students as they have interaction with intellectual students in learning different language based tasks.

At collegiate level the language teachers have to deal with students who had studied in reputed English medium schools and those who had studied through mother tongue medium in rural schools. The students from rural areas who studied in mother tongue have low level of proficiency in English because of lack of proper exposure to English language. Hence the teachers have to understand that Young adolescent students need to mingle with one another, be a part of a group, be a distinct member, share feelings, receive emotional support, and learn to ascertain things from other perspectives. The primary responsibility of the teacher is to get rid of any stigma hooked up to weak students who need extra help.

Mixed ability class room constitutes the students who have varying levels of oral and written proficiency in English language. Special efforts are needed from teachers to deal with such students. At the same time higher proficient students need challenging language tasks for further improvisation of their caliber in English language. Classroom management skills can build or break the mixed-ability class. In this backdrop, the onus falls on English language teacher to bring equity in heterogeneous classrooms and to work out and plan for teaching strategies to satisfy both groups of students.

### **CHALLENGES FACED BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS:**

#### **Minor Difficulties/ Pre-Teaching Activities:**

##### **1. Dealing with Disinterested Students:**

Several students show no interest in bringing text book into class room and are reluctant to complete the language tasks. Students do it by force probably because they are de-motivated by the outdated language materials in their course. Teachers need to plan to motivate them and entertain individual counseling.

##### **2. Work Load of Teachers:**

Additional workload, evaluation of answer scripts, examination duties, make the teachers busy preventing from preparing well for class room teaching especially for mixed group of students. Teachers may not have enough free time to plan for

such classes during their stay at the institute and thus manage the classes with textbook alone without supplementing the teaching with language or teaching aids. Hence teachers need to have reasonable workload load.

### **3. Audibility of Teachers:**

In large classes, the audibility of teacher becomes a major concern. To cover this lacuna teachers sometimes shout and lose their interest and energy. This becomes a major problem for backbench students. Using high level noise by language teacher also reflects in misunderstanding by others outside the class room about the controlling power of the class by language teacher. The teachers suffering from this problem should practice in advance to speak reasonably aloud and see that they are properly audible to all students in class.

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### **4. Lack of Individual Attention:**

Paying individual attention is not possible in large classrooms where mixed ability students comprehend the knowledge differently. Students from rural areas want more attention. Within the time frame of the classroom situation it may not be possible to such individual attention to such students. However the teachers need to plan to pay attention to one or two students preferably weaker students of group every time.

### **Major Difficulties:/**

#### ***Activities of Teacher during Teaching:***

All children are born with potential and we cannot be sure of the learning limits of any child (Robrt Fisher, 2001:1). In the past teachers may well have said that the problem was just that some students were cleverer or better than others in the class. But the situation is more complex than that. Our students are mixed in many ways. They are dissimilar in terms of their levels of Attention, Motivation, Learning styles, Physiological needs, speed, maturity and worldly knowledge.

### **1. Presenting Knowledge on Situation Based Societal Issues to Improve Learning:**

Learning depends on the learners' background as they may come from different families, environment, community beliefs and society. This may be an obstacle which eventually results in ineffective learning. It is difficult for the teacher to know about each student. Hence it is inevitable for the teacher to reshape and reform instructional practices.

### **2. Presentation of Selected Materials:**

Normally text books are designed for an ideal homogeneous classroom environment. Students react differently due to their individual differences. Some students may find the materials dull, strange or meaningless where as others find it enjoyable. It becomes the responsibility of teacher to adapt materials according to the class.

### **3. Matching Participation Levels of Students in Classroom Activities:**

All Students may not participate in language class activities as there are influenced by many reasons ranging from interest to confidence, from age to knowledge.

#### **4. Controlling Indiscipline in the Class:**

It is understood that quicker students finish the tasks given before the other students. As a result they start indulging in talking to others leading to indiscipline environment in the class.

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#### ***Post -Teaching Activities:***

##### **1. Disinterest among Students in getting Feedback of their Performance:**

Teachers may not have enough time to evaluate tests, unit tests, and written assignments. Due to long delay of evaluation students lose interest in getting feedback. Teachers need to rectify the errors made by students and give them feedback from time to time. Thus interest can be created among the students to take part in the activities enthusiastically.

##### **2. To get Feedback from Students about Teacher's Performance:**

Teachers need not have any inhibition to get feedback from students after every class about their teaching methods and levels of comprehension by students. It helps the teachers to adjust themselves according to the needs of students.

#### **Strategies to Overcome the Problems in Teaching to Heterogeneous Groups of the Students:**

Language teacher should be very clear on what needs to be done and what activities are to be incorporated in mixed ability classroom. The activities may include modeling of group tasks, role plays, Group discussions, Debates, case studies, One minute talk, Describing various things and issues, analyses of classroom videos; and a "workshop" to develop a true group task. Teacher's ability lies in planning lessons that can challenge all students, in identifying weak students who need extra attention, and in cooperating with them so they can acquire content and without delay.

#### **Simple Strategies**

Adequate space between rows of benches has to be provided to facilitate the movement of teacher in the class room and it is suggested to replace benches by plastic and portable chairs in order to conduct group or pair work easily in the class.

Many Teachers think that textbook is 'be all and end all' in teaching-learning situations. Other reference books can be used. Additional support in the form of OHP or LCD projector can be taken by teachers.

To overcome the inability to pay individual attention, teachers need to share his/her e-mail ID with students' mail IDs. Through regular communication between teacher and student, individual attention can be paid.

Teachers can depend on controlled writing activities to complete correction work quickly. In addition to this, quizzes can be conducted to reduce the time for

marking. Peer correction also helps in this regard. When a student needs remediation, the teacher needs to work with the problem right there at the time.

Classroom related problems can be solved if the teachers are coolheaded. Teachers are not mere knowledge providers, but they should ensure better language environment in the classrooms.

### **Specific Strategies:/ Formation of Groups:**

One recognizable solution to rectify the problems of weak students in a mixed ability classroom is the practice acknowledged as "cooperative learning," It is also termed as "collaborative learning"

Cooperative Learning is a teaching arrangement that refers to small, heterogeneous groups of students working together to achieve a common goal (Kagan, 1994). All the learners work together in a group to acquire the integrated language skills and at the same time become responsible for their teammates' learning. The general consensus is that cooperative learning can and usually does result in positive student outcomes in all domains (Johnson & Johnson, 1999) Cooperative learning is by and large defined as a mode of teaching arrangement in which heterogeneous groups of students work collectively to accomplish a common purpose. Students support one another, feel responsible for their own and other's learning, apply group related social skills, and assess the group's progress.

The fundamental elements are constructive interdependence, equal chance, and individual accountability. Human beings are gregarious social creatures by nature and cooperation has been used throughout history in all aspects of our lives. For that reason, it can be claimed that cooperative learning groups in educational institutions would be used as a logical teaching method. Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne (2000) summarize that cooperative learning strategies are widely used because they are based on theory, validated by research, and almost any teacher can find a way to use cooperative learning methods that are consistent with personal philosophies.

Teacher needs to adapt the technique of forming groups into; small group, large group, groups having similar skill levels and groups having different skill levels. This provides opportunity for students to share their work. Students of similar skill set group don't feel inferior where as in different skill set group, low level students can learn from high achievers. Teachers may select groups appropriate in the given situation. The excitement generated in such situations provides the stimulus for the students to go back and master the necessary skills to explore them further.

### **Making the Students Participate through Group Activities:**

For mixed ability classrooms, forming student groups for team work is a vastly suggested and even widely attempted instructional strategy. Teacher needs to learn to organize the classroom and prepare students for group work; to create equal opportunity for participation among members of a group; to design learning tasks to strengthen conceptual understanding; to maintain the balance in entrusting



activities to different groups; to optimize the use of various curricular strategies and instructional moves and to assess group products as well as individual contributions. Occasionally, random or special interest teams could be formed to maximize student talents or meet a specific student need (Kagan,1994)

Equal Participation by all students is possible when each member of the group is afforded equal share of responsibility and input. This ensures the students work harder and do better when they take part in group activity. The hidden and camouflaged talents of students in communication skills will come to surface when they participate with lot of enthusiasm. Simultaneous Interaction occurs when class time is designed to allow many student interactions during the period.

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### **Tracking and De-tracking:**

Process of distributing students to different groups for instruction based on an assessment of academic ability, is a long-standing organizational practice. This procedure is called 'tracking'. Tracking has frequently been treated as providing inadequate and inequitable education to students in lower ability tracks, for separating students along class lines, and for enabling unequal access to a college-bound curriculum.

De-tracking, a reform brought into the system of teaching in which students are placed intentionally in mixed ability heterogeneous classes, is an attempt to reduce the negative effects of tracking. There is a never ending debate over the implications of each of these forms of classroom organization, arousing great interest in educators and administrators in taking appropriate decisions. Making each student responsible for facts and ideas to be contributed and discussed, Group activities stimulate total participation. Some of the group activities used in language classroom are general discussions, specifically entrusted team work, panel discussions and debates. Seminars offer another practical strategy for choosing students of different skill levels together in challenging classes. However, periodically, a large scale gathering of students by combining different classes of same level may be arranged to conduct special-topic seminars for enrichment of presentation skills of weak students. It enables the less advantaged students deal with ambiguity, make inferences, and approach a subject from different points of view. This kind of activity boosts up the morale and confidence of such students.

Seminars facilitate a course's preferred English language learning outcomes--reading, writing, comparing, analyzing, summarizing, and so forth--irrespective of student's having the same skills. A post seminar activity can be followed by allotting work to students in small groups on specific content areas, or by a writing assignment to develop the ideas under discussion, or by undertaking a project that requires other elements of mastery, like interviewing or data collection.

### **Using Seven Kinds of Intelligences:**

It is essential for teachers to know the type of intelligence each student possesses. It is worth to note seven kinds of intelligences proposed by Gardner. Howard Gardner, in his book, *Frames of Mind*, listed seven kinds of intelligences;

Linguistic (wordsmart), Mathematical (number smart), Visual (picture smart), Bodily kinesthetic (body smart) Musical (music smart), Interpersonal (people smart), Intrapersonal (self smart). Using these intelligences concept, variety of activities can be incorporated in class room. For instance, vocabulary can be taught by memorizing a list of words or by setting words to music. Teacher should understand that students with special intelligence may retain language more easily with visual aids such as pictures, graphs or video. Group or pair work will please the interpersonal students and a reflective assignment may appeal to the intrapersonal students.

### **Assessing the Students:**

As all learners don't learn in the same way, they cannot be assessed in a uniform fashion. Therefore it is important that a teacher create intelligence profiles for each student knowing how each student learns will allow the teacher to properly assess the learner's progress. (Lazear, 1992). Individual Accountability – happens when all learners in a group are held accountable for working on their part of assignment and for mastery of the amount of material to be learned.

### **Improving English Communication Skills in Heterogeneous Class:**

In a multilingual society like India the mixing of the vernacular with the target language is unavoidable. This problem normally occurs in heterogeneous classes. Teachers need to make the students aware of the key features of target language so that they can create mental plans which are necessary for production of sounds and sentences. All these activities improve speaking abilities and pronunciation practice. Language teachers should indicate pronunciation errors of the students during the act of such activities so as to correct such errors (Stern 1991:337)

Once the teacher has a clear perspective on the nature and psychological framework of students in a heterogeneous class, it becomes easier for him to choose appropriate technique to overcome the problem of students in learning language. Teacher should understand that students learning a language in the same class level will most likely still differ in maturity levels, motivation, cultural background and personality. Very often the students just need a clearer communication about the demands of the course, or some assistance in structuring their time and study skills

### **Conclusion:**

The role of teacher at first is to identify and find out the needs of the individual learners. Then, the teacher has to find out effective strategies to be implemented to provide an active, interesting and interactive process of learning for the students with different levels of ability. Focusing on both intellectual and social goals, the teacher should figure out stages, roles, and problem-solving strategies that support student competence. Designing of Group work by teacher plays an important role in making high achieving, equitable classrooms.

