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From the Editor's Desk

Inter-cultural Interaction for Second Language Acquisition: The Latest ELTIF Project

ELTIF is launching a new project, after trying out in two phases: Interaction between Malayalam speaking school children and Tamil speaking college students. Of course, the medium of interaction and communication naturally happens to be English language. Yet another way of natural language learning.

In 2021 and '22, ELTIF brought educated non-Malayali speakers from the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu for interacting with the children at a Malayalam medium school in the heart of Kochi city. St. Joseph's High School Chathiath hosted the interactive event, with the support of the parents and public. It was a Chennai-based reputed institution—SDNB Vaishnav College for Women—that volunteered to send about 15 UG and PG students to Kerala on a cultural exchange mission. They mingled with the students and teachers of the school in Kochi, interacted with the children both in the classrooms and outdoors for four days.

ELTIF mediated between the host school and the guest college. It succeeded in convincing both parties that it was a sort of 'mutual benefit scheme'. Though students in a city college, most of them had had their schooling in villages, or in the Tamil medium schools in the city; a few from English medium schools, too. Most of them still lack the confidence to speak in English. Inhibition rules the roost. The artificiality of using English for interaction with peers and teachers prevents them from making the best use of 'the language of opportunity'. On the other hand, the college has annual placement processes through which students of all streams—arts, science, commerce etc. —get placed, may not be in high-salaried positions. Most of them prefer a job to higher studies; and they know very well that proficiency in English plays the decisive role in job market, in a city like Chennai. Therefore, when they got a chance to go out and mingle with others using English, they grabbed the

opportunity.

At the Kerala schools, the situation is no better than anywhere else in India. Classroom teaching goes on and on by taking care of exam marks and promoting to the next higher classes. Perhaps, better than anywhere else in India, students are aware of the importance of English for both higher studies and career prospects. Still, sad to say, their needs are hardly satisfied except in some 'good' schools. Therefore, children, and parents are very much interested in promoting such interaction programmes. These two mutually complementing factors help ELTIF in bringing them together.

What are the special features of this project? First, it is learning a foreign language the natural way—there is no option other than 'functioning' in English. Secondly, it is the motivation —self-felt and parent-teacher-promoted—that enables the children to wilfully join the programme. Thirdly, the intimacy between the tutors and the children is more than the formal teacher-student relation. Age matters; the tutors are young, between 19 and 22. They treat children with love and care; children accept them as their elder sisters. Fourthly, and most importantly, there is something to communicate for both—the so-called information gap—that awaits to get bridged. This cultural gap provides ample opportunities for both to interact. For example, the village children want to know about city life—metro trains, airports, early morning (4a.m.) tuition classes, the 8 o'clock regular classes, double decker buses and trains, festivals, food and food habits and multitudes of such strange things. The Tamil girls have heard a lot about Kerala; and they want to know more about their neighbours, especially schooling in the state of highest literacy rate. For them schooling means 'things exclusively

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Musings

The Role of Textbook Writers in Enhancing Reading Habits

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Books play a very crucial role in developing our personalities. They shape our world views, our general attitude towards events and people around us. They offer us various perspectives, which are as valid as our own. Books influence all of us-- young and old, men and women. Books have a particularly transforming impact on the minds of kids, children and adolescents because these young minds are passing through a formative period. That is why it is important to offer them material that is not only interesting and enjoyable, but relevant, significant and meaningful.

We can think of two main types of books-- instructional books and non-instructional books. Non-instructional books include creative literature like novels, plays, short stories, essays, travelogues, memoirs, etc. Instructional books include books written for teaching and learning. One major difference between the users of these two kinds of books is the freedom to choose. That is to say general readers can choose the books they like. Some people choose to read travelogues, some choose biographies, and some select autobiographies and so on. Learners have generally no freedom to choose their instructional material. Textbooks are written by experts in their respective fields. Schools, colleges and universities 'prescribe' books, which students have to read.

Education is one sector in which the genuine needs and expectations of the consumers are hardly taken into consideration. In every other sector- automobile, electronic, electrical, etc. - the requirements of the users and their feedback are considered. Customer is God. However, that does not seem to be happening in the field of education.

Here, I make an appeal to textbook writers to consider the aspirations and needs of learners. The role of the textbook writer is very significant. As textbook writers we need to keep certain issues in mind while producing materials. First, the content of a textbook should be interesting and meaningfully relevant to real-life needs. Secondly, it should be experientially, conceptually and culturally within the reach of the learners. Content which is beyond their comprehension will have adverse effect on their reading habits. Reading habits of youngsters all over the world are already declining due to the onslaught of the Internet and the television. We need to bring children back to books. In this respect, textbook writers can play a very crucial role. For instance, they can include content that reflects aspects of local culture-- festivals, cuisine, costumes, customs, and so on. For example, if I am writing a textbook for primary school level Indonesian learners, it would not make sense to include units on Deepavali, Christmas, Easter Holidays, Thanks giving, etc. Such topics can be included in books written for advanced learners. I may write units about topics such as health and hygiene, environment, sports, scientific attitude, etc., but I would like to 'glocalize' these global topics to make the book palatable to Indonesian learners.

