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Founding & Chief Editor Profile

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Dear Readers and Contributors,

This issue presents again a wide range of topics as a tradition that has been encouraged at IJELLS.

We have two book reviews, two short stories and a creative write up in the first section. It is a pleasure to welcome a very young writer. We have always promised ourselves that IJELLS will be a platform for original writing, and we are setting examples. The teachers of the Masters Programme in English need to encourage students to pursue research and guide them into writing articles.

The Literature section has a breath of fresh air in terms of an article on Temsula Ao's writings and other new perspectives. The Language Teaching section and Communication Skills section have a very interesting compilation of academic thoughts and insights.

We, at IJELLS are preparing to take the presence of IJELLS in other countries seriously. We invite Editors from countries other than India. If interested kindly mail your Resume to editor.ijells@gmail.com

Happy Reading and Sharing!

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju
Chief & Founding Editor



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Sri Rama Katha **Anuradha Veluri**

(Lord Sri Rama's Story: Nagambhattu's trip to Kasi by Sri Kompalli Venkataramasastry)

Foreword of the Translator

Ramayana is India's richest of the possessions -- a great epic, written by sage Valmiki. It is the story of a great hero, who is an epitome of virtue. It is the story of an ideal son and husband, an exemplary brother, a valiant warrior, a great master, a just ruler, a true friend and any role that one can imagine.

Ramayana is like a capsule filled with all the treasures of the world. It can be taken in small doses or in total, for a complete refinement of personality.

Virtuous qualities like truth, friendship, loyalty, sense of commitment, determination, dedication are embedded in it. The list is endless.

Ramayana belonged to the 'Thretha' eon(Yuga) –800BC. In fact, it is for all ages and all times. It is a rich source of inspiration and motivation for one on the lookout for values and morals. It is like a beehive filled with honey, each compartment of it, complete in itself and contributing for a large whole. It is for one to choose and enjoy the sweetness of it – a perennial flow of knowledge and wisdom.

Every page of the book is special and unique in itself. Every time one reads, every time one may interpret it in yet another angle and benefit by it. Such is the effect of the great epic. It is a treasure house to be possessed by every household.

Ramayana , a true story of God incarnated in the form of a human being , has been wonderfully knit by sage Valmiki, portraying excellent human relations and their complexities with an element of philosophy interspersed.

The present story is the one, passed on by the great sages of ancient times. The English version of the story is an attempt to be as close as possible to the original telugu version of it, written by Sri Kompalli Venkataramasastry of Rajahmundry. Any suggestions with regard to it are welcome. It is with an ardent wish to benefit one and all, that the translating job has been taken up. Omissions and commissions, if any, are unintended for which, I may be pardoned.

“Mano tho mein Ganga hoon, nahin tho, behtha pani,” is a famous Hindi quote. It is upto one's perception, as to how one receives it. This revolves around faith. For all with immense faith in Ramayana, it will certainly give peace and bestow them with all the gifts of nature, fulfilling their desires.



Once upon a time, there was a Brahmin by name, Nagambhattu. His wife's name was Suguna. The couple had a son by name, Narayanabhattu and a daughter by name, Narayani. Theirs was a poor family.

It went on like this. One day, Nagambhattu felt, that he could go to Kasi and earn a lot of money there. He started for Kasi on an auspicious time. After he travelled some distance, he met saints Vyasamunindra, Narada and their student Soothamuni. On seeing Bhattu, they asked him where he was going. Falling on their feet and greeting them, he addressed them saying his life is blessed by their visit (darshan). Unable to bear the dire poverty, he is on his way to Kasi. He further requested them to show him a way out of his problem. Taking pity on him, they said, "Oh foolish Brahmin! If you go to Kasi, you can get darshan of Sri Viswanadh, Annapurnadevi and Bindumadhavi. You'll be lucky to bathe in the river Ganges. But will anyone give you wealth? You must either do a noble deed or a pooja (vratam) due to which, you'll get rid of your sins of previous births. With that, you'll get rid of your state of poverty."

Nagambhattu requested them, "you've seen my state; you may give me some advice to help me out". To this, Narada muni said, "I will tell you a method of performing a pooja (vratam) which has a story. By doing so, you will be blessed with immense wealth; like, getting 'plentiful from peanuts'." He then went on to narrate the story of Sri Sita Rama, after briefing him about the procedure of performing the pooja.

King Dasaratha was the King of Kosala. He did not beget children for a long time. While he was performing 'Putra Kameshti' pooja, he was offered a bowl of sweet rice by a gentleman (Yagna purush). King Dasaratha offered it to his three queens Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. On consuming it, they became pregnant and later four sons were born to them – Rama to Kausalya, Lakshmana and Satrugna to Sumitra and Bharatha to Kaikeyi.

They grew up like the waxing of the moon. King Dasaratha educated them with all the skills and knowledge. One day, sage Vishwamitra came to him and asked him to send his sons Rama and Lakshmana with him to guard his 'yagna', a sacred 'haven'. On getting the king's consent, the sage took Rama and Lakshmana along with him. On the way, he taught them the skills of 'Bala' and Athi bala', apart from other skills. With this power, Rama and Lakshmana could conquer the demons and safeguard the 'yagna' to go on smoothly. On way to Mithilanagar, Rama redeemed Ahalya of her curse and on breaking Lord Siva's bow, married Sita. When king Dasaratha wanted to crown Rama as the king, Kaikeyi came in the way, demanding the fulfillment of two boons that he owed her in the past. First one was, Rama to be sent to the forest for fourteen years. Second one was, Bharatha to be crowned king, instead.

Following the instructions given by his father, Rama went to the forest, followed by Sita and Lakshmana. Ravana carried away Sita and Rama and Lakshmana went in search of her. Befriending Sugriva, and killing Vali, Rama crowned Sugriva, king of the monkey kingdom, searched for Sita by taking his help and sending monkeys in all directions.

Hanuman went in the southern direction to Lanka overseas, where Ravana ruled,



saw Sita and brought the news to Rama and Sugriva. With the help of Sugriva, Hanuman and the monkey kingdom, Rama started for Lanka, crossing the over bridge laid by them. There, they killed Ravana, Kumbhakarna and other demons in the battle. Ravana's brother Vibhishan, who took shelter under Rama, was made the king of Lanka. Sitadevi, in the presence of Gods, monkeys and demons, being purified by Agni (fire), was brought to Ayodhya in a 'pushpak viman'(the divine flight) and Rama was crowned the king. He ruled the kingdom happily, in an exemplary way.

This is, Ramayana. Every word in this, redeems one of one's sins. After narrating the story and method of performing pooja, he went on to tell about the conditions of the same: this has to be performed on five Thursdays and five Sundays in the month of Chaitra (March-April) for five consecutive years, without a break. Cow ghee should be used for lighting the lamp. Prasad offered to the deities should be made of cow milk, wheat rawa and sugar. Five balls of the same must be made and offered. Later, one of the five must be offered to a Brahmin and one to a married lady. Third one to be distributed to neighbours, fourth and fifth to be consumed by the members of the family. The same procedure, if performed for five years without a break, will bring prosperity, bestowed by the grace of Sri Sita and Rama. This was told in detail by Narada Maharshi. Saying that he will certainly do it, Nagambhattu took leave and returned home.

Nagambhattu shared his experience with his wife and children, began the pooja in the new year in 'Chaitra month' and performed it for five Thursdays and five Sundays, reading the story of Sri Rama, subsequently. It went on for three years. He became a rich man, eventually.

In due course of time, Nagambhattu again felt like going to Kasi. Informing his wife and instructing his son to continue doing Sita Rama pooja and reading their story without fail, he started for Kasi.

Later, when Narayanabhattu performed the pooja and called his mother to listen to the story, she refused arrogantly saying, it was time for cooking in the morning, time for work in the evening and time for sleep in the night. She became negligent after acquiring property and lost interest in religious rituals. The lady of the house is considered as the torch bearer or the beacon light. If such a person neglects her pious duties, how will prosperity remain in such a house hold? Her attitude called for Sri Rama's displeasure. All the acquired treasure, including the old utensils, slowly started getting transferred to the neighbourhood, to those families, who performed Sri Rama pooja. Even the father Nagambhattu's special copper bowl (with a hole) used for begging, started rolling out. Then, the daughter asked her mother to request Sri Rama to let that at least, remain. On her request, it remained. A silver plate on the shelf was also rolling when the mother caught hold of its rim.

So, the remaining part of the plate disappeared to the neighbouring house. The next day, on enquiring about it, they said that it was their plate and that, they did not steal it from them. Then, Suguna brought the piece of the plate that she had with her and attached it to the plate. The neighbours took the whole plate and said, it was theirs; feeling ashamed, she returned home. At this, her son reminded her that all this was because she

had stopped Rama pooja and listening to the story. “At least now, will you like doing the above?” he asked her. To this she asked, “What is the use of all those rituals, any way all the prosperity is gone. You get your sister married to someone,” she said. Obeying his mother, Narayanabhattu left in search of a groom for his sister, along with her. As they went a little further, they met their father. He also had a queer experience, as Rama ‘Vrata Katha’ was not performed properly. On his way, he saw a lake. Feeling thirsty, he went to it to quench his thirst, leaving his treasure bag on the bank. An eagle then came and flew away with it. Sharing this experience with his children, he asked them where they were going. They told him how their mother had become disinterested and did not continue Rama pooja and how they lost all their wealth and on her instructions, they are on their way, looking for a groom. Nagambhattu told them to do as they had been told and went on his way, home.

Narayanabhattu , thus began his search for a groom. He came across two, in a couple of villages. The first one said that he had no such intention while the second one said that he already had two wives and was not in a position to feed them; so, a third one was not necessary. Both, brother and sister went to another village where they found a flowery garden. They felt that if they performed Rama pooja there, something good would turn up. So they performed Sri Sita Rama pooja and read Rama Katha. Later, when they were to leave for another village, the brother saw a youth having come for flowers to that place. He asked him if he could marry his sister. To this, the boy said he would marry if his guru gave his consent. When Narayanabhattu asked his guru, he said that he had no objection but cautioned him saying that the boy is not rich - does not own any land or a gram of gold. If that is acceptable, the marriage could take place.

So, Narayanabhattu, with the help of the villagers and the Guru’s blessings, married his sister to the boy, in his own humble way. He blessed the newlyweds by narrating them the story of Sita and Rama and the way of performing the pooja, and saying that they may perform the above and live a happy and prosperous life. The couple did so, with great devotion. As they were performing the pooja, a rich Brahmin recognising their capabilities, gave away four acres of land in donation. After sometime, the king of that country was on the lookout for a pious couple to offer them a mansion with all amenities. One night, he was instructed by Sita and Rama to offer all that he wanted, to the pious couple, Narayani and her husband. The next day, the king sent them a chariot and invited them. The couple were then, reading Rama’s story after performing Rama pooja. They hosted the messengers of the king, read the story to them and then went to meet the king. The king honoured the couple, got a palace like mansion constructed with all the amenities and offered it to them. One day, Narayanabhattu asked his sister how long could he stay with them and told her that, he would go in search of Lord Rama and bring Him, to redeem their house of poverty. So saying, he started for a village where he met a blind man tending sheep. He enquired from him of anything he could tell of the conditions there. On learning the plight of the cowherd, Narayanabhattu narrated the story of Rama after which, the blindness of the cowherd vanished. “The effect of the story is itself so amazing, then how much more effective, will the performance of the pooja be!”, thought the blind man and learnt from Narayanabhattu, the whole procedure.



After going some distance, Narayanabhattu came across a sad king. On enquiring what his trouble was, he was told that the king had lost all his kingdom as the enemy kings had occupied his land and his wife and children had lost their way. Narayanabhattu consoled the king and told him that he would narrate 'Rama katha' to him and he would be relieved of his sorrows. He also told him of the procedure of the pooja. Due to the effect of listening to Rama katha, the king's wife and children returned to him. He also got back his kingdom. Narayanabhattu, then proceeded further after advising the king to continue doing the pooja.

After going some distance, Narayanabhattu came across a sobbing lady. On enquiring from her the cause of her sorrow, she told him that she had got married at an early age; that her husband had deserted her and her parents and in-laws, after sometime, 'washed off' their hands of her. To her, Narayanabhattu narrated Lord Rama's story and the pooja proceedings and went his way.

On reaching a village he stopped at a house and asked a lady if he could be given some place to perform Rama pooja. To this, the lady rejected saying that, it was not possible for such religious rituals to be observed in their house and asked him to look for another. He then asked her to show him the way to a pond at least. She directed him to go to the northeastern side and Bhattu went to the pond there, had his bath, and again came to the same house. He then took an old wooden seat from his bag, applied turmeric to it and decorated it; keeping Sita Rama's photo on it, he performed the pooja, offering five balls of 'prasad' made of cow milk, wheat rawa and sugar. When he was reading the story to himself, the lady of the house came out and saw him; he gave her 'prasad' and betel leaf ('thamboolam'), sprinkled sacred rice grains ('akshit') on himself and on the house and went his way. As he left, the house turned to be a marvelous 'Indra bhawan'. The lady kept waiting for her husband to return from begging and told him of all that happened. Being angry at her behaviour and exclaiming how inconsiderate and unlucky she was, went looking for him and requested him to come to their house. Bhattu said that he was going in search of Rama and hence, could not go with him. The Brahmin sought his forgiveness and requested him to come with him. Narayanabhattu said that it was not wrong to refuse him their house. Instead, narrated Rama's story and told him to perform Rama pooja and read the story and be happy. The Brahmin did so and became prosperous.

Narayanabhattu, who went in search of Lord Rama, in villages and forests, became unconscious and fell down; he did not mind the scorching sun, the downpour of rain or hunger. Taking pity on him, Lord Rama, in the guise of an old man, went to Narayanabhattu, helped him regain consciousness, gave water and invited him home for lunch. But Bhattu said that he was looking for Rama and could not eat until he saw him. He wanted to be shown a lake where he could bathe and do Rama pooja. Rama showed him a lake. Bhattu saw silver seats and golden plates kept ready for the pooja, by the time he came refreshed. When the pooja was getting over, Narayanabhattu was once again invited by Sita and Rama to which, he insisted that, until he saw Rama, he would not take any meal. Then Rama in the guise of an old man, said that he was Rama Himself. To this, Bhattu said that it could be so, but he wanted to have 'darshan' of Lord Rama in reality, in the true sense; only then, he would be blessed. Lord Rama then, along with Hanuman, Sita, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna, gave him a divine 'darshan' of the family.



Having had the divine 'darshan of them, Narayanabhattu composed the following hymns in ecstasy:

|| *"Sri maddivya munindra chitta nilayam, sita mano nayakam,
Valmikodbhava vaksyoddhi sesinam, smerananam, chinmayam,
Nityam, neeradaneelakaya, mamalam, nirvana samdhayakam
Santam, satya, manaamayam, sivakaram, sri ramachandram bhaje"* ||

Rama , with a smile, asked Narayanabhattu, whether he would have his meal atleast then. Bhattu with folded hands, said, "Oh, God, if you promise that you will come with me, then I'll certainly eat". Rama promised. Narayanabhattu was then served a festive lunch in golden plates and offered silver seats along with Rama and his family by Sitamahadevi. After the sumptuous divine meal, including camphor and betel leaves at the end, Narayanabhattu requested Lord Rama to go along with him. Rama asked him to walk first and He would follow him later. After some distance, Narayanabhattu looked back and did not find Rama there. He became upset and again lost consciousness. Rama then , bringing him to consciousness, asked him why he fell so. Bhattu, with folded hands, said," Oh great God, your greatness cannot be assessed by Gods, sages and saints . What am I then? Can I withstand your tests? Please pardon my follies and come with me". Merciful Rama agreed and told Narayanabhattu to carry Him on his shoulders and take Him to all the places where he had been on his search for Him. Firstly, Narayanabhattu took him to the house where he was denied permission, to perform pooja at their place. Then, to the lady whose people had abandoned ; next, to the king who had lost his kingdom; finally, to the blind man's place. All of them had been performing Rama pooja and reading the story too. Rama was pleased with their devotion and blessed them with abundance of wealth. Later, Narayanabhattu took Rama to his sister's place where they were all rejoicing by performing Rama's pooja and reading His story. Seeing this, not only Rama, Narayanabhattu was happy too. His sister Narayani, hosted them with all honour. He invited her and his brother-in-law to their place as he was taking Lord Rama there. When they reached the border of their village, the villagers, on seeing them all, conveyed the news to Nagambhattu.

The couple were very happy and received them all. They tried to embrace, when Narayanabhattu told his parents to keep their house clean and welcome them home, right from the entrance(by decorating with designs ,flowers, tender mango leaves etc.),as he was bringing home Lord Rama. Thresholds had to be smeared with turmeric and mango leaves to be hung at the door , and so on. When everything, including the offering was ready ,they were to be invited in. Nagambhattu did as instructed. Narayanabhattu carried Lord Rama on his shoulders along the four streets of the village in procession and on entering their house, said to Rama, "Oh, God! please put your right foot forward, as you enter". Rama did so and their house turned to be a beautiful mansion(like 'Indra bhawan').Then Narayanabhattu requested Rama saying, "Oh, Swamy! I am a poor man. I know nothing but your devotion; kindly accept my old wooden plank for a seat as your throne". Immediately, the wooden plank turned out to be a golden one! Everyone, Sita, Hanuman, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna took their seats along with Sri Rama. Nagambhattu and family performed their pooja, having them in their presence in the true sense and adorned themselves with the sacred rice grains. Just then, a Brahmin arrived



with his daughter and requested Narayanabhattu to be married to her. Taking it to be Lord Rama's intention, everyone agreed and the wedding was performed in a grand way at an auspicious moment.

They always performed Sri Rama's pooja, who was their omnipotent deity. Sri Sita Rama blessed them with long life, good health and prosperity. This pooja was observed and practiced by all in the world. Everyone who performed it was blessed by the kind Lord and lived a happy and prosperous life.



Her Life Imprisonment

Muktaja Mathkari

(Tichi Janmathep by Vaman Chorghade)

Water taps not working! The whole village panicked and cries were heard everywhere: No water anywhere at all! Not even a drop to drink! The tap is out of order! No water! No water!

How and where do we get water from? People started rushing towards the river. The streets were crowded. Married women in large numbers with earthen pots on their heads, were seen on the roads. Was it a good omen or a bad one?

She drew the gunny bag curtain and came out. Holding an empty earthen put on her waist, she started walking towards the water tap.

She tried to open the tap; twisted it in every possible way. But her efforts proved to be futile. The tap kept mum. Instead she saw a group of women and heard the noise of empty vessels which they were carrying.

For a moment she thought; 'In which direction does the river lie?'

She happened to look at the neem tree across the street. It had blossomed. It seemed as if the blossom at the tips of the branches shined like gold and silver beads. Crows and sparrows seemed to be hidden behind the canopy of the dark green leaves.

She was aghast. She wondered: 'When did this tree grow here? How tender, lively and beautiful!' She glanced for a while at the skies.

'How so soon my villagers became so rich? During my time, I remember having seen houses made up of soil and hay. Is it that my village has started manufacturing lime, bricks and tin roofs?

'In my childhood, I used to run away at the sight of a *sahib*.' She remembered how her mother used to pose the *sahib* as a spook. However, today she had come across hundreds of them. 'Which era is this? Where have I been?', she asked herself.

She joined the other women in order to fetch water. She became friends with one of them. They came across a square. Only a daily passer-by is able to enjoy the happenings at a square. But what about her? She was overwhelmed by that commotion. She thought she became young once again. Her face had an expression of person who had just awakened from her hibernation. She was as apprehensive as a bird that has just escaped from its cage but is unable to enjoy its freedom.

She came across a glass palace. She thought of it as a long, sweet dream. She guessed that God created this palace just the same way He created dreams to make us happy. She



remembered a name of building always spoken about at her home. She skeptically asked a woman near- by “Sister, is this the Taj Mahal?”

The poor, ignorant, uneducated woman had no clue. How would she know? She responded in a hoarse voice, “I don’t understand what you say. This house belongs to that Sarju Sheth’s keep. Why poison your eyes by looking at it? Come on, let’s fetch water”.

She was shocked by the woman’s preaching. But her curiosity got the better of her. There were so many things around her now which she had never seen in her times. She resumed her walk.

In front of a house, there was a flag hoisted on a pedestal. People dressed in white clothes were saluting it and whispering a song. She asked again, “Sister, who are these people?”

“You don’t even know this? Which world do you belong to? Dear, they are patriots .” Saying so, the woman also saluted the flag.

“What do you mean by ‘patriots’?”

“They get jailed. They wear cheap, white dresses. They abandon their families. They collect rubbish from our houses and also clean the roads daily.”

“But why?”

“They are to make our country free. Then *Gandhibaba* will be our king. Then we will have money also. Everybody will be prosperous. There will not be any scarcity of water. Children will have clothes to wear. See there, that’s *Gandhibaba*.”

The woman showed her the statue of Mahatma Gandhi carved in the pillar.

“Who is this ‘*Gandhibaba*’?”

“He is our Godfather! He fights with the police. He churns them across the water-lifting wheel and then throws them on the ground. The moment he incants ‘*choo mantar*’, our diseases disappear.

She looked at the statue again. She was wonderstruck. Flowering creepers seemed to play on that marble pillar and it felt as if it was raining roses and jasmines everywhere. Fountains were sprinkling water all around. The same water had become an elixir of life for the lawn below.

“Oh sister, which square is this?”

“The entire village was lathi-charged here. There was a meeting of patriots held here. The patriots were speaking. A salt deal was being discussed. Those bastards, the policemen beat them all very bad. Good Lord! That Brahmin boy was all drenched in blood! He was put behind the bars. Sister, I was also standing right there, in a corner. A policeman shooed



me away. Vile men! Work just on Rs 15/- but look at their haughtiness!” That woman had become very furious!

She was looking at everything greedily, was listening to everything and was trying to understand everything. She felt that she must have been bewitched. Otherwise it would not at all have been possible for her to perceive this magical world in the stark day light. ‘How did the world change so drastically!’, she thought. She could not identify a single change in herself at all and yet she was certain that she was alive. She got even more perplexed. ‘Am I getting lost somewhere?’, she wondered. She had a hallucination that everything about the novelty there was deploring her. She felt ashamed of herself.

Now she became sure of the power of the incidence of the earthquake. The earthquake, to her, seemed to be the only possible cause of this sea change: The old houses there had disappeared and this entirely different new world was born out of the Mother Earth.

One more idea struck her. ‘Is at least the sky intact?’, she thought. A small faded piece of the moon seemed to be journeying through the clouds. Whitish clouds shone like shells in the rays of the Sun. The free wind blew and kites flew.

Now everything became clear to her. The sky was as it had always been.

‘Then what is this magical world? Oh no, no! This is certainly something bizarre!’, she thought.

She once asked again,

“Oh sister, when did all of this happen?”

“What do you mean? Where have you come from?”

“I stay here itself.”

“Then how come you don’t know anything of this? Is there any problem?”

“But when I saw this place last, none of this existed.”

“When had you been here last, oh dear?”

“Just recently, dear. Say around twenty five years ago.”

“What?--?”

The woman looked at her skeptically and got irritated with her. The woman thought of her to be a witch, a sorcerer or someone of that sort and that she was trying to befriend her with the intention of eating away her children. The woman asked her furiously, “Where were you all these twenty five years?”



She had no answer to the question asked. She was lost in thought. Her face looked very sad and disappointed.

“Have you come from the black waters of Andaman and Nicobar?”

“Please don’t say so, sister.”

“Then tell me as to where have you been?”

“Here only, in this town itself.”

“But what does all of this mean?”

“It’s all meaningless. Got married at the age of sixteen, husband belongs to this village only. Today, I’m forty.”

“So?”

“Oh dear, how ignorant are you! We live behind a *burkha*. There is no question of stepping out of the house in my youth!”

That was all that she spoke and she started walking silently.

The other woman was relieved. ‘No, no, this poor woman is not at all a thief or a witch! How sinful was I to accuse her!’ the woman said to herself.

The woman glanced at her and pitied her...

And life continued just like before.



Let's Dream Of Dreams

Sai Chaitanya Mangavelli

An intense flow of thoughts; all strangely synchronizing well with paramount creativity; all the places look vivid but unfamiliar. How come I am nostalgic about something that is unfamiliar?

Wait a second! Am I dreaming?? Well! Let's find out!

Let's say, a dream is a visualization of thoughts while our consciousness is at rest. Basically our thoughts govern our thinking and perceptions in our daily life also. Then what is the difference between a dream and reality?

If a dream is a virtual reality without the laws that are applicable in the real world, then can it predict future?

Life is a strange voyage; we often tend to collect a lot of thoughts and visuals daily. However, we only focus on few.

But what's happening to the other thoughts?

Let's take an example; yesterday I happen to see a place which consisted of a highly decorated garden with flowers of almost all possible colors. Strangely this place is my college library. Isn't it fascinating! But wait a second. That wasn't my library in reality, then how was it that I have been watching it; this place for sure isn't real. I had a nostalgic feeling about the garden and the way in which library was organized.

So this was probably a virtual reality where somehow my daily life perceptions created a world with the help of imaginations which were hypothetically creative.

Wow! Isn't it?

But why a library in a garden, why not in a space or some haunted house?

Digging into my thoughts, I found that before I slept, I was very happy since my project was completed on time and well received. So probably that happiness was having an effect on the location. However, happiness could be expressed in many ways; but I chose a garden which I happened to see couple of days back and a library where I spend most of my time working. Isn't there a strange connection?

Yes. That's how we dream. A dream basically takes thoughts that are stored in our brain (often those which we don't give importance in our conscious thought process) and combine them with our emotions, feelings, desires, regular thoughts and work areas to create a situation with a paramount creativity.



However, even before the dream could be analyzed, another dream had started where I got into a plane that was about to crash; filled with an intense anxiety, all of a sudden a strange idea struck my mind, and I saved all the passengers. It's a good experience to save people, but why such a transition in thought, from a happy garden to a crashing aero plane?

Well, that's how we dream. A dream basically takes random situations depending on our emotional status and intense desires. However these emotions are controlled by our daily events like for example, my success in a project, a feel of anxiety during writing an exam with new questions etc. So one thing is clear, even though we can't decide upon situations in dream we can very well control the theme of it. In addition to that, dreams are often fluidic without interruptions and are high on creativity which is in contrast to our normal conscious life. Perhaps, dreams also fulfill our desires of the way we want our conscious life to be. If that is the case then dreams will serve some purposes. First, it enhances our creativity by an effective and well-connected situation. Second, it connects our thoughts and will probably reduce the pressure of storing these thoughts and third, it refreshes our brain by processing thoughts without interruptions, and unnecessary distractions. This is an interesting methodology that finds similarity to a computer refreshing its memory by processing and deleting the files (cleaning its memory). In addition to that, since dreams are an effective way of processing data, we can pass on stuff like questions to solve, or maybe words to remember in order to get the job done effectively. However what about the anxiety dream, what if I couldn't save people, then that will be a disturbing experience. Isn't it?

Basically our emotions and mind set before we dream, will decide our impact of dreaming. Like happy moods probably lead to happy dreams and sad moods give rise to sad ones. However if one has fixed moods, then even the dreams occur with a mixed nature as its theme. However, there is a benefit associated with it; i.e., by the pattern of the dream and its theme we can analyze our mental condition and come up with a solution. So dreams can be used as an indicator of mental condition. This ideology can be extended, but let's not get into those details.

Sometimes we don't dream at all. How is this possible?

In general our subconscious mind is responsible for the dreaming action but what if even our subconscious mind is forced to sleep; in that case we don't dream. However, brain relaxes itself by processing data in a way which is different from dreams or maybe it doesn't. This dilemma is yet to be solved.

So, only when our subconscious mind is active we dream. This state is referred to as "Rapid Eye Movement Sleep" state.

Now is it possible to control dreams?

Let's take an example, say we are dreaming of a nightmare which is similar to an experience in our daily life. If this situation is maneuvered in real life, then there is a



definite possibility the same can happen in a dream too. So maybe unknowingly we can decide the way in which the dream should proceed.

But is the vice versa, if possible; true?

Well I leave that as an open ended question as of now.

Another interesting observation includes influence of music on maneuvering dream results. Like listening to good music can set the theme of dreams right. So even though our conscious is at rest, external factors still seem to have an impact. This kind of dreaming is called “Lucid Dreaming”- a situation where one can control their dreams. This kind of dreaming is possible only in few cases which I will explain in the next paragraph. However, the uniqueness of dreams is the way in which it doesn't get influenced and interrupted. So it's better if it stays that way.

Wait a second!

Dreams are also characterized by its volatile nature of remembering it only when we are asleep. Then how is it that, I am remembering all this stuff?

Am I dreaming of writing this article or is it happening in real?

Well! Whatever is the case, let's go ahead and understand more about it.

It is true that once a dream completes, it is difficult to remember it, but what if we come to our conscious before it completes; in such a case the dream is not erased from our memory and we tend to remember it. However, there is another way of remembering it too. Like if we are stuck in solving a problem before we sleep, then there is an every possibility that this problem would continue in our dreams and since our dreams are free of distractions, with enhanced creativity we often end up finding the solution. Interestingly we also remember the dream. So basically in order to remember a dream we need to either access it before it completes and gets erased or our dream needs to take a thought from conscious mind so that it can be stored in the conscious memory which we generally tend to remember. This to a certain extent supports “Lucid Dreaming”.

Now we are left with an interesting question; whether our dreams have the power to predict future.

In general, our past and present actions decide to a certain extent, what probably could happen in future. Since our dream connects them and creates a visual of it, there is a possibility it can match with future. Moreover dreams present the best and a creative way of representing our events, so it generally stays on the higher side of the probability of matching with future. Moreover, since it creates a world of its own, and by chance if its creation is similar to the future happening, then we may feel it is predicting the future. However, dreams are mostly based on the thoughts we generally gather and our way of thinking. So predicting future which is dependent on other factors apart from our thoughts is not a sure possibility.



One more interesting thing about dreams is that, they can be remembered by excavating into the memory frequently. The only difference is, it will look like an experience or a thought instead of a dream.

Well! Having said that, Isn't it strange that I am able to explain my dreams so well. Is it possible to master the art of dreaming, or am I dreaming of writing this article?

Revealing the surprise; this article is a result of my dream guided by my desire to understand and express my thoughts about it. So, Yes! I was dreaming while analyzing these points. I fortunately could remember them because the dream took its theme from my conscious problem and my efforts to recollect all its thoughts helped in the same. Now, do all dreams try to convey something?

Is it possible to always find solutions to problems which we couldn't find in the conscious state?

If yes then are dreams really random occurrences or do they follow a pattern or a rule? Well the only way to find an answer is let's dream of dreams!

Happy dreaming.....!



The Diplomacy of Undiplomatic Girls

Ansulika Paul

(Book Review of Manjula Padmanabhan's *Getting There* London: Picador, 2000.330 p.)

Manjula Padmanabhan (b. 1953) is an artist, illustrator, cartoonist, playwright and novelist.

The book is based on Manjula Padmanabhan's own experiences. The book speaks a lot about the courage of being feminine with audacity. In fact one could predict it to be a new horizon in femininity. A world where women could openly discuss her flaws and still believe to be accepted by the society. When the author writes about a woman not just as a sultry sex bomb as portrayed by the media but as an ill-figured not so attractive lady, she contributes a lot to being feminine.

Getting There is also a reminder to the alarming consciousness the Indian society develops in a woman that she can be nowhere without a man. Thus the search begins. The search to "get there". Reaching the destination of having a man in a woman's life. Man the permanent body of pride, fame and completeness of womanhood.

It takes effort for a woman to be herself, to speak her heart out, to say that she does not believe in the institution of marriage. Not necessarily every woman born should be alive to marry or birth children. There can be exceptions and they can still be feminine.

Femininity is redefined in the book as everything a woman does is feminine need not essentially be differentiating herself from men physically, emotionally or otherwise. This is a farfetched fact. Something that needs to be seriously pondered into. Why the whole lot of women need to be doing the same thing for the sake of femininity? Can't it be accepted by society that every woman is born feminine with her choice of life, her set of thoughts and her way of living. This is something society needs to accept and appreciate. *Getting There* gives a detail into all these valuable stuffs. A short haired woman can be equally feminine to a long haired one, a woman who doesn't want to have children can be equally feminine than the one who has one or many. If these beliefs as revived by society now and then could probably be thought about, then all the scrutiny a woman goes thorough would come to an end.

The book is in itself a journey of a woman's Search for a woman. A quest to find herself. The real self away from the tangles of relationships, the society and the world. It also depicts the label every woman suffers with, to be married and to have children. The author tries to detangle the basic and important feminine norms the society has, still being as feminine as she is. The journey is also about a woman whose identity is a man or otherwise she is lost.

Indian society is too protective about a girl child. The girl child has to live in a predefined notion of the family. This over protectiveness takes the shape of insecurity in a child. The child does not practice a habit of thinking independently. The leading lady Manjula in the book *Getting There* also goes through the same mental condition and her quest from Mumbai to Holland is to find "The Independent Manjula" in her. Who would



have her own mind, her own thoughts, her own words and her own life not bound to anyone or anything.

Woman, who had been brought up dependent on someone or the other in the family, actually depends or tries to depend to fulfil her needs. To be precise also because of her incompetency or lack of confidence. She urges to feel needed by others to keep her will power moving in action. This psychological condition can be marked in few parts of the book. The book in itself is a developmental journey of a woman from femininity as society labels her, to femininity as she identifies in herself.

Getting There depicts the stark reality of womanhood away from a symbol of sex or pleasure. It conveys the message that femininity is much above all the superficiality that the world expects a woman to portray all her life. A woman might not fit to the basic strictures of being one but still can be feminine.

This journey of the woman Manjula in the book is a struggle to free self from the body of “men defined femininity” to “woman defined femininity”.



Understanding Language Testing - Book Review

Maria Clementine Joseph

(*Understanding Language Testing* By Dan Douglas, First South Asian Edition (2011) ISBN: 9780340983430, A Hodder-Viva Edition, Hodder Education: A Hachette UK Company, 156 pages, Price: 295 INR)

The thrust of the book *Understanding Language Testing* is towards development of an understanding of testing procedures, techniques, tools, and practices that eventually help in measuring language abilities that are invisible and intangible. Douglas focuses on the ethical responsibility of educators and test designers in defining the purposes of tests and their consequent interpretations that have a profound impact on the lives of the test takers/ students e.g., the Occupational English Test (OET) or immigration or academic purposes. According to him, a language test is an instrument for measuring language ability. He likens a language test to a 'rubber ruler' (p.3, 1.3) wherein the intervals for measurement are not equidistant, yet the focus is on the amount of 'stretch' there exists in it, as in a language test. He leads the reader through to an understanding of test development procedures (needs analysis) and analytical procedures (criteria for scoring) that help ensure language tests are objectively accurate and subsequent interpretations appropriate and impartial. The important purpose of the book is to 'present a framework for the development and use of language tests that measure best the intended abilities of the test taker'. His goal is to empower educators and students to understand the nature of language testing and spur them onto further reading to satiate their quest in the field of language testing.

I agree with the author's stance that language tests though 'rubber rulers' (Douglas, 2011) can be controlled through effective practice; the results of which are fair to test takers and usefully interpretable as evidence of language ability. In Chapter 1, he converges on the 'Code of Ethics of the International Language Testing Association (ILTA)' that testers recognize and safeguard the human dignity of test takers, apart from the analogy of the 'rubber ruler'. In Chapter 2, Douglas discusses the framework for analyzing features of context- Target Language Use (TLU) with special reference to sociolinguist Hymes' (1974) acronym SPEAKING: Setting, Participants, Ends, Act Sequence, Key, Instrumentation, Norms of interaction, and Genre and how interpretations of test performance indicate some level of language ability. In Chapter 3 he presents a framework for developing test tasks, blue prints, how TLU tasks may be converted into test tasks, options for the test, use of computers based tools for test design and administration –all of which reflect test purpose and TLU with the ultimate goal of 'bias for the best' as proposed by Merrill Swain (1984). Chapter 4 highlights the different approaches to assessment: criterion versus norm-referenced tests, the underlying theory being 'communicative testing' during the last 40 years. A new interest developed in the 1990s called 'alternative assessments' which include use of conferences, self/ peer assessments, portfolios, and task-based form of assessment and 'dynamic assessment'. Dynamic assessment is based on the Vygotskian concept that emphasizes the need to also assess learners' capabilities in future as a result of mediation by the teacher besides his/her present abilities as a result of past learning. Chapter 5 discusses different statistical techniques that can be used to measure language ability with respect to a particular test purpose; understanding a) language test as a test



through use of mean, standard deviation, the reliability and SEM; and b) tests as related to factors outside the test –such as correlation, t-test, ANOVA and normal distribution. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses technology as an inescapable aspect of testing language which can be a ‘promise and threat’ (Canale, 1987) (p.57) to test developers. Technology must be considered when defining the construct to be measured in the test and that it ought to be used in the service of language assessment and not mindlessly.

Dan Douglas is Professor Emeritus, Iowa State University, USA. I like the fact that he has used the analogy of ‘the rubber ruler’ given him by one of His teachers, the late Elisabeth Ingram, in 1973 at Edinburgh University, and a language test. As clearly as he perceived the concept, he succeeds in collapsing different aspects of language testing to the test purpose and TLU for his readers. For example, ‘if we know how much ‘stretch’ there is in our ruler...’ (p. 4) and that Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) is a practical application of the concept of ‘stretch’. The concepts outlined in the book are substantiated with examples that are relevant. For example, his apocryphal story that involves a high – stakes exam in Japan (p.54), examples for collection of data- primary and secondary for interns into businesses or the test to measure language ability of prospective *baristas* in an American coffee shop, are a few to mention. The chapters in the book are well organized that each preceding chapter forms the foundation upon which newer concepts are built and expanded upon. In a way the analogy and presentation is ‘cyclical’. There is ‘to and fro’ movement of ideas mentioned previously in subsequent chapters. The footnotes and references are accurate.

Douglas demonstrates his expertise in pressing for an introduction of a certain degree of creativity and personality into the tests that teachers design, empowering them to design tests that reflect communicative activities of the real world and the classroom. He hopes to reduce the tension by advocating for a balance between ethical requirements and the reality of our uncertainty about the nature of our measurements. The strength of this book lies in its content value. It introduces the reader to terms related to testing and provides definitions with sufficient examples. For example, p.5, three interrelated concepts –test, measurement and evaluation have been explained through illustrations. Examples for test development discussed in chapter three include computer-based tools such as *Hot Potatoes, Moodle, or WebCT* and four illustrations to differentiate types of assessment are explicit and clear. Chapter 5 on statistical tools to measure language ability is concise with simple numerical examples relevant to language testing. This gives the reader a clear idea of the various statistical tools available and their usefulness in measurement.