Teachers should feel responsible for teaching, shaping, molding, and motivating the students learn English language effectively irrespective of whether they are in homogeneous class or in mixed ability class. If English Language teachers

can make students feel successful and not give up their efforts in acquiring skills, that is the point. It is also suggested to contemplate on the issue that whether the teachers should allow students to make their choice in grouping instead of the teacher alone generating the heterogeneous groupings. It's like students knowing their level will be comfortable to be in such level group until they are confident to jump to higher level group.

Rather than watering down academic standards, the teachers must raise them, even for the highest-achieving students--and that will require a thoughtful rethinking of how and what teachers teach, and how they measure success. If all the strategies are applied effectively, after every EFL classroom session is over, the weaker students must possess a feeling for greater permission to participate.

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## MODULARISING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

*Dr. P. Bharathi*

### Introduction:

Teacher education and training is in a state of transition. The policy makers and planners have realized that it is essential to organize training programmes in a way that have an everlasting and continuous impact on the teachers. Over the decades there has been a quantitative expansion of the teacher training institutions but the quality aspect has been ignored. Teachers' professional competence and commitment determine the quality of education to a great extent.

The profession of teachers is placing new demands on their competencies, which they should be able to meet if they continue to update and upgrade their skills in tune with advancement in the content and pedagogy of their disciplines. A teacher education curriculum is effective to the extent it prepares the prospective teachers to negotiate the school curriculum with confidence.

### Theories of Teacher Training:

#### Constructivism

Constructivism is basically a theory, based on observation and scientific study about how people learn. It says that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world, through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. When we encounter something new, we have to reconcile it with our previous ideas and experience, maybe changing what we believe, or maybe discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, we are active creators of our own knowledge. To do this, we must ask questions, explore, and assess what we know.

In the classroom, the constructivist view of learning can point towards a number of different teaching practices. In the most general sense, it usually means encouraging students to use active techniques (experiments, real-world problem solving) to create more knowledge and then to reflect on and talk about what they are doing and how their understanding is changing. The teacher makes sure she understands the students' preexisting conceptions, and guides the activity to address them and then build on them. Constructivist teachers encourage students to constantly assess how the activity is helping them gain understanding. By questioning themselves and their strategies, students in the constructivist classroom ideally become "expert learners." This gives them ever-broadening tools to keep learning. With a well-planned classroom environment, the students learn *HOW TO LEARN*.

The concept of constructivism has roots in classical antiquity, going back to Socrates's dialogues with his followers, in which he asked directed questions that led his students to realize for themselves the weaknesses in their thinking. The Socratic dialogue is still an important tool in the way constructivist educators assess their students' learning and plan new learning experiences.

In this century, **Jean Piaget** and **John Dewey** developed theories of childhood development and education, what we now call Progressive Education, that led to the evolution of constructivism. Among the educators, philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists who have added new perspectives to constructivist learning theory and practice are **Lev Vygotsky**, **Jerome Bruner**, and **David Ausubel**. Vygotsky introduced the social aspect of learning into constructivism. He defined the "zone of proximal learning," according to which students solve problems beyond their actual developmental level (but within their level of potential development) under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

Bruner initiated curriculum change based on the notion that learning is an active, social process in which students construct new ideas or concepts based on their current knowledge.

Constructivism gives students ownership of what they learn, since learning is based on students' questions and explorations, and often the students have a hand in designing the assessments as well. Constructivist assessment engages the students' initiatives and personal investments in their journals, research reports, physical models, and artistic representations. Engaging the creative instincts develops students' abilities to express knowledge through a variety of ways. The students are also more likely to retain and transfer the new knowledge to real life.

*Curriculum*–Constructivism calls for the elimination of a standardized curriculum. Instead, it promotes using curricula customized to the students' prior knowledge. Also, it emphasizes hands-on problem solving.

*Instruction*–Under the theory of constructivism, educators focus on making connections between facts and fostering new understanding

*Assessment*–Constructivism calls for the elimination of grades and standardized testing. Instead, assessment becomes part of the learning process so that students play a larger role in judging their own progress. In students. Instructors tailor their teaching strategies to student responses and encourage students to analyze, interpret, and predict information. Teachers also rely heavily on open-ended questions and promote extensive dialogue among students.

*In a Constructivist Classroom.*

Student autonomy and initiative are accepted and encouraged.

The teacher asks open-ended questions and allows wait time for responses.

Higher-level thinking is encouraged.

The class uses raw data, primary sources, manipulative, physical, and interactive materials.

### **Positivism:**

The French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) formulated a form of empiricism, which he called Positivism or the Positive Philosophy. As John Stuart Mill explains, Comte believed -**We have no knowledge of anything but Phenomena**; and our knowledge of phenomena is relative, not absolute. We know not the essence,

nor the real mode of production, of any fact, but only its relations to other facts in the way of succession or of similitude. These relations are constant; that is, always the same in the same circumstances. The constant resemblances which link phenomena together, and the constant sequences which unite them as antecedent and consequent, are termed their laws. The laws of phenomena are all we know respecting them. **Their essential nature, and their ultimate causes, either efficient or final, are unknown** and inscrutable to us.

### **Implications for teacher training:**

Constructivism has roots in philosophy, psychology, sociology, and education. But while it is important for educators to understand constructivism, it is equally important to understand the implications this view of learning has for teaching and teacher professional development.

Constructivism's central idea is that human learning is *constructed*, that learners build new knowledge upon the foundation of previous learning. This view of learning sharply contrasts with one in which learning is the passive transmission of information from one individual to another, a view in which reception, not construction, is key.

Teachers teach as they are taught, not as they are told to teach. Thus, trainers in constructivist professional development sessions model learning activities that teachers can apply in their own classrooms. It is not enough for trainers to describe new ways of teaching and expect teachers to translate from talk to action; it is more effective to engage teachers in activities that will lead to new actions in classrooms. Constructivism represents one of the big ideas in education. Its implications for how teachers teach and learn to teach are enormous. If our efforts in reforming education for all students are to succeed, then we must focus on students. To date, a focus on student-centered learning may well be the most important contribution of constructivism.

### **3. Structure of English Language Teacher Education Programmes.**

Teacher education as a form of service industry has to produce individuals with effective skills in teaching. In case of language teacher education proficiency and skill in language are related to the teacher performance. And good teaching is not easy to define. All language teacher education is concerned with empowerment, i.e., making students powerful through their knowledge about language and their proficiency in the language they need to teach. They should also know the distinction between language and pedagogy.

An effective programme of language teacher education can focus on the social dimension of language, the nature of language as the pedagogic subject, the reflexivity of learner language, the nature of learning opportunities and their implications for assessment. Teachers working in schools have many academic and administrative responsibilities. They need to improve their proficiency and update their knowledge in several areas related to their work. Sometimes these areas may be interrelated. Teachers then require short practical units for training to fulfill their individual needs.



An understanding of the many roles of language in language teacher education involves understanding of three main models of experience in relation to language, i.e., language use, language acquisition and language objectification. Language use subsumes both communication and thinking processes. Language use in Language teacher education serves both transactional (professional and study) and interactional (interpersonal) purposes. Language acquisition is subject to intervention in various forms of teaching and learning.

Language improvement focuses on social survival skills in a training context, classroom skills for the development of appropriate classroom language and the linguistic demands of the course itself. Language objectification or language awareness activities should involve doing rather than just expert input, working with examples of authentic language and going beyond knowledge already there in mind. Time constraints on language teacher education courses make comprehensive coverage of all the language topics of a target syllabus impossible. Trainees need to be given the skills and the confidence to operate in all relevant areas of the language so as to cope with decisions about lesson planning, task design, learner queries, assessment etc. Experience in working with authentic texts is widely held to promote language awareness and relates to all aspects of teacher proficiency, motivation and confidence building.

Much of the knowledge needed by the trainees is embedded in practice is inseparable from it. This kind of knowledge cannot easily be taught. It must be discovered through a process of exploration and reflection. Understanding the relevance of working on real language comes by knowing the local conditions. In relation to the pedagogic aspect Widdowson stresses that real language is local language. It is part of the particular professional skill of the language teacher to be able to localize the language to make it learnable.

A syllabus enhances efficiency in two ways. It helps in planning instruction and for control of the learning process (Widdowson 1984) which is necessary to attain an efficient approach to second language teaching and learning. A syllabus for language teaching must of course be explicit for the teacher. It should make explicit what will be taught. Syllabus can make a statement about the content, methodology and materials to be used in a particular teaching context.

The principles for a language syllabus can be *how it is learned, how it is acquired, and how it is used*. If learning is taken as the first principle then organization of the syllabus based on the structural core should be chosen. If acquisition is taken as the first principle, natural growth of the target language should be provided. If language use is taken as the first principle then no particular organization principle emerges. Then it implies the presence of needs analysis.

In language courses the language could be divided into modules in several ways. The modules could be skill based with different modules for listening, speaking, reading, writing and sub-skills of these larger skills. The modules could also be based on language functions or situations dealing with communication skills. Any

language course should provide a range of opportunities for learning. Nation (2007) proposed four strands. They are

- Meaning -focused input
- Meaning- focused output
- Language- focused learning
- Fluency development.

*Meaning-focused input* involves having the opportunity to learn from listening and speaking. Krashen (1981) would call it learning from comprehensible input. This can be provided by an extensive reading programme. The reading materials should be books written specially for learners in a controlled vocabulary. Listening is also given equal importance. Interactive listening takes care of the speaking component.

*Meaning -focused output* involves learning through speaking and writing. There should be speaking practice in both interactional and transactional language use (Brown, 1978). Learners should be involved in conversations, information-gap activities, short talks, discussions, role plays and monologues. Writing tasks can include letters to other students, keeping a diary, essays, assignments, descriptions and stories.

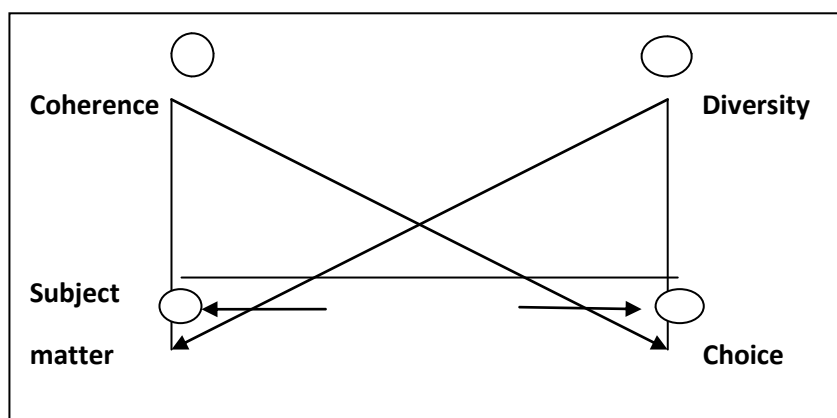
*Language –focused learning* involves a deliberate focus on language features such as pronunciation, spelling, word parts, vocabulary collocations, grammatical constructions and discourse features. About one quarter of the course time can be spent on this.

*Fluency development* involves becoming fluent with features that the learner already learnt. The conditions for fluency development are: easy, familiar material, focus on communicating messages, performing at a faster pace and plenty of opportunities for fluency practice in all the skills of language. Linked skill activities are very effective for fluency development where the same material is used to practice all the skills. Assessment and monitoring is also an important part of any course. In language curricula proficiency assessment is an essential component. A test of language proficiency can draw items for the test from the language itself and not from the course itself. Mostly these tests are criterion referenced.

#### **4.Modular Curriculum as suitable for distance and web based learning**

There are two different approaches to modular planning. The first approach takes the subject matter to be covered as the starting point and breaks down the content into manageable units. Each unit has a clearly identifiable part to play in the construction of the whole. e.g. Jigsaw puzzle where all the blocks are interlinked but specific. They are components of a bigger picture. Jigsaw produces a complete picture only when completed. The second approach places more importance on the freedom of choice, with individual programmes being constructed from a series of entirely separate and wholly independent units. e.g. Lego-brick fashion, where the bricks can be assembled and connected in different ways to get a variety of objects.

The basic design for any modular course is the '**Modular Transverse**' as represented in this figure.

*The Modular Transverse*

(Source – D. Warwick)

The two important aspects in the planning of a modular system are coherence and diversity as linked to the subject matter to be taught and student choices. These components can be achieved by understanding the change in the teacher's traditional role, pre-structuring of the learning materials and guidance of the pupils through the material. One method of ensuring the integrity of the subject and curricular areas is by linking all the modules to a central core. In core curricula general areas of experience are suggested. Fundamental themes and issues running throughout the course are considered as the core modules compulsory to all.