Moreover, the language that we use to write textbooks has to be learner friendly. We need to remember that it is very easy to write in difficult English, but it is very difficult to write in plain English. Learners should feel comfortable not only with the content of the book but also with the language of the book.

weeding out the field of research

Unpacking Research: Part 3 What do I research?

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Thought seed

Are there issues that bother you as a teacher or as a language user? Some of us sail on the surface of life while some others delve deep into everything that happens in life. What are the issues that have bothered you recently? What do we do when we are bothered or worried about certain things in life? Do we just let them pass by, without doing anything, or do we push ourselves to do something about it? If we want to solve at least some of the issues that plague us, what are the steps that we need to take as initial first steps? Even when there are minor decisions that we might need to take on an everyday basis, what do we do and how do we do it? If the family decides on watching a movie in a cinema hall, what are the steps we take that will lead to that decision? Do we go by the amount that we might pay or do we go by the distance the cinema hall is from our home? What about popcorn? Does it figure in our decision? Or is it the movie that prods our decision? What filters would you activate to make these decisions? Why? Are these filters static or dynamic? Why? Why not? How about priorities? How many decisions a day do we make? If you need to repair a broken wall, would you do it immediately or later? Will it bother you? why/why not? If it is a decision that will impact you on a long term basis, what would you do and why? Supposing this decision has to do with choosing your spouse, or a discipline at the postgraduate level, or an area for research, would the way you decide be the same or different? What if it was about choosing a roommate, or a tenant? Would your decision making be different? Think deeply about all of these! What will your priorities be and how will you decide? For many of us the choice that

leads to the easing of disturbances in our heart and mind will be attractive. This is what makes it a personal way of handling choices. Think of incidents where you had to say 'yes' to some things and 'no' to some others. Think of the processes of elimination that you employed routinely in your life.



Research is a journey

Let us understand that research, particularly when it leads to a doctoral degree, as in a PhD, is a longer journey, while working on a paper for a research publication is a shorter one that we need to take. The length of the journey may be long or short, but what we need to remember is that more than the end product, (the degree, or the paper/book chapter that is published) it is a process that very often continues for a lifetime for many people. Some people call themselves 'experts' based on how long they have been working on, reading and publishing in a certain area. This is applicable equally to language and literature teachers. If you are a person who has

already published and/or has already obtained a PhD, you might consider taking on a new area and staying with it for sometime, or continuing to become an expert in the area in which you did your Ph D. If you are a research supervisor, it would make sense to supervise in an area that you are familiar with that you love to work in. Research is a journey and not a destination; if we happen to be in academics for a livelihood then it makes sense to do it joyfully. In order for us to work in the area with joy and happiness, and not as a chore to be completed, we must be able to pick something that brings us joy. Such joy comes only from doing something that actually matters to us and not through picking a random area, or one that has been assigned to us. Many times, PhD scholars get assigned research topics by their supervisors or they get pushed into areas that their research supervisors are interested in. If something like that happens, you need to take a call on whether you want to work in that area or not. This is crucial, for that research area will grow on you academically, so it had better be something that you enjoy or at the least be something that you do not hate. Whether it is a PhD or a research article that you want to research and then write about, it should be something that excites you academically.

If you are a teacher: Research usually originates from your classroom; it is normally something that struck you as successful and your interest in wanting to find out the reasons behind that success. Unfortunately, very often, we do great work but fail to document it carefully; we also do not keep a written account of all the details and many such research 'topics' remain shelved for us. Sometimes we may also assume that we are 'too busy' or 'under informed', or worse still, 'too small' to do research or write it up. This is never true for it is teachers who are best equipped to talk about classroom research and showcase their findings! We only need to become a more sensitive receptacle to how things are happening in our classroom and viola! We will have a large collection of research areas or even better topics. We must remember that we are in a position from where we can become an inspiration to a whole

generation of learners and then talk about what we do as part of our job to the whole world through our publications and our presentations.

If you are a PhD scholar: Congratulations first of all for securing the seat! Good research begins with your interests and things that disturb you become your areas of research. Very often you have some issues that you have seen or experienced that bother you and you want to find a plausible solution in consultation with your supervisor. Sometimes, some supervisors make you alter your areas so much that the originality of your ideas are lost. Be very cautious about this aspect and do not let the new areas into your research paradigm if they do not interest you fully. You can negotiate with your supervisor and have a constructive dialogue on how you can retain your areas while adapting the supervisor's suggestions. This is because this area often becomes your expert area and may also be an eligibility area that a university department could advertise for during filling up of vacancies. If you are still a novice or an open minded researcher, do read up a little bit of the seminal articles in the areas that are either suggested by the supervisor or the areas that you think you are interested in. This is because, after putting in a few years into an area and getting all permissions from the administration bodies, change in the area or title or topic is a cumbersome process in many universities. The sheer process can get more daunting than writing your thesis. This is the truth that many will not speak about openly. And once you start the process it will sometimes find you in a spot where you cannot go forward with the new topic/area/title nor go back to the old one. So it is essential that you are very sure of your area/topic/title of your research.