Perhaps the greatest value this book has given me personally is its fourth chapter, where I found clear explanations of the more esoteric areas of portfolio assessment and dynamic assessment that bothered me for a while. The suggested reading and exercises do facilitate the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and prompts interesting reflection. The book is conversational in its tone. It is academic in its register, related to the field of Language testing. The language used is simple and direct. It is plenteous in illustrations through tangible examples. The author’s emphasis is on developing tests as accurately as possible to measure learners’ language ability, all the while maintaining their human dignity. He reasons that the language test is not meant to intimidate learners but reasonably to provide adequate conditions for successful test



administration that reflects reliability of the test design. I would recommend this book to English Language Teachers at all levels –beginner, intermediate and advanced, so that tests they create facilitate interaction, and are authentic in their design and purpose.

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The Power Mechanism and Shades of Violence in Naga Society: A Study of the Selected Short Stories of Temsula Ao

Anita Konwar

Introduction

The seven states of North East India have numerous communities and variegated culture. Being the abode of diverse communities and culture, North East India stands for unity in diversity on one hand and the emergence of diverse political, social and cultural issues on the other hand. The name “Naga” is a generic term that refers to a group of 30 tribes inhabiting not only in Nagaland but also some hilly regions of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. Some of the Naga tribes are also found in the north-western parts of Myanmar. Despite racial and cultural similarities, each Naga tribe has its own language and traditional social and political institutions. However till the arrival of the British, they had no central political authority.

The British first came into conflict with the Angami group of Nagas when the British were undertaking exploratory tours to build road communications between Assam and Manipur through Naga hills. The British had to face stiff resistance from the Nagas as the Nagas had considered the growing British interest in the region as an encroachment. The British used several measures to contain the Nagas including punitive expeditions against them and by the end of the 19th century, the British could subjugate the Naga resistance and establish authority over them. But the British did little to improve the socio-economic condition of the Nagas. In the mean time, the spread of Christianity and establishment of modern political, administrative and educational institutions led to the growth of an elite class among the Nagas.

When the British decided to grant independence to India, the Naga National Council appealed to the British for independence. By a 9-point-agreement between then Assam Governor Akbar Hydri and the Naga National Council leaders, it was decided that after 10 years the Nagas would be free to decide their future. And with this there began insurgency problems. However, the then Assam government considered the Naga resistance basically a law and order problem and tried to crush it by raiding the houses of the Naga leaders and banning the Naga newspapers. On the other hand, the Indian government deployed army and enacted several black laws equipping more powers to armed forces to deal with the insurgents. The Naga society has been facing immense troubles from the army as well as the insurgents. Taking advantage of these laws, the army resorted to violence of human rights, such as committing act of rape, killing, arson etc. while the insurgents started running a parallel government resulting forceful shelter in villages, extortion etc.



Objective and Methodology

Literature of the North East mostly accounts to fictional writings that depict actual events recorded in history. Most of the writings from the North East run through a common subject matter where they deal with topics concerning the state, terror, violence, memory and displacement.

Temsula Ao is one of the major women writers of North-east India. Like most of the fictional writings related to postcolonial ethnic culture, Ao's short stories portray the political and social turmoil in Nagaland. Her story collection *Laburnum For My Head* and *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* contains stories which are dealt with the issues of Naga Separatist battle for autonomy which started since the end of the British Rule in 1947. These stories not only focus the political struggle but also highlight the problems of the common Naga people who are entrapped in the struggle between the state and the Naga ethnic insurgency groups. The stories deal with the historicity of the Naga Separatist question and the different strategies employed by the state to suppress the insurgency.

The objective of the paper is to analyse how the power mechanism in Nagaland directly or indirectly becomes a cause of violence against common people. Some of the selected short stories of Temsula Ao have been taken for discussion. The methodology applied in the paper is analytical method.

Analysis

In the story "The Letter" from *Laburnum for My Head* the writer has projected the problems of the common people as they are entrapped in the double net of the struggle for freedom led by the insurgent groups and the resistance methods employed by the governments. The insurgency problem results in chaos and disorder in society heading towards social as well as economic crisis of the common people. The lives of the common people are at a standstill as they face heavy pressure from both the insurgent groups and the government soldiers. The academic as well as economic developments are blocked as the people have to give their hard-earned money and food to the insurgents. This struggle for freedom becomes a symbol of irony as this movement becomes identical with the struggle of survival. The common people have to pay taxes to the underground government run by the insurgents. They could not resist as the insurgents are armed with guns and any kind of resistance will lead to violent retaliation. But the irony is that the collection of taxes does not have a proper use as it is indicated in the story itself: "by collecting taxes in the name of the underground government and using the money to feed their drug and drinking habits" (p.57, *The Letter*).

This movement has lost its proper value and it highlights exploitation of the common people. The villagers try to avoid conflict with both the overground and underground government. But if a section of people are suppressed and exploited for a long period, there will be a sudden burst of anger and resentment. Though the villagers did not protest initially but gradually they expressed their discontent at the injustices meted out to them over the years by various forces in Nagaland's murky politics which created



anarchy in Naga society. Finally the village council resolves that they would stop to pay any tax to the underground forces and would refuse to do free labour for the government and would discourage the army visits by refusing to sell any of their product to them. So far these people were silent but now they have learnt to resist and their dissenting voice is heard.

In the story an armed insurgent is killed by the young activists of the village. These young men were highly disturbed by the activities of the underground forces. So, they were ready to retaliate their action at any cost. But the irony lies in the climax of the story when the leader of the young activists discovered a letter from the insurgent's pocket. This letter was from the dead insurgent's son begging the father to send his examination fees. Earlier in the story, it has been seen how one of the insurgents hit a poor man who requested to excuse him from paying the taxes as he has to pay his son's examination fees. The insurgent roared, "Are you saying that we should not collect taxes so that your sons can give examinations and become big 'babus' in the Indian government to rule over us?" (p.56, *The Letter*). In their struggle against the Indian government they treat their own people in an inhuman way. But the letter found on the dead insurgent blurs the boundaries between him and the innocent villager, both struggling to make ends meet. The story shows how both the common people and the insurgents are victims of the power politics of the state.

The problem of insurgency is also highlighted in the story "A Simple Question". The common people are doubly victimized. The problem continues even after India gained independence from the British rule creating anarchy in the Naga society. The common people have to live their lives in terror and the young people were compelled to join the underground forces. It was a huge loss for the Naga society when the young generation was forced to tread on the path of violence and destruction. The insurgent groups consider India as the colonial power but the fact is that they are actually colonized by the foreign lands with whom they make secret alliances. In a way, the foreign countries take opportunities of the rebel leaders to create internal conflicts within the country. It is indicated in the story that every household has to pay taxes for the travel expenses of the rebel leaders going to foreign lands to plead for Naga Independence from India. The common people are the oppressed class. They face problems at every step. If they allow to set up army camps in their village, the underground forces punish them by increasing the tax amount doubly. On the other hand, if they oppose the setting up of army camps, the government takes measures to punish the un-cooperative villagers.

In the story, Tekaba is a 'gaonburah'. The post of a 'gaonburah' is a challenging one as he has to face tremendous pressure from both the government soldiers and the underground forces. The insurgents demand double tax of rice during a bad year. It is Imdongla, the wife of the gaonburah who advises the people to resist the underground forces. The government soldiers arrested Tekaba and all the elder village people on charges of giving supplies to the underground. Tekaba as well as the other villagers are not able to say anything in their defence out of their fear for the army. But Imdongla has the courage to go to the army camp and put a question to the captain, "How would you feel if your fathers were punished for acting out of fear? Fear of you Indian soldiers and fear of the mongrels of the jungle." (p.87, *A Simple Question*). This single dissenting voice represents the silent villagers who are unable to voice their resentment. But one single question



repeatedly asked by Imdongla- “What do you want from us?”(p.87) strikes the conscience of the captain and he could see the impossible situation faced by the villagers. He was compelled to release Tekaba. Imdongla’s voice is the voice of the oppressed, the subaltern whose voice was unheard so far. The climax of the story shows the triumph of the ‘dissenting voice’.

The story “The Last Song” from *These Hills Called Home: Stories from a War Zone* portrays the pathetic story of two women Libeni and Apenyo at the backdrop of a violent situation in a Naga village. The story shows how the innocent people are entrapped in a conflict-ridden atmosphere. The insurgency movement is not only a threat to the people in general but has devastating effects on the security of women. Women are more vulnerable to violence and insecurity. In such a tumultuous situation, women become victims in the hands of both the underground as well as the over ground forces. The story “The Last Song” depicts the violence meted out to Naga women by the Indian armies. Libeni, a widow and her only daughter Apenyo had to face fatal consequences in the hands of Armed forces. The Armed forces are suspicious of the villagers extending helping hands to the underground forces. So they planned to attack the villagers on the day of the congregation at church on a Sunday morning. Apenyo had to face dire consequence because of her undaunted nature and extreme courage. Though the people scattered because of the gunfire by the armies, Apenyo did not move and she continued to sing the choir. Her undaunted nature was a challenge to the Armed forces. She was brutally treated by the Captain of the Armed forces and was gang raped. She not only lost her virginity but also lost her life. Libeni while going to save her daughter from the clutches of the armies was also raped and murdered by the armies. The brutality of the Armies was to such an extent that in order to remove the evidences of their misdeeds, the Captain ordered the soldiers to set the church on fire.

Conclusion

The three stories reflect the disordered, restless situation of the Naga society created by the insurgency problem. The stories highlight the violence and brutality meted out to common people as well as women by the Armed forces. The atrocities of both the insurgent groups as well as the Armed Forces violate human rights. Women become easy targets of both the forces in a conflict-ridden society. The separatist movement in Nagaland initially was able to draw support and sympathy of the common people but gradually it lost its appeal because of the violent and forceful means adopted by the insurgent groups. Through the stories, Tamsula Ao portrays the picture of a land in turmoil. The negative impact of the insurgency problem is highlighted as the over-all progress of the Naga society comes to a halt. The aftermath of post-colonial era becomes more violent for Naga society.

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The World of Anxiety in the Early Plays of Harold Pinter

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Introduction

Harold Pinter has been regarded as a great achievement due to his distinctive style and his meticulous attention to the exploration of the human predicament. An iconic figure; one who is recognised not just as a transformativ playwright but as a champion of truth, Harold Pinter is considered as the foremost representative of the British Drama in the second half of the twentieth century. His plays are imbued with the feelings of disintegration, evasiveness and domination as manifested both in his language and themes. His unique treatment of human existence caught in the intricate web of repressive politics and never-ending power games earned him over fifty awards, prizes and several honors.

The world Pinter depicts in his drama is deeply political, malevolent, violent and absurd at the same time is certainly reflective of dread, the precarious condition inhabited by most of contemporary humanity. His characters are sad citizens of intimacy, fear, the horrific nature of which unmasks itself in claustrophobic rooms they are entrapped in, where power games, domination and the struggle for liberation originate. Pinter is predominantly concerned with the question of existence as the individual is often doomed to inner turmoil, hence loses a sense of self.

The theme of menace, the complexity and obscurity of the characters, the unconventional language use and the competitive struggle that takes place in the plays are the features of Pinter's writing. The characters in the early plays are portrayed in confined spaces as their personal territory, struggling for survival and dominance.

The particular characteristics of Pinter's theatre such as the theme of violence, the competitive interpersonal relationships, the implied unwillingness in communication between the characters and the distinctive use of silences and pauses, distinguish his work from the writers of the absurd. Pinter makes particular use of "Silences" and "Pauses" as theatrical techniques that present a non-verbal way of communication in his plays.

In his early plays, the sense of menace is in the mysterious setting or the bitterness behind the laughter. The fusion of humour and tragedy is recognizable in Pinter's plays. The playwright makes use of comedy not to arouse laughter but to provide insight into his character's inner world. Thus, it is not just a coincidence that the individuals' most fearful and compelling experiences are often accompanied with an element of comedy, behind which they find a shelter to conceal their anxiety and real feelings.

World of anxiety in the early plays

Michael Scott comments, "Harold Pinter is the product of a post-war generation that has attempted to reject the evils of the twentieth century and present a new outlook on society" (1966:9). But Pinter himself says, "My responsibility is not to audience, critics,

producers, directors, actors, or to my fellow men in general, but to the play in hand, simply" (1967:178).

Close analysis of Pinter's plays shows a preoccupation with several basic human problems. Contemporary schools of philosophy like existentialism. Modern psychology and the political under currents of his own time can be seen at the bottom of his plays. At deeper levels his plays speak of the problems and the mysteries of human life and modern psyche. Sometimes his plays mystify the audience by presenting dream-like episodes on the stage. Even his characters seem not to reveal their true identity. The term 'Pinteresque' denotes all these distinctive qualities in his writing. Pinter's plays speak of many serious problems like the individual's isolation in a threatening world, the corruption of bureaucracy, man's shameless power struggles of various kinds, the intricacies of female psyche, sexuality and its perverting power, limitations of language, language and silence used as a weapon, the illusions created by man to escape from reality.

Pinter acutely expresses the anxiety of the age through the medium of plays. His plays of the 1950s clearly evince the dramatist's preoccupation with anxiety. Bernard F. Dukore comments (1966:47):

Pinter's characters reflect the tensions and the attitudes of present-day England. The playwright moves them through highly inventive and bizarre theatrical patterns, but they unmistakably reflect a recognizable life of the world beyond the stage doors.

Several of the characters in Pinter's plays exhibit existential anxiety. Psychologically, existential anxiety is the anxiety which arises from a responsibility which the individual takes to be that one takes up as something imposed upon him. The existential anxiety of the characters of Pinter is seen in their shrinking away from taking up responsibilities. A room, to Rose in *The Room*, as L.P.Gabard comments, room is "the womb that nurtured her"(1976:26). This applies to many of Pinter's characters. What the poet in this dramatist "tries to communicate by such an image is, ultimately, the totality of his own existential fear" (1976:80).

This kind of existential fear plays a major role in Pinter's plays. A method commonly used for presenting it is introducing characters who appear to be either symbols or agents of death, and whose presence creates a sense of menace in the central characters.

The subjects of Pinter's early plays are mostly human beings who live in anxiety of one kind or the other and who are perennially haunted by a sense of menace. In the context of the individual play, these fears and anxieties revolve round the presence of strangers, the insecurity of the 'outside', the confusions about the surroundings, the lack of confidence in oneself, a desire to dominate and the struggle for the same, all of which are mental states identified and analysed by psychology. In this sense, the plays are realistic in their concerns.

In all the four early plays, Pinter portrays the image of death which confronts man with the question as to why he is born and why he dies. Man's innate urge to know who he is and what he is here for can be seen to a leitmotif in these plays. While on this search, he



strikes up friendship with others and establishes relationships in this world. But neither these relationships nor any of his material possession is enough to give him complacency in life, as the interference of death frustrates him by depriving him of all these. A haunting fear of death with its implications is a constant preoccupation in the early plays of Pinter. In *The Room*, Riley comes to the house where Rose and her husband Bert live in comfort. The life of the couple is presented in such a way that any intervention is seen as a threat to them. When Kidd informs her that Riley is going to meet her, she shrinks away expressing her unwillingness to face him.

Mr Kidd(raising) : I don't know what'll happen if you don't see him.

Rose: I've told you I don't know this man.(27)

This unwillingness is a manifestation of existential anxiety. Camus says, "The consciousness of death is the call of anxiety and existence then delivers itself its own summons through the intermediary of consciousness" (29). At last she yields to death and sends for Riley

Rose: Fetch him. Quick. Quick! (28)

Then Riley, the blind man, enters.

In *The Dumb Waiter* the playwright uses a dumb waiter- a small lift used in restaurants for carrying food from one place to another- as a symbol of death or as an agent of death. Ben and Gus, the two hired killers, are waiting for the next victim. At last, quite unexpectedly, Gus himself turns out to be the victim. The order the dumb waiter gives is that he should be murdered, and Ben has to obey it. This is the nature of death. It takes man away ruthlessly, and man finds himself helpless before it. Here the dumb waiter either becomes death or an agent of death.

In *The Birthday Party*, the guests who arrive at the boarding house run by Meg also can be taken as the agents of death. The very mention of their name creates fright and tremor—*anxiety*—in Stanley. He repeatedly asks Meg whether they are sure to come. Then he speaks wistfully

Stanley(decisively): They won't come.

Meg: Why not?

Stanley: I tell you they won't come. Why didn't they come last night, if they were coming.(20)

When they arrive, Stanley's anxiety can be seen getting doubled. He protests and asks them in an intimidating manner, to leave the place. But they insist on taking him away.

Stanley (moving downstage): We're booked out. Your room is taken Mrs Boles forgot to tell you. You'll have to find somewhere else.(44)



Here they seem to be indifferent to this remark. They tell him that they are going to make arrangements for celebrating his birthday party. He tries to dissuade them from this. His attempts fail and he surrenders to them in the end. Stanley's early resistance and subsequent surrender can be taken to be suggestive of man's struggle against death and his ultimate surrender to it.

The Matchseller in the play *A Slight Ache* can also be considered a symbol of death. Edward has been a bit fidgety about the presence of the Matchseller right from the time he happens to notice him. Burkman says that "the horror of death as it is perceived by Edward remains throughout the play" (335). As he had apprehended, the Matchseller tries to dispossess him of his worldly possessions. To begin with, he attracts his wife, then comes in and approaches him to take his wife away from him, and does so slowly but surely, as death takes human lives. Here the most valuable thing to Edward is his wife, and death takes her away from him, as surely as death takes away life which is dear to all human beings. Edward can only accept the loss meekly.

The problem of death is invariably dealt with in almost all of Pinter's plays, especially in the early ones. The projection of the subject of death and its consequent frustration are features of existential literature.

Like the mystery of the universe, the mystery of existence is also a problem in Pinter's plays. In *The Room*, we do not get a clear picture of the real owner of the house. There is a vague and gruesome description of the actual location of the room. Taking Mr Kidd to be the landlord or the caretaker, Rose asks him how many floors they have got for the house. Then the answer is suggestive:

Mr Kidd: Well to tell you the truth, I don't count them now. (14)

After a while, when Mr and Mrs Sands reach there, their discussion shifts to Mr. Kidd. Rose speaks of him as the landlord, but Mr and Mrs Sands do not agree with her. Mrs Sands is doubtful of Kidd's ownership of the house:

Rose: Well, that's his name. He is the landlord.

Mrs Sands: Who?

Rose: Mr Kidd.

(Pause)

Mr Sands: Is he?

Mrs Sands: May be there are two landlords. (19)

The confusion regarding the landlord is in a way suggestive of the mystery that enwraps the universe. No one knows for certain what or who is behind this universe, some holding that God is the creator of all, others denying the existence of such a power. On the whole there is no certainty regarding the creator of all, others denying the existence of such a power. On the whole there is no certainty regarding the creator of this universe and the uncertainty about the owner of the room presents, on a small scale, the confusions and uncertainties about God. This and other concerns of existentialist thought can be identified in several plays of Pinter.



In *The Dumb Waiter*, Ben and Gus, the two hired killers are in a room and they are not even sure whether it is a kitchen or something else. What they do there is simply to obey the orders of their master. One of them, Gus, often asks questions. He wants to know who the owner of the house is. He takes Wilson, who is opposed to be their master, for the owner. He is very eager to see him in person and asks Ben

Gus (feverishly) : I told you before who owned this place. Didn't I? I told you. (68)

The confusion regarding the real owners exists in many of his plays. Misgivings about the origin of the universe and man are echoed in *The Birthday Party* also. During the scene in which Goldberg and Mc Cann ask a series of questions to harass Stanley, Goldberg asks him.

Goldberg: Do you recognize an external force?

Mc Cann: That's the question.

Goldberg: Do you recognize an external force responsible for you, suffering for you. (50)

Again they ask casually

Goldberg: Which came first?

McCann: Chicken? Egg? Which came first? (52)

The very same feeling is echoed in the casual comments made by Mr and Mrs Sands in *The Room* when they talk.

Mrs Sands: I said, I didn't bring you into this world.

Mr Sands: Who did then? That's what I want to know. Who did? Who did bring me into this world? (22)

All these questions reveal that the mystery of this universe is a preoccupation with the playwright, and it haunts his characters. This philosophical pondering can also be heard in the play *A Slight Ache*. When Edward says that he is much concerned with "the dimensionality and continuity of space...and time" (174).

The mystery of identity has been a burning concern for Pinter since his student days. He deals with this problem in many of his early plays. Sometimes he perplexes his audience by the use of names. Almost all his characters are given, indicating the possibility of multiple identity while also questioning the validity of the most common means of fixing an individual's identity, that of using his names.

The double named characters of Pinter lose the real identity attributed by their names. In *The Room*, Rose is called Sal (30). Ben in *The Dumb Waiter* is called Blimey (53). In *The Birthday Party*, Meg is called Mrs Boles and Goldberg is called Nat (43) and McCann declares that he has been called Simey (59) by his mother and wife, and his father would call him Benny (78). Stanley when asked says that his name is Joe Soap (50). This preoccupation with names is indicative of Pinter's interest in the question of identity, which is a vital element in existentialist writings.

Undeserved punishment has been a prominent theme in European writers, especially in the fiction of Franz Kafka. This kind of punishment is a recurring theme in Pinter's writings also. In *The Room*, when Rose is overtaken by the appearance of a stranger called Riley and he himself is attacked by Rose's husband Bert, the dramatist does not give any reason for it. In *The Dumb Waiter*, one of the two killers, Gus, is given capital punishment at the end of the play, while they are waiting for their victim. We cannot find any reason for such a strange turn of events. In *The Birthday Party*, we see two strangers come to a boarding house on a fine morning. They, together with the landlady, Meg, decide to celebrate the birthday party of another lodger, Stanley. Even he himself is not sure about it. They impose the celebrations on him. Stanley is mute and dumb after celebrations. The audience does not get any clue to the reason why he is punished like that. In these plays the audience gets a picture of a cruel and unknown force that inflicts pain upon human beings for no sufficient reason. In all these plays characters suffer from one or another problem which is fundamentally connected with their existence. This makes the characters anxious about their lives, and makes them tense in all their interactions in life.

The central subject of all the earlier plays is this anxiety experienced by man in the twentieth century and the plays of Pinter thus present the image of man in the grip of anxiety and insecurity of a variety of kinds—psychological, moral, social, philosophical and political. These concerns emerge all the more strikingly in the plays because of their being rooted in the playwright's own life and times.

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Indian English Fiction: A Study of Political representation of Pakistan in Salman Rushdie's Shame

Kiran Kumar Golla

Introduction

Indian English Literature is a distinct genre in contemporary world literature and has attained global recognition in recent decades. As the impact of globalization has brought the world so close to be called a global village, the writings by the Indian authors cover a whole gamut of themes, ranging from the indigenous to the cosmopolitan.

Representing this global village as such, these writers have earned international acclaim and made their impact on contemporary literary consciousness. A large number of Indians have taken to English language as their medium of creative expression as Salman Rushdie rightly observes:

One important dimension of literature is that, it is a means of holding a conversation with the world. These writers are ensuring that India, or rather, Indian voices (for they are too good to fall into the trap of writing "nationalistically...") will hence forth be confident, indispensable, participants in that literary conversation. (Mobil K. Ray, Indian Writing in English p.166.)

Pre-Independence Indian English Literature has paved the way for the contemporary writers to make their marks visible in world literature. The most developed genre is Indian English fiction, which in comparison to other genres like poetry, prose and drama has contributed substantially to world literature. But after the 1970s, other genres started gaining momentum and contributing to enrich the Indian English Literature. The early decades of the twentieth century marked the beginning of English writing in India, but it was a period of slow incubation. However the study of the English language strengthened in the years that followed Macaulay's *Minute on Education in India*, and with the implementation of his educational policy. It has become so vital that in the present context it has dominated the local languages and literatures.

The English system of education was unique as Indian culture without losing its roots received the quick graft of western ideas that it needed to stay alive. In other words, there was a synthesis between Eastern and Western thoughts in India's leaders and intellectuals, right from the days of Raja Ram Mohan Roy to the present. The prose writings of Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Radha Krishnan adequately illustrate this synthesis.

These great thinkers and writers of modern India not only imbibed western ideas and thoughts but also upheld Indian culture and heritage and were able to would and define the pattern of India's thought and action and bring it to face the challenge from the west. Besides, their "English Writings, other aspects of literature reveal that each one of them has developed a style of his own which, whether plain or colored, rhetorical or lucid, eloquent or sensitive, is at once me to the genius of the English language and strikingly

epigenetic and has admirably served the purpose for which it has been employed. (Iyengar, Srinivasan, K.R., *Indian Writing in English*, 766).

In the house of fiction, there are many mansions, and perhaps one of the most striking features of which, for the modern reader, is the political novel. Aristotle's well known description of 'man as a political animal' fits Nineteenth and Twentieth century humans admirably. Hence, almost all recognized modern masterpieces in various languages, as M.K. Naik points out, such as in Disraeli's *Sybil* or the *Two Nations*, Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and in *Shame* Rushdie, are political novels. As Rushdie admits, *Shame* is overtly political.. (*Modern Indian Novel in English* 137)

When we talk about Indian Writing in English, it reminds of the early Indian writers who have deeply conditioned modern Indian sensibility through their writings and thus made possible the emergence of a modern tradition. Along the contemporary Indian writers, Rushdie stands out to be the most controversial. This is because his unconventional ideas and thoughts went into his books and directly affected people's sensibilities. One feels that all of his works help us to rethink and revisit the historical narrative of a particular nation, for example, in *Shame*, it makes us take a fresh look at the perturbed history of Pakistan during Post-Independent epoch.

Salman Rushdie: Distinctive writer in Fiction

Sir Ahmed Salman Rushdie was born on 19th June 1947 in Bombay, India to a middle-class Muslim family, in the year when India won the Independence after nearly two centuries of British rule. At the age of fourteen, Rushdie was sent to Rugby School in England. In 1964 Rushdie's parents moved to Karachi, Pakistan, joining reluctantly the Muslim exodus – during these years there was a war between India and Pakistan. Thus, migrancy and the pain of having divided loyalties had an early impact on the boy's mental makeup and burdened him heavily. He stands out now as a prominent novelist for diverse reasons. There are first of all his works, which have received international recognition. There is further more his exceptional position as a writer in exile in consequence of *the fatwa* imposed on him by the late Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran.

In 1988 Rushdie won the Whitbread Award with his fourth novel, *The Satanic Verses*. Before the publication of *The Satanic Verses* Rushdie had never thought that a book can cause riots. *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) focused on contemporary India directed at Indian Muslims and lower castes, and right-wing Hindu terrorists. In the character of Moor, the first person narrator, Rushdie promoted an ideal of hybrid India, in opposition to the Hindu-nationalist agenda. In his introduction to *Imaginary Homelands* (1991), a collection of essays, Rushdie has asserted that it is a paradoxical fact that secularism, which has been much under attack of late, outside India as well as inside it, is the only way of safeguarding the constitutional, civil, human and, religious rights of minority groups.

Rushdie has been married four times, first in 1976 to Clarissa Luard and after his divorce in 1988 to the American writer Marianne Wiggins. The marriage broke up during their

enforced underground life. In September 1998 the Iranian government announced that the state is not going to put into effect the "(at)lva or encourage anybody to do so, but Ayatollah Hassan Sanei promised in 1999, 2.8 million dollar reward for killing the author. However, when the threat was formally lifted, Rushdie ended his hiding. In the beginning of 2000, he left his third wife upon falling in love with the actress Padma Lakshmi and moved from London to New York. They married in 2004, but in June 2007. Rushdie agreed to divorce her.

***Shame* - Introduction**

Rushdie as a migrant writer tries to convey the full impact of the postcolonial condition in a nation where all forms of transition occur simultaneously. The uncovering of the past and foregrounding it into present is at the centre of Rushdie's work. The realistic incidents and events that are delineated in *Shame* constitute the evidence of the dictatorial power ruling over Pakistan. Rushdie wanted to show how autocracy could be destructible to a nation. Moreover, the novel presents an indictment of the corrupt elite that has ruled Pakistan which has become too exclusive and insular and denied the rights of the people in the most blatant manner.

Thus, *Shame* can be considered literally as Salman Rushdie's 'vengeance' on Pakistan. Through his glittering prose and skillfully arranged story. Rushdie has emerged as the chief literary executor of Pakistan's political testament, if not its leading chronicler. The novel is a sort of black joke on one of the worst dictatorships. It is an exquisite feat. Free-flight-fairy-tale, allegory, hilarious entertainment and on the spot reportage roiled into one. *Shame* is urgently political like its preceding companion; *Midnight Children* Politics becomes compulsive as Rushdie counts himself a political animal and considers the act of description itself a political act. For Rushdie, fiction is not only a representation of social activities, but also a necessary functional part of the social context and paradoxically an important element in social change. In the face of the undeniable intellectual, moral and political degeneracy of Pakistan and a dictatorship which can no longer differentiate human beings from animals, Rushdie has effectively used the art of the novel as a weapon towards provoking the idea of change in Pakistan's situation. *Shame* is a conglomeration of history, politics, satire and allegory-all mixed up comprising the intoxicating cocktail of a secular fantasy. It is a novel of fictional distortions, offering fanciful jumbling of historical and political items. When we look at the novels closely, we are reminded of Rushdie's own description that while *Midnight's Children* is a novel of memory, whereas *Shame* is a novel about truth in terms of actual depiction of real incidents.

The novel shows the manifestation of the dictatorship syndrome, but with the fictional strategy of caricature and irony. With his energy enough to light up a street, his forehead marked with namaaz-created ghatta, black punches under his eyes looking like sunglasses, and a waxed bulbous moustache. Raza Hyder belongs to the world of Punch. Similarly, is his rise to power, his prevarications, his making false statements and promises, his hanging of Iskander Mirza, his blaming the opposition for everything that goes wrong, his fear of his own progeny, and, lastly his terrible end like that of a legendary

demon-all are portrayed with hilarious horror and irony and constitute a paradigm of the rise and fall of dictatorships.

Shame: A Novel Of Political Rivalries

The novel opens with a story of three sisters having been pregnant and later giving birth to a peripheral hero Omar Khayyam, who is the symbol of shame. In fact, he is the protagonist of the novel; he has no special powers but represents only an ancient Persian poet. The novel primarily is about the divided Pakistan. The narrator calls it "Q" but not Quite: Robert Toers in his essay calls it not Quite Pakistan' because he is convinced that Pakistan is the country the narrator is talking about. Many have the opinion that *Shame* deals with the multi religious-political scenario of Pakistan. To expose the absurdities and the cultural vacuity in Pakistan in the twentieth century, Rushdie makes the reader clear that in reality there exists two worlds, the real and unreal or the fictional. This state of being constantly reminded of the fictionality of the narrator is a metafictional device, which is there in the text.

It is said that *Shame* doesn't present history by opening it, but hides it in allusive references to the past which are buried in casual place names and family titles and ironic re-incarnation of figures from legend (Brenan 119). It is me that the names of the protagonists Iskander Harappa, who is the fictional representation of Bhutto, the former Prime Minister, and Raza Hyder who is modeled on the personality of the historical Zia-Ul-Haq have figurative connotations. Iskander Harappa has an overt insinuation to the Harappa civilization with Mohenjo-Daro (the mount of the dead), as the chief archaeological site which adumbrates Bhutto's reign of terror. Similarly, Bhutto's bete noire Raza Hyder recalls both 'raja', a misnomer for authoritarian rule and Hyder Ali, a freebooter and infamous ruler (of Mysore). The peripheral hero of the novel, Omar Khayyam Shakil is a pale shadow of the medieval Persian poet of Rubaiyat fame, retaining only the image of Eastern sensuality. These are veiled references. But the novel is actually based on the rivalries.

No doubt, *Shame* is an opinionated novel- but what is it that makes it opinionated in nature? The answer to the question is very simple. For Rushdie, the opinionated is omnipresent, there is nothing that is or can be 'apolitical'. For everything everywhere is involved with power. Pakistan nominally came into existence with the partition of British India in 1947, based on the Muslim league's demands for a separate Muslim nation. It was a political birth. As we have seen in *Midnight Children* (1981), he talks about the Independence of India and in *Shame* he talks about Pakistan in the postcolonial period. As Chelva says " In an early interview Rushdie claims that *Shame* is a political novel and behind the fantasized or the mythologized country in the book there is a real country and behind the dictators in the book and there are real dictators." (*Counter Realism and Judo-Anglican Fiction*, p.152). *Shame* is an allegorical narrativisation of the conditions and corruption of the postcolonial rulers and their repressive measures. This corruption permeates every aspect of social and personal life. The people of the country are divided into two hostile groups, the local populace and the emigrants from India, who are the Mohajirs". Independence found the local people unprepared for it. Their own past had



been an uneventful one, debilitating span of centuries of slavery which had destroyed their culture and had withered their will to act.

Their history as Rushdie puts it, “was an old and rusted machine that nobody had plugged in for thousands of years and here, all of a sudden, it had been asked for maximum output” (*Shame* 82). The Mohajirs on the contrary had left behind them their history and memory. Destitute and faceless and troubled by a sense of insecurity they began to scramble to grab whatever might buy them their future. Consequently, they took charge of all the affairs of governance and business yet deep within them lay the abhorrence of all changes instilled by the horrors of partition. Hence, they do nothing for the development of the land. They are afraid of change.

Rushdie gives at best a semi-camouflaged representation of the misdeeds of the two authoritarian rulers of Pakistan, they are Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (Iskander Harappa) and General Muhammad Zia-Ulhaq (General Raza Hyder). What is most interesting is that there is no basic or fundamental difference between the attitude of a militant dictator and a civilian who imposes authoritarianism under the rubric of democracy. We can see that the history of Pakistan is problematized by the dictatorial tendency of its rulers from the very birth of the country which has lived under what may be called the Jinnah syndrome. Rushdie acknowledges: “ I am forced to reflect that world in fragments of broken mirrors” . (*Shame* 69) “ Actually Jinnah is responsible for all the ailments of Pakistan since its inception. As the acting president of an ailing state he originated the political evils which brought about the military coups of 1958, 1969, 1977 and 1999. The sway of the military and civil bureaucracy in Pakistan is also the result of what damage he did to Pakistan in its first two years. Thus, democracy in Pakistan had been destroyed by its creator, M.A. Jinnah, who sowed the seeds of autocracy which made impossible the emergence of a popular government in the country”. (Mobil K. Ray 155) This is Rushdie's vision of Pakistan. The country in this story is not Pakistan or not quite, there are two countries real and fictional. Occupying the same space and as the novel moves forward the reader builds up the idea about Pakistan being its locale. The linking of fictitious to mendacious stories and histories is one with which other historiographic metafiction also seems to be familiar. For Rushdie, history does not mean narration of the events from the past till the recent times. But it is a part of his memory and imagination. History is the presence of the past. History is inherent in the consciousness of the narrator. History is a story. But whose story is it? Is it the story of those who had power? Or is it the story of the victims of power? The questions of identity and lack of roots haunt Rushdie.

He says “I am an emigrant from one country (India) and a newcomer into {England, where I live, and Pakistan, to which my family moved against my will` (*Shame* p.85). So, practically he loses the culture and identity of his motherland and as an emigrant has to take in new cultures and new identities which is a painful process to internalize. The place is infiltrated with spies reporting the comments and opinions of the people about the government The novel, *Shame*, may thus be read as a document of Postcoloniality, a myth of the nation, a critique of dictatorship, and may be safely located in the counter-canon of third world literature. It brings into forces the history of Pakistan and records a chain of betrayals, wars and coups which have their roots in the medieval times. Centuries of slavery and oppression have frozen their spirit of action. In consequence, poverty and

disease, knavery and debauchery make the only events of their history. This shows the absence of any vital cultural, moral or spiritual tradition that coming down from the past could have directed the people in the present towards some envisaged future. In such a state of affairs, sudden political freedom came perhaps as a dubious gift, the subaltern now finding it necessary to exercise his free will in a world that is both modern and medieval and therefore neither. (*Can the Subaltern Speak?* by Gayatri Spivak 1988).

Illustration Of Pakistan in *Shame*

As *Shame* informs us Pakistan's establishment resembles as a palimpsest that obscures what lies beneath. To build Pakistan, it was necessary to cover up the Indian history, to deny that Indian centuries lay just beneath the surface of Pakistani Standard Time. The past was rewritten and there was nothing else to be done" (*Shame* 87). The political repression in Pakistan is in a way permeated by the existence of a social code that is in itself repressive, and the people who feel that mostly are women. So it is not surprising that when women are kept down in such a society, they form all kinds of very interesting and important networks of support and solidarity among themselves.

He utilizes the characters of *Shame* as emblematic representations for Pakistan. Each of the characters in *Shame* is portrayed in some way, shape, or form, as symbolic of the history of Pakistan. The political and social undertones represented by the characters in the novel tie into the ideas of gender and identity. One of the techniques he uses in *Shame* is to depict Pakistani history through the stories of several native women, the three Shaki sisters: Chhunni, Munnee, and Bunny, Rani Harappa, Bilquis Hyder, Naveed " the good news," Arjurnand Harappa, and especially Sufiya Zinobia. Rushdie utilizes these stories as a way of describing the political and social instability of the region, as well as the complex relationship between individuals struggling to define their identity as a representation of Pakistan.

Shame is the novel of Rushdie's leave-taking, his last words on the East, from which, many years ago he began to come loose, But all the same it is part of the world to which, whether he likes or not he is still joined, if only by an elastic band. Fiction for Rushdie is not only a representation of social reality, but also a necessary functional part of the social context and paradoxically an important element in social change. In the face of undeniable intellectual, moral and political degeneracy of Pakistan and dictatorship that can no longer differentiate human beings from animals, Rushdie has effectively used the art of novel as a weapon to provoking change in the Pakistan situation.

Conclusion

This excerpt from Salman Rushdie's *Shame* describes the political turmoil that engulfed Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa following Raza's coup against Rarappa's government. Earlier in the novel, (*Shame* 72), Rushdie writes: " Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairytale, so that's all right; nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously.



Rushdie does not entirely condemn Pakistan, but he argues that the blame for Pakistan's problems rests with their corrupt leaders who perpetrated the violent repression of difference. Perhaps, he muses, Pakistan was just a bad miracle that could never work. Although Rushdie makes a half-hearted attempt to argue otherwise, *Shame* is obviously an allegory of Pakistani politics from the time of Pakistan's creation to the downfall of General Zia. Many of Rushdie's trademarks are on display. Historical and cultural influences are important to Rushdie, as he likes to trace families back several generations in order to explain the development of his main characters. Once again we have several characters representing chauvinist, extremist elements, and Rushdie astutely portrays how they gain influence in political circles at the highest level. Rushdie also likes to blend fantasy with reality, and it is often difficult to know when to take him literally or not. In *Shame*, Salman Rushdie presents his critique of social and political life in Pakistan, or what is at least to be understood as being Pakistani: the country in this story is not Pakistan. or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space` (*Shame* 29).