Learners vary in many ways from one another in terms of their capabilities, learning styles and pace of learning. Modular courses allow the students to learn at their own pace by adopting a method of their choice and a course to suit their goals. It allows the students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and reinforce their learning through remedial modules or by selecting another mode of learning. By this way it reduces the fear of failure and competition. It improves the mastery in the subject. Individual learner differences are considered while designing the content, format etc. The teachers or instructors get time to focus on the deficiencies of the individual learners and suggest remedial modules to the students. It gives increased job satisfaction as he is able to face intellectual challenges necessary to facilitate student learning. There is a facility for credit accumulation and credit transfer.

Some of the common areas for a comprehensive modular curriculum can be – Language education, ICT in teacher education, classroom management, educational policies, curriculum and learning, curriculum and pedagogy, special needs in education, exploring educational issues, personality development, learning and assessment, professional development in action, proficiency in languages etc. All these components can be offered at different levels of learning as independent or interlinked modules with a facility to add interdisciplinary courses. *All this requires a change in the traditional habits and practices.*

**Conclusion:** Simply establishing a symbiotic relationship between language study and methodology components will not be sufficient in itself to tackle the scale of the language needs of trainee teachers. There is, overwhelming evidence that language

proficiency should be the number one priority in the training curriculum. Research studies suggest that a greater concern with language training, particularly during early phases of the training programme , would produce more competent teachers.

Modularized Teacher education curriculum offered through ODL systems is advantageous as it can reach a large number of teachers at the same time. Teacher training programmes can be rejuvenated by adopting innovative approaches that impact learning. Integrated model for teacher education could comprise of core components that are common to all teacher education programmes and optional courses with a focus on specific areas. Fostering independent and autonomous learning for students is the major focus of both modular and ODL systems. ODL systems will be centre that produce quality materials, integrate technology in teaching and the networking of resources. Modular curriculum because of its flexibility, adaptability to large number of students, learner autonomy and its emphasis on individualized learning has become one of the most promising alternatives in higher education today.

**ENGLISH & COMMUNICATION SKILLS****COMPETENCE IN COMMUNICATION – A MAGIC WAND FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE***R. Ragupathi & Dr. G. K. Chithra*Page |  
117**Introduction**

Nowadays we see around us awareness among job seekers with respect to communication skill. Communication skill paves the way for better life prospects. A man with notable communication skill is held in high esteem. He is a pride to everyone and an asset to the society. Nothing remarkable is achieved without this communication skill. It has become the order of the day that everyone should be competent in the field of communication. Everyone knows the slogan “Right man for the Right job”. All leading concerns are quite keen in installing talented people only in key posts. If one is to taste the fruit of success one has to strive, to seek and to find. He should be next to none in the matter of communication.

**Yard stick for popularity**

A man's intelligence and mental makeup are judged by means of the words he utter. Speech is a boon bestowed on human beings. All prominent leaders, thinkers, sages and philosophers are held in high esteem because of their utterances. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru attained universal acclaim as a powerful speaker. Illiterate Prophet Mohammed is revered by each and every Muslim because of his preaching. Shakespeare enjoys the status of an uncrowned monarch in the field of English Literature because of his magical power in the use of words. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Edmund Burk, Right Honourable Srinivasa Sastri, Arignar Anna, V.K. Krishnamenon and other erudite scholars come to our memory when one thinks of the power of speech.

**How is this popularity achieved?**

How did these doyens achieve this name and fame? The simple answer is their continuous practice. Depth of knowledge, mastery over the language and competence in expression will result in a wonderful performance. A scholar best known for his mastery in a language leaves no stone unturned for enhancing his vocabulary. He is never tired of practicing the art of speech. Francis Bacon says “Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man”.

**The task before the individual**

One has to read a lot to deepen his knowledge. Then he has to express in his own words the content of his reading. Of the four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing the speaking skill and the writing skill are to be practiced well. Then only the words one uses will fetch the desired effect. The words must fall in place.

**The teacher, a prince, patron and guide**

Teachers are held in high esteem among the students' population. A teacher who is intelligent, hard working and wedded to the policy of involvement is all admiration. His teaching should be capable of enlightening the dark corners in the

students' mind. He should achieve mastery over his subject. Patience should be his companion in teaching the students.

### **The current status of students**

Nowadays it is quite common students coming from rural areas are not so competent in the use of English. They can't speak English fluently nor can they write English without mistakes. Most of the teachers are also not competent. They are the least worried in upgrading their teaching capacity. "Nothing will come out of nothing".

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### **Effective teaching results in everlasting success**

First the teacher must equip himself with subject knowledge. He must present his ideas in a pleasing way.

- i) The teacher concerned must become a concerned teacher.
- ii) He should diagnose the areas of the student's weakness.
- iii) He should start from the grass root level.
- iv) He can start with the simple use of sentences of day to day life.
- v) The students should be given adequate drill in the proper use of tenses.
- vi) He must be taught about the subject verb agreement.
- vii) Substitution tables will lend a helping hand both in the oral teaching and writing practice.
- viii) Students can be asked to frame similar sentences.
- ix) Proper exposure should be provided for the students to practice. The teacher should shine as a role model to the student in the matter of communication skill.

### **Students' role in improving the communication skill**

What should a student do to improve his skill in communication?

- i) In the first place a student should shun the fear of expressing his ideas.
- ii) He should not worry about making mistakes. His mistakes will vanish in the long run.
- iii) He should develop an optimistic attitude in developing his skill in communication.
- iv) He should read and read to get acquainted with the usage as well as the meanings of words.
- v) He should enhance his vocabulary day by day.
- vi) He should develop the art of writing. This alone can make him an exact man.
- vii) He should attend seminars and see how others skillfully present the papers.
- viii) He should become an original thinker.



- ix) He should have friendship with talented orators who can guide him towards perfection
- x) The talks given by Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose will instill courage and confidence in the readers. Consequently the student will be induced to write effectively and speak eloquently.

## Conclusion

Failure is a detour, not a dead end, a delay not a defeat.

Failures are nothing but stepping stones to success. One should not mind the initial failures. Constant practice can make a man perfect. The bread and butter aim of education is to improve the fiscal status of an individual. Communication skill will be a never failing companion to find a white colour job for an individual. We may aspire for accumulating money by way of effective communication. But our achievements may not be encouraging. But we should try to narrow the gulf between actuality and aspiration. Rome was not built in a day. Robert Bruce did not taste the victory in his very first attempt. Thomas Alva Edison met with successive failures before final success. Based on all these historical facts one should strive hard to fulfill his mission Awake, Arise and Stop not till you achieve success. There is no substitute to hard work.

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## CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMES

***S. Fatima Mary***

Enrichment is the enhancement of the life of a student during his time at School/College. This could be through academic pursuits, co-curricular, extra-curricular activities etc. The very purpose of enrichment is to improve the experience of the ***learning process***. A student who follows an enriched curriculum has the opportunity to take up a wide range of activities and feels more fulfilled. Page | 120

The improvement process begins with a thorough analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of all dimensions of the school/college and then creating a strategic plan with broad instructional goals, specific learning objectives and debated action plans.

The range of enrichment activities that can be offered to the students both broadens and enriches them and fulfills a social, cultural, charitable educational role and will raise their employment and personal aspirations.

Some examples of enrichment activities that can be provided for the students are career guidance, working with others and problem solving, sports, music, dance and drama, foreign language, enterprise, health education, work experience and charitable events.

General guidance on citizenship can be made a part of the enrichment programme and this will give students knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in society at local, national and international levels.

Preparing the students to become competent, caring and productive citizens capable of living in a dynamic, global society is an awesome responsibility of teachers today. These programmes reduce the achievement gap. This enrichment approach results in improved student achievement and the reduction of the achievement gap between the rich and the poor and among different groups.

Progressive life skills such as communication, decision making, team work and lifelong learning through hands-on education is very important.

Strong moral character and positive self-image can be inculcated through multi-generational and culturally diverse interactions.

These interactions or communications in English is what many students feel is difficult because of a strong influence of their national language, regional language and mother tongue. To make the students overcome these barriers the school or college can take certain measures. These should be student specific or school/college specific strategies so that the objectives or proposed benefits can be obtained.

The activities can be for example, reading a newspaper, watching an Oscar Winning English Movie, Debates, Group Discussions, Elocutions, Role plays etc. They are all very powerful tools in talent building. Inter-collegiate competitions in

terms of English language skills, where experts monitor or umpire the teams. This helps develop competitive zeal and pride of winning among students.

**Role play**, which will be a part of these enrichment programmes helps the students to speak English in full sentences, makes them think about what they are saying so they remember the language. It encourages the use of critical thinking because it involves analyzing and problem solving; therefore role play is a cognitive learning method. They learn lessons that are needed in society, competition, cooperation and empathy. It allows students to take decisions. They receive a thorough feedback. They see the results of their action and can therefore learn how to adjust their words and actions to produce more likeable results.

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Another activity that helps the students to improve their language is **Debate**. The students learn to use the library and to find the exact information they need in the shortest possible time. They learn to be thorough and accurate, learn to analyze, distinguish between the vital and unimportant. They learn to present ideas in a clear and effective manner and in a way which wins others to their way of thinking. They learn to think under pressure, to 'use their head' in a time of need, to make decisions quickly and accurately.

A student who is a native language speaker, most of the time finds it difficult to communicate effectively in English in any given situation. Teaching **Communication Skills** to such students will help them to overcome the Communication Barriers such as Physical, Perceptual, Emotional, Cultural and Psychological.

Two-way communication often fails to be effective because barriers exist. Some of these barriers could be environmental. Other barriers are to do with the way most of the students think, feel and behave. Perhaps the most common barrier to reception is simply a lack of attention on the receiver's part. We all let our minds wander now and then, regardless of how hard we try to concentrate. Students are most likely to drift off when they are forced to listen to information that is difficult to comprehend or that has little or direct bearing on their own lives. As workload and pressure to meet targets increase, the tendency for these barriers to pile up might also be on the rise. It is therefore more important than ever to be aware of these barriers and make an effort to eliminate them.

First and foremost the students ought to understand the importance of listening as part of their learning in enhancing their communication skills. Activities based on listening skills with exercises on reading comprehension will help them to concentrate in this area. Verbal and Non Verbal communication skills will have to be taught in this area.

Non Verbal Communication such as making eye contact while speaking or listening to others conveys interest, concern, warmth, and credibility. Facial expressions like smiling are a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking. Hand gestures while speaking captures the listener's attention, makes the conversation more interesting, and facilitates understanding. Body posture and orientation shows if a person is approachable, receptive and friendly. Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with others. Avoiding discomfort caused by intruding on the other person's space is very important.

Speaking can signal nonverbal communication when you include such vocal elements as: tone, pitch, rhythm, loudness and inflection.

One very important area that enhances the students employability skills are participation in **Group Discussions**. GDs as they usually are called are a part of selection process by any organisation in their search for right candidates. It is used as a qualifying test and is used as a means to evaluate a candidate's ability to work with his colleagues. Making the students participate in a number of Group Discussions will enable them to understand the importance of having the knowledge on various topics such as – political, social, cultural, economic, trade etc. The student will be able to sharpen his mental abilities like – thinking, analyzing, arguing, convincing and persuading skills. He will be able to demonstrate his ability to use English as a listening and speaking medium. His leadership qualities in initiating discussions, summarizing ideas and directing discussions in different angles and concluding the discussions in the stipulated time are learnt. The students are taught to listen extremely carefully, analyze what they are listening to, think quickly, and talk briefly, precisely, and relevantly. As General knowledge is very important to participate in Group Discussions, Students are encouraged to read newspapers, make use of the libraries, watch the BBC and CNN and other English channels. Reading Clubs are formed where students discuss share reviews on the books they have read, and read Magazines and Journals.

The basic underlying factor for learning any language – written or spoken – is its grammar. Grammar refers to the logical and structural rules that govern the composition of any language. Each language has its own distinct grammar and an in-depth study of it is the key to learning the language.

A constant grammar practice, no matter how eloquent a speaker or communicator one maybe, one should spend some time, ever so often in practicing grammar exercises. Encouraging students to read books to improve their grammar skills, punctuation and pronunciation by the teacher will help them improve. Books like 'Eats, Shoots and Leaves' by Lynn Truss, being humourous will make reading and learning enjoyable.

To conclude, the students, either at school level or college level, will benefit enormously when these Curriculum Enrichment Programmes are implemented effectively. An all round development will take place in the student that ultimately helps in a positive, growth and development of the society around him.

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## MEASURES TAKEN TO ENHANCE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS

*Dr A Sandhya Reddy*

### Introduction

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With the world becoming a global village, students of engineering and technology need a specific set of language, communication and soft skills for a successful academic and professional career. Industries are also voicing their concerns about the need for better communication and soft skills and necessary grooming among engineering students. Research indicates that only 20-25% of engineering graduates are employable i.e. possess the necessary skills required by the industry.

Dr Kalam has rightly said that India does not have the problem of unemployment but unemployability. Graduates lack general skills like integrity, reliability and teamwork and specific skills like entrepreneurship, communication skills and modern tools and technologies. To make graduates more employable, colleges have to focus on reducing these major skill gaps. Improvements in curriculum, changes in teaching methodologies, introducing training programs can help in this direction.

A group of 50 final year students who were not placed in the first 3 major companies (CTS, Infosys, Wipro) during the academic year 2010-11 were asked as to why they thought they could not get through. They voiced the following apprehensions:-

- Found the verbal analysis section difficult.
- Not proficient in English language.
- Inability to speak fluently, effectively in the Group Discussion.
- Could not articulate properly.
- Lack of awareness of the topics in GDs.
- Lack of knowledge regarding interview skills.
- Poor performance in the HR interview.
- Nervousness and stage fright.
- Lack of confidence and low self esteem

Keeping in view the above points some measures have been taken in CBIT to help the students in the placement process. A great deal has been said in various research papers as to how important English language is and how important soft skills are. What this paper would like to put forth is the various initiatives taken up by faculty of CBIT to enhance employability skills.

### Measures taken to enhance employability skills in CBIT

#### Proficiency Program

The engineering students in Andhra Pradesh come from the urban and rural areas. This rural urban divide is posing a great challenge to the curriculum developers and the practicing teachers. English is the medium of instruction in the field of

professional education but language proficiency is not a criterion for selection in any engineering college. The aptitude is assessed only by the knowledge level of basic sciences. The linguistic competency of the students from rural background is quite poor even if they are from English medium schools.

Peter Strevens observes:

“In some countries the fact of having followed a language course at school is no guarantee that a practical grasp of common core of English has in fact been acquired, so that a special purpose course in TTSE (Technical Technological and Scientific English) has to be preceded by an emergency course in English from scratch” (Strevens, 223-224).

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In order to help these students an English proficiency course is being offered to in the first year of study along with the regular English classes. These classes are there twice in a week and spread over 4 months. The materials have been specifically designed to acquaint the rural background students with the nuances of English language pronunciation, word stress, speaking skills, basic grammar etc.

The students are encouraged to shed their inhibitions and use language in all situations. Unless and until they become familiar with the language the students cannot possibly fair well in the placements. They are constantly evaluated and assessed and counseled throughout the 100 hour program. They are certified too on the successful completion of the program.

### **Placement Training**

Various institutes conduct short term and long term training for students to gear them for placements. Apart from that the English department too conducts intensive placement training for final year students to enhance their employability skills.

Students are given extensive practice in various aspects of grammar and vocabulary – synonyms, antonyms, analogies, sentence completion, sentence correction, reading comprehension, communication skills etc.

Group Discussions, Group simulations, presentations, mock HR interviews are conducted regularly. Students are taught the right body language, proper etiquette and grooming. It has been observed that these intensive training programs have substantially increased the number of placements in the college.

### **Soft Skills Program**

Most often in colleges soft skills development takes a backseat in the scramble for academic pursuit. There is a skill gap between industry's expectations and the students skill set. With India becoming a global economy, a corporate employee is required to multitask, interact with clients worldwide. He requires various skills which are not taught as a part of the curriculum.

In this regard our college is offering the Infosys Campus Connect Soft Skills program to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year engineering students. Launched by Infosys in May 2004, Campus Connect is a unique academia-industry initiative to architect the education experience. The objective of this initiative is to enhance the quality and quantity of the IT talent pool and to increase the employability of the student community. The employability of the student can be increased if he possesses the necessary skills as



articulation, competence in reading, writing, effective listening and oral communication skills; adaptability to cross cultural environment through creative thinking and problem solving; personal management with assertiveness and initiative; interpersonal skills; the ability to work in teams etc. Enterprises define the entrants to be 'Industry Ready' when they possess these soft skills. IT industry in particular, is facing critical need to bridge the soft skills gap.

One English language teacher is the SPoC (single point of contact) for this course and the other language teachers have been enabled to offer this 60 hour training program. It is called the STAR PRIME V2.0 which consists of the following 5 modules:

- Business Communication Skills
- Intrapersonal & Interpersonal Relationship Skills
- Campus to Company
- Group Discussions, Interviews & Presentations
- Entrepreneurial Skills Development

Apart from theoretical inputs students receive extensive practice in team work, confidence building, group discussions, communication skills, etc. They are also taught corporate etiquette, appropriate body language and proper grooming.

The students are given case studies, developmental assignments and are regularly assessed and a constructive feedback is offered. The pre and post tests show a marked improvement in the student performance. The Soft Skills training program offered by the language department has been extremely useful in not only enhancing employability skills, training the students to be industry ready but grooming them with a holistic personality.

### **Creating a Knowledge base**

Reading for a wholesome well groomed personality is something that all students must be motivated towards. Reading and knowledge so acquired can develop into a very strong foundation for the growth of an individual. Reading in the initial stages can be at random or with a direction. Reading is not merely decoding information or pronouncing words correctly, it is an interactive dialogue between the author and the reader. Moreover the author and the reader share their experiences and knowledge with each other which helps them to understand the text and impart meaning to the text other than what the author himself may have wanted to convey.

To achieve this objective we, the English faculty have started an exclusive book library for the engineering students. The library contains all kinds of books which have been mentioned above - easy reading books, comics, novels, motivational and self-help books, books of Indian writers, classics, short stories and so on. The library caters to students who want to begin reading and also to the students who cannot afford them. The students also give us lists of books that they want to see in this library. The students can borrow the books for a period of one week. The library is located in the English language laboratory which ensures easy accessibility to the students. The library has been very successful because of the fact that many students from the rural background are also taking an interest in reading. The

library has about 250 books and caters to nearly 150 students who borrow books regularly.

It has been observed that the students enhance their vocabulary, internalize sentence structures, understand the language better and improve their knowledge base. This learning has helped them tremendously in facing the aptitude test of the placements.

### **Literary Club**

The Literary Club in CBIT is a language department initiative to provide a platform for the students not only to vent their creativity but to enhance various soft skills.

The club organizes competitions, workshops, seminars throughout the academic year. The events are organized, planned and executed by the students under the guidance of the faculty associated with the club. In this process the students interact with other students from different branches and years of study. The students indirectly are groomed in social etiquette, communication skills, leadership and networking. The coordinators of the club liaison with various organizations like AISEC, Bhumi-NGO, etc... This gives them tremendous exposure and teaches them something which cannot be taught in a class room. The teacher plays a significant role in moulding the students, guiding them, empowering them throughout their journey. They gain tremendous confidence, acquire leadership qualities and become assertive.

We have observed that the learning which happens in the club is an invaluable experiential growth in the academic life of a student which helps him to be groomed into a competitive, confident individual. This confidence, leadership, problem solving and the ability to handle challenges helps the student in every walk of life.

### **Conclusion**

Communication is the most important function of a human being, be it in personal or professional life. To be successful in any field one need to know and understand how to communicate effectively. Engineering professionals who are proficient in English and other soft skills have a considerable edge over those who have not.

This paper has tried to highlight the measures taken to enhance the skills needed for the students to get employed in reputed companies and show how these skills are important for them to work in a performance oriented work environment.

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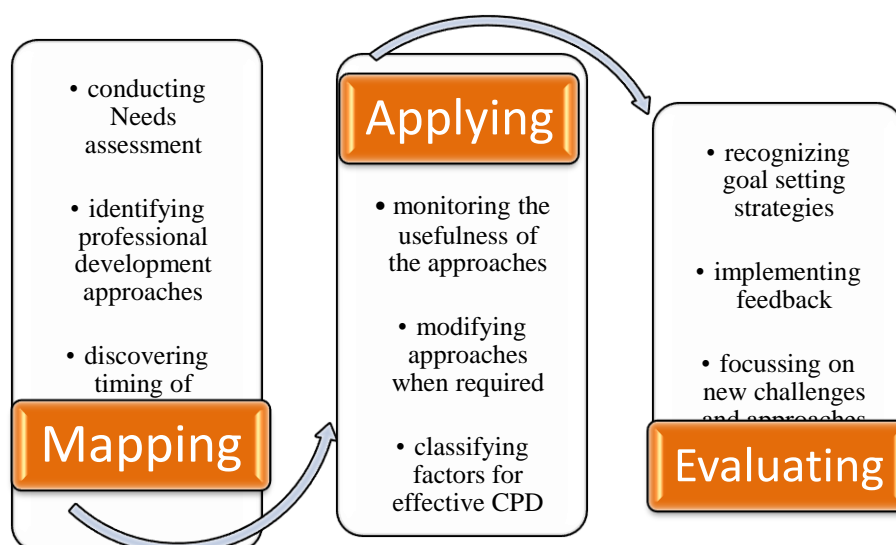
## EVALUATING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHING CAREER: A FRAMEWORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

*Dr. K. V. Madhavi*

**Introduction:** The Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) defines Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as “a systematic means where by 127 professionals can continuously update the skills and knowledge they need in order to practise competently.” According to Madden and Mitchell’s (1993), CPD is “the maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers according to a plan formulated with regard to the needs of the professional, the employer, the profession and society”. Continuous Professional Development is a lifetime practice which should be carried out from the beginning to the end of one’s own career. According to Dadds, 1997, “the inner knowledge, judgment and wisdom of the professional teacher is seen as one of the greatest resources available to children. As such, they must be nurtured and enriched through CPD courses and other experiences.” However, it is observed that CPD in teaching is lagging behind when compared to other areas. Christopher Day in Personal Development Planning: a different kind of competency (1994) said, “Notions of the teacher as person as well as the teacher as professional, with all that is implied for progression, continuity and balance of support for development over a career span, are limited.” He considered that the educational establishment, when compared with industry, has lagged behind in terms of taking a holistic approach to the continuing professional development of its workforce. This kind of impression must be erased and teachers should be exposed to continuous career development.

### Principles for CPD:

The principles that can be considered for Continuous Professional Development in teaching career at higher education must be logically monitored as given below:



**Principles: Continuous Professional Development in Teaching Career at Higher Education**

**Parameters for CPD:**

A holistic approach is designed to encourage the educators develop the latest skills and cope with the latest demands. The educational institutions, schools or universities need to be focused in implementing such approaches, policies, or strategies for Continuous Professional Development. The assessment pattern should be adopted methodically and systematically reflecting as an ongoing and continuing process. Different categories are identified with API scores:

**Category 1: Teaching, Learning & Evaluation related activities:**

The teacher's primary responsibilities vest in teaching, learning and evaluation activities such as acquiring adequate academic credentials; imparting knowledge through lectures, seminars, tutorials; practical assessments; curriculum development; conducting examinations; internal and external assessments; question paper setting; invigilation duties; conducting quiz and mid examinations; evaluation of the students; imparting innovative teaching and learning techniques; maintaining confidentiality; conducting remedial, bridge courses; developing and imparting soft skills, communication skills, personality development modules; organizing and conducting popularization programmes, training courses in computer assisted teaching, web-based learning and e-library skills and one of the most important factors is counseling the students and helping them focus on their goals. The teacher should also act on the feedback received from the students and do modifications as per the performance.