In general, Rushdie`s fiction-situation is politics. It assembles circumstantial evidences from culture and history and asks what other possibilities it might contain. in this sense, Rushdie`s mode of critique is something like dream formation. It operates through displacement, condensation, juxtaposition, distortion, misrecognition, duplication and duplicity and by occupying an oblique position in relation to the histories it addresses.

In a series of alternative drifts of fortune between the world of political expediency and the world of increasing domestic insecurity, both Raza Ryder and Iskander Harappa live out their narrative destinies. However, Raza Ryder's case is more poignant, as Suflya Zinobia's mysterious malignancy of -the mind increases in its demonic proportions.

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The Right To Write: The Woman Writer's Anxiety Of Expression And Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh*

Mousumi Guha Banerjee

If only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then nothing gets lost. But the unutterable will be – utterably – contained in what has been uttered. (1)

The way in which literary language functions has constituted the central concern of philosophical thinking. Ezra Pound's terse explanation is nonetheless reminiscent here: 'Great literature is simply language charged with meaning.' Philosophical endeavour has seldom ceased to make inquiries into the way in which language carries out its semantic functions and the mode in which it is structured.

The leading schools of thought like positivism, structuralism, phenomenology and analytic philosophy, puzzle over the same problems. Hence, a community of linguistic interest has been gradually, but very firmly, established in recent times, since philosophers have worked on problems of meaning with increasing subtlety and sophistication. With such efforts on the rise, linguistic structures have also come to create new literary worlds and novel kinds of experiences. We cannot but name here a few such contemporary French literary critics and historians such as Jacques Derrida (*De la grammatologie*), Phillippe Sollers (*Logiques*), Pierre Macherey (*Pour unethéorie de la production littéraire*) etc. It is primarily because of this reason that there is seldom any room to escape the fact that philosophy and literature would exhibit common methods and shared conclusions.

In order to further the question of language, its function and its literariness, it is not merely pertinent, but also logically and contextually necessary to mention Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logicus - Philosophicus* (in German, *Logisch - philosophische Abhandlung*), which was itself a philosophical event of a unique kind primarily because it asks – 'What is a text?' – an issue which has importance to both philosophers and literary writers. Etymologically, the text is a cloth and 'textus' is the form from which 'text' is derived and it means 'woven'. Wittgenstein was compulsively concerned with the fact that his thoughts be printed exactly as written. It is in this sense that a text is a document faithfully reproduced from an original.

To Wittgenstein, the text is an adequate representation of itself, a finished work which goes into the world with the assurance of conformation to the intention of the creator. There is evidence that his method of composition was 'zettellistic', a compilation of pieces or scraps of paper upon which propositions were inscribed. These propositions are all part of a logical system of the text and are related to one another, though the subjects dealt with are contrapuntally developed in the text as a whole. Wittgenstein, we find, really experiments with textual order and comes to establish that any order is a possible order where a text is concerned, and therefore whatever order is established can stand by itself for any order. Depending upon the deployment of linguistic forms by the writer, the logical textual order he intends realizes as 'performance' on the one hand, which, in its turn, helps to establish an 'argument', on the other. He believed in textual self-sufficiency and the



power of language. Contextual perhaps to the text as being self-sufficient is Jacques Derrida's notion that there is nothing outside the text. The beauty of Wittgenstein is what Richard Kuhns expresses through the following:

The language of the text – that is, the language which is the text – is a language about itself because it explores how and in what way what it offers may be meaningful. (2)

Hence, it can be perceivably maintained that it is language which either shapes up a text or makes it amorphous or even obfuscates it on the one hand, and it is the text which is to provide evidence for its own meaningfulness through language, on the other.

In another book called *Philosophical Investigations* published posthumously, Wittgenstein was more self-conscious in his notes. The book can also be seen as a text about texts and how to interpret a text. (3) He says:

In fact, all the propositions of our everyday language, just as they stand, are in perfect logical order. – That utterly simple thing, which we have to formulate here, is not an image of the truth, but the truth itself in its entirety. (4)

It is this search for an adequate language in poetry that is important. Paul Valéry notes that for Mallarmé, poetry was a kind of algebra, and for himself a kind of arithmetic. But these are poetic metaphors. The search for an adequate language in philosophy also went on in the same manner. A concrete body of thought is the key towards framing a linguistic structure, but that corpus of thought should be devoid of all cloudiness, obscurity and uncertainty. 'Thought' perhaps can barely be defined in more concrete and comprehensible terms than what Wittgenstein has said in *Tractatus*:

Thought is surrounded by a halo. – Its essence, logic, presents an order, in fact the a priori order of the world: that is, the order of possibilities, world and thought. But this order, it seems, must be utterly simple. It is prior to all experience, must run through all experience; no empirical cloudiness or uncertainty can be allowed to affect it. It must rather be of the purest crystal. But this crystal does not appear as an abstraction; but as something concrete, indeed, as the most concrete, as it were the hardest thing there is. (5)

When 'thought' has already come into question, can our concern with 'the poetic universe' be far behind? The concept of text has found a room of its own, but if we talk about such text as being a poetic text, the thought or the idea behind it is undeniable. The relationship between the two can perhaps be best brought out through the following comment:

The greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something and tell what it saw in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think, but thousands can think of one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion, - all in one. (6)

In this context, the metaphorical wisdom of Emily Dickinson as expressed in one of her poems is also reminiscent: 'To see the Summer Sky/ Is poetry, though never in a Book



it lie –/ True Poems flee –’ (7) The question of language in such poetry, thus, has always been problematic on the one hand, since it has always seemed to be elusive, and sometimes even inadequate to the writer, and indispensable on the other, since it satisfies the cognitive demand of the consciousness that develops with perceiving a poetic text.

It is language that constructs reality and constitutes the social and discursive matrix, and it is this function that makes it undeniably important in literary expression. It helps the woman poet speak her heart out leading to a much-desired and comforting purgation of emotions that constituted her hitherto secret, repressed and hidden experience, by daring to utter what is misconceived and misconstrued as unutterable. The language of the ‘heart’ lies at the centre of women’s writing of the nineteenth century. There emerged a noticeable and palpable shift from weak sentimentality, what might be stigmatized as the heavily perfumed language of marketed sensibility, to the terseness of proto-Modernism.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar raise an extremely important question, ‘What does it mean to be a woman writer in a culture whose fundamental definitions of literary authority are, as we have seen, both overtly and covertly patriarchal?’ (Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979, pp. 45-6) They were in fact trying to build up a poetics as against the canonical formation of patriarchal poetics and its attendant anxieties which underlie the chief cultural literary movements. Such a formation, besides being powerfully patriarchal, attempt to enclose the woman author in definitions of her person and her potential which, by reducing her to extreme stereotypes (angel, monster) drastically conflict with her own sense of herself – that is, of her subjectivity, her autonomy, her creativity.

The anxiety of influence experienced by the male poet is felt by a female poet as an even more primary ‘anxiety of authorship’ – a radical fear that she cannot create, that she can never become a ‘precursor’ and that the act of writing will isolate or destroy her. The loneliness of the female artist, her feelings of alienation from male predecessors coupled with her need for sisterly precursors and successors, her urgent sense of her need for a female audience together with the fear of the antagonism of male readers, her culturally conditioned timidity about self-dramatization, her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention – all these phenomena of ‘inferiorization’ mark the woman writer’s struggle for artistic self-definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterparts. The woman writer feels herself to be literally or figuratively crippled by the debilitating alternatives her culture offers her.

There is to be noticed a disavowal of the matrilineal line of descent in *Aurora Leigh*, Aurora having been separated from, and thus induced to ‘forget’ her motherland of Italy – the matrilineal heritage strength is denied very early when she was only thirteen. Nineteenth-century literature by women primarily consisted of a story of the woman writer’s quest for her own story, in other words, of the woman’s quest for her own story; it is the story, in other words, of the woman’s quest for self-definition. Inevitably, then, since they were trapped in so many ways in the architecture – both the houses and the institutions – of patriarchy, women expressed their anxiety of authorship by comparing



their 'presumptuous' literary ambitions with the domestic accomplishments that has been prescribed for them. Undeniably too, they expressed their claustrophobic rage by enacting rebellious escapes – a struggle to a claustrophobic sensibility which emerges from a painful and anxious confinement within texts of patriarchal poetics into the open spaces of their own authority.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning repudiates the habit of nostalgia which tempts the Victorian poet with the glamour of the past, and from this new sense of the present she develops a crusadingly female poetics. Women's writing, from then on, has emerged to become contemporary, combative and self-sufficient. Aurora Leigh exhibits a fierce and exuberant commitment to the present and succeeds in being 'a poem of a new class'. The poem shows the real everyday lives of women, in all its domestic details. Besides being the story of the development of a women writer, it does depict the centrality of female experience. Aurora herself is a poet, who writes the story of her life and literary success, one general cause of women's emancipation and independence.

The narrative reflects a passionate indictment of patriarchy that speaks the resentment of the Victorian poet through a language of eroticized female imagery. According to Deirdre David, female imagery is employed to show that 'art' of the women poet performs a 'service' for a patriarchal vision of the apocalypse. Woman art is the servitor of a male ideal. *Aurora Leigh* remains unequivocal in its feminist stand in its refusal to remain silent about sexuality. Through this unique art-novel, a revolutionary and a hitherto suppressed women's language echoes the ideas of French feminist writers, particularly those of H el ene Cixous.

Aurora, Marian and Lady Waldemar form the triptych through which Barrett Browning speaks her views on the woman question. The right to write is asserted so much so that the expression 'I write' is used by Barrett Browning four times in the first two stanzas of *Aurora Leigh*, referring to the act of woman's speech, the expression of woman's feelings and thoughts and the legitimate professional exercise of that expression. The extraordinarily long poem exhibits the highest convictions upon Life and Art. Gender differences, class warfare, sexual rivalry, the relation of art to politics, utopian politics, rape, urban misery and strangeness and the contradiction of the moral law – legitimization of motherhood in a 'church- ring', the church law of marriage, legalization of poverty by an accepted system and the common law of oppression – are the intersecting issues in the poem, female sexuality and women's struggle for professional recognition being the key themes. Cora Kaplan correctly remarks about the 'novel poem' in the following way:

In spite of its conventional happy ending, it is possible to see it as contributing to a feminist theory of art which argues that women's language, precisely because it has been suppressed by patriarchal societies, re-enters discourse with a shattering revolutionary force, speaking all that is repressed and forbidden in human experience.

In the success of *Aurora Leigh* and in her own career, Barrett Browning defies the ugly implication that the intellectual lives of women must be marred by biological destiny. No other poetic expression could perhaps have been more befitting to bring out the artist's will to self-definition than what Aurora says in Book I of *Aurora Leigh*:



*And I who have written much in prose and verse
For others' uses, will write now for mine –
Will write my story for my better self. (Book I, p. 374)*

To be sure, the bold vitality of Barrett Browning's language and imagery in *Aurora Leigh* is undeniable; the governing ideology of the poem, indeed, revolutionary. However, 'revolutionary' does not necessarily mean 'feminist' in Barrett Browning's sexual politics; her novel-poem is an integrated expression of essentialist and ultimately non-feminist views of sex and gender, despite sharp attacks on sexual hypocrisy and a devastating satire on women's education. *Aurora Leigh* exhibits how the woman becomes the speaker-poet, thereby becoming certainly confrontational both in expression and in all its semantic possibilities.

The first person of this dramatic monologue secures her identity, not in opposition to, but in association with, the other women whose speech becomes closely allied to her own. It is this shared, confrontational and emancipatory right to language, which marks Barrett Browning's sense of herself, at the height of her powers, as a woman poet and as a poet speaking for women. The antagonist, however, is more an embodiment of middle-class materialism, which conveniently allies with Victorian patriarchal formations than with patriarchy itself. In a bid to transcend this materialist ideology, *Aurora Leigh* exuberantly assumes a 'presumptuous' role within the complex social web dictated by a dominant male culture.

The right to write was closely connected with every audacious choice that women might wish to make. In an age characterized by the importance of the popular press as the place of ideological production and the spread of female literacy, it was of prime importance to warn women off questioning traditional sexual morality. Public writing and public speech, closely allied, were both real and symbolic acts of self-determination for women. Barrett Browning uses the phrase, 'I write', four times in the first two stanzas of Book I, emphasizing the connection between the first-person narrative and the act of women's speech, between the expression of a woman's feelings and thoughts and the legitimate professional exercise of that expression.

Writing is a skilled task learned at the expense of 'Long green days/ Worn bare of grass and sunshine, – long calm nights/ From which the silken sleeps were fretted out ... with no amateur's/ Irreverent haste and busy idleness/ I set myself to art!' *Aurora Leigh*, thus, enters tentatively into debates on all the forbidden subjects. Through the first-person epic voice of a major woman poet, it breaks a very specific silence, almost in a manner of questioning the authorial dominance of the arbiters of high culture of Victorian England, thereby giving vent to her consternation as an identifiable and convincing 'subject' of art, her unprecedented struggle to define her creativity and her attempt to speak patriarchal discourse with utmost boldness and passion.

End notes

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein with a Memoir*, Paul Engelmann (ed.), Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968, Second Edition, Vol. 9, No. 4, p. 17.



2. Richard Kuhns, *Literature and Philosophy: Structures of Experience*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971, p. 220.
3. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953, Sections 156 ff., 526 ff.
4. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logicus - Philosophicus*, D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (trans.), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 5563.
5. *Philosophical Investigations*, 1953, pp. 44-44e.
6. John Ruskin, Modern Painters, in *The Works of John Ruskin*, E.T. Cook & Alexander Wedderburn (eds.), London: George Allen, 1903-5, Vol. V, p. 333.
7. Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Thomas H. Johnson (ed.), 3 Vols., Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1958, no. 1472.



Manju Kapur's 'Home': A Study of Popular Elements And Its Representation In The Novel

N. Padmamma

Introduction

Manju Kapur is one of the contemporary writers who, through her writings has chosen to raise an important issue, that makes the reader realize that issues in the present fictions such as representations of popular elements, feminism should aim at providing an altogether new awareness of woman's role in the complete world. She as a novelist stands at a middle space' i.e. neither a staunch feminist nor a silent traditional. Since all the novels chosen for study are written in the current decade, they help us understand the predicament of the women in the current times. Kapur herself says, "Being a woman, being whatever you are informs your writing." 29 She raises issues from gendered ideological positions and perspectives that make it her special strength. She, like the other contemporary women writers, has internalized old feminist debates and issues and deals with the issue of gendered identities in negotiation with other larger structures such as postcoloniality, history and nationality. The women portrayed by her revolt against their conformities but finally grow out of their sweet and sour experiences of life. They do not bear any grudge against their oppressors but fight with the situations that affect their self-esteem. She tries to arouse the sensibilities of the reader by raising voices of protest, questioning male hegemony, gender discrimination and sexualities issues. Her women revolt, express their anguish but escape to the world of romance in an effort to find solutions to their problems. Perhaps that is the reason why her novels also have the dimension of the popular romance fictions. Manju Kapur is a professor of English and lives in New Delhi where she teaches English literature at Miranda House, Delhi University. Her first novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998) received the Commonwealth Award for Eurasian region. She feels contented over the progress of Indian women writing.

Home (2005):

This is fast moving story woven around two childless sisters, one married into a moneyed family with a bunch of pokey relations, and the other married to a lowly paid bureaucrat with perpetual monetary problems. The story narrates the tale of a joint family in Karol bagh, Delhi. The main character or the Patriarch of a cloth business, Banwari all, believes in the old ways and is the firm believer of the fact that men work out of home, woman within. His two sons grow up to handle the business well according to the wishes of their father. As time passes Banwari all dies and the whole burden of the family comes to Yashpal, being the elder one. His sister, Sunita married to a drunkard is killed in a kitchen accident and her son Vicky is brought home. Sona , Yashpal's wife is given the responsibility to bring up Sunita's son as she is childless. Her ten years of childlessness bears fruit when she gives birth to Nisha and later Raju. Nisha is sexually abused by Vicky, her cousin. So she is sent to Rupa's home so that she forgets the incident. Rupa's husband Premnath educates and guides her well . She grows up, after trivial hurdles in studies she joins a college where she meets a boy and decides to marry him. The boy jilts her and her love affair is quickly snubbed by the family. Finally she gets into the business of readymade



garments as her false stars could not comply with her early marriage due to 'manglik dosha' Psychological burdens of 'home' and tension fall so heavily on her that she develops skin eczema that near ruins all prospects of her marriage. The novel ends with Nisha getting married to a childless widower and her giving birth to twins- one male and the other female.

The Popular Novel: its Elements

The contemporary popular novel tries to address predicaments of the current age. Though popular novel accounts to a wide range of readership, it is differentiated from serious or high culture. The perception that the writers of the serious literature consider popular literature as catering to the crude sensibilities of less educated ones is changing. It is seen as one form of popular or mass culture that has emerged with the rise of industrial capitalism, the mass media and the mass culture industry in Post Modern world marked by mass marketing and mass reception. The textual strategies that are deployed in the works of popular literature are- the generic forms, formulaic plots, stereotyped characters and clichéd language along with powerful ideologies and discourses that successfully reach out to stir the hearts and fire the desires of millions of readers.

Whether these fictional works talk of adventures in some exotic landscapes, or deal with the tales of aliens, talk of tear-jerking romance in the security of the monogamous family, or they may present the erotic transgressions of family ties and sexual norms; the imagined worlds of popular fiction seem to set themselves off from, and simultaneously point a finger at, the everyday realities of its readers' lives. If looked from this point of view, popular novels attain the role of a distinct literary field.

Many authors have earned a good name as writers of popular novel. Sir Walter Scott, Jan Fleming, J.K.Rowling, Stephen King, Jackie Collins, John Grisham, J.R.R.Tolkein are few names in the long list of the many eminent names who write under this genre. Contemporary Indian English novelists are no less behind. With the successful writers like Shobha De who is also called as the Jackie Collins of India, we have lot of popular novel writers like Chetan Bhagat, Aravind Adiga, Jhumpa Lahiri, Tishaa Khosla, Kiran Desai and of course an attempt is being made in this paper to examine the works of Manju Kapur as belonging to this genre.

As has been noted above, popular novels have established a literary genre and a cultural field. Ken Gelder, an ardent supporter of this genre says:

Popular fiction is best conceived as the opposite of Literature. It is Distinguished from literature as a general field of writing. Both of them exist in a constant state of mutual repulsion or repudiation..... By literature I mean the kind of writing produced by Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, James Joyce, Toni Morrison, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Tobias Wolf and so On.

Ken Golder in the same book writes of R. L. Stevenson's view, who in his defense of popular novel speaks up for simplicity: Novel is not a transcript of life, to be judged by its exactitude, but a simplification of some side or point of life, to stand or fall by its

simplicity. For although, in great men, working upon great motives, what we observe and admire is often their complexity, yet underneath appearances the truth remains unchanged: that simplification was their method, and simplicity is their excellence.

And today the situation is that popular literature is simple and literature is complex. Literature is intimately connected to life, while popular novel gives over to fantasy. Literature is cerebral, but popular novel is sensuous and caught up with 'danger' and intrigue. Literature is restrained or discrete, popular novel is excessive, exaggerating. Literature does not need a story or a plot, but popular novel could not function without one. And to take Stevenson's side - Literature is dull, while popular novel is simply exciting. Literature also lacks what popular novel values most of all; a large number of readers. The sentiment: I love my readers is common to all popular novel writers who often work hard to maintain an intimacy between themselves and their readers. Most popular contemporary novelists have their own online pages and some actively engage with their fans. Popular novel in this way is mindful and respectful of its audience and perhaps that is the reason that they are the bestsellers.

Tracing popular elements in *Home*

Manju Kapur's novel *Home* (2006) is replete with elements that can be regarded as the ones from a popular novel. 'Home' is perhaps the story of the struggle of lower middle class people who have come to India during the time of partition from Pakistan after losing their wealth and property to finally struggle and rise like the stories of rags to riches wherefore the characters rise by saving each penny they have. These stories are read with greater interest as most of the Indians especially the people from Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and surrounding areas have suffered the brunt of partition. They fantasize their lives under such similar circumstances. The opening page of 'Home' tells of the theme of the fiction that it is a tale that moves around two sisters- Sona and Rupa- one poor and the other rich, married to two different families by their good or bad fortune- themes quite often explored by the popular novelists.

The author through this novel has deliberately taken up certain issues surrounding women in general as she intends to voice out the female struggle by hinting out the social parameters under which the women of Indian middle class thrive between the dominant and the subordinate under the roofs of *Home*.

The rest of the story flows into the expected frame of a family saga as the unfolding of each event in the story tells the expected result beforehand. The story opens with the 'home' of a Patriarch, another heterosexual unit of Banwari Lal and his two sons Yashpal and Pyarelal who support their father in family business of cloth merchandise. Where the word of the patriarch is followed by rest of the family without any argument, the sons carry the family legacy by being the proud fathers of two off springs each. Though Yashpal is not so lucky to be father at an early stage, his wife takes good long ten years to give birth to a daughter Nisha first, then to a son Raju, the younger brother very soon becomes the proud father of two sons very soon after his marriage. Through the family portrayal Kapur highlights the social culture of north Indian middle class families where the culture assigns

primary importance to the head of the family and where birth of sons is considered as a moment to rejoice.

More than first fifty pages are spent illustrating the barrenness of the elder daughter-in-law, Sona whose worth in this great world can be only realized if she contributes to provide an heir to the family. All these factors are the anxieties held by common men and women that contribute to the making of the popular novels. Like movies there are flashbacks of the memories how the romance between Sona and Yashpal materializes into their marriage in the good old times when love marriages and inter-caste liaisons were socially condemned. Vicky, the son of Lala Banwari Lal's deceased daughter is first given to Sona so that her luck might change, perhaps adopting a child might help in opening her womb, and this dream is soon fulfilled as she gives birth to two children after adopting Vicky, is nothing more than a fantasy.

It is after the birth of the children that Sona starts hating Vicky and treating him like the servants of the family is similar to the stories of stepmothers in popular literature. According to the rampant socio-popular culture mothers are shown escorting their daughters to attend all marriages and social functions so that:

It being likely that among the guests a boy, or better still his parents, would cast a glance and hold it steadily upon her person. Then it was hoped subsequent enquiries would yield results. (Home, 3)

Throughout the novel, there are talks of marriages, girl seeing functions, naming ceremonies and celebrations of religious festivals like Karva Chauth and Vat Savitri Katha and so on. It is a complete family drama. There are around six marriages in the Home that begin first with the marriage of Sona, Vicky, Pyare Lal's sons, and end with Sona's son Raju and Nisha's marriage thus offering mirror to the kind of middle class bourgeois Indian society. Thorough details are provided of various ceremonies associated with marriages. Vicky, the son of the deceased sister, is hurriedly educated and married off before he is hardly nineteen:

At last, the night before the wedding The hired bus stands outside the Karol Bagh, while inside the last rites of puja, packing and mehendi application are simultaneously taking place.....as each adult settles into the bus that is taking the nineteen year old Vicky to his bride. Vicky sits in front, a starched pink turban on, a red tikka blazoned across his forehead..... (Home, 80). Quickly the baralis reach the dharamshala meant for the guests and stuff their luggage's in the alcoves above, and settledown to the serious business of getting ready. Murk hangs around the hallways in the back organ, supervising the breakfast, puri also and lassi..... Vicky's shirt is whipped off, and the thread slung around his chest. The haven fire is lit in an old aluminium cooking pot. Water and cold drinks are passed around The puja goes on and on, as does the lunch. Smoke fills the room, the elderly sit on the cots, the younger ones hand them plates of food..... By four, tables are cleared for the six o'clock chat. The pressman is ironing.....while some men think of bottles hidden in suitcases..... The ladies are getting ready to go the bride's house. On two large decorated trays they carry a sari, petticoat, blouse, underwear, chappals, perfume, oil, hairpins, powder, jewellery, make -

up and trinkets. Fromhead to foot, the bride has to be made over in things belonging to the groom's side . (Home, 84- 85)

Furthermore, At last the barat sets off in the galore of portable tube lights, the band screeches in the background, and people line the gullies to watch..... the men's dancing gets wilder, and the women are unable to keep up with their alcohol aided abandon. The bride is hiding in the depths of her house. He has come, he has come, they shout at her. The bride rises, balancing herself on her extremely high heels. (Home,88)

There are great details associated with food too, spanning throughout the novel:

Dinner is served at one in the morning. Puris, Kachoris, naaah, tandoori amaranth, also sabzi, Channa, fried potato, grilled paneer and mixed vegetables, paneer in tomato gravy, dahi aphoristic pink ice- cream, gulab unjam, spiced sweet milk served in kulhars, then paan, sweet and plain and lots and lots of bottled drinks, enthusiastically swung around by children, drunk, spill, finished, drunk, split, finished again. (Home,87)

Similarly as many marriages, as many details of people, food, travels etc. The detailed travel accounts are provided. The visits are undertaken only to meet the 'babas' located far off in distant hills to confer either motherhood to the women of the *Home* or to know of the prospects of marriages of children of the home. There is a detailed description of religious ceremonies like Karva Chauth and Vat Savitri Katha only to provincialism women of the *Home*. The eldest daughter-in-law takes the responsibility of telling the fables associated with these religious functions that run to many pages. Women teach girls to keep fasts for a good husband and be a beacon of their married homes. They are taught to be humble, docile as the popular Indian culture demands. Women wake up early before dawn prepare tea, halwa, try parisi and eat before the sun rises. Young Nisha is also coaxed to keep fast:

A r re, come, come, after this you can't eat anything till the moon comes up..... Later Pyare Lal took the fasting females to Hanuman Mandir where they bought bangles and had mehendi traced on their palms. Once home they settled down to watch a rented video, palms outstretched, the dried flaking mehendi smeared with a sugar lemon mixture to darken the colour. The boys went straight to the shop to have their lunch there. In the evening the men came home with mulchescholla, dahi bhalla and rasmalai, their women must not labour over dinner (Home, 94)

Then there are the marriages of the sons in the family who along with their new brides bring ample amount of dowry:

Sana counted the things he was getting, more than Vijay, substantially more. Part of her trembled, it was too much, but the girl had a scar, and the scars had to be paid for. Pooja was bringing quantities of cash, a car, a fridge, an air conditioner, a TV, a Godrej cupboard, a double bed with a deluxe foam mattress, a dressing table, twenty one sets of jewellery, countless watches, saris, suit pieces, frocks, and little pant - shirt for women, men and children, and a honeymoon in Europe, all expenses paid. (Home, 254)



Not to be left behind, are the naming ceremonies of the children born to the inmates of Home:

They did the naming ceremony on the fortieth day. The auspicious letter taken out was 'a'. For the horoscope the pundit chose the long and old-fashioned Anandalakshmi, which no one would use, the name that would confuse the evil eye and deflect ill from the person. Her everyday name would be Nisha, short, sweet, with a modern ring to it. The grandfather decided to celebrate on the scale reserved for sons. Everybody remotely related was called. All a baby could need was displayed in the drawing room. There was a pram, cotton sets for summer, little sweater sets in pastel colours for winters, sets of silver glasses, cups, spoons, and rattles, little brush and comb sets, dolls, doll's house,, gold bangles for baby wrists, gold~ chains that hung around her neck and reached her knees. (Home,40)

It is through depicting the social life, the culture, marriages, festivals and functions that Manju Kapur adds a lively vividness to entertain the reader, a necessary element of popular literature.

Conclusion

The paper has also presented how Manju Kapur assimilates the elements of popular literature in her works. Kapur has a great obsession for providing the details of food, travels, clothes, shopping and their all raveling description runs through all the pages that can be frequently heard of when a few women sit together and talk around Her minute details of Indian culture- functions like bride seeing marriages, birth ceremonies, religious functions are all described in such grand and elaborate details that run to scores of pages amounting to insignificant progression to the narrative. What happens in the family, in the neighboring big house, in the next street or the town has been the staple diet of her novels, and it is this very world that she knows so well. However this colourful tableau presents her as a keen observer of Indian culture who only can understand and depict the complexities of the relations of Indian women. Kapur, through her novels has tried to portray an Indian woman as seen in the popular movies, in tune with the times, performing the role of a loyal girlfriend (Nisha); a mother who is a symbol of sacrifice (Asha); a woman who is considered perfect if only she can bear children and abides by the laws ordained for a woman inside marriage (Sona, Nisha); a sister who keeps the honour of the family intact. Her women protagonists move in and around these very margins. They do try to come out of these stereotypical roles by protesting but in the end fall back to the same order of things with a new affirmation.

It would be difficult to argue that Manju Kapur is a serious feminist because all her feminist upsurges in her fictions end up in a sort of comfortable escapism, comparable to that of romances or the popular literature. A detailed reading of her novels has revealed that all her women characters protest against the torturous conventions but end in the same traps. Her works reflect her engagement with feminist issues, only because of the fact that her woman attains a mode of existence in which she is free of dependence. Nisha cries against everything in her life right horn her childhood; she revolts against her marriage, sexual abuse, and women's confinement in homes but ends in the predication met by every



common woman. Astha's rebellion against male domination and her escapade to lesbianism and again reverting back to hetero-normativity is something similar to the popular romance formula that works on heterosexual parameters.

Further, use of common themes for love affairs', bad marriages', marital tensions' too works on the popular romance formula. All tales end in subjection to the heterosexual concept of the dominant gender ideology also mark the fictions of Kapur adhering to the populist norms. But if Manju Kapur has taken up the elements of popular fiction, she has also undertaken the reformist role. She wants to reform the home and the world, with gender roles redefined in Indian modernity. She criticizes the dehumanizing practices like child marriage, polygamy, dowry, child abuse etc. through her novels. She has explained through her works how women can bring desired changes by raising issues of protest-participating in nationalist political movements or by resenting against the codes laid by patriarchy. Her novels have made women realize that they can actually control their destiny; Popular feminist writings represent woman to be a perfect mother, wife and an empowered woman. This is what Kapur seeks to do as well.

Along with this, her women protagonists attain a humane understanding that acts as a rebalancing factor between women and men, between the social, economic and political power structures within a given society showing the end result -'all is well that ends well' comparable to the popular movies that ends in uniting all odds on a note of happiness. She provides a 'good ending'. However Kapur's women are not from fairy tales. She does not represent good women as passive and active women as villains. This stereotyping is absent in her novels. Nisha, Astha , Nina all three women protagonists of the three novels have sufficiently proved that. With the cultural changes over the times and with the advent of the women's liberation movement, the content of the popular narratives has also undergone changes. Now the women are seen as expressing radicalism against hegemony and resistance against all kind of subordination.

Kapur has thus presented the feminist ideas in popular forms. Her women enjoy felinity as being wives and mothers but are very possessive and emphatic of their place in society.

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Emotional Imbalance In The Characters Of Anita Desai's Fiction

B. Pramila

Anita Desai is one of the most leading Indo-Anglican novelists. Born to a German mother and an Indian father, Anita had an unorthodox upbringing, which in turn helped to nurture writing aspirations in her young mind. Having grown up in a houseful of books led her to the early decision that writing would be her life. She began to write in English at the age of seven. While studying English at the University of New Delhi, Anita Desai dedicated herself to writing. Her career started with short stories which got printed in leading Indian magazines. Her first story was Circus Cat. Then she wrote one after another stories followed by her first novel *Cry the Peacock* in 1963 and many more. She emerged on the literary horizon after independence, focusing on the contemporary issues.

She is a writer who has influenced generations of writers. She has enriched Indian fictional world with her significant literary outputs. Her mixed background gives Anita Desai the advantage of having double perspective when writing about India and Indians as well as migrants in India and Indian migrants to the west. Her parentage, her upbringing and expatriate experience has given her a cosmopolitan outlook and a sympathetic understanding of the painful aspects of the human predicament—loneliness, rootlessness and alienation of the sensitive and the tender-hearted. Endowed with remarkable sensitivity, she can apprehend the emotional problems of her fellow beings. This delicate sensitivity speaks for itself when she remarks;

"I confess I am afraid of speaking out about the art of writing, the mechanics of my craft. I have an intuitive and deep fear that by speaking of something subterranean and subconscious, I will destroy it- it is something so very frail".

The words reveal a withdrawn self that turns inward. It is this tendency to turn her focus on the unexplored inner regions of the human self— the female self in her novels that won her a space for herself among Indian English novelists. Her novels span an extensive range of issues. They map the evolution of a writer from obsession with the unrevealed inner world of her female characters to themes of perennial interest to all. Anita Desai is widely known for the treatment of inner life in her novels. She has made a significant contribution to the development of Indian novel in English by her psychological themes and characterization. As a writer of the post- Independence phase, she gets more and more psychologically intended and try to assess the sociological effect on the psyche of her characters.

Anita Desai clearly stands ahead from other novelists in as much as she introduces a shift of ideational focus from the outer to the inner part of human existence. Desai's greatness as a writer revolves round her achievement in exploring the psyche of her characters. She is considered as a psychological Novelist. In her novels, Desai has proved as a novelist who gives importance for the sensibility of her female protagonists. She plumbs the depth of the inner life of Indian Women. Anita Desai in her psychological novels presents the image of a suffering woman preoccupied with her inner world, her



sulking frustration and the storm within; the existential predicament of a woman in a male dominated society. Through such characters, she makes a plea for a better way of life for women.

This paper is an attempt to provide a better understanding of women characters in Anita Desai's novels and analyses the psychic turmoil of her protagonists and show Anita's woman sensibility as reflected in her three major novels-Cry, the peacock, where shall we go this summer? and Fire on the mountain through the protagonists of these novels. "The hall mark of her fiction is to focus on the inner experience of life". She expresses a "Uniquely Indian sensibility that is yet completely at ease in the mind of the west."

Anita Desai's predicament is not with society or social forces but the individual psyche and its interaction with social values. She is interested in the psychological aspect of her characters. In dealing with psychic maladies, Desai strikes a new note. Her characters suffer from various complexes and mental diseases, which obstruct the healthy growth of their personality. Characters in the novels of Desai are generally neurotic females, highly sensitive but isolated in a world of dream and imagination and alienated from their surroundings, as a consequence of their failure or unwillingness to adjust with the reality. They often differ in their opinion from others and embark on a long voyage of contemplation in order to find the meaning of their existence.

Anita Desai solely concerned with the inner weather of the characters. Desai is a painter of their kaleidoscopic moods, their wills and conflicting choices. She discusses the problems of temperamental incompatibility, conjugal chaos and inharmonious man-woman relationship. In her novels most protagonists alienated from the world, society, families, and parents and even from their own selves, because they are not average people but individuals who are unable to communicate with the people around, unable to relate themselves with this setup, they drift into their own sequestered world where they spin their dreams, which never materialize.

When these characters have to face alienation they become rebels. Since Desai is concerned with the delineation of psychological reality she prefers the characters that are peculiar and eccentric rather than general and common place. She conceives each character as a mystery and riddle. She believes that it is a duty of a novelist to solve this riddle. Her characters are almost sick of life and listless plaything of their morbid psychic longings. In dealing with the psyche of the characters and their motivations she moves deeply and dwells in the inner reality of her characters.

In an interview she has admitted that

"I am interested in characters who are not average but have retreated, or have driven into some extremity of despair and turn against or make a stand against the general current. It is easy to flow with the current, it makes no demands, it costs no effort, but those who cannot follow it- know what the demands are, what it costs to meet them"

Her novels focus on the inner climate, the climate of sensibility. Her main concern is to depict the psychic states of her protagonists at some crucial juncture of their lives. The



inner most psyche of her protagonists is revealed to us through their interaction with those who are emotionally related to them on the basis of kinship, The inner play of thoughts, feelings, and emotions is reflected in language, syntax and imagery. As a novelist, her distinguishing qualities are many, the chief among them being the subordination of the background to the characters and the deft handling of language, imagery and syntax in order to convey an intimate expression of the inner world of her characters.

Prof. Srinivasa Iyenger rightly observes;

“Since her pre-occupation is with the inner world of sensibility rather than the outer world of action, she has tried to forge a style supple and suggestive enough to convey the fever and fretfulness of the stream of consciousness of her principal character”

She insists on analyzing her characters and the story is important only in so far as it reflects the obsessions of her characters. Desai makes each work of hers a haunting exploration of the psychic self.

Desai has tried to present her themes organically with appropriate adjustment and adaptations in spheres of style and point of view. The result is her comparative superiority over other Indian women novelists writing in English. These are the basics of Desai’s fictional methods through which she attains remarkable success as a novelist.

Women writers of all ages have a natural preference for writing about women characters. Anita Desai is no exception insofar as she has written by and large about women characters and no wonder if most of her novels move around women characters. Although she is pre-occupied with the theme of incompatible marital couples, we come across different kinds of women characters in her novels including characters represent woman’s mind and psyche in it varied moods and nuances. If at one extreme there are sensitive women characters, on the other extreme, we find thick-skinned women with blunt sensibility. Desai is an excellent in depicting the inner furies of women and their rising tone for emancipation and empowerment. She is an explorer of the feminine sensibility.

In her very first novel *Cry, the peacock*, we find examples of the two extremes. In this novel Desai shows the women characters suffering from neurosis. They are guided by fear, guilt, jealousy aggression and their psyche loses grip of their own central position. *Cry, the peacock*, is a novel mainly concerned with the theme of disharmony between husband and wife (Gautama and Maya) relationship. Here Desai has dealt with a sterile woman, highly sensitive and emotional, who is married to Gautama, a promising, prosperous and overbuy practitioner of law. Gautama’s sensibilities are too rough and practical to suit Maya’s. She is the pampered child of a Rai Sahib, and is brought up in an atmosphere of luxury. She lives, to use her own words, like ‘a toy prince in a toy world’. Though Gautama is a faithful husband who takes care of Maya and loves her in his own way yet Maya is never satisfied and happy. She feels that Gautama never cares for her. And he does not have any feelings for her. The novel gives us an impression of the marital incompatibility and unhappy conjugal life.



The married life of Maya and Gautam results in rapture because the two are not only temperamentally different but mutually opposed. Maya is full of life and wants to enjoy life to the utmost. But Gautam is dry, matter of fact and prosaic personality. For Maya, peacocks represent the struggle for survival. The peacock's cry is symbolic of Maya's agonized cry for love and life of involvement. For example the death of Maya's pet dog Toto upsets Maya so terribly that she is off her mental balance, the death of Toto symbolizes the psychic death of Maya. But for Gautama Toto's death may be trivial and he takes this event easy and to him it is an everyday event to be managed efficiently and dismissed. He consoles Maya in his own way. We find in the character of Gautama, a practical, worldly-wise husband, has a philosophical approach to life but is emotionally distanced from Maya's demented sensibility fluttering in every wind of imagined disaster.