**Category 2: Research and related contributions:**

Apart from fulfilling regular and primary responsibilities, the teacher has to indulge in research and its related activities. R & D has occupied a pivotal role in the present scenario. Hari Bhartia, immediate Past President, CII and Chairman & Managing Director, Jubilant Life Sciences remarked, "one significant challenge in India is to attract the best talent into research—the government can play a role here by provisioning large research grants. Mr. Bhartia also said that clusters of academia-industry collaboration have emerged in India."

CPD is being assessed in terms of research publications, either referred, internal, national or regional publications with or no impact factor; research grants by different funding agencies like UGC, CSIR; attending conferences, seminars, symposiums globally; organizing value added programs, orientation programs, refresher courses; writing books and chapters with ISSN or ISBN numbers; being a keynote speaker, distinguished guest; guiding research candidates for Ph. D or M. Phil / M. Tech programs, acquiring grants for major, minor or consultancy projects; getting patents; being the part of professional bodies as a member, reviewer, or editor; participation in educational tours, industry visits; involving in administrative duties in the work place; active involvement in charity works, community services; nominations for honors, awards or rewards. CPD should result in exhibiting career enhancement through academic relation activities and also through research oriented events.

**Performance Appraisal Indicator (API):**

Union Grants Commission (UGC) of India has adopted different categories that could be used to assess the teaching, learning and evaluation patterns of the teacher especially in higher education. Performance Appraisal Indicator is divided into 2 sections with API scores and weightage of marks given for each category and activity as mentioned below:

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**SECTION-A:****1. GENERAL**

1.	Name of the Teacher
2.	Designation of the Teacher
3.	Name of the Department
4.	Name of the Institution
5.	Date of birth
6.	Contact details

**2. Details of educational qualifications (starting from degree):** The details of Academic qualifications need to be furnished.

**SECTION-B:****CATEGORY I: TEACHING, LEARNING & EVALUATION RELATED ACTIVITIES:**

**API Score allotted: 200                      Weightage: 40**

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Nature of Activity</b>
<b>Category 1(A)</b>	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>
1.	Lectures taken as percentage of lectures allocated (100% compliance = 20 points) (below 75 % = 0; 76-80%= 8; 81-85% = 12; 86-90%-14; 91-95%=16; 96-100%=20 points)
2.	Seminars, tutorials, practical's, contact hours undertaken as percentage of those actual allocated (100% compliance = 20 points) (seminars/tutorials = 10 points; practical's=10 points)
3.	Lectures or other teaching duties in excess of UGC norms (1 hour excess per week: one point)
4.	Imparting of knowledge / instruction vis-a-vis with the prescribed material (Text book / Manual, etc.) and methodology of the curriculum (100 % compliance = 20 points) (teaching plans=10 points; lecture notes = 10)
5.	University examination duties (Question paper setting and evaluation of answer scripts) as per duties allotted. (100% compliance = 10 points) (evaluation = 5 points ; question bank = 5 points)
6.	University examination /evaluation duties for internal /continuous assessment work as allotted (100 % compliance = 10 points)

	(assignment= 3 points; quiz=3 points; mid exam=4)
7.	Additional examination work such as coordination, invigilation, confidential work duties etc. (each component 5 marks )
<b>Category 1 (B)</b>	<b>DESIRABLE WEIGHTAGE: 100</b>
1.	Use of Innovative teaching-learning methodologies; use of ICT; Updated subject content and course improvement. a. ICT Based Teaching method: 10 points (PPT, visuals, downloads of NPTEL, SONET and other subject related specific websites) b. Interactive Course content:05 points ( E-content developed, use of X-learn, etc.) c. Participatory Learning modules: 05 points (Application oriented assignments, cases, etc.)
2.	Developing and imparting Remedial/ Bridge Courses and Counseling modules (Each activity : 05 points)
3.	Developing and imparting soft skills / communication skills/personality development / modules (Each activity : 05 points)
4.	Organizing and conduction of popularization programmes/ training courses in computer assisted teaching/ web-based learning and e-library skills to students a. Workshop / Training course : 10 points each (minimum of one programme per year) b. Popularization program: 05 points each (minimum of one programme per year)
<b>Category 1 (C)</b>	<b>Student Feedback on teaching</b> (below 50% = NIL; 50-60%=25; 61-70%=30; 71-80% =35; 81-90%=40; above 90%=50)

**CATEGORY 2: RESEARCH AND RELATED CONTRIBUTIONS:****API Score allotted: 300      Weightage: 50**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Nature of Activity</b>
	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>
<b>Category 2 (a)</b>	<b>Publications      API Score allotted:100</b>
	Books with ISBN/ISDN each=20, 1 chapter = 10
	Refereed journals – International (with impact factor) each=15
	Refereed journals - National (with impact factor) each=10
	Others (Including Non refereed journals, Monographs, Book reviews, Article reviews, Course material, etc.) each=05
<b>Category 2</b>	<b>Research Projects</b>



<b>(b)</b>	
	Major each=20 Minor each=10
<b>Category 2 (c)</b>	<b>Research Guidance (Degrees Awarded)</b>
	M. Phil. each=05 Ph.D. each=10
<b>Category 2 (d)</b>	<b>Seminars/Conferences/Workshops/Symposia organized</b>
	International each=20
	National each=10
	Regional each= 05
<b>Category 2 (e)</b>	<b>Seminars/Conferences/Workshops/Symposia Papers presented</b>
	International each=10
	National each=05
<b>Category 2 (f)</b>	<b>Consultancy Projects</b> Every 5 lakhs = 10
<b>Category 2 (g)</b>	<b>Patents</b> <b>each = 20</b>
<b>Category 2 (h)</b>	<b>Seminars/Conferences/Workshops/Symposia wherein served as Resource person</b>
	<b>National / International</b> Keynote Speaker / Chairman / Co-Chairman/ Distinguished Guest / Key Speaker / Lead Discussant each=05
<b>Category 3</b>	<b>CO-CURRICULAR EXTENSION AND PROFESSION RELATED ACTIVITIES API:100 Weightage: 10</b>
<b>Category 3(a)</b>	Membership in editorial boards each=5
<b>Category 3(b)</b>	Membership in professional bodies each=5
<b>Category 3(c)</b>	Training programmes attended
	Outside the Country each=10
	Outside the institution each=05
	Inside the institution each=05
<b>Category 3(d)</b>	<b>Guest lectures delivered by faculty in</b>
	Industry

	each=5
	Research Institutes each=5
	Other Universities each=3
	<b>Field studies / Educational tour</b>
	<b>Environmental education / value based programmes</b> each=5
<b>Category 3(e)</b>	<b>Achievements</b>
	Executive positions in professional bodies each=10
	Awards and honours (only academic bodies and Govt.,) each=20
	Administrative position in University each=10
	Extension activities (participation in community services) One programme = 05

### Calculation of Performance Rate:

1. Performance score as per the points mentioned against each criterion is calculated.
2. Each parameter score such as scores of Student feedback, Research, Academic activities and Achievements and Extension Activities is calculated.
3. The parameter score is multiplied by the weighted assigned to each parameter.
4. The weighted parameter score of all three parameters is added.
5. The total Weighted score by 24,000 (the maximum possible weighted score) is divided and multiplied with 100 to get performance rate of the teacher.

### Conclusion:

CPD is a lifelong process and one should assess one's abilities through the above mentioned activities. A teacher is always under careful watch of his students, management, and his influence reflects the future of the pupil, the workplace and himself. As Henry Adams quoted, "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops," it is the primary responsibility of the teacher to leave a positive impact on the students and involve in Continuous Professional Development and become an exemplary figure.

### Abbreviations:

API – Academic Performance Indicator  
 CPD - Continuous Professional Development  
 CSIR - Council of Scientific & Industrial Research  
 ICT - Information and Communications Technology  
 NPTEL – National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning  
 PARN - Professional Associations Research Network

PPT – Power Point Presentation  
R & D – Research and Development  
SONET - Synchronous Optical Networking  
UGC - Union Grants Commission

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## PRACTICING LIFE SKILLS IN CLASS ROOM

**Dr. Y. Nirmala Devi**

### Life Skills

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Life skills are abilities which enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Every field is undergone dramatic changes. The latest invention may be nothing tomorrow. The users of cell phones and internet are increasing day by day. Not only in technology and science, this is the same situation for the educational field. For Students, what they are studying in the class room, may be completely different when they enter into the job field. They must be ready to encounter the different situation. To meet the requirement of new environment they must be good enough in their life skills. What is life skills?

**World Health Organisation's** defined lifeskills as,

*“Life skills are abilities that help us to adapt and behave positively so that we can deal effectively with the challenges of everyday life”. Life skills are innumerable. However, analysis of the life skills field suggests that there is a core set of skills. They are*

- *Decision making*
- *Problem solving*
- *Creative thinking*
- *Critical thinking*
- *Effective communication*
- *Interpersonal relationship skills*
- *Self-awareness*
- *Empathy*
- *Coping with stress*
- *Coping with emotion*

It helps us to accomplish our ambitions and live a better life. Life skills are not always taught directly but often learned indirectly through experience and practice. To practice life skills in the class room, literature can be used as material. Literature is the mirror of the society and reflects our lives. For example, Black American literature records the trials and tribulations of the black people to attain equal status in the society. It is very clear that literature is not only for the entertainment whereas it has variety of dimensions. By using literature, we can practice life skills in the class room. And also, Literature plays a major role in teaching four basic language skills like reading, writing, Listening and Speaking. However, language skills or life skills cannot be taught in traditional teaching method. Learner center Approach should be adopted and students should be involved in the practice.

## **Why we use literature as a material**

According to Collie and Slater (1990:3), there are four main reasons which lead a Language teacher to use literature in the class room. These are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. In addition to these, some of other factors are universality, variety, interest and economy and suggestive power.

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### **Authentic material:**

Literature is not created for any particular purpose. It is merely reflection of reality, imagination of the author, or personal experience of the author. In reading this literary context, students can easily understand the situation and cope up with the language.

### **Cultural enrichment:**

It is the main source of learning culture. For example, Indian literature, African literature, Australian literature give clear picture about their tradition, culture, customs, and language. No writer can escape from the influence of his country's culture and tradition in their work. Consciously or unconsciously, writers record the recent incidents and happenings of their contemporary age. In above all, some of the writers use as their background for their novels, short stories. For example, many novels were written on theme of world war-I, civil war, world war-II .When a reader reads the literary text, they can understand the tradition and culture.

### **Language enrichment:**

Literature provides a wide range of vocabulary, idioms and phrases. Students can learn about the various uses of the same word, different ways of connecting ideas, and the variety of possible structures which develop and enrich their own writing skills. Students become more productive and creative in using language when they perceive the richness and diversity of the language.

### **Personal involvement:**

Literature can be useful in the language learning Process owing to the personal involvement .Once the student starts to read the literary text, he becomes more involved in the development of the story and he becomes enthusiastic to find out what happens next. He feels close to certain characters and shares their personal emotions. When the student admires the character and feels the emotionally for a character, unconsciously he accumulates the language used by the character. This can have beneficial effects upon the whole language learning process. For example, Milton's paradise Lost. It is very difficult to understand the meaning. If anyone admires Satan, a villain in the epic, definitely he should admire the choice of the words used by him. Unknowingly and without any effort he will learn the wide range of vocabulary.

## **The theme of literature is universal.**

Like other subjects, it does not concentrate on specific area. Literature is about people, relationships, conflict, love, desire, feelings, hopes, dreams, life. Despite of culture and country, these themes are common to all human beings. Through reading literature, we learn about life, the world around us, and ourselves. Great figures in the literary world deal with these common themes in their work. These common themes pervaded in all literature. So, it is the responsibility of the teacher to select the text relevant to the aim and objectives of his teaching for their students. Literary texts are often rich in multiple layers of meaning, and can be effectively mined for discussions and sharing feelings or opinions. Without having to experience the tragedies, difficulties and pain, we can understand feelings and emotions of human nature and the human condition. We live and learn through the experience of the characters. Marcel Proust said, "Only through literary art can we escape from ourselves and know the perspective of another on the world."