The incident of the death of the pet dog Totto is employed to show the emotional incompatibility between husband and wife. We get scores of such examples throughout the novel where Gautama neglects emotional yearnings of Maya, though they live together, Gautama knows very little about her. In order to console her he offers a cup of tea without realizing Maya's shattered state of mind. This mechanical gesture only makes her to brood over Gautama's Insensitivity. Desai succeeds in bringing out through trivial incidents of everyday life, like their response to flowers, late-evening scents of the garden, and the stars in the sky, the widening emotional gulf between partners. Here Desai brings woman's psychic self, which reveals Maya's inner thoughts. Maya is a hyper sensitive woman, an introvert. She constantly broods over the fantasizes about her childhood days and finally regrets them by going mad. Maya's tragedy is mainly caused by her loneliness, lack of proper response from her husband, non-reciprocation of feeling between the husband and wife, her childlessness and her hypersensitivity.

Anita Desai not only explores and portrays the feminine psyche of a common woman but also of the subnormal bordering on abnormal woman. These are the women who because of various factors are under so much of mental stress that they cannot be, called insane, but then certainly they are not totally normal. Her character Maya who is hypersensitive and because of her loneliness she is almost a mental wreck. She dreads that she would lose her mental balance and when she is so much lost in herself without moving for a long time. Gautama says;

Still sitting there? You haven't stirred out? Haven't lifted up a book, your sewing? Nothing at all? But this is madness, Maya. 'Madness?' I screamed, leaping up at him, to strike him, to stab him. . . and began to cry hysterically (p.p178).

Not only this but also through the use of unpleasant animal imagery Desai depicts the neurotic state of her mind.(animal imagery used for externalizing the mental state of Maya. The symbolic self-portrait of Maya is painted step by step by the juxtaposition of other characters and scenes like Gautam, Lila, pom, Maya's father, Gautam's mother, sister, the image sceneries the scene of the meeting with the albino astrologer, cabaret dancers, the dinner parties and storm scene in the end which intensify Maya's inner state of turmoil.



Later in the novel after she had pushed off Gautama from the roof top she goes back to her father's house in Lucknow. She retreats into the world of her childhood, absolutely cut-off from the present reality. She becomes a girl again lost in her world of picture books and toys. This mental retrogression suggests that Maya has not been able to adjust herself in the world of reality and after killing her husband, she mentally goes back of her protected and pampered childhood, the best part of her life. Thus in the character of Maya Anita Desai has presented the feminine psyche of both a girl and a woman.

Where shall we go this summer? is Desai's another major novel in which once again importance has been given for the feminine sensibility by revealing the inner psyche of the protagonist Sita. In this novel Desai presents an intense identity crisis of the central character Sita, a sensitive woman in her early forties. Unable to live in the strife-torn present she is in the throes of identifying herself with the past, represented by the childhood on Manori island twenty years ago. The past becomes a psychic residue in her "personal unconscious" the backdrop of her life, and her obsessive preoccupation with it gives her the strength to leave her home, husband, two children and the urbanized life of Bombay for Manori island, where she thinks she would be able to live under a magic spell. Sita's problem seems to be due to maladjustment with her husband; the home life and surrounding atmosphere nauseating her. She is fed up with her husband, a businessman, whose complete lack of feeling brings her to the verge of insanity. And a deep change takes place in Sita from a proud mother of four children to a woman of "rage, fear and revolt, for "control... had slipped out of her hold". Sita's is more a psychological problem than being external, as resulting from unfulfilled wishes. Tragically, her dreams of getting love and affection from her husband end in a nightmare.

Moreover he ignores her instincts, and what she likes him to treat her in a gentle and tender way is what he cannot do. As a result, in the long run the husband-wife relationship is dragged into difficulties that come out in the form of identity crisis, for both Raman and Sita stand for binary oppositions. Raman is a creature of society, more or less an extrovert, more accommodative, apathetic whereas Sita is hypersensitive, an introverted personality and a pessimist. She not only hates Raman for his lack of feeling but also derides the 'subhuman placidity, calmness and sluggishness and the routine manner of her husband's family. As a reaction against these, when she speaks she speaks with rage and anguish, and with 'sudden rushes of emotion' In order to seek a means of escape she chooses three things- exile, silence, and cunning. All this is the ultimate rejection of the values her husband represents, and she has resolved to go to Manori Island as a kind of self-exile in her search for identity in silence and in her revival of the past, away from home and civilization.

In where shall we go this summer? The suffering of Sita is caused by factors psychical in origin. Lack of a mother, an elder sister, of a girl companion further worsens Sita's condition. She suffers from nervous disorder being she faced with this void, emptiness, irreparably continuing to exist even after her marriage resulting in her loss of identity, self-confidence and inability to reassure love and security to her children. This is aggravated by her husband's mechanical and matter of fact attitude towards her with no warmth of feeling, understanding and attachment. Sita is completely alienated from the



world around her and starts living in a world of dream and fantasy and 'Make believe' under the strain to 'a serious psychological confusion'.

Where shall we go this summer? is a subtle psychological study of human personalities which are at war. At a deeper psychological level Sita's quest for her identity is an outcome of the husband-wife conflict. The strange and insensitive nature of Raman causes serious problems to the mental life of Sita. Anita Desai's creation of Sita is an example of repressed person. She hates her husband for not understanding her, dislikes her children for they are insensitive, so on. As a result she lives in a world of phantasies, incongruities and violent out bursts as a means of escape from reality. Her entire life is woven in this strange manner inscrutably. But the concluding part of the novel, however has a different tone, and this is an essential artistic development in the whole structure of the novel. Sita who has been unable to come out of her egotistical self now gets an apocalyptic vision.

Earlier she was unable to compromise with her husband, but now she can see things in a circular form, and ring, making the moments experience something permanent. She finds that all her life is false, a Maya, and her immediate experience is real' the still centre, marked by a vision of revelation. In fact, it is the supreme moment of getting self-knowledge in which Sita melts in others, melt in her. The reign of chaos is over, there is unity. And like an artist she gathers things, binds things, and packs things in complete understanding and harmony. Sita is in full agreement with the natural rhythm of life. Unlike Cry, the peacock and Voices in the city where the protagonist's succumb to their neurosis and kill themselves, Sita accepts the need to face life with all its grossness and ugliness. Sita's change in attitude marks a positive acceptance of life and of the man-woman relationship in the traditional way. The experience in Manori leads Sita to a reassessment and perfect understanding of her situation out of which must have arisen her decision to return to the fold of the family.

The novel thus emphasizes the triumph of life over chaos and of art over life. And at such a moment of illumination life stands still, and all personalities melt into one Sita's identity crisis is over. Her identity is one of impersonality. This corresponds with life when it is worth living. Life is a continual process of sacrifice, adjustment, and compromise, In this novel we find deep psychological probing into the inner most recesses of mind of modern man in quest of identity in the contemporary world'.

Fire on the Mountain is another important and popular novel. This novel pictures the sensibility of an Indian house wife and her sufferings. Nanda Kaul is the protagonist of this novel. It presents the study of the sensibility of a house wife and the trauma of a house wife which takes her towards seclusion. In this novel, Desai has disclosed the true picture of the affected sensibility of a female through her protagonist Nanda Kaul.

Anita's Fire on the Mountain symbolizes feminine sensibility in a heightened way. Nanda Kaul, the protagonist in the novel symbolises the heightened feminine sensibility. The novel deals with the existential angst experienced by female protagonist Nanda Kaul' an old lady living in isolation. It also projects the inner turmoil of a small girl, Raka, who is



haunted by a sense of futility. It presents the plight of a helpless woman, Ila Das who is in conflict with forces that are too powerful to be encountered, resulting in her tragic death.

Fire on the Mountain falls into three sections, the first section titled 'Nand Kaul at Carignano' deals with Nanda Kaul the main protagonist's lonely life in Kasauli. Raka comes to Carignano forms the second section, it portrays Nanda Kaul's change of attitude towards Raka, her great granddaughter. The final section 'Ila Das leaves Carignano' presents the tragic end of Ila Das, Nanda Kaul's childhood friend.

The story revolves round the inner lives of the two female protagonists Nand Kaul and Raka. Nanda Kaul is the wife of Mr. Kaul, the Vice-chancellor of the Punjab University. When the novel begins, Nanda Kaul is living in Carignano, far from the madding crowd. She is leading a life of isolation and introspection. She shuns all human company. Even the postman's arrival to deliver the letter is frowned upon by her. She always likes loneliness after the death of her husband'. The married life of Nanda Kaul is not life of the ordinary people because there are no emotions and feelings. Her relationship with her husband was nothing beyond the duties and obligations they had for each other. That is why she longs for the privacy, seclusion, tranquility. The news of Raka's visit to Carignano shatters her hope for privacy and isolation. But as days pass by, Nanda Kaul finds herself drawn towards Raka, something she had not expected. But the little girl refuses to be befriended and escapes into the hills looking for company in solitude. It is spontaneous and natural. It is the isolation of a roe, playful and fanciful.

Ila Das, Nanda Kaul's childhood friend visits Carignano to meet Raka. A onetime lecturer in the Punjab University, Ila Das had lost her job subsequent to Mr. Kaul's retirement. She has come to Kasauli now in her new capacity as an officer in the social welfare department. she fights against child marriage by enlightening the local people about the evils of this practice. This invites the wrath of many of the villagers of whom Preet Singh is one. His attempts to barter his little daughter for a tiny piece of land and a few goats have been successfully thwarted by Ila Das. He is lying in wait to settle his score with her. One evening, When Ila Das returns late from Carignano to her humble house in the valleys, he waylays her, rapes and murders her. When the news of Ila Das's death is conveyed to Nanda Kaul over the phone, she is rudely shocked and falls dead. Raka unaware of her great grandmother's death, rushes into the house proclaiming wildly that she has set the forest of fire.

The novel explores the alienation of Nanda Kaul and her granddaughter Raka. Nanda Kaul's longing for a secluded and still life after the death of her husband despises almost everyone who comes her way, her daughter Asha, granddaughter Tata, great granddaughter Raka and her old companion Ila Das. When the novel begins, Nanda kaul is presented as a recluse, living all alone expect for the company of the servants who dare not disturb her privacy, she brooks no human presence. She spends her days in isolation. She had witnessed only betrayals and demands in life before her retirement to Kasauli. She lived a monotonous life receiving and treating the endless stream of visitors who used to call on her vice- chancellor husband. As a mother of several children all demanding and un-accommodative, she had been given too many anxious moments. Now all alone in Carignano, a house associated with many weird stories, she feels that loneliness is the only



essential condition of human life. She is haunted by the existential angst which has led her to conclude that human life is basically a lonely struggle against the odds of life. In her case the odds have manifested themselves in the form of an adulterous husband and cantankerous children.

As in the case of Raka, immediately after her arrival at Carignano, on witnessing a fire in the forest she becomes obsessed with forest fires for they seem to her the empirical manifestation of her inner conflict; whether to continue with her mediocre and painful and aimless existence imposed upon her by heredity and environment or to revolt against their dictates and attempts to create her own values. By an elaborate expression of her free will and demonstration of her ability to choose and act, she sets the forest on fire towards the end of the novel. The fire created by her is the result and manifestation of her existential angst to destroy the old and meaningless to make room for the new and significant.

Ila Das is the third female protagonist of the novel. Unlike Nanda Kaul and Raka who are central to the story, her role is only marginal. Her life suggests another dimension of misery and meaningless existence. She finds herself fighting a lonely battle against a mindless multitude. But she is not cowed down by adversity. She remains in her conviction and refuses to make any compromises. Though she is aware of the dire consequences that she might be forced to face, she remains faithful to her cause and braves the brute majority with conviction and commitment as her tools. Finally, she meets with a tragic end but has made her existence significant in exhibiting courage and determination in the face of stiff resistance and threat to life'. Anita Desai probes the psyche of these three lonely women and portrays them with remarkable sympathy and understanding. Life has dealt with them harshly. The attempt of the three women to encounter life bravely appears almost pathetic. Thus the characters of Nanda Kaul, Raka, and Ila Das are studies of women in isolation.

Desai examines the three aspects alienation, quest and conflict in the lives of three female protagonists. Nanda Kaul is a study in alienation, Raka symbolizes the individual's quest for meaning in an otherwise futile life. Ila Das stands for the eternal conflict enacted in the human drama between the individual and the forces of determinism Violence emerging out of the human world preys upon all the three major character of this novel. Nanda Kaul is a victim of the violence of indifference of her husband, Ila Das is a victim of rape and murder, Raka is a victim of the world of her parent that she is born to. Desai's novels are certainly reflective of social realities. But she does not dwell like others on social issues. She delves deep into the forces that condition the growth of a female in this patriarchal male dominated society. She observes social realities from a psychological perspective without posing herself as a social reformer.

As a novelist, Anita Desai exhibits a strong inclination towards the interpretation of the human predicament. In particular, she voices 'the mute miseries and helplessness of married women tormented by existentialist problems and predicaments' A woman novelist, Desai has won a niche by exploring the emotional world of women, bringing to light the various deeper forces at work in feminine sensibility as well as psychology. This predilection leads her to examine the psyche of her women protagonists when they are confronted with the absurdity of life. This draws her attention to the darker side of life. She projects a tragic vision in her novels by placing her female protagonists in hostile

situations. Desai further examines her women protagonists as individuals who find themselves forced into uncongenial environments, fighting against the odds. This problem of the tragic tension between the individual and their unfavorable environment acquires the dimensions of existential angst.

Anita Desai's characters are self-conscious of the reality around them and they carry a sense of loneliness, alienation and pessimism. She adds a new dimension turning inward into the realities of life and plunges into the deep-depths of the human psyche to score out its mysteries and chaos in the minds of characters.

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Traces of New Wave Feminism and Varied Expressions of Power in the Women characters of Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us* **K. Ragamayee**

A woman must have money and room of her own if she is to write fiction. -Virginia Woolf

Feminism is a concern for woman and wants to establish a new identity for woman to understand the female predicament. Generally, woman's image is observed from two angles, what she is (Biologically) and what she has to be [socially constructed]. A woman cannot escape the fact that she is woman. Society has constructed rigid model role for her and has confined her domain.

Feminism deals with political, cultural, and economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates gender equality for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests.

According to Janet Richards, "The essence of Feminism has a strong fundamental case intended to mean only that there are excellent reasons for thinking that woman suffer from systematic social injustice because of their sex, the proposition is to be regarded as constituting feminism".¹ The agonistic definition of feminism sees it as the struggle against all forms of patriarchal and sexist aggression. Feminists have recognized that politics is not something, which has to do with ideologies of some political parties but that feminist politics aims at bringing women's experiences into the political arena. Feminists have also identified that women's derogatory status in the hierarchical order of most of the societies is because of the gender differentiation.

Feminists and scholars have divided the movement's history into three "waves". The first wave refers mainly to women's suffrage movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth century's (mainly concerned with women's right to vote). The second wave refers to the ideas and actions associated with the women's liberation movement beginning in the 1960s (which campaigned for legal and social rights for women). The third wave refers to a continuation of, and a reaction to the perceived failures of, second-wave feminism, beginning in the 1990s.

Feminism in the Indian Context

Feminist situation in India possesses a dissimilar dispensation. Indian society has always been highly hierarchical. To understand and sympathize the sensibility of feminism in India, it is important to observe that Indian feminists present altogether different picturesque scene. The long and painful suffering of women, the bitter struggles for the exception of the idea of equal pay for equal work, the continuing battles on behalf of woman's right to abortion and to practice of birth control are some of the visible marks of the gender inequality that have persisted.



It is interesting to note that the feminist movement in India was initiated by men and it was only later that women joined. The authenticity of feminine sensibility and feminine experiences would demand a brief scrutiny of the changing position of women in India. The study of the Indian feminine psyche evolves a change from tradition to modernity.

The second wave feminism began in 1960 dealing with legal and social rights of women had shown its impact on Indian women authors as well. Nayantara Sahgal has a unique authenticity over Indian politics because of her familial association with the political family of the Indian democracy, the Nehru's. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, mother of Nayantara Sahgal is the sister of Jawaharlal Nehru. This has helped Sahgal to observe the variations in Indian politics very closely.

Nayantara Sahgal

Sahgal's sixth novel, 'Rich Like Us' has received accolade from critics as an insightful political fiction and helped her win the prestigious Sinclair Prize (Britain) in 1985 and the Sahitya Akademi Award (India) in 1986. The chief temporal setting of the text (from 1932 to 1975) encompasses both the Indian independence movement and its aftermath, leading up to and including the infamous political Emergency declared by Indira Gandhi, and because it overtly treats questions of governmental policy, the majority of scholars have focused almost exclusively upon the novel's engagement with national politics, disregarding the implications of such a macro-narrative for the micro-narrative of gender.

Ramesh Chadha commends the mutual exclusivity of Sahgal's national and gender politics as she asserts that "along with the political themes, [Sahgal] also portrays the modern Indian woman's search for individual freedom and self-realization."² Thus failing to analyze the negative relational links between the discourses of nation and woman, Chadha un-problematically describes Rich Like Us as a "feminist" text.³ (Ramesh Chadha, "Nayantara Sahgal," *International Literature in English: Essays on the Major Writers*, ed. Robert L. Ross (New York: Garland, 1991) 261.)

While Shyamala Narayan admires the "social commitment and contemporary relevance" of what is "probably [Sahgal's] best novel", Jasbir Jain identified and appreciated the novel as a discerning "political biography," "the story of a country ... [in which] the protagonist is India,"

Rich Like Us

The novel is woven around a dual narrative— Sonali is the narrator in first person and the other is the omniscient narrator alternating between three voices— that of Rose, Nishi and her father Kisorilal. The novel partly deals with the life of a young and committed Oxford-educated I.A.S. officer Sonali, who possesses the intellectual strength to tear apart clichéd and outmoded traditions. She lets her family know her horror of an arranged marriage and consequently an inevitably stifling life. She is posted as a joint secretary in the Ministry of Industry, and in that capacity, one expects her to wield



considerable power, being a woman officer working in the reign of a woman Prime Minister.

On the other hand, when she exercises her power to reject an application that has failed to impress her in terms of national welfare and logical necessity, she falls out of favour and gets abruptly demoted and transferred to her native state, in favour of her ex-fiancé and class fellow Ravi Kachru, who steadily climbs up the professional ladder, through unquestioning loyalty to the PM. Ravi is a Kashmiri like Nehru and hence his is an added claim for proximity with the reigning powers. Sonali succinctly evokes the hazards of being a woman as opposed to the privileged position of Ravi being a man:

...he was a man. He had never fought a battle for freedom...never had a sari throttling his legs, making walking in the wind and running to catch a bus a threat to life and limb, never had his mother set up a howl when he ...got a haircut. He had no idea what the simplest subjugations were all about. (123-124)

The other part of the novel is seen through the story of Rose, introduced in the very first chapter, a cockney-accented chocolate shop girl from London who falls in love with an Indian garments-businessman Ram Surya, magnetically drawn to the enchanting world that he weaves around her by his eloquence. Despite knowing about Ram's first wife Mona and a newborn son Dev, Rose leaves behind her lonely parents and forsakes her country to come to India as Ram's second wife. Rose symbolises personal courage, compassion and genuine human warmth. She takes many grave risks in her life trusting her instincts blindly, goes on to make friends with her unbending father-in-law Lalaji, even takes charge of the business when Ram pursues the seductive Marcella and, in the absence of any real fulfillment, creates a small circle around her with Sonali, the crippled beggar in the tomb and the faithful servant Kumar. It is the brave, outspoken and powerful voice of Rose that her stepson Dev finds unbearable and hence, gets her silenced forever through one of his youth camp thugs.

Rich Like Us, with its focus upon the female protagonists, Sonali and Rose appears to be dealing with the feminine sensibility emphasizing the issues of women. At the same time it also seems to be dealing with the prevailing nationalist paradigms, which work to the detriment of women's issues. Exhibiting only a limited commitment to charting female agency or to radically redefining women's roles, Nayantara Sahgal states revealingly in a 1989 interview, "I have never written from any specific ideological viewpoint. If I have, I have a nationalistic viewpoint."

Sahgal also opines that it is almost impossible to separate politics from reality in India as life is so political here. That is to say, politics become a part of life. She thus discloses that her criticism of national politics is based on the general experiences or sufferings of women in general and issues of suicide and dowry murders in particular. There are various representations of suicide in *Rich Like Us* which correspond to a macro-political level rather than specifically interventionist women's behaviours. For instance, there is a reference to the Sita myth in the context of a discussion on nationalist allegiances and is, significantly, voiced by a man.



In another nation-based context, years later, Rose wonders whether the wrongs of the Emergency can be explained away as acts of fate but concludes, "even if that's what it was—the powers who were supposed to know better sometimes being as vicious as they were, e.g. their barbarous treatment of Sita—of course it had to be fought" (RLU 219). Sita's tragedy is here reduced to a parenthetical remark to emphasize the corruption of a nation and a political system steeped in an oppressive religious tradition, thereby underlining once more Sahgal's appropriation of the legend for larger political ends. The references to myth also occur later in the novel, while referring to Sonali's great grandmother's death. At the same time, the mention of the two original nineteenth-century accounts of widow burnings is to interrogate the broader bases of nationalistic and societal corruptions rather than to investigate the particular religio-cultural suppression of women.

Incidentally, though not surprisingly, the position of man is left unquestioned. There is, for instance, no questioning of the Britishers' emphasis upon the stranglehold of "superstition" on the women (RLU 126), their objectification of the suicides, or their assumption of gender inequality as a mark of Indian inferiority. Similarly, there is no criticism of Sonali's grandfather's condemnation not so much of the horrific practice of 'sati' itself but of the acquiescence of Hindu India which fails to question its own pernicious beliefs and practices. Sonali's grandfather does not portray his mother as a person who would manipulate the issues for personal benefits or safeguard her son, rather casts her as a victim requiring the protection of Mr. Timmons.

Just as the 'sati' motif is evidence of Sahgal's hegemonic nationalism, so is her treatment of the Emergency a testimony to her disjunctive feminism. Although Indira Gandhi is not identified by name and does not appear onstage as a character in *Rich Like Us*, her presence permeates the narrative consciousness. From censure of the prime minister's nationalization of banks and a denunciation of her belief in "family rule," through a dubbing of her executive tenure as a "dictatorship" and an accession to "imperial power," to a likening of the excesses of the Emergency to those at Austerlitz and Dachau (RLU 155, 82, 156, 52), Sahgal repeatedly condemns her violence to the democratic process. While her criticisms of the Emergency are well founded, there are some troubling questions, posed from within a feminist perspective, regarding her treatment of Mrs. Gandhi in *Rich Like Us*.

Sahgal presents Indira Gandhi as ostensibly gender-neutral politician who fails to consider the particular ramifications of her governmental policies upon women. Although her mother, Kamala Nehru, was an ardent advocate of women's rights, Mrs. Gandhi repeatedly denied being a feminist because, as she put it, "I always felt that I could do anything I wanted." Her privileged upbringing—akin to that of her cousin, Nayantara Sahgal—unconstrained by her sex, also led her to underline her status as a zoon politikon, a politician without gender, claiming, "I don't think of myself as a woman when I do my job. According to the Indian Constitution, all citizens are equal I'm just an Indian citizen and the first servant of the country." Thus it was that the woman who was seen as synonymous with India did little to advance the cause of women. During her tenure as prime minister, Indira Gandhi failed to appoint even a single woman to her cabinet or to patronize any feminist group or movement in India; and none of her economic objectives outlined in her Twenty-Point Programme announced during the Emergency focused



specifically upon women's upliftment. It was her belief, that women's problems had no link with the specific oppression of women but with the general national problems of poverty and unemployment, that contributed to the declining status of Indian women in post-independence times.

Except for once, Sahgal does not mention Mrs. Gandhi's characteristic exploitation of her identity as woman. At the same time she brings in a comparison between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and a positive portrayal of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi presenting her gendered nationalism. The minimal criticism voiced by the pseudo-Marxist characters of Ravi Kachru and the unnamed prisoner in jail regarding the collusion of Gandhi's pacifism with bourgeois capitalism is quickly overturned by Sonali and Kishori Lal. Sonali, in particular, serves as the author's mouthpiece, unstintingly praising Gandhi's actions, particularly his satyagraha [truth force, nonviolent] movement, his agitation for "human rights," and his commitment to the "new epic" of equality (RLU100-02). What Sonali/Sahgal ignores in her eulogy to Gandhian nationalism is its inherent paternalism and associated reinforcement of some of the most regressive beliefs underlying Indian women's suppression.

Sahgal's more direct attempt to identify herself with Indian women by declaring that *Rich Like Us* presents two "heroines" and no "heroes" is an important point to be noted. Her praise of Sonali and Rose as women who "were willing to risk the unknown, to make difficult, adventurous choices and to brave the consequences" ("NS" 102) is grounded in a historically male heroic vocabulary; and her ambivalent conceptualization and treatment—from a feminist viewpoint—of the two characters once again underlines Sahgal's paternalistic politics.

Having come to maturity in post-independence India, Sonali is offered as the type of the new Indian woman, an educated, professional, single female dedicated to the progress of her country, an ostensible product of the new constitutional equality accorded to all Indian citizens. "People like you, especially women like you, are going to Indianize India," remarks her father (RLU 24), further suggesting an integral link between national and feminist politics. A closer examination of Sonali's life, however, points up perhaps most unequivocally Sahgal's problematic stance on the woman-nation nexus. Though Sonali expresses her rejection towards the clutches of marriage, there are instances where she depends on men for important decisions. For instance she says that her father should have suggested her to resign during emergency.

And, despite Sahgal's extra-textual praise of Sonali as an "idealist," a "woman who had a conscience" ("NS" 101,102), the textual evidence plainly suggests that her sole (nationalistically) heroic act is a compromised one. She resigns from the civil service not as a résister protesting the overthrow of the Indian constitution but as an escapist who cannot face her demotion and transfer from New Delhi: "I was a civil servant until I was thrown out, soon after the emergency began," she admits (RLU 232).

Not only, then, is Sonali's role as a committed feminist refutable, but Sahgal's paradoxical treatment of Rose as the suffering but stoic Hindu wife contests even more insistently any claims regarding the author's feminist politics, as it controverts all authorial

asides about Rose's "rebellion" and fundamental "freedom" (RLU 53; "NS" 101). Declaring Rose to be Sonali's "twin soul," despite the differences in their nationalities and ages, Sahgal enumerates her many "freedoms": from British conceit, self-importance, a high-class accent, and the urge to look young and lose weight ("NS" 101). What she disregards, however, is Rose's utter lack of freedom as a woman. A Britisher knowingly married to a polygamous Indian, she (108 *The International Fiction Review* 20.2 (1993) passively enacts her role as the Hindu 'souten' or co- wife after some initial, feeble resistance. And just as she adjusts to Ram's legal and emotional ties to Mona, Rose reconciles herself to his continued philandering. She believes fatalistically that "nothing, nothing [can] be done about" his affair with Marcella (RLU 94); lives resignedly through her five-year separation from him as he mends his broken heart; takes him back without any outward protest; and nurses him through his final illness, all because she too comes to think of marriage as a "sacrament" as established by Hindu masculinist belief (RLU 55).

It is this strategic gendering of the ideal nationalist satyagrahi that Sahgal symbolically reproduces in Rose's person, casting her, ironically, as the most traditionally Indian of the female characters, erasing her autonomy as a woman so that she might become a "legend" to others, leaving them a "legacy" of her strength amidst adversity and her sati-like self-sacrifice (RLU 41,234).

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Narrative Techniques Adopted In The Novels Of Shashi Tharoor **Rajkumar B. Bhairam**

The novel portrays life from all the angularities of perception and gives inklings into the understanding of life in its amplitude. It is, nonetheless, not a photographic representation but is something more than life. The novelist, therefore, is obliged to make a careful selection of the material and language in order to present his perception of life. Hence, the novelist has to evolve his own narrative strategies and artifices to present a segment of life in a way he desires. The material of the novel may be a fantasy, a realistic documentation, or an autobiographical revelation; but it is technique that makes it relevant to life and art.

Shashi Tharoor has three novels to his credit – *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), *Show Business* (1994) and *Riot* (2003). In those novels he has evolved his own modes of narrative technique in order to project the essentials of life of India. He works out wonders with his own kind of realism weaving a magic web. His realism reflects the postmodern political revolution. He suggests politics of cultural resistance and evokes academic interest. He aims at measuring up to the challenges of the perplexing present in his works. He has made a careful selection of the material and language in order to present the perception of life.

Shashi Tharoor's ideology consists of construction out of deconstruction. It consists of frequent visits to the land to reshape it with appreciation of the past and yet unable to provide the finality. Shashi Tharoor himself admits:

The issues that have made India and nearly unmade India are part of my being.... All my writings have demonstrated that there are a number of things about India that augur well for the future. But as Indian, I feel a responsibility to draw attention to those things that do not augur well. (Jha, 2006. 75)

The Indian English novel is the product of what one might term as the liberal bourgeois class. This class was primarily created as an outcome of the political, economic and cultural forces unleashed by British colonialism in India. This class was the first to enjoy the fruits of English education and the first to absorb the values and lessons of such an education. To begin with, the interest of this class was aligned with those of British colonialism and opposed to those of the erstwhile ruling classes composed of feudal elements.

Individualism, social and religious reform, thrift, respect for private property – these were some of the cherished values of the middle class which nurtured the novel. Indian English novel today is a cultural-political project that sees narration as a functional counterpart of nation, as well as national formation. The novel is a graphic chronicle of the varied vicissitudes of the people as they pass from economic, sociological, cultural and political subjugation of various hues and shades. It expresses most immediately and intimately the social awareness of society wherein it takes birth and wherein it evolves. The



contemporary Indian English literature makes use of mythology, folk-beliefs, fables, mythical history to present the present day predicament. Through this, the Indian writers give the clear idea of the variegated Indian socio-cultural complexities.

The postmodern Indian English novel brings out the artistic rendering of the sociological, cultural and even the political dimension of the life. Recent Indian English fiction has added theoretical consciousness and sophistication to the sociological, cultural and political concerns. These novels attempt to define new historical dialectics as well as historical realities and a sense of place. They have made an aggressive attempt to bring to the fore the rich-poor dichotomy. The rich and powerful were exhorted to share their power and the poor were dragged into the mire to struggle for their lives. Using revolutionary techniques, writers like Rushdie, Shashi Tharoor questioned the existing power structure which only knows the words like order. They obliged to the finer feelings of man as a citizen in the pre- and post-independence Indian scene at a particular phase of time when civic liberties and human rights received serious setback.

The postmodern Indian English novel is meta-fictional in nature. Their protagonists are self-conscious. These novelists deconstruct well-established notions of history, tradition, family and patriarchy. To expose this they have adopted a new technique for their fiction. The recent Indian English novelists choose narrative modes which enable them to negotiate the complex, composite identity of the nation as well as to counter the essentialist and West-oriented history of India constructed in Western discourse. The act of weaving such a narrative is an act imbued with political consciousness. Sometimes we cannot separate where the chronicle ends and the fictional narrative begins. Allegory, symbols, fantasy, magic realism, narrative fluctuating backwards and forward in time, compelling use of narrator, fluency in story-telling and the unveiling of layers and layers of meaning have all become mode of writing. Experimentation with the English language, the use of parody and sheer invention has resulted in the formation of new language rhythms, which increase the humour and multitudinousness of the new Indian novels in English. The narrative aims at encapsulating the essence of Indian reality through typical characters, situations, settings and dialogues.

Shashi Tharoor set the trend for an inhibited experimentation with narrative techniques and usage of the English language. He provided the genre of Indo-Anglian novels a new direction and renewed confidence. The complexity of his narrative technique has been praised in glowing terms. Instead of an omniscient author, the reader gets the illusions of reality, from a character within the framework of a novel.

Tharoor's novels –*The Great Indian Novel* and *Riot: A Novel* are complex in their plot and technique. He realized that the story of Indian subcontinent cannot be easily rendered. He recognizes the complex nature of Indian subcontinent and makes Indian characters function as centre of consciousness. He is, thus, able to authenticate their experiences. In his writing, there is emphasis on the social, political and historical realities of the subcontinent which is paralleled by an awareness of the world of magic and spirituality, which defied logical narrative.



Shashi Tharoor's artistic craftsmanship finds perfect expression through his style and technique that he has carved out splendidly in his novels. He cultivated a narrative technique of his own kind through constant experiments in his novels as it has been Tharoor's habit to write essays and papers on the important issues. The expression of the feelings and emotions of the protagonists by means of figurative language in all his three novels show his shrewdness in manipulation of English language. He is a conscious novelist among the modern novelists writing in English who knows how to tell the stories to fascinate the readers. In each of his novels, he has experimented with new forms. He not only tried to experiment with the tales he has told in his novels, but also with the manner of telling of these tales.

Shashi Tharoor is widely acknowledged as an experimenting novelist. In one of his article, Tharoor wrote:

The task of the writer is to find new way (and revive old ones) of expressing his culture, just as his society strives, through development, to find new ways of being and becoming. In turn, the challenge of finding these new ways obliges the novelist not just to find new stories, but new ways of telling it. For me as a writer, the way I tell the story is as important to me as the story itself. The manner in which the narrative unfolds is as integral to the novel as the story it tells, and as essential, I hope, to the experience of the reader. (Tharoor, Interview for the First City. Sept. 2001)

The different narrative strategies such as the first person, third person and omniscient narrator empower the novelist to work out the design of the novels. In *The Great Indian Novel*, Tharoor has taken the ancient epic as the basic framework and filled it with a contemporary cast of political characters for a serious and ironical reconsideration and representation of the recent Indian history. An invisible but omniscient, omnipresent and participating narrator in the first person tells the story following the epic device. The participation of the narrator in the events of the story has shaped its course. Sometimes the narrator Ved Vyas is too frank and unabashed while relating certain incidents in his life from which the material of the story springs. There is a mute scribe in the person of Ganapathi, who also is the narrator, who never makes any verbal contribution to the narrative except for a few peculiar gestures which the speaker easily comprehends. In this way the framework of oral narrative is established. The narrator uses the meta-fictionist's device of subversion to focus the history. He declares:

Sometime, Ganapathi, dreams enable you to see reality more cleverly. (Tharoor. The Great Indian Novel.383)

In the novel *Show Business*, narration is mix of first person narration, synopsis of Ashok Banjara's Hindi films, excerpts from Showbiz magazine, and accusatory monologues by the supporting cast. It fragments and rearranges the chronology of the rise, fall and rise again of Ashok Banjara in the film industry in a way that replicates the Hindi film world and brings out the curious parallels between India's unique film culture and the swarming, baffling and beguiling variety, including the vivacity and corruption, the serenity and chaos, the sophistication and naïve self-delusion of India itself.



Tharoor has told the story of the protagonist Ashok Banjara through reels that runs in Ashok's mind and the voice he hears. There are six sections in the book. In each sections of the book, there are three interlocuting narratives. The first is the first person narrative of Ashok Banjara himself. He recalls episodes from six different points of his life. The narrative begins with him, shooting his first film, and ends with him on his deathbed. There are six monologues of Ashok Banjara from different stages of his life. All the monologues begin with the sentence:

I can't believe I'm doing this. (Tharoor. Show Business.3)

Tharoor captures the attention of the readers in the narratives with this clinching statement, whose curiosity involves them to know what Ashok cannot believe.

The second narrative is the story of a movie Ashok is acting in at the time, along with other characters from the novel. In the sequential takes, there is the story of the movies in which Ashok is acting. Amongst the voices of various characters, Tharoor takes the reader to the film sets of Ashok and from these various points of view, the reader gets acknowledged to the character of Ashok. It is through these fragmented flash backs that the narrative tells us the story of Ashok Banjara. The third narrative is a series of monologues, addressed to him in hospital by the characters including the cinema villain - Pranay, his father -Kulbhushan Banjara, his brother - Ashwin and his wife - Maya. R.K. Narayan in *The Guide* (1958) discards the method of the straightforward narrative. He uses flashbacks and the montage technique so often applied in cinematography. Tharoor has also adopted the same technique in *Show Business*.

In *Riot*, Tharoor has used the most striking form of narration. He has used a vast range of styles to tell the story – through newspaper cutting, interviews, transcripts, scrapbook notes, letters, journals, poems, and even a birthday card. This has helped Tharoor to present and perceive a single event through various views. India as a nation comes alive through Priscilla, Rudyard Hart, Randolph Diggs, the New York journal reporter – all these Americans visiting India for different causes.

The novel revolves around Priscilla Hart, revealing through her eyes various problems that India confronts. Every character stands as an ideology articulating its views. The narration runs back and forth through time, between characters, with many differing points of view, all of them weaving together to form a novel. The novel can be read in any order. The reader can pick it up from any chapter, go back or forward to any other chapter and he will bring a different level of awareness to the story.

The abrupt opening and unconventional ending of the novel is one of the features of Indian fiction in English. Another initiative feature of Shashi Tharoor's narration is the striking initiation and the unconventional close of the novels. *The Great Indian Novel* begins with a clinching statement:

They tell me India is an underdeveloped country. (Tharoor. The Great Indian Novel.17)

In the same manner, *Show Business* begins with a clinching statement:



I can't believe I'm doing this. (Tharoor. Show Business.3)

A similar thing happens in the next novel *Riot* also. The novel opens with the news from the New York Journal on the murder of Priscilla Hart, an American volunteer of an NGO - HELP-US, in a riot during the procession carried out on Ram Shilapoojan day. The device of mystery involves the reader at first. He cannot prevent himself from going ahead to know what actually happened to her during the riot. His curiosity is increased by the fact that she was not a part of that riot.

Shashi Tharoor's novels have an unconventional conclusion. *The Great Indian Novel* does not have conventional conclusion. The narrator brings out the implied author's view that the only thing that it is certain is that there can be no certainties. On the last page of the novel, we find that the narrator is waking up from a dream:

I woke up, Ganapathi, to today's India. To our land of computers and corruption, of myths and politicians and box-wallahs with moulded plastic briefcases. To an India beset with uncertainties, muddling chaotically through to the twenty-first century. (Tharoor. The Great Indian Novel.418)

In the postmodern fiction, the narrator refuses to end the story and wishes to begin again because "stories never end, they just continue somewhere else." (*The Great Indian Novel*. 418) The narrator retells his story in the context of the epic and the history of India because the history of India cannot end. It has to be told again and again, each retelling opening out new possibilities of meaning.

In *Show Business*, the hero of the novel, Ashok Banjara, is lying in the hospital after serious accident during the shooting of the film *Kalki*. He is unable to move and speak. He can only hear and visualize the past. However, he does not accept it as his end:

But not yet. Someone will find out how to stop the pain, someone will find out who did it, someone will arrest the villain for the crime, someone will find the lyrics to the theme song, someone will gather the crowds for a joyous celebration, and then, only then, will it be, only then can it be, the end.(Tharoor. ShowBusiness.307)

Ashok does not accept his end. He waits on the death-bed hoping for his bright future in film industry. Thus, the novel does not have a conventional ending to the story by avoiding the death of Ashok. In this way, the ending is postponed indefinitely by the narrator.

In *Riot*, the voices come together to solve the mystery of Priscilla Hart's murder. There is an impressive twist at the end of the novel. However, no one - from the local politicians to civic and police authorities including a foreign correspondent -has been able to come to the truth. Here, Tharoor keeps the mystery of the murder unresolved. The novel ends with mere possibilities but the real end of the story is not achieved.

Myth strengthens the functionality of the fiction; history justifies the claim of the text on actuality. Myth gives new meaning to the contemporary events. Tharoor devises suitable narrative strategies to use myth to accomplish the task in his novels. It will be worthy to quote R.G. Joshi saying about myth and their cultural relevance:

The analysis has to disintegrate the myths and reconstruct in order to discover their meaning. But in countries like India where the cultural context of the myths has continued in spite of its having undergone many changes, the myths can be interpreted without the help of this method. The Indian myths have not lost their cultural relevance and even in the present century their influence is felt. (Joshi, 1987. 35)

Myths have always been a ready source of rich information for writers of literature. The novelists have used myths –both indigenous and from the old religious texts. Myths are regarded as store-house of ideas and concepts that human beings inherit unconsciously in the community life. Vanashree Tripathi, in her article *Polysemy at the Dead End*, says:

Myths can be profound and poetic sensing of the deepest hidden aspects of reality. Myth serves as a mediator between the known and the unknown, a non-dogmatic vision ever open to individual reinterpretation, yet a touchstone around which an entire culture may cohere; we cannot consider such interpretation right or wrong. (Tripathi, 1994. 117)

Shashi Tharoor has used myths in all his novels. In *The Great Indian Novel*, Shashi Tharoor has used the myth of *the Mahabharata* as his framework to portray India from the time of India's freedom struggle to Indira Gandhi's regime. The title of the novel *The Great Indian Novel* is the archetype of the epic *Mahabharata* as *the Mahabharata*, in a literal sense, means Great India. The form adopted by the author is a unique combination of dual literary traditions – the native and the Western. The author moves from one form to another with no inhibition. The Indian spiritual content is dressed in the garb of the Western concept of dramatic monologue. In blending the Indian and the Western literary sources and influences, Shashi Tharoor deliberately erases all boundaries of literary cartography and creates a delightful postcolonial parody.

Reviewing and re-writing the mythic structures and assumptions is, therefore, Tharoor's greatest contribution to the new discourse in Indian writing in English. In *The Great Indian Novel*, myth forms the background stage on which the drama of contemporary life, politics and culture is enacted. The mythical characters, used as representatives of the modern day politicians, help the novelist to present the reality of modern India. The apt use of imagery and symbols is used to provide the cynical and satirical tone to the novel.

In *Show Business*, Shashi Tharoor has replaced the myth of the epic with the contemporary myth presented in Bollywood Hindi cinema. In this novel, he has drawn the similarity between the illusory world of cinema and the real world in which we live. He has tried to convey the satirical and poignant view of modern life by drawing the parallel between the real world and reel world. In the novel, the Guru draws a comparison between *the Mahabharata* and the Hindi cinema:

Each character fulfils the role assigned to him in the film as each of us fulfils the role assigned to us by our destiny on this earth, our dharma. The Hindi film hero's dharma is to be a hero, the villain's is to be a villain. It is the same, after all in the Mahabharata, whose personages act out their roles without being able to deviate in the slightest from the script of destiny. (Tharoor. Show Business.215)

The novelist successfully portrays both the worlds of cinema and politics showing how success in both lies in the pittance. It has been realistically delineated through the story of Ashok Banjara. He becomes the hero of the Bollywood film industry despite his father's wish to enter him into politics. He succeeds in it and becomes the superstar. The film itself is a showy business, which works on illusion, the willing suspension of disbelief on the part of innocent cinemagoers. The simple cinemagoers never question the reality of the films and accept everything real. While Kulbhushan Banjara, Pranay, Ashwin and the other characters point out that reel India is far away from real India.

The title of the novel is in itself a metaphoric symbol. Tharoor has used new creative metaphor of cinema to explore the Indian condition because cinema represents the primary vehicle for the representation of the fictional experience in the country of widespread illiteracy like India. Show business symbolizes the theatre, films, television, and pop music as a profession or industry. The politics is also a business industry. Thus, the title is a metaphoric symbol for both cinema and politics.

In *Riot*, the myth of Ram Janmabhoomi issue has been used by Tharoor. Through one of the conversations between Lakshman and Priscilla Hart, the reader becomes acquainted with the issue. Lakshman is rational in his thought and he does not believe in the history of Ram Janmabhoomi and Babri Masjid. While there is no certainty about the exact birthplace of mythical Ram at Ayodhya, the extremist Hindus believe that there was temple of Ram at the disputed sight. They believe on the historical belief that Muslim ruler Babar demolished the temple of Ram and built the mosque at the same place which is known after his name. They want to rebuild the temple of Ram at the same place. They hate all the Muslims for no fault of theirs. This extremist mentality has endangered the life of whole Muslim community in India. While the Muslim historian Mohammed Sarwar brings out another history which is based on his scholarly study. In the resulting riot, both Hindus and Muslims are killed. Among them, Priscilla Hart is one who is neither Hindu nor Muslim.

Another myth used in the novel is again from Ramayana, the myth of Sita and her public ordeal by fire. Tharoor has explained the myth to highlight the plight of Indian women in all ages because of patriarchal social structure. Through this myth he exposes how even Ram, the God of Hindus subjected Sita, his wife, to suffering. He believed in the gossip in the kingdom about chastity of Sita after being taken in Ravana's captivity for long period. He subjected to her a public ordeal by fire to prove her chastity by walking through the flames unscathed. However, it was not the end of her suffering. After some days again Ram believed in the public opinion against the chastity of Sita.

The myth says that Sita ended her life by entering into the earth. Through this myth, Tharoor points out that the condition of women in India has not yet improved. Today also



women in India suffer for no fault of their own. They are given the second place, have to suffer a lot because of the male dominated society. It is brought into the notice of the reader through the stories of Sundari and Fatima Bi. The title of the novel is metaphoric. It stands for different kinds of riots resulting out of conflicts of various types. Though the novel deals with the riot between Hindu and Muslim occurred during Ram Shila pooja procession carried out by Hindus, it covers different conflicts and riots occurred in the past.

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Literary Texts On Screen: A Pedagogical Perspective

Sindhu J.

In this paper I seek to share my experiences in teaching three specific literary texts in world literatures in English, namely John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, Dee Brown's Native American history *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* and Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*. What I have to submit here is partly speculative and partly based on my classroom experience and is not intended to serve as a critical or pedagogical template for others involved in teaching these texts. At the outset, one of the initial debates with regard to the official prescription of these three specific texts had to do with the fact of their being somewhat lengthy, and therefore posing a challenge to students and teachers working within the imperatives of the semester scheme. A working solution was finally arrived at, with only Toni Morrison's novel being prescribed in its full form (since it does not lend itself to yielding an extract), a film version of Steinbeck's novel and three short extracts from Dee Brown's history. It was hoped that this 'paring down' of 'bulky' texts would facilitate students' learning, while not compromising on their exposure to different cultures. Also, the introduction of texts through film versions was seen as bringing some variety to a predominantly reading course.

Since I have realised that it is not often students are able to place a text accurately in its historical context, I found it useful to handle the texts chronologically. To begin with, the class (a heterogeneous group) viewed the 1950 John Ford film production of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*. This particular film version was selected because it carefully avoided any representation of the then highly-controversial ending of Steinbeck's novel. At the time of its release, the novel had been burned, banned on obscenity charges and finally published in an expurgated form. At this point it is important to make clear that the focus was on the subject matter of the text and not particularly on its form. The visual medium of the film text was supposed to help students relate to the happenings in the prescribed text, without having inevitable recourse to plot summaries so readily available on the net, and to make the prospect of having to read the novel less daunting. After the screening, in classroom discussion I soon found that the poor quality of the old black and white film, together with its unknown actors, their Oklahoman accent, their use of slang and the unfamiliar theme made it difficult of grasp, and it had not served its purpose as well as expected. The question of fidelity (the extent to which a film based on a literary text reflects its content and spirit), or the issue of adaptation, always problematic in film theory and criticism, did not arise for two reasons: firstly, because the class was on Steinbeck's novel and not on a comparative study of genres; secondly, because it was evident that the film was, for the reasons mentioned earlier, even more perplexing than the written text. Moreover, the student audience concerned had had no opportunities for training in film studies as such, which would equip them to look for specificities in a film text, or assess its narrative against the written text through an inter-textual approach.

Since I focused on the larger socio-economic-political contexts addressed in the novel more than on the individual story of its protagonist, a parallel set of visual texts presented themselves as a possible avenue to a better understanding. For the space of two



classes, I moved away from the discussion on Steinbeck and instead deviated to talking to them of three short investigative documentary films made by Kavitha Bahl and Nandan Saxena of Top Quark Film Productions. The first of these, (premiered in U.K. in 2011), titled *Cotton for my Shroud*, investigates the ongoing farmer suicide crisis in India (with focus on the farmers of Vidarbha who were pressured into growing BT cotton, as against native varieties) and the culpability of the multinational Monsanto and the Indian government. It examines the strategy of multinational corporations to control seed supply, and corrupt politicians' willingness to play an unsavoury role in this second colonisation of India. The second film, titled *Dammed*, documents the miserable plight and disenfranchisement of those villagers who have been displaced, and whose homes have been submerged by the Narmada Dam project, and their futile struggles for land compensation with an indifferent and corrupt government. The third film, titled *Candles in the Wind* (2013), records the pathetic living conditions of the widows of the wheat-growing belt in Northwest India, whose men have either committed suicide or else succumbed to cancer from overexposure to global brands of pesticides and consumption of genetically modified grain crops.

The failing battles of survival of these incredibly courageous women, who daily face sexual harassment from male relatives, neighbours and moneylenders, malnutrition, debt, disease and impending starvation death, are portrayed with absolutely no attempt at sentimentalization. Since these films are factual and are at the centre of ongoing debates with regard to the direction the Indian agrarian economy is taking, they struck a chord with my student-audience, a significant percentage of which is from a rural background, with an excellent grounding in, and working knowledge of, agricultural practices. Already aware of the impact of FDI on the Indian economy, they found it easier to see a parallel between what is happening in our country today and the corporatisation of 1940s American agriculture that Steinbeck was depicting in his novel and thus relate better to the content of the text. In this case, the visual medium presents the possibility of bringing students back to a text that was otherwise relatively difficult to assimilate. I have not yet had the opportunity to screen these documentaries for my students, but hope to do so in the future.

Dee Brown's historical-memoir *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, which counters white constructions of Native American colonial history in the period 1860-1890, presented a different challenge in the classroom. The Native American cultural world was naturally unfamiliar to students, and the importance of Brown's task in deconstructing the Eurocentric horizons of mainstream histories of the American Wild West seemed pointless and irrelevant to present-day students, who belong to a generation that is far removed in time and space from the age of colonialism. In order to address this impasse, I had recourse to an apparently unrelated discussion, of a hugely popular comic film titled *The Gods Must be Crazy*, written and directed in 1980 by Jamie Uys. Financed only from local sources, it is the most commercially successful release in the history of South Africa's film industry. Originally released in 1980, the film is the first in *The Gods Must be Crazy* series. Set in Botswana, it tells the story of Xi, a native of the Kalahari Desert (played by a Namibian farmer) whose tribe has no knowledge of the world beyond. The film is followed by one official sequel and three unofficial sequels produced in Hong Kong. While the film does not, strictly speaking, reflect the content of Dee Brown's work, a particular scene of



violent colonial encounter between the natives and the white conquistador, which I discussed with the students, brought home to them the parallels of genocide, violence and bloodshed in Native American histories, which have been so easily brushed aside by white historians. The immediacy of the visual impact of this scene, I argue, will be helpful to students to grasp the gravity of Brown's avowed purpose in the written text. As the film is easily available on YouTube and other media spaces, many of my students were familiar with it and a discussion became possible in the classroom.

The third text I have had to deal with in the M.A. classroom is the 1987 novel *Beloved* by African American woman writer Toni Morrison. Although students are not unfamiliar with the basics of African American slave history, the complex postmodern structure of *Beloved's* narrative poses a challenge to most, while some (both male and female) find the female-specific experiences of violence in the context of slavery a socially and culturally un-negotiable terrain altogether. I would like to submit that some of these issues in relation to understanding the text can perhaps be addressed if students access the film version of *Beloved*. Categorized variously as belonging to the genres of horror, supernatural fantasy and melodrama, it was considered a box-office bomb at the time of its release and is at present unlikely to attract students in conventional academic setups for its cast of actors. At risk of being rather subjective, I would venture to offer the view that the 1998 film version of this novel, starring a young Oprah Winfrey, is one of the most sensitive creative attempts ever made to render/translate a narrative of complex, highly problematic woman-centric experiences. Without falling prey to the temptation of sensationalizing many a scene which has the nude female body at its centre, the film does not flinch from graphic details, which reflect some of the horrors of slave experience. Three particular scenes come to mind: one, in which the nine-months-pregnant slave Sethe is brutally flogged and raped for attempting an escape; second, the terrible scene in which a panic-stricken Sethe attempts to kill her four children rather than see them, as she imagines will happen, dragged off to slavery; the third, in which a naked and hugely-pregnant Beloved is seen hungrily trailing after her mother Sethe, with a rag doll in one hand.

The film foregrounds the mother-daughter bond in such a way as to highlight what has been recognised as one of the most searing tragedies of slavery, the forcible and often permanent separation of children from their mothers (Coon 1998 n.pag.). Sethe's murder of her child is depicted in the written text as an act of fierce maternal love and protectiveness, which is easily and often misunderstood by students / readers as a strange and distorted portrayal of motherhood. Given its sexual explicitness and its deliberately subverted construction of motherhood, *Beloved* is not a text (film or book) that can be easily assimilated by those who have been nurtured on the cultural stereotypes of motherhood as consisting solely of maternal protection, woman's glory and even linking it to female identity. A common misapprehension is that such unimaginable horrors can happen only in the literary-imaginative realm, but rarely in real life. The terrifying immediacy of the film's visuality may be unforgettable for some viewers, but serves to further inhibit those sensibilities which have been shaped by an entrenched patriarchal fabric, which tacitly legitimizes male control of women through violence. There is also a tendency to shy away from the stark and raw power of the written text, which should not



be ascribed to students' general reluctance to read their prescribed syllabus. This avoidance of uncomfortable truths is, in my view, symptomatic of the larger societal picture which we inhabit at present. In the context of increasing gender violence and crimes against women which target the female body specifically, a commonly-found hypocrisy is that while it is thought embarrassing and somehow inappropriate to speak of such things in an academic situation such as a "literature class", an equally common indifference and apathy are displayed by the general public to the daily news reports, which often bear a startling resemblance to the experiences depicted in *Beloved*.

The inferences I am able to draw are far from being conclusive; rather, they seem to point towards two aspects of this teaching-learning experience. Firstly, that film-screening and discussion thereof can be a useful method of initiating student-engagement with culturally unfamiliar texts, but the success/failure of this method depends on many variables which are never constant. Both narrative and genre, as Cartmell and Whelehan assert, can be significant points of contact between literature and film (8). A near-ideal situation would be one in which an intersection is found between native forms and sources of students' knowledge and a film text which "increase(s) the cultural capital of a literary text" (Cartmell and Whelehan 6), which can then be explored in the classroom. Secondly, the enormous variety and richness of the world of films can be exploited constructively to make a written text, perceived as difficult or inaccessible, come alive in the classroom and take on additional dimensions, thereby sustaining the interest of students. As a teacher of literatures in English and gender studies, I hope to be able to facilitate the discussion of films like these in an open atmosphere of proactive awareness and interaction.

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Metaphysics and Indian Scriptures in Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra* A. Venkata Ramana & T. Narayana

Indian Scriptures are India's colossal and unprecedented wealth. The Itihasas (*itihasa* in Sanskrit is for "history" or "thus verily happened") are narrative traditions composed during the period 500 BC to 1000 AD. They tell the stories of divine incarnations along with much philosophical and ethical reflection. These reflect popular, non-Brahmanic interests and the rise of theistic Hinduism focused on Shiva, Vishnu and Shakti. The Itihasas include the Mahabharata and the Ramayana epics, two of the most beloved Hindu texts, as well as the Puranas, which with their grandiloquence, capture the minds of anyone with a sense of self awakening.

The Mahabharata contains philosophical and devotional aspects, such as a discussion of the four "goals of life". They are generally considered to be four purusharthas; 'dharma' (righteousness), 'artha' (prosperity), 'kaama' (lust) and 'moksha' (liberation from the material world). "It is the longest known epic poem and has been described as "the longest poem ever written" and is roughly ten times the length of the Iliad and the Odyssey combined, or about four times the length of the Ramayana."(2) *The Mahabharata* is most well known for the *Bhagavad Gita*, the single most popular Hindu text. *The Bhagavad Gita* ("The Song of the Lord") tells the story of King Pandu and his five sons and features a memorable appearance by Krishna, the popular incarnation of Vishnu. *The Ramayana* ("March of Rama") tells the story of Rama, the seventh incarnation of the deity Vishnu. It is written by Valmiki in high Sanskrit in the form of rhyming couplets, and contains seven sections. *The Puranas* are collections of mythology, hymns, ancient history, rules of life, rituals, instructions and knowledge, cosmology. Most attained their final written form around 500 AD. Today they are among the most commonly used scriptural texts. There are 18 Puranas, with six each dedicated to Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In all the Puranas the goddess Lakshmi is given a prominent place without any sectarian dispute.

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that studies the ultimate structure and constitution of reality—i.e., of that which is real, insofar as it is real. The term, which means literally "what comes after physics," was used to refer to the treatise by Aristotle on what he himself called "first philosophy." In the history of Western philosophy, metaphysics has been understood in various ways: as an inquiry into what basic categories of things there are (e.g., the mental and the physical); as the study of reality, as opposed to appearance; as the study of the world as a whole; and as a theory of first principles. Some basic problems in the history of metaphysics are the problem of Universals—i.e., the problem of the nature of universals and their relation to so-called particulars; the existence of God; the mind-body problem; and the problem of the nature of material, or external, objects.

Gita Mehta meticulously weaves the stories by including the true essence of the Itihasas and the Metaphysics. In every story, she relates these concepts and a deep sense of admiration for our great sages and for their vision is quite inspiring. She tries to connect



the lives of the characters to these and clarifies the doubts the reader get while reading the book. Though the reader has no intention of learning these complex concepts, the themes inspire them and finally understand what the writer tries to showcase. She begins with the four Dharmas of human life and concludes by clarifying the complex concepts and the purpose of the Itihasas and Metaphysics.

The writer begins with one of the four goals of a man's life, the 'moksha' which can be attained during the fourth ashrama of life. The writer's goal is to evince the Indian philosophy of thought that a man can obtain 'moksha' during any of the four stages of life. The narrator of the stories is a bureaucrat, retires from his post and decides to renounce the world without knowing what 'renunciation' is meant. In 'The Monk's Story', the young Jain monk who was in the second stage (grihastha) of his life renounces the world to attain the fourth goal of life (moksha). The four stages of life are ideally specified by our 'Sastras' as they fulfil the 'dharmas' of human body. After taking birth, nobody can predict death which is the most complex and unattainable task of a human being. So, the short stay of his life should have some purpose. Man must have learnt the secrets of human heart from the nature itself. The main purpose of a man's life is to go according to nature's law. The nature's law is doing its dharma without disturbing the remaining creation as depicted in our scriptures-an incredible thought indeed! But who ever follow the four dharmas without interfering with others life can be liberated from the fetters of life. As it is said, man's life must be like a drop on the lotus leaf without getting attached to anything.

The most central concept of Hindu metaphysics is Brahman, or Absolute Reality. Brahman lays at the foundation of all existence. All other levels of reality have come from it and will eventually collapse back within it. Now the primary purpose of human existence is to realize the identity of the self, or truest, spiritual essence (called Atman) with Brahman. This "soul," we might call it, although that is not the best term because of its Western and Christian connotations is stuck, we might say in a level of reality called "Maya" (or illusion). Our perception of existence is illusory, because we fail to understand and experience the oneness of Self Atman) with Brahman (Ultimate Reality). Instead of oneness, we experience separateness, age, sickness, death, and the ephemeral quality of things.

The Jain Monk explains to the bureaucrat, the Jain's philosophy and Mahavira's longing for permanent happiness.

Unlike your busy pantheon of Hindu gods, we Jain monks follow the footsteps of a man. A great prince it is true, but still only a man who found all his wealth, power, beauty gave him no more than transitory pleasure and who yearned for a pleasure that could be sustained. Wrapped in the luxuries of a great court by day, a beautiful wife by night, Mahavira longed for the freedom to find this state of bliss. (ARS p-20)

The writer's intention is to emphasize on man's quest for real happiness and his strong will power to find the path that leads him to god. The Jain monk's life is akin to that of Mahavira's life. Jain monk is the son of a diamond merchant and Mahavira is a prince. Both of them renounce the world after getting married and the renunciation ceremonies are analogous to each other. They are in search of the bliss that enlightens them. Jains



believe in the doctrine of following a man who attains salvation. But Hindus believe in the entire creation from the planet to a plant.

Man is a combination of both strengths and weaknesses i.e. skills. Hindus attribute each skill to a particular god and name them accordingly in order to understand the complex ideas in a better way. Unless we read the Hindu scriptures and comprehend the appropriateness of the concepts, one cannot assimilate the subtlety of life's principle. The same concept is taught by the other Indian religions. They attribute everything to a single person or god. Gita Mehta aims to highlight the similarities of Indian religious goals of uniting the soul with the almighty.

“Thus, while most Hindu religions and spiritual groups maintain a similar metaphysical understanding of reality, the character of Brahman, as identified with one of the traditional gods of the Hindu pantheon, informs different understandings of life, reality, and how one is to live a spiritual life and realize the identity of Atman and Brahman.” Man is busy with the material world which takes him away from the eternal world and permanent bliss. The writer's objective is to remind us of the single goal of attaining moksha.

The writer relates the river's origin and its importance as the story is set at the banks of the Narmada River. The origin of the Narmada River is clearly explained and a deep sense of devotion is triggered. The Puranas mention the story of the birth of all the rivers. The five holy rivers of India are Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Cauvery, and Narmada. Narmada is the holiest of all. In mythological times, Shiva the lord of destruction and creation sat meditating. His intense concentration made him break into sweat. As it rolled down, it got collected in a tank. Eventually, this overflowed as the Narmada or Shankari, Shankar's daughter. Every pebble on the riverbed is supposed to take the shape of a Shivalinga. It is said that a single glance at the river cleanses our sins. Interestingly, a legend goes that when Ganga feels polluted, she comes in the form of a black cow to have a purifying bath in the Narmada! (9) The river's sanctity washes away all the sins by absorbing them into her. Most of the world religions insist on pilgrimage at least once in the lifetime.

Gita Mehta connects the story while detailing the importance of pilgrimage. The purpose of pilgrimage is endurance as it is a difficult affair that takes nearly two years to complete. The pilgrims through the skill of endurance generate heat the tapas that help them link themselves to the energy of the universe. The Narmada River is thought to link mankind to the energy of Shiva. The writer illustrates the concept of the unity of soul with the supreme power and the title *A River Sutra* is justified. The reader can interpret the title as the river connects the stories of the characters or the characters are connected to the river or the river connects the characters to god.

The villages surrounding the river have their own stories. The Vano village tribe, who held the Aryan invasion at bay for centuries, believes in a goddess, a stone image with half body of a woman symbolizing fertility and the torso is of a coiled snake. They assume that they ruled a great snake kingdom until they were defeated by the gods of the Aryans



and were saved by the Narmada River. They conferred on the river the gift of curing the effects of snake bite.

According to a Puranic story, the 60 million Gandharvas, defeated the Nagas and took over their kingdom and treasures. The Nagas went to Vishnu for help. He asked them to get Purukutsa's help. They sent Narmada their sister, to ask him to help. He agreed and she led him into the nether world of the Nagas. Empowered by Vishnu, Purukutsa fought against the Gandharvas, ultimately defeating them. The Nagas then declared that whoever remembers this story of Narmada leading Purukutsa, would not be affected by the venom of snakes. Narmada marries Purukutsa. Those whoever takes a dip and recites the sloka will not be effected by the venom of snake. The sloka states:

Narmadaayai Namah Praatarnamaadaayai Namo Namostu Narmadey tubhyam Traahimaam vishasarpatah.

(Devi Narmada! My salutations to thee day or night, kindly safeguard me from the fear of serpents or their poisonous bites!)

Another belief of the Vano villagers is, their goddess has the power to cure madness and liberate those who are possessed. Gita Mehta links this belief with 'The Executive's Story' in which the protagonist suffers from a kind of psychic disorder. He is brought to the Vano village on the advice of a priest. Here in this story, the writer deals with the third goal of life, one of the four dharmas of the body. For any normal person the function of the body is perfect if the desire is fulfilled. If we ignore or neglect it, it revolts against the entire system. The situation of the young executive is also the same. The body loses its control and his actions become abnormal. The Narmada River and the village goddess rescue him. He is taken to Vano village and the idol of the village goddess is taken to the river banks in procession. The mud idol of the goddess is immersed in the river by him and he is cured.

'The Ramayana' depicts the duties of relationships, portraying ideal characters like the ideal father, the ideal servant, the ideal brother, the ideal wife, and the ideal king. It presents the teachings of ancient Hindu sages (Vedas) in narrative allegory, interspersing philosophical and devotional elements. The characters Rama, Sita, Lakshman, Bharata, Hanuman, and Ravana are all fundamental to the cultural consciousness of India."(7) Both the epics 'The Ramayana' and 'The Mahabharata' are like body and soul of India and mirror-ises the Indian concept of life in which an individual can view his image. In our epics both virtue and vice and their consequences are clearly explained. Gita Mehta perhaps portrays the characters in a way to present the idealness that we find in our epics. The reader could find a perfect teacher, disciple, devotee, parent, lover and more importantly a complete man.

'The Teacher's Story' symbolizes a perfect teacher Master Mohan and a perfect devotee Imrat a blind boy. Master Mohan takes the responsibility of teaching Imrat the songs of great sages in order to fulfill Imrat's wish to sing before Amir Rumi's tomb. But their effort ends in a pathetic note as Master Mohan's wife makes them fall victims of her greed. A rich man who is cruel and jealous of Imrat offers a bribe of five thousand rupees to Master Mohan's wife. In spite of Master's unwillingness, she takes Imrat to the rich man. He kills him in the presence of Master Mohan by slitting his throat. Master Mohan

feels guilty of Imrat's sad plight throws himself under a running train after leaving the recorded songs of Imrat with Tariq Mia, a wise Sufi Scholar. Throughout the story he clarifies the doubts of the bureaucrat and guides him.

In 'The Courtesan's Story' Rahul Singh is portrayed as a true lover. Though the story of the bandit is pathetic, it reveals the truthfulness, innocence, bravery and sincerity. Rahul Singh abducts the courtesan's daughter because he feels that she was her soul mate for many births. So, he does not like to touch her without her consent. She gets attracted towards him by understanding his good nature. The courtesan and her daughter stand for human helplessness and failure. Rahul Singh expresses his true love by saying that,

Don't you know you are mine? You have been mine in many lifetimes but each time I lost you. This time I have unsheathed my dagger before Fate. I will not let you go. (ARS p-184)

Though he has no intention to kill anyone, the society has made him a murderer. The courtesan's daughter describes him as a strange man so generous and yet always hesitant to ask anything of others.

'The Musician's Story' deals with an ideal teacher, father, mother and a daughter. The musician takes his daughter to the nearby woods and tries to teach her how to perceive music from nature. His daughter says that he is a genius and can find beauty in ugliness. He explains his daughter how the birds respond to the beauty of nature and the origin of the seven notes of music. As a teacher, he completes the responsibility in making his daughter mastering the art of music. Until the young man comes to him to learn music, his first and the last student is his daughter. The musician tells him that he did not accept anyone as pupil except his daughter. But he urges the musician to accept him as his disciple. He accepts the young man on the condition of marrying his daughter. He agrees to marry her without being aware of her deprivation. When he comes to know about her physical deformity, he rejects her. His rejection makes her completely depressed and cannot concentrate on music. The disciple's character stands for true student in accepting her without knowing about her and ignorance in rejecting her as he fails to find beauty in ugliness.

Her father, being ideal, tunes up her mind to dedicate herself to lord Siva. She being a true daughter understands her father's vision seeks refuge of the river to wash away her obsessed mind. The reader can trace a true mother's agony when her mother speaks less and always finds a groom in every boy whomever she comes across. Geeta Mehta portrays the characters that are ideal and true in every sense.

In 'The Minstrel's Story', Nagababa's character is portrayed ideal and stands as an icon for a complete man who finally refines himself by undergoing all the hardships of monkhood and returns to normal life after understanding the true essence of life. Gita Mehta succeeds in creating such characters to match with the characters in our epics which are the icons of man's great intellect and Indian's keen sense of spirituality. The character of Nagababa teaches us how to reach the highest state of mind which leads to salvation. Our Itihasas direct us towards 'moksha'. Every individual has to experience the karmas of



life. Nagababa stands as an example. In search of truth, he follows his Guru. His master teaches him how to overcome human limitations. He teaches him how to look for plants, roots and berries to suppress his hunger, and learns to survive without water and also the yogic exercises to slow down the metabolism in order to endure the extremes of heat and cold are truly great efforts to understand the metaphysics underlying the human beings existence.

If we try to grasp the idea of metaphysics deeply, one may have to consider the basic questions of life. The questions who am I? , what do I do? , where do I go? , connect man, mind and the universe. For ages man's quest for answering these questions is so great and Indian philosophy of thought helps in understanding these intricate questions. Our Philosophy teaches us that one could find God and the ultimate truth within the centre of the human mind. The writer's sole purpose is to draw the attention of the readers to assimilate Indian ideology that opened the doors to connect man, mind and the universe.

The way Nagababa tries to find a way to understand the complex theories that helped him to realize that man has to travel through eighty-four thousand births in order to become a man and then only he could re-enter the world. The concluding lines of the book can be interpreted as, the clay lamps suggest the ephemeral nature of man's existence and the ocean is linked to eternity. The clay lamps may get melted at any point of time and their remains can never be traced. Similarly, the human body is buried in the mud and the soul has to get unite with the Almighty. The work of the creator is interminable and the process continues.

At the bend of the river the clay lamps were still flickering as the current carried them toward the ocean. (ARS-p282)

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A Shift from Learner Centered Education to Teacher Centered Education

N. Aravinda

Introduction

In a learner centered education the focus is on the needs and interests of the students. Learner centered education is the perspective which focuses on the learners' experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs. It creates a learning environment conducive to learning and promotes the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners.

Learner centered education is defined in various ways. LCE is defined by McCombs and Whisler (1997) as: "The perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners.) This dual focus, then, informs and drives educational decision-making (p.9).

Gibbs (1992) states that LCE, "gives students greater autonomy and control over choice of subject matter, learning methods and pace of study"(p. 23). This view highlighted three core characteristics of LCE by promoting the idea that students should have more input into: i) what is learned, ii) how it is learned, and iii) when it is learned.

Characteristics of learner centered education

Pine and Boy (1977) identified the following characteristics of LCE:

- a) **Respect for Students:** In LCE, the teacher respects learner's individuality, complexity, uniqueness, capacity for making choices, right to govern their own life and select their own values and idiosyncratic potentials. Respect for the learner is based upon the teacher's recognition of the dignity of the learner. It is easier for the teacher who has respect for his/her own intrinsic value to deeply respect students. And because of the reciprocity of the teacher-student relationship, if the teacher values the students, a deeper appreciation of intrinsic self-worth evolves in the students.
- b) **Acceptance of Students:** In LCE, the teacher accepts the student as he/she is. Accepting the student gives him/her the opportunity to express his/her meanings without ridicule, attack or pressure of memorization. It allows him/her to see things the way he/she does. Accepting the student is offering unconditional positive regard for him/her. The teacher neither approves nor disapproves of feelings that are expressed. There are no reservations, conditions, evaluations or judgments placed on



the student's feelings. Acceptance does not depend upon the students acting or taking a certain way, his/her socioeconomic background, religion or IQ.

- c) c. **Effective Communication in the Classroom:** LCE fosters effective communication in the classroom. Effective communication occurs when the teacher receives what his/her students want to communicate. Communication between teacher and students is expressed through affective, cognitive, verbal and nonverbal means. Effective teaching requires open communication, and this is encouraged by a non-threatening atmosphere that fosters teacher and student resonance to each others' existence. To be resonant to another, a teacher must be reasonably free from the influence of his/her own needs and anxieties, which distort perceptions.
- d) **The Needs, Problems and Feelings of Students:** In LCE, the teacher addresses the needs, problems and feelings of students. The more the teacher focuses on the needs, problems and feelings of the students, the more he/she emphasizes the existential character of learning. Focusing on the individual frame of reference enables students to become more aware of their internal resources and helps them gain an understanding of the reality of self in the school and home as well as the world. In this kind of atmosphere the students begin to feel that real learning comes from within their self.
- e. **Permissiveness:** LCE is permissive, that is here the students feel free to behave in their own way. Students can explore their capacity for self-directive growth when they experience permissiveness. A permissive atmosphere requires emotional security and self-acceptance on part of the teacher. The teacher will be tolerant of the differing of the individual students.

Benefits of learner centered education

1. increased motivation for learning
2. Promotes peer communication
3. Reduces disruptive behavior
4. Builds student-teacher relationships
5. Promotes discovery/active learning
6. Responsibility for one's own learning Strong research evidence exists to support the implementation of learner-centered approaches instead of instructor-centered approaches.

In a teacher centered classroom, the teacher plays a dominant role giving the information to the learners and the learners passively receive it. This type of teaching method hurdles the students to learn on their own. The teacher transmits knowledge to the students in a teacher centered classroom. Thus the teacher is the transmitter and the leaner is the receiver.

Learner-centered approach grew out of dissatisfaction with the traditional system, where the learners were mere receptacles. The educational philosophies of Dewey, Freire, Illich which emphasized the importance of the role and participation of the learner in the educational process.



Many educational theorists have advocated it and used in many ways. Learner centered is the perspective which focuses on the learners' experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs. It creates a learning environment conducive to learning and promotes the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners (McCombs & Whisler, 1997, p. 9).

According to Dewey, traditional education aimed mainly at transmitting societal and cultural values, attitudes and ideas less for use in the here and now and more for utilization in the unpredictable future.

Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator used the 'narration analogy' and 'banking Analogy' to describe the educational system of the day. In narration education, the teachers are the narrating objects and the students are merely patient listening objects. Narration leads the students to memorize the content filled by the teacher. This concept saw the students as passive recipients of knowledge by the knowledgeable. In the process these contents become "lifeless and petrified."

Illich is of the view that "education, instead of being an exciting and challenging undertaking, has been heavily tainted and continues to be tainted. The result is that the wonder, adventure and delight in learning is lost"

A learner-centered style of instruction as envisioned by Illich would afford opportunities and procedures that enabled learners to pursue freely. The three functions of the reconstructed learner-oriented system proposed by Illich are:

- i. To provide all who want to learn with access to available resources at any time in their lives.
- ii. To empower all who want to show what they know to find those who want to earn from them.
- iii. To furnish all who want to present an issue to the public with an opportunity to make their challenge known.

Illich suggests the creation of "learning webs" which would provide instructional resources that would be available to each potential learner on a voluntary basis. It would be quite different to the funnel model of traditional schooling where information and beliefs are poured into learners perceived as empty vessels devoid of ideas and information.

- i. Reference Services - to provide information on facilities and processes used for formal learning.
- ii. Skill Exchanges – to serve as clearing house for share and learning a skill.
- iii. Peer Matching – to link people according to mutual interests.
- iv. Reference Services to Educators-at-large – Who are part- time 'teachers' who happen to have the expertise needed by the learner to solve this particular problem.

(Illich, 1975: 78)



Illich's humanizing and liberating education system thus replaces the traditional system of education, forming a networking system of learning experiences. The learner exercises maximal control over his/her own learning in this decentralised system, not only what to learn, but also, when, where and how much. Consider the education system a viable alternative to the present system; Illich encompasses the use of modern technology.

The basic tenets behind Illich's philosophy are:

- i. Learning is a part of living – it cannot be confined artificially within the four walls of a classroom.
- ii. The learner knows what he or she wants to learn.
- iii. The learner should have the right of access to whatever researcher might be required in order to pursue learning – including the right teacher.
(Shyamala Kumaradas, M.Phil.Dissertation, Unpublished)

In learner-centered education, learning emerges from the learners' processing of their direct experiences. The notice the following issues can be in a learner-centered teaching and come to a conclusion that learner-centered education is a better alternative to teacher-dominated education.

1. Learners' educational needs would differ.
2. Learners' pace of learning differs from one learning to the other.
3. The level of linguistic proficiency would differ.
4. The learner expectations are unique to each learner.

In the table given below, the characteristics of teacher dominated teaching and learner centered teaching may be summed up:

Teacher-Dominated Teaching	Learner-Centered Teaching
Separate subject matter	Integrated subject matter
Teacher as a distributor of knowledge	Teacher as a guide to educational experience
Passive pupil role	Active pupil role
Pupils have no say in curriculum Planning	Pupils participate in curriculum planning
Accent on rote memory	Learning by discovery techniques
External rewards used, e.g. Grades and punishments (extrinsic motivation)	External rewards and punishments not necessary (intrinsic motivation)
Concerned with academic standards	Not too concerned with conventional academic standards
Regular testing	Little testing
Accent on competition	Accent on group work
Teaching confined to classroom (text based / content based)	Teaching not confined to the classroom
Little emphasis on creative expression	Emphasis on creative expression

(Ad. from Bharatha Lakshmi, Ph.D. Dissertation)



Learner-centered teaching focuses attention squarely on learning: **what** the student is learning, **how** the student is learning, the conditions under which the student is learning, whether the student is **applying** the learning, and how **current learning** positions the student for **future learning**.