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Student-centered approach is the suitable method for practicing any life skills. Because using literature in the language classroom, skills cannot be taught in the class room. First, they can discuss at a literary level about the characters, theme and plot with direct questions. In the second level, they can discuss about the inner meaning of the theme, character sketch and its development and the author's aim. In the next level is personal/evaluative level. In this level, students should be encouraged to give their personal views towards the theme, characters, background of the plot. At the advanced level, they can be encouraged to write their own ideas and conclusions. It can be done as individually or as group.

## **Using literature to practice decision making skills.**

Among the all life skills, decision making is an important one. In its simplest sense, **decision making** is the act of choosing between two or more courses of action. There may have been a better choice that had not been considered, or the right information may not have been available at the time. Because of this, it is important to keep a record of all decisions and the reasons why decisions were made, so that improvements can be made in the future. This also provides justification for any decision taken when something goes wrong. Hindsight might not be able to correct past mistakes, but it will aid improved decision making in the future.

For practicing decision making skills, open ended short stories can be taken. For example, a famous Pebble story can be given for discussion. The story begins like, "Many years ago in a small Indian village, a farmer had the misfortune of owing a large sum of money to a village moneylender. The moneylender, who was old and ugly, fancied the farmer's beautiful daughter. So he proposed a bargain. He said he would forgo the farmer's debt if he could marry his daughter. Both the farmer and his daughter were horrified by the proposal. So the cunning money-lender suggested that they let providence decide the matter.

He told them that he would put a black pebble and a white pebble into an empty money bag. Then the girl would have to pick one pebble from the bag.



1. If she picked the black pebble, she would become his wife and her father's debt would be forgiven.
2. If she picked the white pebble she need not marry him and her father's debt would still be forgiven.
3. But if she refused to pick a pebble, her father would be thrown into jail.

They were standing on a pebble strewn path in the farmer's field. As they talked, the moneylender bent over to pick up two pebbles. As he picked them up, the sharp-eyed girl noticed that he had picked up two black pebbles and put them into the bag. He then asked the girl to pick a pebble from the bag.

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Careful analysis would produce three possibilities:

1. The girl should refuse to take a pebble.
2. The girl should show that there were two black pebbles in the bag and expose the money-lender as a cheat.
3. The girl should pick a black pebble and sacrifice herself in order to save her father from his debt and imprisonment.

Students can be asked to give their suggestions regarding this matter. If they are in the girl's position what they will do to save their life and their father?. These type of open ended short stories provide more opportunities to think imaginatively and creatively to come up with new ideas and thoughts.

Another example, we can take for practicing decision making is Shakespeare's King Lear. Because all of shakespeare's plays deal with human nature and the main theme resolves around human weakness and its consequences. In this play he portrayed about an old man's wrong decision and its consequences. He did not take correct decision at the proper time. Before discuss in detail, teacher should explain about the summary of the story of King Lear. In short, Lear, the aging king of Britain, decides to step down from the throne and divide his kingdom evenly among his three daughters. First, however, he puts his daughters through a test, asking each to tell him how much she loves him. Goneril and Regan, Lear's older daughters, give their father flattering answers. But Cordelia, Lear's youngest and favorite daughter, remains silent, saying that she has no words to describe how much she loves her father. Lear flies into a rage and disowns Cordelia. The king of France, who has courted Cordelia, says that he still wants to marry her even without her land, and she accompanies him to France without her father's blessing.

Lear quickly learns that he made a bad decision. Goneril and Regan swiftly begin to undermine the little authority that Lear still holds. Unable to believe that his beloved daughters are betraying him, Lear slowly goes insane. He flees his daughters' houses to wander on a heath during a great thunderstorm, accompanied by his Fool and by Kent, a loyal nobleman in disguise. Lear's daughters have turned against their father, In Dover, a French army lands as part of an invasion led by Cordelia in an effort to save her father. The English troops reach Dover, and the English, led by Edmund, defeat the Cordelia-led French. Lear and Cordelia are captured. In the climactic scene, all his three daughters are died and Lear finally dies out of grief at Cordelia's passing.

Though the story is about the old aged king and his three daughters, the themes in the story, the theme of betrayal, misuse of power, selfishness and taking wrong decisions are common to all people and in all ages. Students can understand the characters easily and they can relate to their personal lives. In reality they can come across people like them. In this context, students should be encouraged to analyze the decisions of literary characters and their effects. Students will then make their own judgments about the decisions and effects and will relate them to their own lives. This will be effective because students will enjoy the process of reading and reflecting more if the story becomes personal, and students tend to learn more and be more motivated to learn if material relates to their lives. Also, if students are creating their own conclusions/creating their own knowledge, this is a high order mental which will be retained for a longer period of time. This retention will increase the likelihood of student application of learning to their own decision-making.

## Conclusion

Teachers need to consciously help students to imbibe these critical factors for success. It is not as easy as taking a book and teaching to students. The learning has to come from experiences. Students who has these skills , the opportunities for success are innumerable. And moreover these opportunities are not limited to one field alone and it will help to sustain in any field or in any country. these skills are firm bedrocks in this rapidly changing world to which students can firmly anchor to formula for success.

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## DEVELOPING REPORT WRITING SKILLS THOROUGH PROCESS METHODOLOGY

*Chalasani Sudheer*

The demand for English has been sweeping almost all the fields of national life like politics, international relations, media, communication, travel and education. The advancements in Science and Technology and their use of new terminology have been showing an immediate impact on the language, adding tens of thousand of words to the English lexicon.

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In order to meet the demand the government has introduced many English medium schools. The teaching of English in India has always been in difficult circumstances. This is so because of large population of the country, bleak economic conditions, the cultural and social diversities, insufficient faculty and material etc. some of the other factors:

1. Lack of clear-cut policy
2. Lack of exposure to the language.
3. Non availability of suitable teaching-learning material.
4. Lack of good teachers of English.
5. Defective methods
6. Lack of motivation
7. Large classes.
8. Faulty examination system

(Methodology of Teaching English, 2003, pp. 33-34)

With all the problems, discussed above, the standard of English in our country is deplorably low. Hence, there is need to find the causes and solutions to this problem. The researcher has investigated into the standards of teaching English language and methodology of teaching English in an engineering college.

### Statement of the Problem

The main purpose of any class room teaching in English is to improve language skills. Compared to oral communication, written communication is difficult. Several reasons have been given by researchers in order to prove the effectiveness to develop the writing skill both at trinity and graduate levels. According to Raimes (1983) teaching writing helps to reinforce the grammatical structures, idioms, vocabulary etc, taught to the learners.

White (1987) states that teaching writing through interesting and creative materials helps the teachers provoke creative responses from the students. Therefore, this kind of involvement on the part of the learners according to Raimes et al. (1983), helps the learners not only to be creative but also to participate in the writing activity. Hence this kind of relationship between writing and discovering new ideas makes L2 writing a very valuable part of a language course.

In a study conducted by Hedge (1988) on the processes involved in producing organized and contextualized pieces of writing, the focus was on the purpose and the

audience to whom the text was addressed. Hedge identified different kinds of writing texts which help the learners to enhance their writing skills, namely, personal writing, study writing, public writing, creative writing, social writing, and institutional writing etc. She feels that every writer should be familiar with different conventional of written text, as it helps them serve various purposes of writing which they encounter in their daily life both in and outside the classroom. This idea was supported by Raimes, A.

Raimes (1983) feels that teaching writing helps the learners experience a new way of learning while attempting different kinds of text. This learning of different text helps the learner's to meet their future needs in real life situations.

The most important factor in writing exercises is that the students need to be personally involved in order to make the learning experience a lasting value. Encouraging student participation in the exercise, while at the same time refining and expanding their writing skills requires a certain pragmatic approach. The teacher should be, first of all, clear about what skills he/she is trying to develop. Next the teacher need to decide which means or type of exercise can facilitate the learning of the target aspect. Once the target skill areas and means of implementation are defined, the teacher can then proceed to focus on what topic can be employed to ensure student participation. By pragmatically combining these objectives, the teacher can expect both enthusiastic participation in the writing and learning activity as well as effective learning as the resultant.

### **The Context of the Study**

Muthavarupu Venkateswara Rao College of Engineering and Technology, Paritala, Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh, affiliated to J.N.T.U. Kakinada was the context of the study. The university has all the rights to modify or alter the syllabus, conduct examinations both internal/external lab and written examinations and award degrees to qualified engineering students, who have passed in all the examinations of the university and fulfill all the requirements of the university.

In this study, the researcher is concerned with the first year English components of engineering courses, which is compulsory for all first year learners. In most engineering colleges, importance is always given to writing, as it is essential to the technocrats to exhibit their views in letter writing, report writing, essay writing, e-mails etc. However, it has been noticed that many engineering students encounter problems in writing specific tasks. Most of them fail to achieve objectiveness, formality and detachedness in their writing. In addition to that, they are not much aware of the changes that need to be made in writing to achieve these objectives. Though they have learnt the techniques of report writing or essay writing in school, what they are unaware that the writing course in the discipline requires more than the knowledge of content and requires knowledge of specific features like organization and arrangement of ideas, coherence and context-specific sentences construction. Most of the students have significant ideas to present but they are unable to organize their ideas or use the desired language to achieve the task. Also, it has been observed that they are fairly good in writing answers for the content questions posed by their teachers. They nearly mimic text book language in their

answers. If they are asked to write a report, they find it difficult to present their ideas logically in writing.

### **A Review of the Prescribed Textbook**

The text book of English for first year B.Tech students prescribed by Jawaharlal Nehru Technical University, Kakinada is "Step by Step: Learning Language and Life Skills" published by Pearson Publication Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi in the year 2011. This book is a compulsory text book for all engineering colleges affiliated to Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, since English is considered to be the most important language and is acknowledged as a passport for betterment of education and employment opportunities in the world. The book consists of exercises in comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, dictionary, listening, speaking, and writing. The overall stated aim of the text book is to enable learners develop communication skills.

The text comprises of 6 chapters equally divided for two semesters. The first three chapters are meant for the first semester and the remaining three chapters are for the second semester. All the chapters are selected from various areas of human activity such as Read and Proceed, Health, Travel, Disaster Management, Gender, Sport - an attempt is made to move away from the earlier textbooks which were primarily literature based.

To improve writing skills each chapter has comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening and writing section. The reading skill is tested through the comprehension questions which are related to the passages. Each lesson has a vocabulary and a grammar section which focuses on types of words and sentence constructions used in the text. Speaking and listening sections focuses on different types of listening and speaking activities that are important for the development of communication skills of the learners. These sections also include instruction in phonetics and pronunciation with an overt emphasis on accent neutralization.

Since writing forms an important part of an academic literacy, at the end of each chapter various forms of writing have been explained in details with exercises. These forms of writing are as follows:

1. Paragraph writing
2. Conversation writing
3. Essay writing
4. Writing letters
5. Report writing
6. Writing resumes

### **Area of Research**

The present study presents a Process Approach to report writing, which has been developed for the first year engineering students. This approach involves giving learners a process to follow, clear instructions on the sort of language appropriate for reports in general. In this approach, as mentioned above, the researcher will not be looking at the vocabulary specific to the engineering, but he will look at the formal

vocabulary where, if the learner has to write a report on any topic, he/she will be able to write with minimal focus on language and major focus on the content.

### Objectives of Research

The researcher has identified the following as the main objectives of the study:

- To investigate the problems in students' writing at the first year B.Tech. by collecting samples of writing of L2 learners at varied levels and analyzing them.
- To study and test the impact of processes methodology to develop writing skills in the first year B.Tech students.
- To test whether the processes method of teaching is the most suitable method for improving writing skills in the first year B.Tech students.

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### Design of the Study

The present study intends to examine the efficacy of the intervention through which focus on the processed based teaching of elements is carried out to highlight the differences between oral and written language. The study focuses on language features of report writing, as it is very essential for professional students. Report writing is used in most of the universities, since it is used to describe project, statements of the experiments to be conducted, and data to be analyzed. The specific elements concentrated on in the present study include tense, voice, concord, prepositions, and articles.

The study is divided into three phases:

1. Pre-Intervention test
2. Intervention
3. Post-Intervention test

### Pre-Intervention Test

In the beginning, learners were asked to write a report for about 40 minutes to see whether they are able to write and to ascertain what kind of errors they make while writing. Then learners were asked to write a report on "Extension of National Highway Number 5 from Four Lines to Six Lines" in about 150-200 words. Learners were given 40 minutes to write the report. The presentation task demanded formal language in the written mode. These tasks were given to the learners to check whether they were able to write using formal language. This task also aimed at checking whether learners could use passive voice, tense, prepositions, articles, concord accurately and whether they could write using formal language and vocabulary. The researcher found that learner errors were mostly found in the usage of passive voice, tense, articles, concord, and prepositions.