- When teaching is learner-centered, the action focuses on what the students (not the teachers) are doing....This learner-centered orientation accepts, cultivates, and builds on the ultimate responsibility that students have for their own learning.
- When teaching is learner-centered, content is used, not covered.
- Course content / curriculum is not the end; it is the means to the end.
- Don't assume that because teachers have taught, that students have learned.
- This is not only about how teachers need to become learner-centered teachers, but also teaching the students to become learner-centered learners.

The paradigm shift to learner-centered teaching can be summed up with the following seven principles, as discussed in *Learner-Centered Teaching* by Maryellen Weimer:

Principle 1: Teachers Do Learning Tasks Less , Learners do more of.

- Organizing the content
- Generating the examples
- Asking the questions
- Answering the questions
- Summarizing the discussion
- Solving problems

Principle 2: Teachers Do Less Telling; Students Do More Discovering.

This is “messier,” in that classrooms may be “louder,” it may take longer for students to “get” concepts, and the teacher learns new teaching methods. Students progressively take more responsibility for their learning through discovering, and “uncovering” what they need to know.

Principle 3: Teachers Do More Design Work (of activities and learning experiences)

Effective assignments and activities, which are designed to help students:

- Increase learning skills (learning “how to” learn)
- Motivate student involvement and participation
- Discover work that is related to the discipline/real world
- Develop content knowledge, learning skills, and awareness

Principle 4: Faculty Do More Modeling

Demonstrate for students how an expert approaches a learning task, and how you problem solve.

Principle 5: Faculty Do More to Get Students Learning from and with Each Other

Use collaborative activities and cooperative groups for learning.

Principle 6: Faculty Work to Create Climates for Learning



Create learning environments conducive to students taking responsibility for their own learning.

Principle 7: Faculty Do More with Feedback

Feedback is not just about grades, but also informal and helps students learn from mistakes. are useful for different purposes in teaching, but some activities can be used for more than one purpose. More complex activities and or combinations of activities will take longer than the minimum suggested time. Keep in mind that the activities can be modified, combined with other activities, and /or tailored to meet your specific goals. Make sure that the activity has a purpose directly tied to the content being taught. Design the activities for the mastery of the students.

How to Make a Learner Centered Class

It is a challenge in front of the education managers and teachers to make the classrooms learner-centered under assorted curricular frameworks. Weimer (2002) described five learner centered practice areas that need to change to achieve learner-centered teaching:

- a) the function of content includes building a strong knowledge foundation and to develop learning skills and learner self-awareness
- b) the role of the instructor the responsibility for learning, should focus on student learning. The roles are facilitative rather than didactic.
- c) The responsibility for learning shifts from the instructor to the students. The instructor will create learning environments that motivate students to accept responsibility for learning.
- d) The processes and purposes of assessment shift from only assigning grades to include constructive feedback and to assist with improvement. Learner-centered teaching will use assessment as a part of the learning process.
- e) The balance of power shifts so that the instructor shares some decisions about the course with the students such that the instructor and the students will collaborate on course policies and procedures.

Henson (2009) suggests several dispositions important for LCE:

1. education should be experience-based,
2. each individual learner's own unique qualities and dispositions should be considered when planning experiences,
3. the learner's perceptions should shape the curriculum,
4. learner's curiosity should be fed and nurtured,
5. learning is best when it involves the emotions, and
6. the learning environment should be free from fear.



Various kinds of measures can be taken to make a class learner-centered. Here I put forward some techniques:

1. **Brainstorming:** Before initiating a lesson, the teacher may ask the students to brainstorm for a few minutes on the general aspects of the topic. It will make the students aware of the problem and orient them to what is going to be discussed.
2. **Pairwork /groupwork:** The teacher may divide the whole class into several groups consisting of two to five members and involve them in tasks which they can work on collaboratively.
3. **Project:** Where possible, the teacher may involve the students in relevant projects, in which they will explore on a problem or phenomenon individually or in group and come out with new findings or feasible recommendations.
4. **Presentation:** The teacher may ask the students to present on what they have learnt from time to time, giving them a scope of reassessing their learning and further improvement.
5. **Exhibition/exposition:** The teacher may organize semester-wise exhibition/exposition, where the students will display their learning outcomes in a concrete way. From this they will be aware of the practical value of education.
6. **Debate:** The teacher may organize debates in the classrooms on a debatable topic and ask the students to put forward their views and argue for or against the topic. This will help develop their critical faculty.
7. **Workshop:** The teacher may organize workshop on an area of the subject they are studying, in which a resource person or expert, preferably from outside the institution, will interact with the students closely and provide hands-on training or useful tips for them.
8. **Counseling:** The teacher will counsel the students outside the class whenever they approach with a problem. This frequent interaction between teacher and students will provide them guidance for go-ahead, giving students a good feeling of learning.

Conclusion

To enable the students to be active in their learning process and gain knowledge the teachers should adopt learner- centered teaching and encourage them in their learning process. Thus the students become active participants taking part in all the activities.

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The Need of English Language Practice in the Classroom with More Techniques by Regional medium High school Learners

Muchumari Dharma Raju

Introduction

Although English is not the language with the largest number of native or first language speakers, it has become a lingua franca i.e., a language is widely adapted for communication between two speakers whose native languages are different from each other's and they are using it as a 'second language'. The aims of a language teaching course are very often defined with reference to language skills i.e., Listening (understanding speech), speaking, reading, and writing, and language elements i.e., vocabulary, and grammar. Therefore these aims relate to the kind of activity which the learners are to perform. Someone knowing a language knows more than how to understand the speech, speak, read, and write sentences. He also knows how sentences are used to communicative effect. The modern language teacher does not follow one rigid method, but applies the principled eclecticism approach- fitting method to the learner, not vice versa. This means choosing the techniques and activities that are appropriate for each particular task, context, and learner, with a focus on motivation and helping learners become independent and inspired to learn more. Some techniques and exercises that are suitable for beginners look less appropriate for students at higher levels –for example, the use of repetition. Teachers find it quite effective to get beginner students to repeat sentences in chorus, but at higher levels it is easy to organize discussion. Whether pre-planned or opportunistic, where as for beginners this option will not be available.

Different theories about the nature of language and how languages are learned (the approach) imply different ways of teaching language (the method), and different methods make use of different kinds of classroom activity (techniques).

- Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics 1985

Explanation

According to academic research, linguists have dominated that there is not one single best method for everyone in all contexts, and that no one teaching method is inherently superior to the others. Also, it is not always possible- or appropriate- to apply the same methodology to all learners, who have different objectives, environments and learning needs. An experienced professional language teacher always adopts the Principled Eclecticism Approach, deciding on the most suitable techniques and applying the most appropriate methodology for that learner's specific objectives, learning style and context. The modern teacher will in fact use a variety of methodologies and approaches, choosing techniques from each method that they consider effective and applying them according to the learning context and objectives. They prepare their lessons to facilitate the understanding of the new language being taught and do not rely on one specific 'best method'. The teacher proposes a variety of exercises, both written and oral, to improve the learner's accuracy, fluency, and communicative ability.



Modern teaching methodology increasingly emphasizes the importance of identifying and teaching to the individual needs of learners. English language classrooms are diverse places not only in terms of where they are situated, but also in terms of the individual learners within each context. This approach encompasses the learner's first languages and cultures, their learning needs and their experiences. Few course books deliberately incorporate opportunities for learners to build on the first language skills already acquired, despite research suggesting that bilingual approaches are most successful in developing second language competence (Thomas & Collier, 1997).

A teacher who has a repertoire of techniques to teach different skills/sub-skills is more likely to succeed in this objective than one who has a limited number of techniques at command. Another important point to be remembered is that having a repertoire of techniques is by itself no guarantee of success; one must know when to use which technique. In other words, the judgement of a teacher should be fine tuned to the needs of that particular class/ group of learners. For example, drilling is a technique which can be used effectively at the practice or familiarization stage of a lesson, but not for a communicative activity which demands deployment of the learner's own language.

Teachers, Consumers of Syllabuses: Bell (1983) claims that teachers are, in the main, consumers of other people's syllabuses, in other words, that their role is to implement the plans of applied linguists, government agencies, and so on. While some teachers have a relatively free hand in designing the syllabuses on which their teaching programmes are based most are likely to be, as Bell suggests, consumers of other people's syllabuses.

Language in general and L1 acquisition: Skill Learning is about getting good at something which involves practicing. Speaking , Reading , Writing , Interpreting , Type writing using morse code , playing a musical instrument are typical perceptual-motor skill , performed by 'athletes of the small muscle'[Leon Fleischer , the pianist]. Skill is never acquired from a single instance, and there are no quick and easy shortcuts to complex skills. Skill learning is not a eureka –experience, although sudden insights can be involved. It is focused effortful practice that is crucial. In L1 acquisition , Children might hear the same expressions many dozens of time every day . They swim in a sea of language , perhaps 10 hours a day, or 70 hours a week, compare that to a mere 5 hours a week in a Language Class during a school year only .

In Anglophone cultures, a child will hear about 7000 utterances daily , among them 2000 simple questions . And it takes many years of daily interaction with mature speakers for them to attain adult – like skill. So children receive massive amount of data- food for their in born pattern –finding abilities [Tomasello2003, 4]. Apart from that ,they are also learning their first language outside communicative experiences :They repeat what others have said to make sure they got in right , they might rehearse possible utterances' before trying them out , and they talk to themselves , practicing things they can't say properly .They engage in private verbal games and just keep saying or chatting words without any communicative intent.



If we accept that different intelligences predominate in different people, it suggests that the same learning task may not be appropriate for all our students. While people with a strong logical/mathematical intelligence might respond well to a complex grammar explanation, a different student might need the comfort of diagrams and physical demonstration because their strength is in visual/special area. Other students who have a strong interpersonal intelligence may require a more interactive climate if their learning is to be effective. So some students learn language on their own by reading and some students want to work in groups.

To practice different types of activities there is need motivation for the learners. Clearly a major factor in the continuance of a student's motivation is a teacher. Teaching method is vital that both teacher and students have some confidence in the way teaching and learning takes place. So whatever the method or methods that they should encourage both the students and the teachers to learn in a better way in activity based manner with more practice in the classroom. We can decorate even the most unattractive classrooms with all kinds of visual material to make them more agreeable as learning environments.

We have to know why practice is more important. Input can be non- interactive in the form of texts that learners listen to or read. Alternatively, It can arise out of interaction, as when learners participate in conversations. Interaction affords learners opportunities to receive input in the form of 'models'(i.e., exchange initial utterances in the form of statements, questions and instructions that provide exemplars of specific linguistic features). It also affords learners opportunities to produce 'output' and to receive feedback on their attempts at production, in particular feedback that points out and corrects their error (i.e., corrective feedback). Interaction provides learners with input containing the data they need for acquisition.

Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP): In this procedure the teacher introduces a situation which contextualizes the language to be taught. The language, too, is then presented. The students now practise the language using accurate reproduction techniques such as choral repetition, individual repetition and cue-response drills.

Interesting classes: If students are to continue to be intrinsically motivated they clearly need to be interested both in the subject they are studying and in the activities and topics they are presented with. English language classrooms are complicated places. Common sense tell us that classrooms are places where people typically one teacher and a number of learners, come together for a pedagogical purpose. (All wright, 1992:267).Harmer (2007:108-10) lists the key classroom roles of the L2 teacher as controller, promoter, participant, resource and tutor. Interestingly Harmer (2007:108) avoids identifying teachers as 'facilitators'. Thornbury comments, ' the learner should not be seen as the object of the verb to teach, but the subject of the verb to learn'.

Some Approaches, methods and their techniques are suitable to practice language in the classroom for regional medium learners. Successful L2 learning is held to occur when learners engage in frequent and long term convergence. Every syllabus needs to be developed on the basis of certain criteria, such as 'learnability' and 'frequency'.



Communicative syllabuses emphasize the functions of language rather than the rules. Communicative tasks aim to make learners fluent (especially during the early stages) as well as accurate in their use of the target language. Some classroom activities are as follows: Role-play, *Mind engaging tasks*, *Language games*- information gap, choice and feedback.

The S-O-S approach is the systematic presentation and practice of carefully selected and graded grammatical structures of English in affective and meaningful situations. The approach is based on the assumption that language learning is a matter of habit formation, which involves a lot of repetition and conscious drilling of the language items. Some classroom activities are as follows: In the classroom, all that is available in the classroom, for example the furniture, blackboard, pictures, calendar, windows and doors, can be made use of for the presentation and the practice of new language items and vocabulary. Outside the classroom, things outside which can be seen from the classroom, for example, trees and flowers, can also be used for teaching. *Drills*: The use of drills is a central technique of the S-O-S approach. *Substitution table*: A substitution table is a very effective teaching device which can be used to give learners mastery over English constructions.

The Bilingual method is built around situations. All language skills are considered equally important and no skill is postponed to a later time. Fluency in language skills is achieved in each situation mastering of skills is not seen as a long-term, painful process. The focus is, in the early stages, on oral or conversational proficiency, and this is to be achieved in each situation, whatever its range. The steps of the methodology are as follows: Imitation of basic FL sentences (basic situation). Interpretation of basic sentences in FL (basic situation). Substitution and extension of FL sentences (extended situation). Independent speaking of sentences (basic and extended situation). Reverse interpretation (optional; basic and extended situation). Interpretation of questions. FL questions and answers (basic and extended situations). Normal FL conversation (basic, extended and original situations). L2 learners may be able to draw upon their prior linguistic knowledge to assist their second language development.

Procedural syllabus which is organised around tasks, rather than in terms of grammar or vocabulary. For example the syllabus may suggest a variety of different kinds of tasks which the learners are expected to carry out in the language, such as using the telephone to obtain information; Drawing maps based on oral instructions, etc. Planning is essentially a problem solving activity. It involves deciding what linguistic devices need to be selected in order to affect the audience in the desired way.

Humanism stresses happiness, freedom, and growth as man's highest goals. It welcomes joy and beauty (Lau mont,1973). Hence population problems, ecology, and interpersonal relations are a crucial part of the new curricula. Thus Teacher- pupil transactions should be characterized by mutual respect and acceptance and recognition of pupils' needs for safety, identity, achievement, and differential(individual) treatment. Ego-demeaning, authoritarian practices have no place in a humanistic curriculum. With an orientation, humanisms an approach to coalescing psychological knowledge and beliefs about the nature of humans as individuals. Now the means by which various academic disciplines shape our emphasis on the centrality of persons can be considered. How is the



school, as an institution, designed to fulfil the needs of pupils so they may become fully functioning persons?

Many linguists find some demerits in most of the old syllabi. The most common contemporary syllabus is the multidimensional or multi-layered syllabus, which, drawing on the debates above, is a 'hybrid' approach to syllabus design. Typically, these syllabuses combine structures, functions, notions and elements of task-based learning and skills development, although, as Little John's (1992) detailed investigation suggests, core elements of many syllabuses, with other content 'grafted on' in a subsidiary role.

Children will learn more effectively when their total personalities (physical, emotional, mental, and social) are considered within their environmental context and when teachers do not attempt to isolate the cognitive from the affective or to consider pupils apart from their environments. Pupils will learn more effectively when the uniqueness of their learning skills, potentials, and styles, as well as the learning modes which they share with all or many of their peers, are recognized by the teachers. Learning will be more effective when teachers act on the premise that pupils' behaviour tends to be in terms of the actions and attitudes of significant persons.

Certain styles of classroom management need to be seen to be acceptable and valid, even if they're not adopted by the whole staff. Whole-class talk is a very hard thing to manage. There are many techniques to teach different language aspects e.g., The teacher can devise a number of exercises with a view to teaching preposition. It would be better to teach preposition through situations, action chains, pictorial demonstration and story method.

Scope and Limitations

There is a chance that regional medium learners can learn in a better way by practicing language in the classroom. Total life experiences cannot be created in the classroom, but we can sure that the useful, needful language can be learnt in the classroom by using more effective syllabus. By practicing language, the learners may not learn everything. Universal grammar consists of a highly abstract set of linguistic principles that do not constitute the actual rules found in any single language but rather act as constraints on the form that these rules can take. The theoretical case for positing universal grammar is that a language is so complex that it would not be possible for anyone to learn it simply through exposure to input.

Conclusion

We need to provide the learners with a variety of subjects and exercises to keep them engaged. The choice of material to take into class will be crucial too, but even more important than this will be the ways in which it is used in the lesson. Language is, in fact, learnt when it is taught as a means of communication. By practising needful, useful activities of L2 language (English) in the classroom, there would be more effective learning.



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Don't Pass on the Passive Voice

Jimalee Sowell

Introduction: The Myth of the Passive Voice

Many English grammar books and stylebooks written for native English speakers are riddled with prescriptive rules and stylistic prescriptions that force writers and speakers to linguistically twist themselves into unnatural positions in order to get things right. The problem as is well stated by George Yule in *Explaining English Grammar* is that “In language use, the concept of better really depends on values unrelated to an understanding of grammatical structures” (Yule, 1998, 3). The plight of the passive voice has not been an easy one. Stylebooks and grammar books have, and to some extent still do, unfairly denounce the passive voice as a kind of evil that must be avoided. Sheridan Baker, author of *The Complete Stylist Handbook*, goes so far as to say the passive voice is “...more wordy and deadly than most people imagine” (Baker, 1976, 165). Unfortunately, such critics of the passive voice have not considered the linguistic merits of the passive voice and treat the passive voice as though it were interchangeable with the active voice. As a result, even self-appointed language authorities are still perpetuating the myth of the passive voice. Liz Bureman, author of the online article *When to Avoid the Passive Voice*, says, “Using the passive voice weakens the sentences and makes them less graceful.” And in the online stylebook at PlainLanguage.gov we are told that, “Readers prefer active voice sentences, and we should try to use the active voice in most of our business writing to communicate our message most effectively. [...] Over time, writing in the passive voice simply becomes a habit, one we should all work to change” as though the passive voice were a kind of bad habit such that needs be kept at bay.

Jack Lynch, author of the online stylebook *Guide to Grammar and Style*, using an example from Dan White cites the following sentence as being as being weak: *I'm sorry the paper was written badly*. He claims that an active voice rendition is favorable and suggests the sentence be rewritten as: *I'm sorry I wrote a bad paper*. Lynch vehemently recommends that passives should be avoided because sentences with too many passives become “dense and clumsy” and that “it [the passive voice] lets the writers shirk the responsibility of providing a subject for the verb.” (Lynch) However, there is nothing wrong with the passive example about the poorly written paper, and it is in no way linguistically inferior to the active voice construction he recommends. Unfortunately, neither Mr. White nor Mr. Lynch has given us any discourse (though they do suggest that the speaker or writer of their passive sentence example is also the author of the badly written paper). Therefore, it is impossible to judge whether or not Mr. Lynch's example sentence would be better written in the active voice. In rewriting the sentence in the first person, Mr. Lynch is implying that all passive voice constructions should be transformed to the first person. Since Mr. Lynch did not give us a context, we are free to imagine a number of situations in which Mr. Lynch's example sentence is even preferable to an active construction. Perhaps, the paper was not written by the speaker, and he tactfully wants to avoid naming the bad writer. The author of the paper may have previously been mentioned, and so there is no need to rename him. For the purposes of some discussions,



the paper might be the important focal point rather than the author. Or possibly—and what really seems to anger Lynch—the writer of the paper is being evasive. It seems it is not the passive voice Lynch should be taking issue with; rather, it's using the passive voice to shirk responsibility that bothers Lynch.

Suggesting that the passive be avoided is nothing short of a prescriptive notion. What would such prescriptivists say about sentences or phrases that regularly occur in the passive such as 'Service is included'? Would they say that this is a clumsy sentence that would become more purposeful and direct if rendered in the active? What exactly would they choose for the active voice rendition: **Someone includes service*, **This restaurant includes service*, or **They (we) include service*? What about verbs that only occur in the passive, such as *be born*? Would they also insist that the active voice would be preferable since it is less wordy, more graceful, and does not denote a bad habit? For the sake of the prescriptivists, should we start saying *My mother bore me in 1971* instead of *I was born in 1971*?

While a piece of writing littered with too many passives may become hazy, evasive, and difficult to read, that hardly merits a description of deadly for the passive voice. Rigidly clinging to traditional style choices that insist we avoid the passive voice is as absurd as insisting that, for the sake or correctness, we avoid ending sentences in prepositions, a prescriptive axiom famously refuted by Winston Churchill: "This is the sort of nonsense up with which I will not put." All the horror talk about the passive voice, especially by those students who earnestly listened to their English teachers and earnestly read their composition books, has resulted in a generation of writers who feel a surge of guilt rising up in their throats with each stroke of the passive voice, a generation of writers who has learned that the passive voice must be avoided without clearly understanding the grammatical functions of the passive voice. While some stylebooks have adopted a more evolved attitude toward the passive voice, there are still a number of stylebooks and grammar books that persist in warning us not to use the passive voice. Even word processing programs have been lured into the idea that passives are evil and have counted our passive constructions as though we should be severely reprimanded for each one.

What writers and speakers of English (native and non-native) need to know is that the passive voice performs specific linguistic functions. Once speakers of English (native and non-native) understand the form, meaning, and use of the passive voice, they will understand when the passive voice is preferable to the active voice and employ the active voice in all other situations. The passive voice is neither inferior to the active voice, as many composition stylebooks lead us to believe, nor is it, as many ESL/EFL textbooks mistakenly lead learners and ESL/EFL instructors to believe, simply a variant of the active voice.

Unfortunate Treatment of the Passive Voice

In *Intermediate English Grammar for ESL Learners* (2008, 52), Robin Torres-Gourzerh gives an explanation of active and passive constructions in the following way:

In English, most sentences can be written in two ways: in the **active voice** or in the



passive voice. Active-voice sentences can contain a subject, a transitive verb, and an object.

Paul wrote the essay.
My sister reads my diary.

In a passive-voice sentence, the subject and object of an active-voice sentence switch positions; the active object becomes the subject of the passive sentence, and the active subject becomes the object of the preposition *by*. The verb from the active sentence is changed to a past participle and is used with the auxiliary *be*.

The essay was written by Paul.
My diary is read by my sister.

I cannot take much issue with Torres-Gouzerh's explanation of the form of the passive voice (although it could lead learners to believe that the *by + agent* construction is retained in all passive sentences, which is not the case as is later illustrated). Careful readers might question, though, the occurrence of a sentence such as, "My diary is read by my sister." Would anyone naturally produce such a sentence? Would there ever be a real communicative need to render this utterance in the passive voice?

The author's explanation of meaning of the passive voice deserves some focused attention:

The meaning of these active and passive examples is essentially the same. They are simply two different ways of expressing the same action. Although the active voice is the way you learn to write correct complete sentences, the passive voice is common in written English, especially in formal academic writing, and in newspapers and magazines. (Torres-Gouzerh, 2008, 52)

Torres-Gouzerh's explanation is problematic. First of all, what does it mean to a learner that the active voice is the way you learn to write correct complete sentences? Could this explanation lead learners to believe that the active and passive voices are only used in written language? Might this explanation give the impression that the active voice has something to do with 'correctness' (not unlike the prescriptive correctness discussed earlier)? Might this explanation even lead students to believe that the active voice has something to do with completeness? While it is true that the passive voice often does occur in academic writing and does frequently occur in news reports, it is not true that the active and passive voices are essentially the same. There are reasons as is evident in an explanation of the uses of the passive voice (found subsequently in this paper) that the passive voice is more often used in certain genres of communication than others. Frequent occurrence of the passive voice in some genres, however, is not related to the notion of formality. Presenting the passive voice as the voice of formality, therefore, could cause great confusion. If active and passive voice were essentially the same as Torres-Gouzerh suggests, there would be no need for both voices. Torres-Gouzerh is far from the only author who represents active and passive voices as equivalent. In *Everyone's Guide to English Grammar*, I Jayakaran writes, "We can express any idea written in the active voice in the Passive [sic] voice without any change in the meaning." (Jayakarn, 2006, 174), and



in *High School English Grammar and Composition*, Wren and Martin say, “A sentence in the Active [sic] form can be changed into the Passive [sic] form, and vice versa.” (Wren and Martin, 2013, 189) And, we can be sure these are not the only authors who have made such assertions. These sorts of explanations of equality of both voices in textbooks and other ESL/EFL materials lead non-native learners of English to falsely conclude that the passive voice is a mere, interchangeable transformation of the active voice, except that perhaps the passive voice is more formal and used in written language. If learners believe this, it is likely they will avoid using the passive voice, seeing it as a more complicated alternative to the active voice and with no clear understanding of why or when the passive voice might be employed. Perhaps, some adventurous learners will sprinkle the passive voice in their speaking and writing—and if they have followed Torres-Gouzerh’s advice, only for academic writing or when they are writing for magazines and newspapers, but without any clear reason for doing so, and we can safely conclude, probably without much accuracy. Of course, it is not with malicious intent that these authors equate the active and passive voice as essentially the same, but, like a virus this is how the misunderstanding of the passive voice is perpetuated.

After introducing the form of the passive, many ESL/EFL textbooks provide example sentences with active and passive counterparts:

Active: The children have nice toys.

Passive: *Nice toys are had by the children.

Active: Can Sunita ride a horse?

Passive: *Can a horse be ridden by Sunita?

Active: I am not to watch T.V. today.

Passive: *T.V. is not to be watched by me today. (Jayakaran, 2006, 176 – 7)

While the active and passive might seem to have the same meaning (apart from representing a shift in focus), Celce-Murcia and Hilles cite an example previously cited in work by Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) from Chomsky (1965) that illustrates that active and passive variants of the same sentence can, in fact, have very different meanings: *Everyone in the room speaks two languages* (i.e., any two languages per person) and *Two languages are spoken by everyone in the room* (i.e., two specific languages that everyone speaks). Celce-Murcia and Hilles tell us that, “Since we have established that the active and passive versions of a sentence are not always as closely tied as we had first imagined, we will not teach passive sentences by simply transforming active ones.” (Celce-Murcia, Hilles, 1998, 28) Moreover, it is hard to make a case for equivalency of active and passive voice when we know that passive voice is the marked form—i.e., the active voice is used most of the time.

Awkward constructions

Additionally, having students transform active voice sentences into passive ones can result in some awkward constructions that would not be natural utterances in English. Outside of this sort of transformational exercise, would anyone actually ever say *Nice toys are had by the children* (See *semantic constraints in the passive voice*), *Can a horse be ridden by Sunita?* or *T.V. is not to be watched by me today?* And, if so, what would be the

communicative need to have the toys, the horse, or the T.V. in the subject position in these sentences?

Transformational exercises

Furthermore, such textbooks reinforce the idea of interchangeability by having students do transformational exercises, changing active sentences to passive ones and vice versa.

Exercise

Change the following sentences into the Passive [sic] form. (Omit the agent where possible.)

1. Premchand wrote this novel.
2. We admire the brave.
3. I bought the baby a doll.
4. They know me.
5. He invited me to his house yesterday. (Wren and Martin, 2013, 190)
... etc.

Once again, we can see that some sentences become very awkward in the passive voice. Would anyone really ever say *The brave are admired by us* or *The baby doll was bought by me*?

Example of Good Instruction of the Passive Voice

1. In *Intermediate English Grammar*, Raymond Murphy explains the passive voice in the following manner:

We use *an active verb* to say *what the subject does*:

- My grandfather was a builder. **He built** this house in 1930.
- It's a big company. **It employs** two hundred people.

We use *a passive verb* to say *what happens to the subject*:

- This house is quite old. **It was built** in 1930.
- **Two hundred people are employed** by the company.

When we use the passive, who or what causes the action is often unknown or unimportant:

- A lot of money **was stolen** in the robbery. (somebody stole it but we don't know *who*)
- Is this room **cleaned** every day? (does somebody clean it? – it's not important *who*)

If we want to say who does or what causes the action, we use *by*....:

- This house was built **by my grandfather**.
- Two hundred people are employed **by the company**.

The passive is **be (is/was/have been etc.) + the past participle (done/cleaned/seen, etc.): (be) done (be) cleaned (be) seen (be) damaged (be) built etc.**

(Murphy, 1994, 41)



Mr. Murphy has a good explanation of the passive, though he neglects to give a detailed explanation of the uses of the passive voice and when the by-phrase should be retained.

2. In *Problem/Solution, A Reference for ELS Writers*, the passive is explained as follows:

The Grammar of Passive Sentences

Compare the grammar of these two sentences to review the differences between active and passive sentences.

Active sentence: The Chinese invented paper money.

Passive sentence: Paper money was invented by the Chinese.

Active vs. Passive Subject. The subject of a passive sentence receives the action of the verb. The subject of the active sentence does the action of the verb. Also, the subject of the passive sentence is the direct object of the active sentence.

Passive vs. Active Verb. The passive verb is formed by using the past participle of the active verb. The passive verb has this pattern: be + past participle of the verb.

By-Phrase 1. The subject of the active sentence can be used in an adverbial phrase in the passive sentence. This phrase is called the *by-phrase*.

Active subject: The Chinese

By-phrase: by the Chinese

By-Phrase 2. The *by-phrase* is not required. It should be used only when it provides important information.

My car was stolen last night by a thief.

My car was stolen last night by a twelve-year-old boy.

The *by-phrase* in the first example can easily be left out because only thieves steal. In the second example, a more interesting *by-phrase* is used.

Using Passive Sentences

English speakers use passive sentences when they want to change the focus from the subject to the direct object of the verb. Passive sentences are used in the following situations.

Actor Unknown. For some events, it is impossible to know who did the action.

The wheel was invented early in the history of human civilization.

Actor Unimportant. The person who did the action is not the focus of communication. For example, in technical and scientific writing, the focus is on the process rather than on the technician or scientist. In other contexts, too, the focus can be on the events rather than the people who were involved.

This report was prepared with a grant from the Ford Foundation.

This university was founded in 1889 to serve residents of this state.

Actor Hidden. The name of the actor can be left out of the communication to hide some information. This use of the passive can be interpreted positively or negatively depending on points of view.

John dropped the computer; Maria fixed it. Maria said to their boss: "The computer was damaged slightly when it was dropped, but I repaired it. Everything is fine now."

(Byrd and Benson, 1994, 126)



This is a good explanation of the form, meaning, and uses of the passive voice along with a concise explanation, though not thorough, of when to retain the by-agent.

What ESL/EFL Instructors and Learners Need to Know About the Passive Voice

In this section, I follow Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia's model (1999, 4) of explaining grammatical items in terms of form, meaning, and use.

Form of the Passive Voice

The passive voice is formed by using the appropriate form of the *be* verb (present, past, etc.) and the past participle form of the main verb of the sentence. The subject and the object noun phrases reverse positions—the object noun phrase in the active sentences is moved to the subject position, and the subject noun phrase is moved to the object position. The passive voice can be used with all tense and aspect combinations. Only transitive verbs can be used in the passive.

A table such as follows can be used to show that the passive voice can be used in all tense and aspect combinations.

	passive voice
simple present	The house is cleaned by Eric.
present progressive	The house is being cleaned by Eric.
simple past	The house was cleaned by Eric.
past progressive	The house was being cleaned by Eric.
present perfect	The house has been cleaned by Eric.
past perfect	The house had been cleaned by Eric.
simple future	The house will be cleaned by Eric.
future perfect	The house will have been cleaned by Eric.
be going to	The house is going to be cleaned by Eric.
modals	The house should be cleaned by Eric. The house can be cleaned by Eric.

Celce-Murcia and Hilles suggest that the once the simple present and simple past have been introduced, the passive voice can be taught and then subsequently taught as each tense/aspect is introduced. (Celce-Murcia and Hilles, 1988, 28-9)

Although only sentences with transitive verbs can be written in the passive voice, this does not mean that every sentence with a transitive verb can be used in the passive voice. There are some restrictions. (Langacker, 1987 as cited by Larsen-Freeman, 1999, 347):

1. The more definite the subject is, the more acceptable the sentence is in the passive form is.



Examples:

This poem was written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

?Poems were written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

2. With stative verbs, the more indefinite the object in the *by* phrase is, the more likely it is to be acceptable in the passive form.

Examples:

Arthur Ashe was like by everybody.

?Arthur Ashe was liked by me.

The movie has been seen by everyone in town.

?The movie has been seen by Jim.

3. The more the verb denotes a physical action, as opposed to a state, the more acceptable its use in the passive sentence is.

Examples:

The ball was kicked over the goalposts.

?The ball was wanted by the other team.

(Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia, 1999, 347)

4. Certain transitive verbs, when used statively, are not likely to occur in the passive voice.

Verbs of containing (e.g., *contain, hold, comprise*)

*Two gallons of water are held by the watering can.

Verbs of measure (e.g., *weigh, cost, contain, last*)

*Five dollars is cost by the parking fine.

Reciprocal verbs (e.g., *resemble, look like, equal*)

*Lori is resembled by her father.

Verbs of fitting (e.g., *fit, suit*)

*He is suited by the plan.

Verbs of possession (e.g., *have, belong*)

*A car is had by him.

(Langacker as cited by Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia, 1999, 348)

Additionally, there are some verbs that are either used exclusively in the passive voice or more commonly occur in the passive voice than the active voice. These verbs are: be born, be deemed, be fined, be hospitalized, be jailed, be scheduled, be shipped, be staffed, be suspended. (Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia, 1999, 346)

Meaning of the Passive Voice

The passive voice allows for a shift in focus placing the emphasis on the receiver of the action instead of the doer of the action. When using the passive, there is some kind of communicative need for which the passive has been chosen over the active voice. Sentences rarely exist in isolation, and as such, it is most nearly impossible to say that the



active is preferable to the passive when no context has been given. Purpura (2004, 6) gives this example:

Reggio and Messina were taken to the vet's this morning.

Here the passive voice very well could have been favored because as cats, Reggio and Messina, would not have been able to take themselves to the vet. Furthermore, the agent has not been retained in this sentence. This could be because the agent is unknown or it could be that the agent is known and retaining it would have created a redundancy. (Purpura, 2004, 6)

Uses of the Passive Voice

- a. When the doer of the action is unknown
 - Examples: My bicycle was stolen last night.
 - The political headquarters was set on fire.
- b. When the doer of the action is obvious
 - Examples: The yuan is used in China.
 - Pineapples are grown in Malaysia.
- c. When the speaker is being tactful
 - Examples: Those who have only been with the company for a few months will be laid off.
 - The employees of this company were deceived regarding the punishing tax system.
- d. When the speaker wants to avoid directly placing or accepting blame
 - Examples: The door was left open again last night.
 - Mistakes were made.
- e. When the agent is not the focal point
 - Examples: A new movie theater was built near the mall.
 - The Galaxy phone is made by Samsung.
- f. When a piece of work is the focal point rather than the creator
 - Examples: *The Grapes of Wrath* was written by John Steinbeck.
 - *Avatar* was directed by James Cameron.

When the *by* + *agent* Construction Is Retained

Agented passives only occur in about 15 to 20 percent of all passive constructions. Since the *by* + *agent* constructions occur less frequently than not, it is more logical to teach our students when to retain the agent rather than when to leave it off. Most retained agents fall into one of the three categories below. (M. Shintani, 1979 as cited by Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia, 1999, 354)



1. When the agent is new information

Example: While Jill was walking down the street, her purse was snatched by *a young man*.

2. When the agent is nonhuman (i.e., we expect agents to be human)

Example: All the lights and appliances in the Albertson household are switched on and off daily *by this electrical device*.

3. When the agent is a well-known personage and should be included as propositional information:

Example: The Mona Lisa was painted by *da Vinci*.
(Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia, 1999, 355)

Teaching Ideas and Suggestions

Though the form of the passive voice must be learned and should be introduced first, it is relatively simple, and learners are able to understand and produce the form of the passive with relative ease. Thus, the learning challenge for form is relatively low. Students also need to be made aware that the meaning of the passive voice is a shift in focus. However, the greatest learning challenge for ESL/EFL students regarding the passive voice is when to use it. When finding classroom activities for the demonstration of the passive, it is important to find exercises that naturally loan themselves to the passive and essential to avoid exercises that require students to transform active to passive and passive to active.

Simple Present Passive Practice

Passive with Realia

Bring in items that represent particular countries or regions of the world such as currency, chopsticks, postcards, and pictures of national monuments. If you don't have any such objects, pictures are readily available on the Internet. Ask students about these items using the passive voice.

Example:

T: Where are chopsticks used?

S: Chopsticks are used in most Asian countries.

T: Where is the yen used?

S: The yen is used in Japan.

T: Where is the Eiffel Tower located?

S: The Eiffel Tower is located in Paris.

Give students a few minutes to prepare similar questions. Have students practice asking and answering questions in the simple passive.



World Knowledge Quiz

Test your students' world knowledge. Make a passive quiz game asking questions similar to the above using such questions as the following:

1. What languages are spoken in Canada? a. <i>French and English</i> b. English and Spanish c. English and Farsi
2. Where are most of the world's diamonds mined? a. <i>Africa</i> b. Asia c. South America
3. Where is escargot typically eaten? a. <i>Germany</i> b. Italy c. <i>France</i>
4. Where is kimchi typically eaten? a. <i>Belgium</i> b. Uruguay c. <i>Korea</i>
5. Where is the Blue Mosque located? a. <i>Iceland</i> b. Dubai c. <i>Turkey</i>
6. What language is spoken in Denmark? a. <i>Danish</i> b. Flemish c. French
7. When were the Americas discovered by Columbus? a. <i>1492</i> b. 1352 c. 1562
8. Where is the Parthenon located? a. <i>Greece</i> b. Italy c. Britain
9. Who was the Pythagorean Theorem created by? a. Homer b. Socrates c. <i>Pythagoras</i>
10. Who is often credited with discovering electricity? a. Bill Gates b. Abraham Lincoln c. <i>Benjamin Franklin</i>
11. Where is the Taj Mahal located? a. <i>Pakistan</i> b. <i>India</i> c. Bangladesh
12. Where is the baht used? a. <i>Mexico</i> b. Cambodia c. <i>Thailand</i>
13. What language is officially spoken in Brazil? a. <i>Portuguese</i> b. Spanish c. Brazilian
14. What currency is used in Hong Kong? a. <i>Hong Kong dollar</i> b. Hong Kong yuan c. Hong Kong rial
15. When was gold discovered in California? a. <i>1950</i> b. <i>1848</i> c. 1712
16. Where is Angkor Wat located? a. <i>Vietnam</i> b. <i>Cambodia</i> c. Thailand
17. What language is spoken in New Zealand? a. <i>New Zealandish</i> b. German c. <i>English</i>
18. Where is the Colosseum located? a. <i>Rome</i> b. France c. Argentina
19. What is the most widely spoken language in the world? a. <i>Mandarin Chinese</i> b. English c. Spanish
20. Where are the Great Pyramids located? a. <i>Egypt</i> b. Morocco c. Monaco

Variation: This activity could be done using regional rather than world knowledge.