### Intervention

The intervention phase was divided into eight sessions where each session was of about four hours i.e. for about 32 hours of intervention. In each session, neo feature was taught with the help of the worksheet. These worksheets focused on the information about usage of tense, voice, concord, prepositions, and articles. In



the teaching sessions, the difference between present, past, future tense, and agreement between subject and verb were more emphasized. The worksheet consisted of fill in the blanks exercises. Each exercise was followed by a feedback session where answers to the exercise were discussed and learner's doubts were clarified. The researcher discusses the materials used and the teaching session in detail in the following section.

### **Post-Intervention Test**

In the post-intervention test, another reportwriting task "Establishment of Thermal Power Plant near Vijayawada" was given to the target students. It was a guided writing task since the main points required for the report was provided as hints and the learners had to write a report consolidating those hints. Learners were given about 40 minutes time. The same parameters used for analyzing the pre intervention tasks were used for analyzing the post intervention tasks as well.

### **Sample Group for the Present Study**

For the present study, the researcher adopted the simple random sampling technique for the collection of data. Since it is generally impossible to study an entire population (every individual in a country, all college students, every geographic area, etc.), researchers typically rely on sampling to acquire a section of the population to perform an experiment or observational study.

Simple random sampling is the basic sampling technique where researcher selects a group of subjects (a sample) for study from a larger group (a population). Each individual is chosen entirely by chance and each member of the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. Every possible sample of a given size has the same chance of selection.

(Valerie J. Easton and John H. McColl's Statistics Glossary V1.1)

The researcher carried out research study on 24 students – 14 boys and 10 girls – of the first year of Electronics and Electrical Engineering at M.V.R. College of Engineering and Technology, Paritala. The learners were in the age ranging from 17 to 19 years. The medium of instruction was English. Out of 24 learners, 15 had studied in English medium from class 1 onwards and 09 studied at the intermediate level.

### **Course in Writing Skills**

A thirty two hour (Eight weeks, four hours for each week) course was conducted for a group of twenty four learners from the first year B.Tech, Electrical and Electronics Engineering students of M.V.R. College of Engineering and Technology, Paritala. The course was designed to develop writing skills by applying Process methodology.

Students who were interested in improving their writing skills were selected (heterogeneous group of students of different levels of linguistic competence) and a group of twenty four students were formed.

Although the group comprised of 30 students at the commencement of the experiment- due to unavoidable personal reasons six students were very irregular. As a result data of the 24 students was collected.

### Observations on Each Topic

The following is the analysis of data of each topic. The topic given to the students is stated clearly at the beginning of the analysis of each report. Page | 144

#### Topic. 1. **The Conversion of National High Way from Four Lines to Six Lines**

	Generating Ideas
First week	With the help of teacher students generated ideas by using brainstorming method. Students were successful in generating ideas under different headings on the given topic
Second week	Organization of Ideas
	As it was the first report, the ideas were not properly organized and there was no proper division of paragraphs.
Third week	First Draft
	Only a few students started with abstract followed by summary of the report others fail to do so.
Fourth week	Peer Evaluation.
Fifth week	Second Draft
	Most of the students failed to correct the mistakes they committed in the first draft.
Sixth week	Editing
	Editing and teacher's interaction seemed to have helped eliminate or at least minimize grammatical errors in the writings.
Seventh week	Proof reading
	Some of the students were successful in identifying the spelling errors, grammatical errors, and syntactical errors.
Eighth week	Final draft
	At the final draft, some still displayed a few minor grammatical and spelling errors though most showed fluency and accuracy.
	Our response
	By applying process methodology, the writing seemed to have taken better shape. There is a free flow of ideas

Intensive coaching was given to the students in thirty two hours. After the completion of intensive coaching students were asked to write a report on the topic “Establishment of Thermal Power Plant near Vijayawada” the following data showed the improvement in the students.

### Establishment of Thermal Power Plant near Vijayawada

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	Generating Ideas
First week	Without taking any help students generated ideas by using brainstorming method. They were successful in generating ideas under different headings on the given topic
Second week	Organization of Ideas
	Having written a number of reports, students were able to organize the ideas in a proper way and they were successful in division of paragraphs.
Third week	First Draft
	Most of trained students came to know the proper structure of writing reports.
Fourth week	Peer Evaluation
	A number of grammatical errors in the various texts were gradually reduced. Most of the students got good command over correct use of articles, verb, prepositions, concord, and sentence construction.
Fifth week	Second Draft
	Most of the students were able to correct the mistakes they committed in the first draft.
Sixth week	Editing
	Students were successful in editing the reports.
Seventh week	Proof reading
	There was a lot of improvement in proof reading. Students were successful in identifying spelling errors, grammatical errors, and syntactical errors.
Eighth week	Final draft
	At the final draft, some still displayed a few minor grammatical and spelling errors though most showed fluency and accuracy.
	Our response

By applying process methodology, the writing seemed to have taken better shape. There is a free flow of ideas
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The thirty two hours course in developing report writing skills which was conducted using the Process approach significantly improved skills in the students.

### Summary of the Findings

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The language that is used by the learners in the scripts in the pre-test proves that learners are aware of some aspects of language required to write reports. However, the errors made by the learners indicated that they were not aware of the functions of certain features that are necessary for a formal tone of writing.

The comparative analyses of the pre-test and post- test findings showed that:

1. There is a significant change in the performance in the post-test results when compared with pre-test. This means that there is a definite progress in the learners' ability to write formal reports and the course taught is helpful. This can be said with confidence since there are not known factors other than the course which could have led to the growth in their ability to write formal reports.
2. The researcher in the pre-test noticed that some of the students of the target group could not distinguish between prepositions. In the post test it was noticed by the researcher there was considerable decrease in the mistakes. 4.00 was the mean of pre-test as compared to post test the mean was 0.92.
3. During the pre-test it was noticed by the researcher that some of members of the target group could not use concord properly. The post-result proved that there was a considerable decrease in the mistakes in concord. In the pre-test it was noticed the mean was 2.17 as compared to the post-test mean of 0.38. It was proved that the intensive 32 hour coaching given to the target group on concord yielded fruitful results.
4. In the case of tense in the pre-test it was noticed by the researcher that many students from the target group were unable to distinguish the difference between present perfect and simple past tense. After the post test most of the students were able to use right tense at right place properly. The mean score in the pre-test was 3.88 as compared to the post-test mean of 0.88, which shows that learners have been able to learn necessary features of tense.
5. There is a statistically significant increase in the use of passive constructions. The mean score in the pre-test was 2.54 as compared to the post-test mean of 0.64, which shows that learners have been able to learn necessary features like avoiding personal pronouns, suppressing the agent or the doer of an action and using the passive voice to lend a formal tone to their reports.

### To Sum Up

The principle claim that the researcher makes in study is that through intensive coaching on writing by applying process method, students can improve their writing skills. Few EAP/ESP programmes exposed learners to the register of academic writing, and even if they do they are in terms of broad generalizations which learners are not able to realize in language. The claim that the researcher has made and also

tried to substantiate through data collection is that there is a need for explicit instruction of these process expectations and how registers are realized lexically grammatically. Through this study the researcher has shown that L2 academic writing teaching should be given more attention.

It is felt that oral language forms an important part of written discourse. Without the knowledge of oral language, the learner would not be able to understand the linguistic differences between these two forms of language. Moreover, these two modes of communication are the two ends of a continuum and understanding of this knowledge will help them choose the correct social conventions and related linguistic forms when working with in genres of the written one and not confuse one for the other.

It is the opinion of the researcher that equal importance must be given to oral and writing skills. If the student is fluent in oral communication than it is easy for him to understand the errors and rectify mistakes in writing communication. Today most of the organizers are emphasizing good writing skills especially at the time of employment and promotion.

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## IMPORTANCE OF SOFT SKILLS TRAINING FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

*G. Tripura Devi*

We are living in a world of information explosion where in the spirit of enquiry, pursuit of knowledge and the burning desire to succeed have brought a world of change in our attitude to life in general and individual aspirations in particular. At this juncture, mere knowledge and skills one has in his own sphere of study and activity are not enough. He needs a set of integrated skills to excel in his profession or in his work place. Ability to express oneself and confidently is a very important personality trait but many people fail in this aspect though they have very strong professional technical skills.

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For instance: Using their technical and professional skills, a scientist can make a new invention, an engineer can bring out a new invention, an engineer can bring out a new model car, a surgeon can perform a surgery successfully, a business personnel may bring out a new product or a captain for an advertisement, a teacher may present her lesson with all details but when they have to interact with people at the work place or in the public, they don't need these technical skills. What all they need is a set of soft skills which are highly communicative in nature.

Despite constant updating of syllabus and core content, it is observed that soft skills are not given a significant part among the various skills set imparted to an engineering graduate. On completion of the course, engineering graduates are supposed to step into their career with confidence and should be able to perform as per the expectations of industry. Modern HR selection process is competency-based and professional students are expected to practice Industry-demanded skills and be ready to face the selection process. Keeping this key aspect into consideration, training is important for engineering students to enhance their skills and to achieve good placement in various Industries. Training of students and equipping them with life skills has become an important responsibility of the Institutions. Along with technical expertise, development of a holistic personality is also necessary.

The engineering graduates are supposed to work with significant independence and should be strong in leadership qualities. They should have adequate competence to perform the designated duties in effective manner. They should be pro-active and committed and also must be team-players and to have passion for learning at the work site. They also needed to have capability to leverage the knowledge and promote cross-functional learning (*The Hindu Speaks on Education*, 2009).

**Soft skills are all those skills that have to do with “being human”.** They are those skills that are NOT focused on engineering, physics, dynamics, geology, biology, electronics, etc. Soft skills are those skills having specifically to do with being human and with being “in relationship” with other human beings. Specifically, communicating with them, working with them, influencing them, getting along with them, fighting with them, arguing with them, being angry with them, agreeing with them, laughing with them, and the list goes on. It's called “life”.



The facilitator frames different kinds of topics and the deliberation process is thrown open to the whole group of students. Students are required to exchange ideas and opinions amongst group members on a specific and familiar topic. Students are to be trained to articulate different types of situations through adequate discussion till they reach a satisfactory level. The students are required to contemplate real life situation and arrive at possible solutions. To ensure this, mock group discussions are conducted among the engineering graduates to make them effective and efficient.

The primary purpose of technical institutions is to enhance the capabilities of engineering graduates by developing talent, creating knowledge through institutional solutions such as creating digital resources and creative technology solutions for class room learning. However, it is observed that majority of engineering graduates are lagging in practical skills. Some of the reasons could be their primary education, medium of instruction, rural background, financial status, etc. To overcome this inadequacy, presently several methods and mechanisms are available. These may inculcate various generic skills for making a professional student Industry-ready and to orient towards their nature of work to perform duties in the designed way and feel and exercise responsibility.

To enable students to acquire the targeted industry requirement for recruitment process, the following aspects may be considered.

### **Assessment of Students**

Performance and learning levels are assessed by the examinations and these examinations are considered to be a formative feedback mechanism. It is essential to conduct mock tests to separate students according to their intelligence level.

### **Mapping**

It is very essential to categorize the students according to their intellectual abilities. This is mainly based on the assessment tests conducted during the course work and students are categorized according to their standards. It becomes possible to transform the knowledge based on their perception and intelligence levels.

### **Non-Verbal Presentations**

It is obvious that lot of emphasis is required on quality of increasing professionals with regard to their ability to understand. In this connection, the learning aids like charts, data sheets, work sheets, slides, power point presentations, models, animations, multimedia, audio/video aid, projector/LCD, desk top/lap top, internet, etc., are very useful for reaching expected levels of intelligence.

### **Group Discussions**

The facilitator frames different kinds of topics and the deliberation process is thrown open to the whole group of students. Students are required to exchange ideas and opinions amongst group members on a specific and familiar topic. Students are to be trained to articulate different types of situations through adequate discussion till they reach a satisfactory level. The students are required to contemplate real life situation and arrive at possible solutions. To ensure this, mock group discussions are conducted among the engineering graduates to make them effective and efficient.