The Passive with the Simple Past

Famous Creations Quiz

Split students into groups. Give each student a few strips of paper. On each piece of paper have students make true questions about famous inventors, painters, writers, music stars,



inventors, and the like. Have them write both the question and the answer on each strip of paper.

Example:

Q: Who was the telephone invented by?
A: The telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell.

Collect the pieces of paper and give each group's strips to another group. For example, if there are only two groups, give A's question to group B and vice versa. Choose one student to act as the quiz show host. The host asks the questions and gives points to students with correct answers.

Sample Quiz Game Questions and Answers

Who was penicillin discovered by?	Alexander Fleming
Who was <i>Reservoir Dogs</i> directed by?	Quentin Tarantino
Who was <i>The Sunflower</i> painted by?	Vincent Van Gogh
Who was <i>Hamlet</i> written by?	William Shakespeare
Who was <i>Indiana Jones</i> directed by?	Steven Spielberg
Who was the <i>Mona Lisa</i> painted by?	Leonardo da Vinci
Who was <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> written by?	Jane Austen
Who was <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> written by?	Dan Brown
Who was <i>Harry Potter</i> written by?	J. K. Rowling
Who was <i>The Scream</i> painted by?	Edvard Munch
Who was <i>Avatar</i> directed by?	James Cameron
Who was Facebook created by?	Mark Zuckerberg
Who was <i>Leaves of Grass</i> written by?	Walt Whitman

Using Authentic Materials to Teach the Passive Voice

Written Discourse

So that students can see how the passive voice works naturally in discourse, it's important to show them writing that with natural uses of the passive. Try guidebook passages, scientific reports, science magazines, passages from history books, and recipes. News articles and stories are also a good source for passive language, as in the news, 'what' is often more important than 'who' and the 'who' of the action is not always known. Have students highlight all instances of passive voice they find in the text. Then, for each instance of the passive voice, ask students to indicate why the passive, rather than the active voice was used.

Example:

Here is a Facebook posting posted by Farewell, My Love though the author seems to be anonymous. Although the circumstances of this story are rather grim, the story itself has numerous passives.

Meet Oogy, [sic] Oogy was about ten weeks old and weighed twenty pounds [sic] he was tied to a stake and used as bait for a Pit Bull. The left side of his face including most of his ear was torn off. He was bitten so hard a piece of lower jaw was crushed. Afterward, he was thrown into a cage and left to bleed to death. If you have time to reblog nail polish and makeup photos, youll [sic] have time to reblog this, respect for Oogy...He's a survivor ruined by horrible people. I believe in these dogs.

Spoken Discourse

Find short clips from TV shows, podcasts, news broadcasts, songs, etc. that have instances where the passive voice has been used. Play clips for students and ask them to indicate for each use of the passive why the passive, rather than the active voice, was used.

Conclusion

In spite of all the mistreatment the passive voice has taken by English composition and ESL/EFL books, it has its place as a valid linguistic device and deserves neither to be avoided nor to be taught as a variant of the active voice. In order to understand the passive voice and how to use it, ESL/EFL students must be instructed on the form, meaning and use of the passive voice and also need to learn how the passive voice works in context. Notions that the passive voice is inferior or equivalent to the active voice must be challenged and evaded. Care and attention needs to be taken in the instruction of the passive voice.

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A Case for Redesigning the Syllabus for ESL/EFL Learners

Komali Prakash

Introduction

According to a report by Aspiring Minds, an employability solutions company, around 47% graduates in India are unemployable for any job. Mr. Varun Aggrawal, the co-founder and CTO of Aspiring Minds, strongly feels that “ the alarming statistics of nearly half of the country’s graduates not being employable in the knowledge economy needs great attention with interventions both at the school and higher levels”. Their key findings that are relevant to the present paper are that-

- Nearly 47% are found unemployable, given their insufficient English language and cognitive skills.
- 90% graduates in India did not have the required proficiency in English communication.

In this context, this paper tries to look at certain helpful ‘interventions at the school and higher levels.

Main Paper

The purpose of learning a language is for the user to be able to communicate his message to his listener; to be able to transfer information. All foreign or second language learners of English aim to use spoken language primarily for transactional function rather than interactional function, i.e. to be able to express their intentions (Richards 2014). But, a cursory glance at any school or college syllabus shows that the focus is on prose, poetry, grammar, and non-detailed texts to include drama or short stories. These are the four segments and the classes are also scheduled for them separately. It is, more often than not, content- oriented and this is no different from other subjects because the aim of the teacher is on relaying the content in the essay or poem rather than on teaching spoken or written skills through the literary piece. From the time-table it may noticed that there are no hours ear marked for speaking. Grammar is taught in isolation and it is boxed in as a separate question in the question paper. The students on their part learn the summary of the essay or the poem or the highlights of the play, the positive traits or the flaws in a character etc., by rote. These students who are subjected to this sort of study are not well equipped to frame even a few sentences, leave alone critically analyse the complexities of the literary piece. So, this exercise has proved to be futile and the students graduate with no command in the language.

This paper does not take into account schools or colleges which have English as their medium of instruction and where students tend to speak only in English. The context for this paper is such that, the medium of instruction is the local language, and students are taught English as a third language. In such a scenario, the insights and implications culled from a four month intense course in English proficiency for international students are highly relevant. They study LSRW, grammar and vocabulary. The students, who were not able to frame even one sentence at the beginning of the course, were able to communicate reasonably well by the end of the course.



There is no gainsaying the fact that learning a language is synonymous with the development of all the skills- Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW). One thread that links them all is grammar. As such, the use of grammar is seen more as a skill. If the four skills are integrated the language output is better. Though this integrating of skills is not a recent concept in language teaching, in some educational institutions in India, it is yet to take shape. Instead of the routine syllabus of prose, poetry and drama, the syllabus designers should design a syllabus involving LSRW skills and functions of English, like introducing, asking for directions, requesting, complaining, apologizing, giving opinion, advice, arguing, agreeing or disagreeing etc. As a teacher involved in teaching speaking to international students, I always combined grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation with speaking.

Grammar is an essential part of language and it has to be taught for the learner to learn on his or her own. However, grammar should not be looked at as transmission of knowledge, but as development of skill. The usually asked question is whether grammar should be taught inductively or deductively- whether the rule comes first followed by the examples or is it the other way round. In fact, a combination of induction and deduction proves to be effective. So, for example, if the past tense is being taught, the following pattern is followed. I start by talking about my own childhood- ‘when I was a child....’ I ask the students to focus on the verbs and later teach the form and function of the past tense. As a follow up I ask them to describe their own experiences. Topics like The incident I cannot forget, the moment of my life that I cherish the most, my unforgettable holiday, fun in my growing up years etc. are given. As Ann Burns (2009) says, grammar must be taught “at the point of need”. Vocabulary also has to go hand in hand with grammar.

Words which are semantically related are clubbed together in our mental lexicon. As such, grouping of vocabulary as lexical sets or topics or adjectives for description of places or persons can be introduced. A well-known way of teaching vocabulary is through word-mapping wherein one word is written in the center and other related word are linked to it. Synonyms and antonyms of words can also be put up on board. When describing a place, words like beautiful, magnificent, serene, fantastic, awesome, amazing, interesting, stunning, gorgeous, splendid, striking, captivating, fascinating etc, can be put together and students can be helped to find the exact words to describe something. The teacher can also help the students pronounce the word properly by directing their attention to the link between proper pronunciation and intelligibility. A project section can be added which can either be done in class or given as homework. This aims to extend the topic and help the students in the writing component. Grammar instruction that is separate from the other skills like writing does not seem to improve the students’ writing competence.

So for a student to be proficient in speaking, he/she must have grammatical competence, which involves correct grammar, appropriate vocabulary and intelligible pronunciation. Apart from this there should be cohesion and coherence in the speech. Communication activities like role play, skit, interviews, debates, speeches also help students develop their speaking skill. In other words, the four traditional skills are a means to an end- the end being putting grammar into practice.



It may prove to be fruitful to ask the students to develop their own tasks. Based on their interests, they can bring some pictures, photographs, newspaper clippings or gadgets and decide on the task. For example, the speaker may have three photographs of three different people and the listener, one of them.. When the speaker describes each of his photographs, the listener identifies which of the three he is looking at.

Conclusion

In the early years till middle school, the students can be taught skills and functions of English. Later, once they are proficient, small reading passages and poems can be introduced. In this way there can be a grading in the syllabus. When they are able to grasp the meaning, they are likely to enjoy the literary pieces.

Integrating skills with grammar and vocabulary, and focusing on functions may help the learner gain confidence and communicate comfortably.

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Need for Teacher Education and Training in Higher Education: Some Challenges and Constraints

K. Manjula Bashini & S. Mekala

Introduction

Fundamental changes in the economy, jobs and businesses have reshaped workplaces and the nature of work which demands new and ever changing skill sets. Along with the subject knowledge, it has become a requirement for Engineering students, to be able to think critically, solve problems, communicate, collaborate, find relevant information quickly and use technology effectively. These survival skills are not only for their career success but are also necessary to improve the quality of their personal lives. So the nature of teaching is changing today, than even a decade ago. In order to meet the challenges and demands of the profession, teachers of English in Engineering colleges need to improve their teaching skills and update their repertoire. This is possible only through regular in-service training programmes. This paper discusses that when college teachers do not have any pedagogical training, they might not be aware of the better teaching practices. And when they attend training courses, they would change their concepts and approaches to teaching and could actually become more learner centered teachers. Pedagogical training can also bring a change for the better, in the teachers' beliefs about themselves as teachers.

Role of In-Service Training Programmes for Teachers in Higher Education

Professorial productivity is measured in teaching, research and service [Terrell & Warren 2013]. Regarding teaching, Ward (2001) asserted that, "the mediocre teacher tells; the good teacher explains; the superior teacher demonstrates; and the great teacher inspires." Milton (1972) argued that in spite of significant research about learning being published, "Faculty do not have the time, the familiarity with its specialized language, or the inclination to avail themselves of the literature..." (p ix). He also continued that "elementary principles of learning, especially in higher education, have been neglected, abandoned to an abiding faith in traditional methods, or periodically subjugated to innovative hunches" (p ix) i.e. they teach the way they were taught.

Excellent teachers are made, not born; they become excellent through investment in their teaching abilities. Leaving teachers to learn from trial and error is a waste of time, effort and resources. Therefore, teacher involved in teaching and supporting student learning should be qualified, supported and adequately resourced for that role [Gabriela 2012]. According to Cahn (1978), in comparison to primary and secondary teachers, most college and university professors received minimal or no training in educational theory and methodology.

In the 1980s, there was recognition of the need to prepare college and university professors to teach, which led to the emergence of the Teaching Assistants (TA) [Terrell & Warren 2013]. In recent years, many countries such as Norway, UK and Srilanka have



made decisions about the compulsory pedagogical training of college teachers [Gibbs& Coffey 2004]. Such a compulsory training is not insisted for teachers of higher education in India. Thus not surprisingly, only a few European countries have made substantial investment into enhancing the teaching abilities of their academic staff. In other words, the preparation of university teachers remains largely unsystematic and adhoc [Gabriela 2012].

‘In-Service Training’ versus ‘In-Service Education’

A number of writers who have contributed to the literature on teacher- education would appear to use the terms ‘in-service training’ and ‘in-service education’ interchangeably. Some, however, try to distinguish between the two. Henderson (1978) says: “A good deal of ‘education’ versus ‘training’ controversy seems to reflect concern for the status of teaching profession”. (1978: 11) Thus, the term ‘in-service education’ often refers to a systematic and rigorous study of, and involvement in, over a sustained and long period, various disciplines designed to bring about an increase in knowledge and intellectual growth leading to an enhancement in the academic standing and status of the teacher; whereas ‘in-service training’ often refers to the acquiring of specific skills, methods and techniques of teaching, over a much shorter period, leading to growth in practical professional merit.

According to Adams(1975), ‘in-service education’ refers to both theory and practice, ‘in-service training’ merely to practice: “The term ‘in-service education’, as it is now generally used, refers to the entire process of curriculum review and any consequent modification of practice... in contrast to participation in the lower order activity of ‘in-service training’.” (1975: 11). Adams believes that with teachers being now exposed to pressure from a variety of sources, largely due to expansion in research and growth in knowledge, in general, ‘in-service education’ is a powerful force for effective change. Thus, Adams prefers to use the term ‘in-service education’ “ to mean the development of the individual which arises from the whole range of events and activities by which serving teachers can extend their personal academic or practical education, their professional competence and their understanding of educational principles and methods”. Adams (1975: 37)

It is Freeman (1982: 21) who attempts the most precise and clear definition of the term in the context of teaching. He says: “Training deals with building specific teaching skills: how to sequence a lesson or how to teach a dialogue, for instance”. His contention is that teaching is a finite skill which can be acquired and mastered by ‘training’, and that ‘training’ as opposed to ‘education’ is concerned with the preparation of the teacher to meet, effectively, the needs of the classroom situation.

Thus, the professional development of a teacher is a matter of continuous growth. The teacher needs knowledge as well as skills. The term ‘education’ may be conveniently used for the first and the term ‘training’ for the second. It seems most helpful in our own context, therefore, to regard them as complementary. James(1972) recognises the need for both when he places strong emphasis on what he describes as ‘the Third Cycle, ‘the education and training of the teacher in service: “ The Third Cycle comprehends the whole



range of activities by which teachers can extend their personal education, develop their professional competence and improve their understanding of educational principles and techniques". (1972:5) This is a large and complex field which cannot be adequately described by the term 'in-service training'. Therefore, James prefers to use the phrase 'in-service education and training' (INSET) to refer to the whole gamut of activities envisaged in the Third Cycle of teacher preparation.

Need for In-Service Training Programmes for Teachers of English in Engineering Colleges

The term 'profession' incorporates 'qualification and training'. This implies any professional undergoes a systematic training before taking up that profession. In India, that too with special reference to second language teaching in Engineering colleges, completion of a training programme is not a requisite to start the career as a teacher. The AICTE norms say that a candidate with a minimum of 55% in PG is eligible to teach, upon completion of an M.Phil/ PhD or a pass in NET/ SLET. But basically a course in M.Phil/ PhD hones up the candidate's research ability and a pass in NET/SLET attests the candidate's retention of the subject matter. A good researcher or anybody with good retention capacity need not be a good teacher. The art of teaching is an entirely different skill, which requires an array of skill sets and a sense of commitment. So teaching as a profession requires systematic training. Such a training programme will enable the teachers to understand the purpose and possibilities of what they are teaching. They will know what are the expected outcomes from the learners at the end of the course. They will also be equipped with the necessary tools to test if the students have attained the necessary outcome. As far as English curriculum in an Engineering programme is concerned it should enable the students to use English effectively for their various communicative needs. As most teachers have no idea of what to teach, they are simply guided by the syllabus - which does not provide any clear guidelines to reach the students and enable them to use English on their own. They are not habituated to peruse the objectives of the syllabus and relate it to the expected learning outcome of their learners.

Teacher Training Programmes: Some Challenges and Constraints

In India, the number of graduates with masters' and doctoral degrees has increased. However, not many researchers have been conducted concerning the preparation of graduates to teach in higher education. School teachers are taught how to teach. Should college and university faculty members also receive instruction in pedagogy is the important question now. The graduate curricula have a focus on a discipline's knowledge base and research [Terrell & Warren]. In some countries the formal degree programmes exist to develop and certify competence in research (masters/PhD) and there is a clear expectation that academic staff are qualified to this level but the requirement to gain a formal qualification in teaching is not widespread [Gabriela 2012].

In many countries including India, academics are prepared for their role as researchers, but not for their teaching duties. Teaching is viewed as an activity that anyone can do [Gabriela 2012]. Allen and Rueter's (1990) remarked "it has been sarcastically noted that college teaching is the only profession requiring no formal training of its practitioners"



(p-9).Once the degree is obtained, they are considered “credentialed” to teach in a college or university classroom [Terrell& Warren 2013].

Boehrer and Sarkisian (1985) expressed : With many academic departments, acceptance into a graduate program conveys an automatic license to teach. This notion presumes that, if a person can learn the subject, they can also teach it (p-15).In the absence of educational development, teachers in higher education tend to base their teaching on their own experience as students. In this way, old teaching methods that focus on the teachers rather than the students’ needs and on the subject matter rather than on the transformation of student knowledge perpetuate from generation to generation [Gabriela 2012].

A number of European countries such as the UK, Ireland, Nordic and the Low Countries have already recognised the importance of classroom teaching for quality education. They have established teacher development programmes for academics and doctoral students, and professional associations to advance teaching and learning in higher education. Similar initiatives are taking place globally, with notable progress in the United States, Australia and Canada [Gabriela 2012].

Conclusion

According to NAASCOM, recruiters complain that most of the students lack communication skills, and only twenty five percent of the engineering graduates are readily employable. Any curriculum fails, when the teachers are not trained to implement it. The success of curriculum rests with properly trained teachers, who are familiar not only with the subject matter but also with the learners’ learning environment, which comprises the following aspects: their need to learn English for communication, their academic situation, testing and evaluation scenario and their use of English in their career.Thus,teaching is not a profession in which most people, even intelligent and accomplished graduate students are automatically skilled[Weimer, 1997].Teaching a course is an important instructional duty and if it is not handled well, it can impact a department... potentially negatively affecting the employment prospects of the poorly performing graduate students[Terrell& Warren 2013]. To conclude, the knowledge base in all professional fields changes over time. Likewise the knowledge base in education can never be ‘complete’ or finished. Instead it will always be a work in progress, as it is in all other professions.

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Teaching Reading Skills Using Culturally Familiar Materials At The Secondary Level

Narsimulu Dokka

Introduction

The Aim of the study was to attempt an in-depth study, from a schema-theoretic view, of whether culturally familiar texts would enhance the reading comprehension skills in English of the ninth grade learners in regional medium schools of Andhra Pradesh. The study involved the examination of the three texts which were culturally familiar to the learners and three texts, which were culturally unfamiliar to the learners, from the current course books taught in the regional medium schools of Andhra Pradesh.

The study attempted to examine the role of the content/cultural schemata in the comprehension of given text. According to schema theory, comprehension takes place when there is an appropriate match between the text and the readers' prior background knowledge. On the contrary, distortion occurs when there is a mismatch between the text and the readers' world of knowledge they bring with them. In an attempt to examine the hypothesis drawn above, mainly a qualitative examination was administered of the impacts of subjects' success or failure to avail the cultural schemata presumed by the three experimental reading texts. The experimental reading texts selected for the study made it possible to study subjects' ability to avail the cultural schemata while comprehending culturally familiar reading texts.

Teachers and students of rural areas of A.P., when interviewed at the time of the researcher's project work, which was part of B.Ed. programme, expressed their disappointment at the reading texts designed for them since they had little relevance to their cultural background. The learners showed disinterest in reading those texts. During the informal discussions with the teachers, they lamented the fact that they were using the materials prepared 20 years ago without any changes. They also suggested that the texts needed to be changed as most of the texts were alien to the learners' culture.

Defining Reading

Reading is a very important skill as far as second/foreign language is concerned. Though reading has been defined in many ways yet it does not have a single definition. Present psycholinguistic research supports the claim that reading is a meaning-driven (Goodman, 1970; Langer and Smith-Bruke, 1982), multileveled, interactive, hypothesis generating process (Spiro, Bruce and Brewer, 1980). Grabe and Stoller define reading as "...the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret the information appropriately" (2002:9).

Schema Theory

Famous psychologist called Bartlett (1932) is the first person who used the term 'Schema'. Bartlett defined schema as "An active organization of past reactions, or past



experience” (1932: 201). The role of background knowledge in language comprehension has been formalized as schema theory (Bartlett 1932, Rumelhart and Ortony 1977, Rumelhart 1980).

According to schema theory, reading comprehension is an interactive process between the text and the reader’s prior background knowledge. During the 1960s reading theory had the impact of psycholinguistic model of reading. Goodman described reading as a “Psycholinguistic guessing game” (1967: 1) in which the “Reader reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display” (1971:135).

Cultural Schemata and Reading Comprehension

Cultural schema (Yule, 1996) is also called abstract schema (Nassaji, 2002; Oller, 1995 ;), story schema (Mandler, 1984), or linguistic schema (Ketchum, 2006). Ketchum proposed cultural schema as a culture-specific extension of content schema because it refers to the role of cultural membership that is needed to fully comprehend the meaning intended by the writer. Abstract in nature, cultural schema involves cultural familiarity and helps readers to reconstruct the story line through referring to more personally and culturally relevant scripts (Oller, 1995). Several studies proved the positive effects of cultural familiarity on reading comprehension (Alptekin, 2006; Steffensen, Joag-Dev and Anderson, 1979). Steffensen stated that when students are familiar with cultural norms, they make a better interpretation of the text they process.

Context of the Study

This study was carried out in regional medium secondary school in Rangareddy district of Andhra Pradesh. The strength of the students as sample is ten and the five teachers from different schools were selected.

All the learners selected for this experiment were studying in class nine, and all of them had been having Telugu as the medium of instruction for six years. The average age group of the learners was 14 years. The reading comprehension abilities of the learners in English were not to the extent expected by the textbook writers. The learners were given questionnaires to study their social and cultural background, and their reading habits. This helped in framing a general profile of the readers.

Research Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used in this study. The tools employed for the present study was a set of questionnaires prepared separately for students and teachers of the school under study. Apart from this, informal discussions with students and teachers were organized. Pre-tests and post tests were administered to students so as to collect the data for the study. The details of the tools are as follows:

A questionnaire is an effective tool to collect information about the subjects of the study. Two questionnaires were used in this study- one for the students and the other for the teachers.



The aim of the questionnaires was to elicit detailed information about the background of the respondents, the reading habits of the learners, and the opinions of the students about the current reading texts being taught.

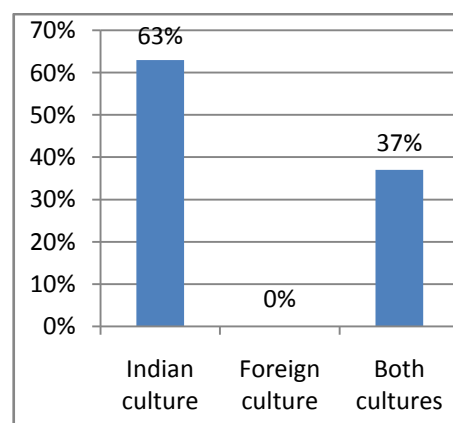
First part of the questionnaire tried to elicit the information with regard to the educational background of the students' parents and family members. The second part of the questionnaire focused on information regarding the reading habits of the learners, the types of books they usually read and their opinion on the current reading texts taught in the school. It also tried to probe whether the prescribed texts were interesting or they felt the texts were alien to them. In the third part of the questionnaire, the researcher tried to get information on the experimental texts given to them. The questions in this part also tried to find out whether the subjects were interested to read them, whether the culturally familiar texts would enhance the reading comprehension of the readers, and it also sought to know the opinions of the subjects on whether they could be included in their prescribed text books.

The aim of the administration of pretest is to know the subjects' proficiency levels of reading. Apart from this, it has also been aimed to know whether the learners have difficulty in comprehending the culturally unfamiliar texts. The core aim of the posttests was to know to what extent the subjects' comprehension levels of reading are increased after teaching the culturally familiar texts. In addition, it has also been intended to know whether the learners could produce more elaborations of the culturally familiar texts than culturally unfamiliar texts, and to know which ones oblige the learners to make more distortions.

Analysis and discussion of results

Students' Reading Preferences

Almost all the subjects had the habit of reading Telugu daily news papers but no subject had the habit of reading English news paper as they did not have access to it. All the subjects had the habit of reading stories, plays or/and comics. As can be seen in the graph below, 63% of the subjects liked to read the stories, comics or/and plays of Indian culture and the rest of them liked reading the books on Indian as well as foreign culture. In addition, 75% of the subjects liked reading English books and the rest of them did not.



Graph-1



Difficulty Level of the Texts

Almost all the subjects expressed their disappointment that most of the texts in their textbook were very difficult to understand as they were culturally unfamiliar to them. Indeed, 33% of the subjects felt difficulty in understanding the words and 33% of them had problems in understanding concepts of most of the texts in their prescribed English textbook and the rest of them said that they could not understand the words and concepts of most of the texts as they were totally unfamiliar to them.

Asked to mention the texts which they had difficulty in understanding, the subjects said that the texts such as *An Unwanted Passenger* (33.33%), *The Course of True Love* (41.66%), *The School for Sympathy* (58.33%), *Winter Sleep* (8.33%), *Keeping Cool* (16.66%) and the entire Non-detailed text (8.33%), and 50% of the subjects felt that *About Ben Adhem* (poem) is very difficult to understand.

Relevance of Texts

Forty percent of the subjects expressed their view that the current textbook did not fulfill their needs and the majority of the subjects (50%) said that the present textbook addressed their needs only to a very little extent as they were not familiar to their prior background knowledge and the lessons were not associated with the subjects' lives. One subject expressed her opinion that though a few lessons in the textbook were relevant other texts were not at all relevant. Indeed, all the subjects suggested that the texts those are not associated with their needs have to be replaced with the texts which fulfill their needs.

In fact, all the subjects said that they enjoyed reading the texts given by the researcher. They also suggested that the texts such as *Komuram Bheem* and *Bathukamma* which reflect their culture must be given sufficient space in their textbooks. Interestingly, one subject expressed her view that texts like *Komuram Bheem* can also be included in their history part of the social studies textbook.

Teachers' Responses to the Questionnaire

Almost all the teacher respondents expressed their view that current prescribed textbook does not take into consideration the learners' social and cultural background. They also told that the cultural unfamiliarity of the texts would be the cause for the poor performance of the learners.

Analysis of pre- and post test results

Quantitative Analysis of the Data

In order to examine the performance of the subjects in two tests based on the two texts the researcher quantified the data by comparing two tests in terms of mean scores and standard deviation, which helps us understand the variation between the two tests. Between these tests the first test is based on the text which is culturally unfamiliar to the subjects and the second test is based on the text familiar to the subjects' culture.

Following are the scores of two tests on reading comprehension of class IX students. Each test had a total of 40 marks.

Test I
Mean score: $120/10 = 12$

Test II
Mean score: $289/10 = 28.9$

Identifying the range of scores:

- a. In test I, the range is $(04-24) = 20$ marks
- b. In test II, the range is $(16-37) = 21$ marks

Analysis of Subjects' Reading Comprehension

The data set for the statistical analysis of subjects' comprehension contained the mean comprehension scores of two texts. The analysis focused on the following aspects:

- i. The mean score and the standard deviation of reading comprehension of the subjects for each text,
- ii. A comparison of variability in mean scores among four texts,
- iii. A comparison of mean scores of reading comprehension between the two texts

Results of standard deviation of two tests:

SD in Test I:
 $\sqrt{316/9} = 1.97$

SD in Test II:
 $\sqrt{326.9/9} = 2.00$

Analysis of Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Test I and Test II

From the above finding it is clear that the variation of performance in test II is almost same as the variation of performance in test I. So this means subjects have performed as uniformly as group in test I and test II. But, the mean score of test II is higher than in test I. This implies that the overall performance in test II [m.s = 28.9 (sd = 2.00)] is higher and it varied as equally as of performance in test I [m.s = 12 (sd = 1.97)].

The comparison of the two tests in terms of mean scores and standard deviation demonstrated the fact that the subjects better performed in test which is based on the culturally familiar text. On the contrary, their performance was very poor in test I which was based on the culturally alien text.

Descriptive Analysis of Subjects' Performance and Comprehension on the Texts Given

A thorough qualitative analysis was made on the comprehension and recall of the culturally familiar and unfamiliar texts presented to the subjects. The researcher's chief concern here was to see the degree of match which happened between the cultural schemata presupposed by the reading texts used in this study and the prior background knowledge availed by subjects during their interaction with these texts. The two texts were



analyzed based on the performance of the learners in the two tests given. Each text was analyzed based on the elaborations as well as distortions made by the learners for the question-answer protocols given.

Text 1: 'An Unwanted Passenger'

This text is associated with a theme which is culturally alien to Indian readers. Hence, it was assumed that this text is likely to pose problems of comprehending to subjects. The subjects had found it difficult to comprehend and recall the content of this text in a satisfactory manner. It was hypothesized that the cultural schemata operative in this text were not part of the knowledge base of all the subjects and that this would result in the failure of comprehension or the partial comprehension of the text.

The descriptive analysis of this text supports the schema theorists' assumption that a reader is not a passive recipient of the information which he or she encounters in a text. Instead, the meaning of a text begins as the result of an active interaction between the text and the background knowledge of the reader during the process of comprehending a text presented. We have support from the data observed in the study for the view assumed by schema theorists that the manner in which a text is comprehended depends significantly on the cultural schemata perceived by a reader as relevant to a satisfactory understanding of that text.

The question-answer protocols produced by the following subjects implied that the subjects felt difficulty in comprehending the text 'An Unwanted Passenger' because of the inability to use the cultural schemata appropriate to understand this text.

The responses to the question

'When the Malaysian said that he was going to have the dead snake for supper, how do you think the Englishman must have felt? ' as follows:

- 'Snake eating I no. my supper snake is no. my eating is only food.' (Subject 1)
- 'Chi python for eating!' (Subject 3&5)
- 'Malaysian men snake food eat!' (Subject 4)
- 'Malaysian was going to have the dead snake not supper' (subject6)
- 'You snake eat oh a snake a dirty snake my villages not a snake eat malaysian snakes eat. Snakes very dangerous yo how did they eat.'(subject 10)

Majority of the subjects did not have the relevant schemata with regard to the food culture of eating snakes. The response given by subject nine suggests that she could not even understand the question properly so she felt that it is the English man who wanted to eat the snake. It is obvious that the subjects who could not respond to the question did not have those particular schemata; thus, they failed to comprehend that particular part of the text they have read.



Text 2: 'Komuram Bheem'

The schemata presupposed by text 2 were assumed to be culture specific. It was noted that this text is woven round a theme that is culturally familiar to the readers/subjects. This text, unlike text 1, would not pose any problems to the subjects during the comprehension. The question-answer protocols based on text 2 implied that almost all the subjects succeeded in availing the cultural schema presupposed by this text.

Almost all the question-answer protocols based on text 2 showed that subjects did succeed in drawing appropriate inferences from the information actually happening in the text in order to build a satisfactory mental representation of the events in the text. A few inferences produced by the subjects based on text 2 are presented below.

The following inferences are drawn by the subjects to the question

'Why do you think Bheem was chosen as representative of people of eleven villages?'

- The villagers of the 11 villages wanted a trustworthy individual to take their grievances to the government because he knows Reading and writing. (subjects 1, 2,3 and 6)
- The government offered to give pattas in the 11 villages and wanted a trustworthy individual to take their grievances to the government. He was a sardar. (subject 4)

The following inferences are produced by the subjects to the question

'What do you think led Bheem to build an army to fight against the Nizam government?'

- Bheem fought for an army because he thought the negotiations were failed, both parties went for open war. (subjects.1, 3 and 6)
- Nizam government decided to occupy the tribal lands... (sub.4)
- Bheem refused and the negotiations were failed both parties went for open war (sub.5)

Conclusion

There is clear evidence that the schema-theoretic view of the reading process has helped us realize the complex nature of reading and the significance of the readers' contribution to the act of comprehending. We have also understood that reading means not just reading words of a text but it is the active interaction between the text and the readers' prior background knowledge.

However, the chore of untying the mystery of the reading process and helping learners acquire one of the most important skills needs our constant attention. In order to help learners to be good readers we have to put our constant effort in getting to know more and more about the process of reading.



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Conversationalization of Discourse in the Vice Chancellor's Messages in University Websites: A Study of Four University Websites in Karnataka

B. V. Rama Prasad

The aim of this paper is to look at the Vice Chancellor's or the president's message in the websites of four universities in Karnataka, two 'government' and two 'private' deemed universities. The paper looks for features of 'conversationalization' in the messages. It uses the concept of conversationalization from Fairclough (Fairclough 138) who argues that this is one of the features of the promotional culture. It also uses the framework of content analysis which focuses on objective, systematic and quantitative analysis of texts. (Kuljis 369) As the websites are increasingly becoming the main source of information about the universities for the students, such an analysis is relevant today.

Fairclough 1995 discusses the concept of conversationalization of discourse saying that it is an indication of the colonization of discourse by the promotional culture (see pp. 137-139). In his analysis of the discursive practices of British universities, he shows how features of the promotional culture have entered the discursive practices (see 140-166). This paper will try to see if such conversationalization is visible in the selected sample. It also will try to see if the private universities use more conversational aspects in their Vice Chancellor's or President's messages.

Content analysis tries to produce objectively verifiable and replicable inferences from texts (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18: see Saichaie, 2004 for an application of content analysis to the university websites). In this paper also an effort will be made to quantify the data for analysis using the framework of content analysis. The various steps of content analysis have been enumerated in Saichaie, 2004, p. Krippendorff, 2004, Kuljis, 2010. This paper uses the following steps: stating the aim, deciding on the samples, deciding the units of analysis and the system of coding, tabulating the results, and analysis of the results. As will be shown, the effort will be to provide a method of objectively analyzing data. Though this paper uses a very small sample, and analyses those samples for only one feature (conversationalization), it is hoped that the method can be used for larger sample as well.

The Aim & Sample

The paper will try to see if there is a difference in the degree of conversationalization in the different samples.

The paper analyses the websites of four universities of Karnataka – Bangalore University, University of Mysore, Christ University, and Jain University. All the universities belong to the same region of Karnataka, the adjoining districts of Bangalore and Mysore. Two of the universities are government universities (Bangalore University and University of Mysore: listed as state universities in List of Universities in Karnataka and in List of institutions of higher education in Karnataka, 2014). Two of them are private deemed universities listed as deemed universities in List of Universities in Karnataka and in List of institutions of higher education in Karnataka, 2014. All the four universities



offer the traditional post graduation courses like M. Sc., M.Com., M.A., etc. and also research programmes. The private universities which offer only technical courses have not been selected. Hence there is a uniformity in the sample which is that all the universities that are selected for analysis offer similar kind of courses, the only difference being whether they are government or private universities. Among the various pages in the websites, the paper has looked at the Vice Chancellor's message or the President's message where the Vice Chancellor's message is not available.

The Jain University does not have a Vice Chancellor's message: instead it has an introduction to the vice chancellor. As the president's message was in the form of the university introducing itself (as is the case with the other universities selected), it was included for analysis. For the purposes of this paper, only the message beginning from the first line of the address and the final conclusion have been used. For the time being, we will ignore the heading and the other multimodal aspects like images, though a thorough analysis will have to include these as well. As the purpose is to show that an objective and quantitative analysis is possible and to indicate further possibilities and not to draw general conclusions, it is hoped that this is satisfactory. The relevant WebPages were all downloaded on the same day, i.e. 19-12-2014.

Units of analysis and the system of coding:

As earlier said, the paper tries to look for features of conversationalization. It is assumed that the presence or absence of the personal pronouns is connected with conversationalization. For example, "I welcome you" is more conversational than "This University welcomes its students". One or two instances of such sentences may be accidental and hence may not have much significance. However, if there is a pattern, say one university uses ten personal pronouns as against another which uses only one, it cannot be merely accidental. Further, we look at four aspects connected with the conversationalization. These are:

- A-the use of first person personal pronoun 'I/me/my' as addresser
- B-the use of second person personal pronoun 'you' for addressee
- C-the conflating of the 'I' and the institution by using 'we/us/our/ours'
- D- the conflating of the 'you' with the institution by saying 'your institution'.

Of these the first three are easily quantifiable: the 'find' tool in MS Word can be used to find these words in the sample. The last one (conflating of the institution with the 'you') needs to be manually checked. For example, 'your duty' and 'your professors' are different because in the former, the student is still seen as an outsider whereas in the latter he/she is seen already as part of the institution.

The tabulation of results:

The following results were obtained using the above system of analysis. As the system of coding has been made explicit earlier, it is hoped that these results can easily be verified. Further application of this coding to larger samples may be undertaken.



University	A I/ME/MY as addresser	B YOU as addressee	C 'WE' as addresser (conflating the 'I' with the institution.)	D 'YOU' conflated with the institution	total words
Bangalore University	2	1	17	nil	1881
University of Mysore	2	1	0	nil	331
Christ University	7	13	1	1(your university)	295
Jain University	0	16	0	1(your professors)	327

Analysis of results:

In terms of A, Jain University is the least conversational, followed by Bangalore University and the University of Mysore. Christ University is the most conversational, the difference being very significant.

In terms of B, Bangalore University and the University of Mysore are the least conversational followed by Christ University. Jain University is the most conversational. The difference between the government universities and the private deemed universities is significant.

In terms of C, Bangalore University seems to be most conversational, followed by the University of Mysore and Christ University. Jain University is the least conversational. The difference between the Bangalore University and other Universities seems to be very significant. However, it is to be noted that the Bangalore University sample has the most number of words (1881). A further analysis of the reference to the university in the third person in these different websites and the percentage of first person references to the institutions may through further light upon this.

In terms of D, only Christ University and Jain University use it. Bangalore University and University of Mysore do not use it at all. Though the difference is not significant, the fact that this possibility of addressing the student as if he/she is already a part of the set up is an important promotional strategy.

Conclusions:

If there is difference between the government universities and the private universities in terms of the conversationalization of discourse in this sample, then this difference is clearly visible with respect to B. That is, personalization of the addressee as 'you' in the second person is the most visible difference. A further analysis and the fine tuning of the system of coding are necessary to come to any conclusions regarding the features A, C and D.

However, it is hoped that the paper has shown that there a possibility of using linguistics to make verifiable claims about the nature of the university websites. It is possible to move beyond general statements about the marketization of the discursive practices of the universities and to specifically show how this marketization is reflected in the linguistic practices. It is of course possible to further refine the approach to include



more factors and to analyze larger and more complex sample or to analyze more aspects of the websites like images and hyper links.

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Impact of Social Media on English Language Learning in Digital Era

N. Sagar, Pilli Vijay Kumar & B. Suresh

Introduction:

As it is a digital era, most of the people are becoming tech-savvy. People give preference to digital devices as it makes communication faster and convenient. It spreads its wings into teaching field. If the teachers follow old methods and approaches to teach English language, it will become difficult for students to get command over English language. For example, if the teacher follows Grammar and Translation method, the students can't improve their language skills. So the teacher has to follow modern technology to teach English language. Students should adapt Social Media Language Learning (SMLL) to enhance and strengthen their language skills. The objective of this article is to examine how does social media impact on learning English language in the digital era.

Case study:

In the under developed and developing countries, states, districts, and cities, learning English language became a complex challenge as people are not familiar with SMLL. A case-study was done by us on a group of students for three months. Experimental group learnt about SMLL and involved in different group activities in which they wrote messages and communicated through video-calls. Smart phone, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter became their powerful tools to communicate with one another. In this process, as they involved typing text, chatting, communicating, reading and writing skills. There was a healthy atmosphere in which they felt comfortable to learn English language without pressure. As language learning is an unconscious process, it became easy for them to improve their skills. As traditional groups are not following SMLL, they could not improve their language skills effectively when compared to experimental group.

Impact of Social Media On English Language Learning:

As the Smart-Phones contain mobile dictionary, internet facility, WhatsApp, Hike messenger, Video calling, it makes communication in English easy. If the learners have any doubt, they can refer to dictionary & download language games, exercises on grammar and download some other videos in English like speeches, seminars, lessons, mock-interviews, mock Group Discussions etc. by listening these videos, they will be familiar with the vocabulary, usage of the words, sentence construction etc. It helps a lot to learn English language in comfort zone. They need not attend particularly spoken English classes. Though they are busy in their work, they use social media in their free time or in a travelling or leisure time.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is one of the ways to learn English language. It is advanced to Audio-lingual method in which the learner listens videos by having headphones and speak or utter dialogues through microphone. One can improve



pronunciation by listening phonetics, which is the study of speech sounds. One can follow standard pronunciation by getting command over phonetics. The exercise on pronunciation helps to improve pronunciation skills.

WhatsApp is one of the handy app in which group can be maintained to share information, jokes news in English. So they use English by reading and writing texts in English. Facebook, Twitter makes the world as a village in which everyone can share their ideas with others. They prefer to communicate in English Language only. Once they addict to these social sites, they login at least one or twice in a day. Viber, Skype helps to improve spoken skill. As English is a link language and International language, they prefer to communicate in English rather than using regional language.

In the part of Digital world, WIFI services are extending in all railway stations, bus stations, colleges and important public places. So the flexibility and feasibility will be at hand of the learners. They can use social media through WIFI services.

The following are the few useful websites to improve English language.

TED: (Technology, Environment and Design)

TED is the platform where everyone can get knowledge of the subject and improve communication skills by listening various topics in English. Experts deliver lecture in less than 18 minutes. It is the fact that listening the basis to learn any language. It gives scope to listen in healthy atmosphere.

Babble: It is one of the social networks where one can improve language skills by chatting with others.

English baby: One can learn or good at idioms by following this site. Idioms enriches English language and it offers videos and lessons in English on particular topics

Talk and learn: It is a language exchange community which allows people to share information with others by creating and uploading profile and pictures.

Duolingo: It the website which helps to translate the English word into regional or native language.

Conclusion:

English language learning through social media is a learner- centered approach and easy approach to the learners irrespective of time. Social media a boon and bane also.. It depends on the way which we use it. It replaced teacher-centered or traditional teaching. It facilitated the learner to learn in a healthy and free atmosphere. It is free from restrictions. People should adapt new technology to improve not only their language skills but also to improve communication and interpersonal skills.



Social Networks And Language Teaching And Learning

M. Uma Devi

It has been the practice of dissemination of knowledge in various ways since times immemorial. If we consider the history of teaching and learning, in ancient days the pupils were sent to Gurukulas and by living with the guru, they not only gained knowledge of academics and war traits but also acquired required life skills. The earliest form of teaching and learning was oral i.e. drilling and recitation. During this process the learner was totally dependent on the teacher. Over a period they started writing on palm leaves. Most of the education was imparted orally and even the evaluation was done in the form of oral assessment and thus focusing more on their memory and clear pronunciation.

Later due to scientific and technological advancement, many changes occurred. The change percolated even into the teaching and learning process. With the invention of printing press in 16th century by John Gutenbergh, a drastic change occurred in various fields especially in teaching and learning. With the available printing technology, later the books have been published in different languages resulting in the availability of study material anytime, which has led to weaken the learner's memory.

As a result of this, different methods of teaching emerged based on the need from time to time. To cite a few - Grammar -Translation method, Bilingual method, Direct method, Audio-Visual method etc. All these methods are more or less the teacher -centered by which learner's speaking and listening skills were neglected to a great extent. Thereby, even after their graduation or post-graduation the graduates or post-graduates are unable to speak or write on their own. This has paved way for a paradigm shift in teaching which resulted in learner-centered teaching.

Further, scientific and technological advancement has a great impact on education. With the development in communication systems, teaching and learning has become a challenge task to be taken up on a wider perspective. Thereby it has become more relevant to the recent times and applicable to global standards. Apart from this, in the modern days language competence is treated as a skill but not language as a subject. Earlier language was taught through literature coupled with morals. Due to scientific and technological development the focus is mostly laid on language development forgetting that the study of literature is the backbone of one's personality and social development.

History of Social Networking

The term Social Networking is coined by J.A. Barnes in the year 1954. A social structure made of nodes that are generally individuals or organizations. A social network represents relationships and flows between people, groups, organizations computers or other information/knowledge processing entities.



According to Oxford Dictionary

“A network of social interactions and personal relationships; -A dedicated website or other application which enables users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc.”

According to Dictionary .com social networks in a general meaning

“a website where one connects with those sharing personal or professional interests, place of origin, education at a particular school, etc.”

But it also gives a technical explanation on the same as

Any website designed to allow multiple users to publish content themselves. The information may be on any subject and may be for consumption by (potential) friends, mates, employers, employees, etc. The sites typically allow users to create a "profile" describing themselves and to exchange public or private messages and list other users or groups they are connected to in some way. There may be editorial content or the site may be entirely user driven.

Content may include text, images (e.g. (<http://flickr.com/>), video (e.g. (<http://youtube.com/>) or any other media. Social networks on the web are a natural extension of mailing lists and bulletin boards.

At first, this group networking website is introduced at Harvard University by Mark Zuckerberg as intra-network for internal communicative purpose. Soon it was used for smooth and faster administrative and communicative purpose. But later it has been gradually extended to other campuses finally resulting in the form of social interaction through the mode of internet of Social Networking as face book which has become the most popular social network. In general, it is described as an online community of people with a common interest who use a website or other technologies to communicate with each other and share information, resources, etc. Over a period, a number of websites increased with specific aim to bring the virtual communities together and foster interaction among these group members allowing them to share either professional knowledge and experience or personal information and communicate with others who use that website makes one's network stronger. All networks do not have open access to everyone. Some of them are available only to registered users of certain age groups and professions.

Examples of the popular social networking websites include: MySpace, Facebook, Bebo, YouTube, Last.fm, LinkedIn, Academia.edu, About me, blogger , dailybooth , pledge wing , flicker, google+, hr.com, Net log, Twitter & my heritage.

Social Networks and Education

The system of education has been undergoing transformation over a period. Recent trends in scientific and technological development has a great impact on imparting education especially due communication networks .As a result of this advancement,



educational institutions are going for implementation of digital system in teaching. It has been rightly stated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that Geography must be taught through visuals rather than explaining/describing in the form of a theory for visual images have a deep impact on the learners' mind. Thus, nowadays teaching is taking place with audio-visual aids. A vast amount of information is made available on the websites for the learner to get by just a click. Thereby learners' autonomy has increased in gaining knowledge and gathering information on any subject. The children are able to adopt latest technologies rather than elders and are able to become innovative at a very young age.

Social networks are not only used for sharing information but they also help in promoting human contacts online. The learners are able to gain knowledge on various things such as customs, life style, traditions and food habits and their festivals. The users of these networks form groups and share their feelings and opinions on various issues. In this process their communicative and analytical skills will be enhanced.

Due to increased internet users especially student community, teaching has become very easy. Even in schools and colleges the respective class groups are creating group mail ids so that the teachers are able to communicate any information such as posting assignment suggesting to follow/browse some sites to complete their assignments, submission deadline, posting attendance or results. It has become very easy for both teacher and the taught. Besides this, the learners have an opportunity to listen to expert lectures through online and also are able to post their queries and get clarified of their doubts. Social Networking is not only used for sharing knowledge but it is also used for business promotion in the form of advertisements by introducing new products. Now, more than half of the giant social network's advertising revenue is coming from ads for its 1.2 billion users on smart phones and tablets. And it's buying WhatsApp after outbidding rival Google Inc. for the most popular mobile app for sending messages on smart phones.

Though many people have apprehensions about the internet and social networking, that there are risks inherent in online social networking, there are also many potential benefits. It's equally important to be vigilant when kids are getting involved in online social networking, but it's also good to encourage positive relationships through various avenues, including the Internet.

Advantages of Social Networking

- Vast amount of information is available on the websites.
- Information can be spread across very fast.
- Online communities can be very diverse and expose your child to many new viewpoints, ideas, and opinions that children may not be familiar with.
- Because social networking—like everything else online—is constantly evolving, kids can become more familiar with new and emerging technologies, as well as increase their media literacy through exposure to many different types of online media that are shared by their friends.
- People can enlightened of their worth and rights and there are instances to bring about revolutionary changes through network communication.



- Kids tend to use social networking to augment—not replace—their real-world relationships, helping them learn to communicate in many different ways. Social networking is becoming an increasingly important method of communicating in schools and the workplace, so it's good for children to be prepared to communicate through sites like Face book and LinkedIn.
- Challenges teachers' potential and drives them to be more innovative.
- Learners can be guided to explore knowledge resources.
- Lessens the teachers' work and becomes more transparent.
- Learner's autonomy increases and the learner need not be totally dependant on the teacher unlike earlier days.
- Youth can further explore topics that they're interested in through online social networking. By making connections with other people who have similar interest, kids can learn and exchange knowledge with others with whom they may not have had the opportunity to interact with.
- Learners have the opportunity to do on line courses at their convenient time
- Learners can listen to expert lectures at their convenient time and post doubts and queries if any.
- Teachers often take advantage of students' social networking abilities to create class blogs, discussion forums, videos, and more. By collaborating with other students and teachers through online social networking, children are able to build stronger school/college communities.
- Social networking can be advantageous for career building. LinkedIn is a particularly valuable business tool; over 200 million people are members, including hiring managers from many top companies. If one wants, one's profile is designed to function as an online resume, detailing one's education, career history (with recommendations from one's colleagues), and creative portfolio. This platform encourages users to connect with people working in their organizations, and to endorse their colleagues for the skills they display in their daily work. One can learn how to take advantage of all that LinkedIn has to offer with this LinkedIn Training Course.

Disadvantages of Social Networking.

- The primary disadvantage of social networking is that most people do not know how to network effectively.
- As the learners have the freedom to browse on the net if they misuse it, it results in a negative way.
- Learners autonomy may hamper or challenge the teachers in the classroom
- Learners may be distracted to view various sites which are not useful to them and may waste their time by getting addicted to browse different sites.
- All learners may not have the access to internet thereby the gulf between the students may be widened.
- Network security may hamper the dissemination of information if it is misused by a few.
- There are many instances which show how some miscreants misuse and cause trouble to others.



- The more the children are used to social networking, there is a possibility of being exposed to wild, idiotic ideologies, children would easily be able to find on the internet could poison their thought process which in turn potentially lead to further issues in their lives.

Conclusion:

To conclude, Social net work is very useful to enhance one's morale by developing number of contacts. At the same time one should remember the golden rule of social networking is to avoid putting everything online that could reflect badly on one's personal or professional life. If one wants to use a social media site for personal as well as professional networking, consider creating a separate account under a nickname, so one can keep one's professional account clean. As everything has two sides social networking too if used in the right way one can reap immense benefits otherwise one has to lose in a chaotic way.

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Sustainable Future: Need of Restructuring Curriculum

Vidya Vati

Introduction:

The concept of 'sustainable development' was defined by Brundtland Commission in 1987 as development 'that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. With onset of industrial revolution and advancement in technology man began to exploit natural resources recklessly and has done great harm to Mother Nature on which he is dependant for his survival. In order to have Sustainable future we must use our resources wisely. Education is a very powerful tool to initiate any change. At Rio Summit in 1992, The Agenda 21 states: 'Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving capacity of people to address environmental and developmental issues'. The education for sustainable future needs to include Teacher Development Programme also. Only then commitment to sustainable life style can be embedded in the ethos of educational institutions.

Challenges:

1. Global warming has triggered extreme climatic changes which include erratic rainfall, frequent cyclones, landslide, and flash-flood.
2. Health of people is being affected owing to post disaster diseases like diarrhea, asthma, skin problem, dengue, dysentery, malaria etc.
3. Non-availability of clean water is another formidable challenge for modern world. Industrial effluent and other human garbage have polluted water resources. About 183 million people do not have access to safe drinking water.
4. Nearly half of the world population lives on 2 dollar a day. The world's 20% rich people consume nearly 75% of the planet's natural resources.
5. Waste management is a great threat to modern civilization.

Role of Language

Language is vehicle of communication. The written word has played a powerful role throughout history both in informing the people and motivating action for any change. Declarations, literature have been used as instruments of social change. English is spoken all over the world. English exists in multilingual society like India as a tool for accessing ideas and opportunities for participating in specific context. Skills of critical thinking concepts such as inequality, gender equality, sustainable future, sustainable consumption and language competencies can be integrated.

Revise Educational Programmes

For sustainable future there is need to integrate theme of sustainable development in formal and informal pedagogical material adapting to different cultural context and needs of learning. School curriculum must be restructured from nursery to university to



include the study of problems linked to social, economic and environmental sustainability of our planet.

Conceptual Framework

Sustainable development is a very wide and complex issue. To create awareness among students about environment I used different methodologies in my study. Theories of Collaborative Learning, Experiential learning and Story Telling guided my study. I am presenting three lessons. The participants in the study received pre-test, treatment and post- test.

A set of instruction was developed. The unit of instructions was completed in six sessions and all lessons had specific objectives, content and activity. Each lesson involved students in investigating, brainstorming, problem solving.

Lesson 1: Importance of Conservation

The objective of this lesson was to sensitize students to the problem of water and develop understanding of planning and organizing.

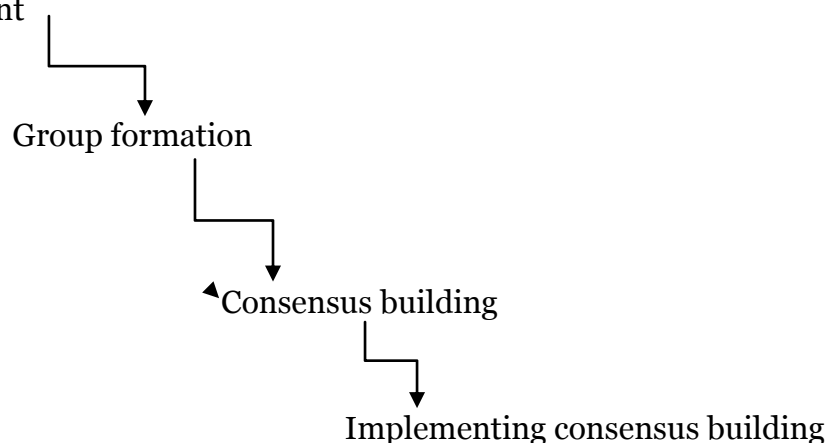
The first lesson was community problem solving activity. The students visited two localities collecting data on the use & wastage of drinking water, developed an improvement plan and presented their projects to their classmates. In the class the teacher initiated discussion on sustainable future based on water.

Language Implications: students can learn language as easily with non-linguistic problem. The focus was on the use of authentic language to interact with people. No attention was paid to grammar. The students created tangible linguistic products in analyzing the problem and developing improvement plan.

Methodology: Collaborative Learning

This theory defines learning as the process where knowledge is created through collaborative work. Learners work together to search for meaning, solution or create product of their learning. In the process behavior and skills of learners develop.

Situation assessment





Lesson 2: Sustainable Consumption

The objective of the lesson was to change attitude of students towards sustainable consumption.

Story : Where There is Wheel

Puddukotai is a backward district in Tamilnadu, India. Here use of cycle became a social campaign for breaking barrier of life among women. In the beginning a few women learnt riding cycle. Those women encouraged others to learn cycling. Cycle became symbol of their liberation, their mobility. Presently more than 70000 women use cycle in this district. Young muslim women in high spirits can be seen riding cycle with their children or products for selling. Says Fatima, a school teacher, "I feel liberated on cycle. Now we don't depend on our sons, brothers or husband. We don't wait for bus." In Puddukotai cycle has empowered women in unique way. Women from all walks of life- agriculture labor, mine workers, nurses, teachers, aanganwadi workers—use cycle to do their daily chores. One of the leaders of this campaign from Kilakuruchi village says, the important thing is cycle has instilled confidence into women. Time is saved. Now women get more time to look after their home, children, even for themselves.

Process:

The teacher told the story and students listened. As a response task three questions asked:

1. What emotions did you feel during story?
2. Describe one character. How do you feel about her?
3. What does this story make you think about?

The teacher invited students to talk about their answers to the class.

Then students prepared to tell short local story in groups and set similar response task.

Language Implications: students develop listening skill and speaking skill. Methodology– Theory of storytelling learning guided the study. Stories convey powerful messages reminding us of different places and other times. Listening to stories create personal connections between the storyteller and audience, promote innovative problem solving. Storytelling builds confidence, develops language skills, encourage speaking and listening.

Lesson 3: Developing knowledge about Bio-diversity

The objective of this lesson was to develop in students understanding of real time environment and importance of bio-diversity.

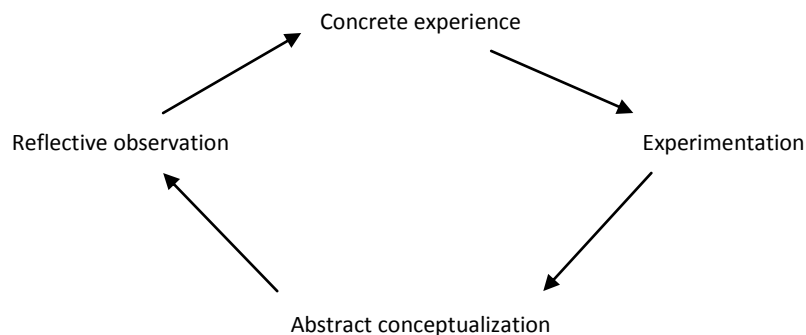
The activity was carefully planned, as such activities pose challenges for the teacher like – safety, cost of transport, supervision of large group. The teacher made pairs of thirty students and instructions were given.



The students visited Bio-diversity Park and immensely enjoyed the trip and appreciated first-hand experience of observing natural conservation site with rich wetland, grassland, a variety of food yielding species and medicinal herbs. They learnt practicing skills of enquiry, analysis and developed perception of importance of bio-diversity for human life. After visit all pairs wrote down their experience 'A Day in Our Life'.

Language Implications: In the process of interaction with park guide, making enquiries the students' speaking and listening skills developed, and composition developed their writing skill.

Methodology : Experience Learning theory guided this study. This process of learning focuses on the learning for individuals. One makes discoveries and experiments. Experiences form the basis for observation and reflection. [Kolb model]



The following questions guided the study:

1. What effect does the developed curriculum have on students' knowledge of sustainable development?
2. What effect does the developed curriculum have on students' knowledge of sustainable consumption?

Evaluation:

The teacher developed the test which was guided by the overall purpose of the study. The test consisted of knowledge assessment of environment. It used simple questions [1-yes, 2-no, 3-don't know].

Findings

Q1. What effect does the developed curriculum have on students' knowledge of sustainable development?

Prior to the curriculum implementation 2% students had knowledge of sustainable development, 86% did not have any knowledge and 12% students were uncertain. After the curriculum was developed 89% students had knowledge of sustainable development, 3% had not any knowledge, 8% were unsure. Several students defined S.D. as development



that can be continued. Some students defined it as development that fulfils needs for good life but also conserves natural resources for coming generation.

Q2. What effect does the developed curriculum have on students' knowledge of sustainable consumption?

Prior to instruction, students had very limited knowledge of sustainable consumption. After instruction, the students' response was encouraging. 90% students had knowledge of sensible consumption, 10% were unsure. They wanted that classroom practices regarding environment protection should reinforce academics. Conservation should be the talisman. Only then sustainable future can be ensured.

Conclusion:

Sustainable development is key sustainable future. To inculcate values and understanding for environment among youth curriculum needs to be restructured. Young people are major consumers as well as stakeholders in the conservation of natural resources. Even small changes in life style can make big difference."If we take care of small things, big thing will fall in its place." ELT can play effective role in motivating the world community to make honest and concerted efforts to achieve the goal of sustainable future.

Recommendations:

1. Education activities for ESD should be part of mainstream learning processes.
2. Knowledge of eco-friendly technology and sustainable consumption need to find due place in curriculum.
3. In curriculum traditional wisdom and indigenous know how should be included.

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Employability Skills among Engineering College Students - A Case Study

Ashok Vardhan Garikimukku

Introduction

Alvin Toffler, an American writer and futurist, known for his works discussing the digital revolution and corporate revolution says, “Those who succeed in the 21st century aren’t those who can read and write, but those who can unlearn, learn and relearn.” It is imperative that the student of the 21st century has to unlearn many faulty notions, learn and relearn the right concepts.

Most youth today are being patted and petted or pestered or pitied, when they actually should be trained to unlearn the wrong concepts already learnt in school and in life, learn the right concepts and go on relearning all the newer trends and technologies that are being born at the click of a mouse. They should be trained to be pitted against our modern world of defeatism and negativity in a spirit of uncompromising defiance. To achieve this magical metamorphosis, empowering them with the soft skills is the magic mantra. The youth will, undoubtedly, accept the challenge provided they are shown the way. In fact we need to catch them young and we need to catch them doing something right. Today, the corporate giants and industries, both private and public sector, are looking for talent who display proficiency in hard skills and versatility in soft skills.

The youth in the Indian context today are in dilemma of sorts. Everyone is an engineer today, at least academically and qualification-wise. But in reality and practicality, how many of them are good enough by normal standards. The rote method of educational system of the yore is pulling our future to the past. Most of the students are crazy for mathematics and science and they invariably neglect arts, humanities and languages. Moreover, you have a problem of outdated syllabus and theory –oriented teaching-learning process. This is the stark reality of the Indian output every year. So from where do we get the standard?

Quo Vadis – Where are you going?

The important question to be asked in this context is ‘Where are we going?’ Each and every human being enjoys certain innate skills and some skills are developed over time. Motor skills and cognitive skills play a major role but one shouldn’t underestimate the value of psychomotor skills which include soft skills.

By merely possessing soft skills, people won’t go places. In a world full of tough competition from people with better skills, abilities and qualifications, Darwin’s survival of the fittest suits the hiring trend these days. So everyone should strengthen themselves in the concept of soft skills with integrity and fidelity.



Different companies expect different qualities in their employees. Yet there are certain commonalities like emotional balance, cool approach, self awareness, motivation, critical thinking, time/stress/change management, adaptability, grooming, willingness to learn, team spirit and good communication ability. In simpler terms, attitudes, beliefs, value systems that are nurtured from childhood through various stages of life and the impact of heredity and the environment play a major role in determining what role a person can and will play in the larger picture of the company. For example, students in the Indian context spend about 17 to 18 years of their life till under graduation but they are still struggling with communication ability in English.

What could a language teacher do to nurture various soft skills and improve communication ability of his students? This was a simple question but it requires great thought. Besides teaching of LSRW, can he do something more for his students to get them ready for employment? On deeper thought and wide research, it was realized that only an English teacher is suited to play this all important role. He can communicate well and so he can improve his students' communication ability. Only he can work personally with the student for constantly monitoring them and correcting them, if need be. With all due respect to the teachers of other subjects, it is to be noted that the English teacher knows etiquette better than any other subject teacher and he in turn can teach it to his students. It may be a time taking process but it is worth investing your time and efforts in. Even through regular class room teaching of English subject, he can nurture soft skills.

A Case Study

The case study was about the researcher's practical experience when he worked in an engineering college in a remote place in the state of Andhra Pradesh from 2009 to 2013. In this college, about 60-80% students were from Telugu medium background having been educated in the Zilla Parishad schools. They were good at bad communication ability in English. They were gripped by apprehensions and misconceptions about the language ability. The average EAMCET rank was 70,000. The nature of the class was so heterogeneous and dynamic that one couldn't follow a single method of teaching. Most of them required individual attention and guidance. On the personal front, most of them also lacked a sense of direction in life.

It is in this context that a dire need to bridge the gap was immediately felt. The cloth was ready but it had to be stitched as per the requirements of the consumer and his context. Though the course structure wouldn't approve of it, the management encouraged the department of English to come out with a workable plan.

After a lot of deliberations, planning and re-planning, the following schedule was prepared keeping in mind the needs of the students in question:

1. Soft Skills	I B.Tech/I Sem to II/I	45 hours
2. Communication Skills	II/II to III/II	90 hours
3. Mock Tests/Interviews/GDs	IV/I	120 hours
4. Reasoning /Numerical Aptitude	II/I to III/II	60 hours



Three English faculty were employed for this purpose of delivering these modules I, II and III.

Some of the topics that were dealt with in Soft Skills category included SWOT analysis, Communication Skills, Presentation Skills, Goal-setting, Body Language, Time Management, Change Management, Leadership Styles, Lateral Thinking, Workplace Etiquette etc.

Under the Communication Skills category, lot of importance was placed on Functional English, Vocabulary Enhancement, LSRW Skills, RC (Reading Comprehension), Anchoring & MC (Master of Ceremonies), Role Plays, JAM, Public Speaking, Extempore Speeches, Debates, GDs, Mock Interviews, and Resume Preparation etc.

Materials and Methods Used

The primary goal of these classes was to empower students but not the teachers. Unfortunately in the regular classes, teachers speak and students are only relegated to the position of listeners. But here care was taken to ensure the reduction of talking time by the teacher and increase of student talking time. Teacher was only a facilitator of learning, not an instructor. Interactive method of T-L process was encouraged. Various individual, pair, group activities were conducted. Contextual learning from known to the unknown using real life situations known to the students was encouraged. Irrelevant and 'meaningless' examples have given way to relevant and up to date material of the present day information revolution. Case study of various problems people face was also conducted so that the students learn to study the situation deeply and widely, analyze, brainstorm and propose workable solutions.

Under Soft Skills category, lot of care was taken to ensure students understand psychological foundations of human beings so that they understand human behavior in general and their own behaviour in particular. A session on psychometric assessment was also conducted. Different components of Soft Skills were explained with practical experience of real people by using paper clippings, magazine clippings, audio-visual aids, charts, questionnaires etc.

A model 50 minutes class usually consisted of an activity for 5 to 10 minutes and brainstorming and wide discussion to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the topic being dealt with. The teacher would normally be very dynamic in his approach keeping in mind various counter questions that may be aroused by the students from time to time. In general, it was observed that the students understood various nuances of the topic by the end of each session. The class would end on a happy note with a lot of inputs both from students and the faculty. Lot of examples of lateral thinking culled from various sources was used to drive home the point.

For classes in communication skills, a different approach was followed. Starting from Functional English to Vocabulary Enhancement (Root Words, Synonyms, Antonyms etc), JAM, GD etc., concepts were learnt in detail through interactive lessons. Generally, the students were not good in English and so care was taken to teach them various aspects



of grammar also. Initially, some students were unwilling to participate actively in learning grammar. Slowly but steadily, they were brought back on course. For other concepts, students used to be active in the class because the classes involved a lot of activities. Presently, we were able to see more and more students coming out of their groove to participate in the activities braving the deadly stage fear.

In the IV B. Tech, importance was given to conducting Mock Tests based on the previous question papers of MNCs. The second day, discussion of the question paper was done. Mock sessions on GD, JAM, and Interview were conducted on the other days. Thus in IV/I, students had access to about 15 Mock Tests, countless sessions of GDs, JAM and Mock Interviews.

For improving communication ability, Globarena software and K-van software were used besides a number of practice sessions. For improving functional English, a book by name 'Function in English' published by the OUP was useful. Lot of activities of the e-Plus clubs of the Hindu was used with great success. Witty and humorous materials from the past and the present literature, corporate lessons, examples from cricket and movies, YouTube and Facebook, WhatsApp, paper clippings etc formed the crux of the material. For example, if we were speaking about self-confidence, a few clippings of Nick Vujicik or lot of success stories from the Britain Got Talent series served the purpose. Even the classics of Charlie Chaplin and Laurel & Hardy were used as part of the classes. The training materials available in the market were used and adapted to suit their changing requirements.

It is always the English teacher who should be the change he wants to see in his students. He has to walk the talk and talk the walk. Teaching 'interpersonal skills' is not about making oneself more powerful. It is about making one's students more powerful. The aim of teaching communication skills was not about making oneself a better communicator. Teaching time management is not about the teacher learning time management but helping the students learn it. However, the vice versa was also true. Both the student and the teacher could benefit out of these activities. Then the teacher would naturally walk the talk and talk the walk.

One notable achievement was the SWOT analysis session. It was fun, entertaining and more importantly self-illuminating experience leading to self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem and eventually esteem of others because only if you understand your own strengths and weaknesses and accept yourself as you are. You can understand others' strengths and weaknesses and accept them as they are.

Students were encouraged to read fiction and non-fiction and we were able to find improvement in their reading habits. Though there weren't many, it was good to watch people taking after the habit of reading.

Conclusion

If someone was able to communicate effectively and learn to behave with dignity and modesty, he could have a transformational effect on his employability. Learners start



this journey in school by learning the bolts and nuts of English language and behavior but they need to piece together the nuts and bolts to actually put this learning to practice so that they can communicate purposefully and behave appropriately. When this is done, the corporate world will open their doors to them and embrace them into its family.

In total, students were constantly encouraged and meticulously mentored to develop high levels of academic, social, personal integrity and value systems, step outside comfort zones, broaden circle of friends and circle of influence, improve communication ability and enjoy a balanced life style.

It is said that practice makes man perfect but is it actually true? Does bad practice lead to perfection? It is not sufficient that the management wants it and the teacher teaches it but it is always the stakeholders who have to grasp their importance for their future. If they find classes like this useful, enriching and empowering, half the battle is won. The fact that 110 students out of 140 eligible candidates were placed in MNCs proved beyond doubt that classes were treading the right path. Even during the academic year 2012-2013, 98 students out of 120 eligible students were placed. There is no denying the fact that the future of the students was in safe hands. Yet it was only a small step- a step in the right direction. Moreover, the researcher also knows that

“We have promises to keep
And miles to go before we sleep
And miles to go before we sleep.”

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Unsaid Things and Quiet Moments of the film Aloha

Dr. Mrudula Lakkaraju

I would like to start the article quoting from my other article titled "Unsaid Things and Quiet Moments in Communication Skills"

" There is a need to instil the values of unsaid things and quiet moments. That every moment of silence need not be filled with noise, as we fear them to be deafening, with the right value system the same silence can be reassuring and comforting." (IJELLS, April 2015, P.187)

After long I have come across a movie which unlike other movies, filled with words, expressions, background score and OSTs, in its own unique way promotes the very concepts I discussed in my published article.

The credits of the film start with an old Hawaiian song introducing us to the concepts of Hawaiian history culture and the American presence as coloniser. Interestingly the title of the film 'Aloha' is a all encompassing concept which resonates in many ancient traditions like India. We Indians have many such all encompassing concepts. For instance the concept of Namaskaram/Namaste is not just a symbol of greeting, it also stands for humility, humbleness, respect, greeting, surrender and many other things. Likewise 'Aloha' is a word that indicates affection, peace, compassion, mercy, heart full of feeling, the ability to influence, sincerity of the heart along with a Hello and a Goodbye. The 'Aloha Spirit' pervades the movie and hovers over the humans of this story.

The plot line is a very simple downright commercial with Bradley Cooper who plays a character on assignment in Oahu, Hawaii as a military contractor. Brian Gilcrest reconnects with his old girl friend Tracy Woodside (Rachel McAdams), now married to an Air Force recruit (John Krasinski). He also spends time with Allison Ng (Emma Stone), a fighter pilot who watches every move that he makes. As they travel throughout the lush terrain, Brian finds himself falling for his guide, while his conversations with provide a shocking revelation from their past. The remainder of the movie is how a hard core professional thwarts his own multi- million mission to gain Ng's trust and make peace with his past girlfriend and his past mistakes. The setting of the story is Hawaii, where the local people earmark a certain area to themselves. Gilcrest and Ng negotiate with them. The natural beauty of Hawaii with its deep cultural view of the elements around them form the setting.

The plot and characterisation are interesting but what is more interesting is the insertion of various scenes which curiously depict communication without words. On one hand we have silence and quiet moments which give us an opportunity for introspection and on the other hand we have some effort of communication which cannot be contained in words. There is so much more beyond words that the space between the individuals communicating is charged up with meaning and it requires understanding of it on a



different plane. Both these kinds of communication improves the empathetic quotient of an individual and thus making him/her a better communicator.

Brian Gilcrest is a man who pursued his dream for aircraft and space travel. He joins the US air force, is injured, takes off from full active life into a more commercial role, that of a military contractor for a millionaire. He is hard core professional, seasoned in life and does not get personal emotions get in the way of professional decisions. (He doesn't even react to a cute baby's picture of a colleague) As he lands in Hawaii for his new assignment we see glimpses of the western perception of this country which is traditional. The visitors are greeted with a dance where the dancers in Luau dresses in an effort to uphold this perception.

Amidst all this mad rush for words, perceptions and aspirations the directors takes us through with a story that has very little to do with words.

At the airport we are introduced to Tracy Woodside who symbolically is Head of forensics, somebody who has access to tools for finding out more about everything. She ambushes Gilchrist and inviting him for dinner.

On reaching the office of the billionaire boss Carson he greets Brian not by a formal greeting but by giving him a back massage. We understand later in the movie that it is almost a motherly soothing action of healing on an injured child. Carson communicates with Brian nonverbally with an informal and almost ridiculous back massage.

Gilcrest and Ng take a trek through forest to meet the seventh generation of King of Hawaii. Ng, who is a quarter Hawaiian, observes on their way " This place has lots of Manna." The King refuses to Gilcrest's terms of agreement to build an airfield on the island. Ng tries to be a part of the conversation, is snubbed by Gilcrest. But slowly she warms up to the King, has her own unsaid means of communicating with him and in the end he agrees to the very same conditions Gilcrest offers. The King says at the end of their visit "I was fed a lot of manna from both of you tonight (and then pointing to Ng) especially from you"

We now are introduced to the concept of Manna. It means many things like

- In bible the food miraculously provided for the Israelites in the wilderness during their flight from Egypt.
- Spiritual nourishment of divine origin.
- Something of value that a person receives unexpectedly: viewed the bonus as manna from heaven.
- A dried exudate of certain plants, especially the Eurasian ash tree *Fraxinus Ornus*, formerly used as a laxative.
- A sweet granular substance excreted on the leaves of plants by certain insects, especially scale insects and aphids, sometimes harvested for food.
- Any substance that can be metabolized by an animal to give energy and build tissue



The defined meanings and the intended meanings of the dialogues indicate that the word manna can be more than what is defined, there is lot unsaid about this word. it represents a concept of nourishment that goes beyond the obvious.

The King gives Gilcrest a word of advice hoping to bring out the humane side which respects nature. He says

"The sky has a lot to say tonight, stick around, you will skin your knees on eternity bro"

Gilcrest visits Tracy as promised for dinner and the old friend confronts him. We learn that they were supposed to be together but Gilcrest backs out of the relationship. At Tracy's house we have one the most interesting scenes that contributed to the design of this paper. Onto an arguing Tracy and Gilcrest, walks Tracy's husband John Woodside.

This is what happens...

John leans on the refrigerator, holds a beer in his hand, watches Tracy and Gilcrest, sighs, walks up to him, squeezes Gilcrest's left arm and shoulder, signs a thumbs up with his bottle of beer, smiles, walks two steps, turns back points a finger at him and leaves.

And this is how Gilcrest interprets it as...

"Good evening Brian, welcome to my comfortable home, I know you used to see my amazing wife, check out my manliness dude, I have been working out every day, Hell Yeah, I have moved in the second she was available and I am a little too handsome and a little too happy to ever see you as a threat Brian, Good Evening"

The flurry of events that follow are as follows. Gilcrest comes to know that Carson is putting a nuclear bomb in his satellite. Ng comes to know of this and accuses him of unfairness to the people of Hawaii. Tracy too confronts John about his silence, he is disturbed and leaves her. Tracy comes to meet Gilcrest at his hotel. Gilcrest guesses that Grace, Tracy's daughter is his child. The separation from his lover Ng is forcing Gilcrest to start seeing things in another way. Gilcrest helps Carson launch his satellite and after that he sends a self destructive software and the satellite bursts into pieces. He earns back Ng's respect. He plans to lie low for a while.

He meets Tracy and knows that the 'silent' John has actually written her a letter and it reads like this.

Dear Tracy,

You asked me to speak my mind. so here it is, my mind. Do not penalise me for not being one of those flowery people who shoot all their feelings like a big spray like a fire hydrant on a summer day. I just hated the way you changed when Gilcrest came back to Tanoan. But, I don't like to hate. Its bad for my brain. Every night when I come home I start afresh. I don't bring what happens at down there, here. I may not be the original



owner of your heart, but I am the better owner and a much healthier option too. You have no idea, the way you comment when I come through the squeaky back door.

Woody.

As Tracy reads the letter for the first time Brian Gilcrest hears all that is unsaid. He realises that, he never heard the squeaky back door and that Woody truly loves Tracy and Vice Versa. He is a changed man, sensitised by his brief companionship with Ng. He also realises that he does not belong with Tracy. Tracy agrees and they decide to part ways. He stays for a day as a friend. The next morning when John returns home he finds Brian in his kitchen. What follows is one of another quiet moment in the film 'Aloha'.

Brian and John come face to face and communicate with each other not saying a word. The subtitles run like this.

- I know you are Gracie's father
- I am glad you know
- Yes, this is awkward, and yes, I want my family back.
- It was always your family, Woody. They are all crazy in love with you.
- Did you sleep with my wife?
- No, I slept with Ng.

The reader now understands who said what.

The army general who lambasted Brian for his mistake calls him back for re-dress and offers acceptance for his actions. After all we realise Carson had malicious intentions on his mind. Carson is arrested and Brian Gilcrest gets the general's approval to pursue Ng, contrarily he was the one who threatened him away from her in the first place. Ng and Gilcrest patch up.

Gilcrest has a few more things to do. One is to visit Grace. He visits her in her dance class and they both communicate with each other without words and without subtitles. She asks him with an expression in her eyes if he is her father, he says, with an expression, yes, she comes out running, hugs him and goes back dancing a happy girl. Brian Gilcrest has mastered this art of communication of 'unsaid things and quiet moments'.

This very quality, we, the communication skills experts call as 'empathy'.

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