### **Language Proficiency**

Subject competence encompasses proficiency in language and the degree of knowledge of student depends on aspects such as syntax, phonology, etc. The student's competence in the subject matter will be greatly aided and maximally utilized if this competence is coupled with knowledge of theories of how language is learnt and how this can relate to approaches, methods and techniques used in regular subjects.

### **The following factors are to be considered during training of professional graduates:**

- Encourage the graduate learners to consider past experiences and relate their skills learned in those roles to present and future work experience.
- Discuss with learners their reasons for studying or going through assessment. This information can be used to contextualize activities.
- Create a plan and follow up to reinforce the abilities of engineering graduates. Define expectations and design schedule for desired behavior.

### **Further, the following activities also foster the employability skills:**

- ❖ Work place-based approaches can be particularly useful for fresh graduates because of authentic context in which employability skills can be demonstrated and applied.
- ❖ Classroom based approaches do not have access to the some opportunities as work place-based approaches. Arranging of practical case studies, simulations and activities with Industry representatives can all help to address the lack of awareness at real work station. Working closely with industry contacts to design activities can be useful ways of ensuring a high degree of relevance of activities.

### **6 soft skills for every hard-nosed professional**

Behavioral training experts say there are several soft skills are required in these circumstances. Some of them include:

1. Interpersonal skills
2. Team spirit
3. Social grace
4. Business etiquette
5. Negotiation skills
6. Behavioral traits such as attitude, motivation and time management

It is quite necessary for the professional graduates to enhance the generic skills other than technical skills, and make themselves aware of the history, growth potential and jobs available in the present day Industry sector. Hence, it is important to have a first hand knowledge and experience of situations that are to be faced in the current Industry. Professional students need to understand the emerging trends of Industrial World.

The basic philosophy of training of young engineering graduates lies in giving information about ground realities and making them the all-round performer. Today, the selection process is different and employer will select the candidates based on how they match the employer's needs. People from different industries are equally keen to recruit students whenever they come across them. It is important for graduates to know what selection attributes are given priority by employers. For a selection process, it is felt that communication skill, writing resume, positive attitude, motivation, strategic planning, preparing for the interview are all important for true success. Thus, these training methods are helpful to both graduates as well as the industry.

## TECHNICAL WRITING IN ENGLISH- CHALLENGES

*D. Ahila*

### Introduction

As a technical writer, our job is to work with developers and content experts to document their products. Traditionally, developers and engineers document their own products. They write all the tutorial and related documentation that ship with their products. Nowadays, many companies hire people with strong language, communication, and/or writing skills to do all the technical writing work. Thus the birth of the technical writing becomes a profession. Most often, technical writers are English or Communications major. Some schools in the U.S. even have technical communications as a major—not as a common subject, but is becoming increasingly popular as the demand for technical writers is rising. Occasionally, we find a few technical writers—former engineers and programmers—who would rather write in simple English than in codes.

In any case, technical writers have strong language skills, but they may not necessarily have the technical knowledge, background, or understanding of the area or field they are writing about. Thus, it is essential that technical writers have the interest and the capacity to learn new things fairly quickly. Secondly, technical writers must be able to understand just the right amount of information so that they can logically and effectively communicate that information in the documentation they write.

These two essential requirements are the keys to being a good technical writer. They are also the biggest and greatest challenges we face every day.

- **Knowing what we need to know**—since technical understanding is not the job requirement, the challenge is to know how much to grasp in order to do our job.
- **Asking the *right* questions**—learning something completely new and complex in a short amount of time requires asking the right questions. Again, our job is not to be content experts or to out-geek the engineers.
- **Seeing from a user's perspective**—our users are typically people with content knowledge somewhere between the engineers/developers and us. It's a good thing that we don't know too much because then we see the need to explain things that content experts might not think necessary. At the same time, it's not always easy to guess or know what our users want to (or care to) know.
- **Working closely with content experts**—since technical writing is a relatively new field, not all content experts know how to work with technical writers. In a typical product development phase and cycle, it is quite common for changes to be made on a daily basis. Every new change affects documentation in some way, thus it is essential that technical writers work closely with the content experts to ensure that all the changes are reflected in the documentation.
- **Technical jargon**—the official language of our content experts! If we don't understand it, our users most likely won't either. Our job is to learn, read about, research, and drill all that jargon into our heads until we understand it.

Sometimes it might takes days, weeks, or even months before something finally “clicks” for us. Then we have to translate that into plain English.

## Seven Challenges to Technical Writing

Technical writing is a great field, but there are some challenges that technical writers must sometimes overcome:

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1. **Rework and repetition.** Technical writers have a lot of rework and repetitive work—not necessarily because the writer has done anything wrong, but rather because the technical products that they are writing about tend to change often. It’s common for a new technical writer to be assigned the task of updating existing materials, rather than producing new information.
2. **No byline.** It’s rare for a technical writer to get a byline on a manual, help system, or other document that he or she has produced. This is one reason why good references are so important. Although one brings samples to interviews whenever he can, the prospective client will almost certainly be checking with the previous documentation manager.
3. **Respect.** Technical writers usually work as part of a technical team. A technical writer encounters a team of engineers or programmers who just don’t want to cooperate, either because they are too busy or because they don’t see the value in what the writer is doing. A good technical writer must also have good people skills.
4. **Long hours.** Staff technical writers tend to work long hours. They often have deadlines that mirror the tight deadlines faced by the development team. Sometimes freelance technical writers aren’t allowed to work those long hours because management doesn’t want to pay overtime. Other times, however, the freelancer works as many hours as the staff writers do. Clarify overtime expectations before accepting any jobs.
5. **Change.** A technical writer working in a technology field, things will be changing often. The tools he uses, the product he writes about, and even the manner in which he produces information will be different over the course of his career. It’s important for him to invest the time and effort that it takes to learn new things.
6. **Must work core hours on site.** A technical writer has to work on site at least part of the time. This varies from company to company and there are still some companies who require their writers to work on site—particularly if the product is large, non-portable, or if the writer will be dealing with sensitive information.
7. **Meetings.** Technical writers go to both formal and informal meetings. Even freelance technical writers usually find it necessary to schedule meetings with other members of the development team. If the company has more than one technical writer, there are often writing group meetings to discuss common problems and standards.

Anyone who is seriously considering transitioning into the technical writing field should think long and hard about these challenges before making a final decision. All of these obstacles can be overcome, but it requires effort.

## **Challenges Faced By Technical Communicators at Work**

### **Inability to separate content from information**

As professional technical communicators, understanding the content and information to be gathered from the engineers is must. 'Must' be specific. Content is a vast term. It can imply design documents or first draft written by engineers. The stakeholders are responsible to provide us with relevant documents from time to time. We seek information from engineers to resolve our issues about the product workflow or behavior.

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### **Untimely or no inputs from the Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) or Developers**

SMEs are hard-pressed for time; this is not to say that technical communicators have all the time in the world. However, for them to take us seriously, we have to ensure that the groundwork is done. If the design documents are incomplete or lacking necessary information, press the panic button immediately.

One can befriend the developers or quality assurance professionals in his team over a cup of tea, and inform them about the bottlenecks. More often than not, they will be ready to help or at least tell whom to contact about such problems. Technical documentation is growing at a slow and a steady pace and will soon not be a niche domain anymore. Many process-driven companies now lay a lot of emphasis on technical documentation, as a software product cannot be deemed complete unless it is accompanied by relevant user documentation.

### **Getting people to review the work for content**

If one wrote something but no one ever reviews it, chances are that the inadequacies in his writing will go unnoticed. This can pose a problem later when some client or customer points them out to his organization. It will not only jeopardize his credibility as a writer, but also reflect badly on his work. The suggestion for this is to buy some time from the stakeholders and tell them the importance of a review and what we expect them to look at.

### **Writing a document with little information about the Product /Process /Project**

It is always a good practice to meet the product managers or stakeholders should such a condition arise. They must understand that insufficient information will put us out of business very soon. As technical communicator, he is supposed to provide the complete functionality for our end users. He must document facts as they are. He will not be doing any justice either to the end users or to himself by providing incomplete facts.

### **Less importance given to documentation**

People are open about their opinions. The same people will change their opinions once the profession starts gaining credibility in India. In many organizations where technical writers are employed today, writing is seen as a strategic business function. Making our presence felt requires that we must work harder towards transforming the profession itself into a core business function. It is our responsibility to educate product stakeholders about the importance of hiring technical communicators.



**Lack of clarity among the software professionals about the role of technical writers**

Being a technical writer always gives an opportunity to explore new dimensions and come up with some great ideas. This field is indeed great for people who have technical knowledge but also want to use their language skills. Technical writing is still in a stage of evolution where there are things yet to be more properly established but with more and more learned people venturing in this line the future is indeed bright.

Technical writing like any other technical or managerial line has its own rules and processes. It largely depends on understanding and how well a person can articulate the ideas into words. In case one has the ability to clearly express his understanding in words precisely then certainly he has the spark to be a technical writer.

A lot of organizations offer very good and challenging positions to tech writers as these companies understand the value if communicating with the end users in a comprehensive manner.

**The Prerequisites for Being a Technical Writer**

Technical writer should have necessary skills for successfully performing in the dynamic industry. To discuss some of the things, a tech writer should possess,

**\* Excellent Grammar and language skills**

It is extremely important and certainly a prerequisite for being a tech writer that he is well aware of the various rules and notions in grammar. He should never have confusion about the tenses and other parts of speech. Though vocabulary is also important still he can manage as no much difficult words are needed here. Sentence structuring and error free composition is always required.

**\* Technical Knowledge and understanding of terms**

Being technically qualified helps a lot technical writers. If he understand the technical terms used in IT, it would be a lot easier for him to document the stuff; else a lot of dependence would be on the developers. One who possesses these two attributes can certainly be a good tech writer.

Some challenges need to be considered when thinking about a career as a technical writer. For example, a person may have to invest considerable time and money to acquire the knowledge and skills needed. Also, it can be difficult to gain entry-level experience. Technical writing is typically a sedentary profession that does not involve travel. At the same time, it is a demanding profession that can take time and energy away from other, more creative writing pursuits. Working for a company with an established set of document guidelines can be frustrating, and the profession is sometimes criticized for being dry and unimaginative.

Many technical writers have a background in the arts or other creative disciplines. A major challenge to some technical writers is the lack of creativity associated with technical writing. There is a certain degree of artistic freedom, such as adding and editing images and other graphics, but most of the work involves

rewriting technical specifications. Some writers find this technical work boring and monotonous.

Technical writers usually work to very tight deadlines. Often, they depend upon others to provide information, which can be frustrating if material is not delivered in a timely manner. Technical writers must be able to handle constructive criticism. Final documents must be current and technically perfect, which requires peer review, multiple drafts, editing, fact checking, and proofreading. Remember that constructive criticism is part of the business. Do not take it personally.

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The technical writer must avoid complacency. If a writer specializes in one comfortable niche and the technology becomes obsolete, the writer will be out of work. For example, a writer who is extremely skilled at writing user guides might be reluctant to work on an annual report.

Freelance and contract technical writers must be prepared for times without work. The writer requires financial savvy and discipline to deal with cyclical employment. One must consider developing transferrable skills as an indexer, teacher, photographer, illustrator, video narrator, reporter, or editor. If one has "more than one string to your bow", you are more likely to succeed as a small business owner.

Generally, the outlook for technical writers is bright. Technical writing is a job growth area: More jobs are being created than are being filled, particularly in the high technology industry. Once employed, a technical writer works on a wide variety of projects, many of which represent the cutting edge of science and technology. The field is supportive of female professionals; more than half of all technical writers are women. While a majority of technical writers are between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four, about 20 percent are over fifty-five years

## Conclusion

Technology is constantly changing and evolving. Technical writers must be extremely knowledgeable and keep up with technological advances. It can be frustrating to be familiar with a system that frequently upgrades, requiring a greater learning curve. It can also be frustrating to develop documents about unfamiliar products. However, unfamiliarity can result in excellent work, as the goal of technical writing is to educate unfamiliar users.

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