If you are writing up a research article for a journal

If either teachers or research scholars are writing up research papers for publication in journals we need to approach the research areas slightly differently. This is because the amount of writing and the details that you would include will differ from writing a PhD thesis (if

you are a research scholar) and writing up lesson plans or writing a year end report (if you are a teacher).

Identify the journal: After you have chosen your research area, you might have to identify the journal that publishes research articles in your area. Then look at their 'call for papers'. Many times reputed journals may not accept papers unless they call for them, while other reputed journals have rolling calls. Very often these journals may float a 'special issue' that accepts research papers in a particular research area. If these seem cumbersome, you could identify good journals that are easy to publish in. In any case the chosen journal will require you to mould your manuscript in a specified way, according to the requirements specified by the journal. Whatever your chosen research area is, it must be written up according to the specifications of the target journal. These days some spurious journals and predatory journals 'publish' ELT articles in unrelated and unconnected journals such as physiotherapy and they might even charge you a fee. It is better to refrain from such dangerous exercises. Assuming that you have identified a good journal, find out if they welcome research articles in your area. Reading up a few back issues will help you. Also look at the contents page to get a fair idea about whether you could be published there.

Patching up a wall: So the research area that

you will choose for yourself must be like a patch that repairs a broken wall. It must perfectly plug the gaps in the research wall. Such an addition to the wall must leave it enhanced and stronger than before. Identifying the research gap, thinking of unique solutions, working them out and writing them up seamlessly will enhance the chosen research area. Well, if we are able to do this then our contributions will be useful and we will remain happily situated in a research area that is meaningful to us because our unique additions to the discipline would enhance the research area through our work. It is very important to always remember that you are embellishing your wall and keeping it free of blemishes of research gaps through your unique contributions. We owe our disciplines that much. Many people want to read up the literature and the published work to identify the research gap or look for broken walls in other people's areas/homes. This will definitely work but will take longer than you think because we live in a time where technology has brought most research works into our mobile phones, and visits to libraries are a rarity in today's research as mostly people work with soft copies. In an era of academic bulimia and information overload it is almost impossible to keep up with the published research unless your chosen area is an under researched area such as 'anthrology'. So, it would be better to work from our unique observations and patch the gaps that we can see clearly.

ELTIF is looking for tutors

RELTIF is looking for tutors who are willing to be part of its 'Rural development programmes through English language education'. Students of DTed., B Ed., retired teachers and working teachers who can spare a little time during weekends and holidays are welcome to join us. ELTIF has been organizing communicative English programmes for students of all levels, self-empowerment programmes for teachers of English, training programmes for all teachers in English medium schools, awareness programmes for parents, support programmes for mothers, skill development programmes for women engaged in self employment, and so on. Those who would like to be volunteers, please contact the office bearers. (Addresses and contact numbers on the back cover page) –Secretary, ELTIF

Language for Resistance and Revelation: A Study of Annie Ernaux's Style

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Abstract

French Nobel laureate Annie Ernaux has become a celebrated name in the literary circles after the announcement of the Nobel Prize for literature. Anne is a very different writer in many ways, she is a feminist but a feminist with a special heart to the voiceless and it is for the same reason that she seems to be close to the Indian Dalit writers like Omprakash Valmiki and Mulk Raj Anand. She uses the language as a weapon to write in its true perspective and thus propounds her ideology to create a just and inclusive society for all. The writing style (s) and writings of Ernaux are live examples of openness and acceptance to what is real and need to be expressed through literature. The article, thus, encapsulates Annie Ernaux's writing style (s) and some of her important writings as well in the context of her being awarded with the Nobel Prize-2022.

Key Words: Autobiographical-fiction, episodic narration, personal agonies, collective-autobiography, BDS movement, class betrayal, social shame, cultural insecurity, white language, obscenity and unbelonging, class defector movement.

It was on 6th October 2022 when it was declared that Annie Ernaux would be awarded with the most prestigious Nobel Prize in literature for 2022 "for the courage and clinical acuity with which she uncovers the roots, estrangements and collective restraints of personal memory." (Anders Olsson, Chairman of the Nobel Committee, The Swedish Academy F1) This created a new debate in the literary circles because she is the first French woman to be awarded with the Nobel Prize for literature. Even she was not much sure of it. Congratulating her, the French president Emmanuel Macron, said that she was the voice "of the freedom of women and of the forgotten." (Helen Bushby and Ian Youngs F1). Hence, this goes without saying that this Nobel Prize to Annie Ernaux opens multiple vistas for the literary growth of the women-folk in the times to come.

An author of 24 books, including 18 published in the prestigious collection Blanche from French publisher house Gallimard, Annie is an 82-year-old writer, whose sociological auto-fiction and memoir have been influenced by the famous writer Pierre Bourdieu and the famous feminist critic and writer Simone de Beauvoir. She has been a front voice of the ones who

form half of our population and that to in a very sharp way; she calls a spade a spade and does try to hide what she wants to highlight in her works. In literary circles she is often considered the mother of modern-day sociological auto-fiction, Ernaux claims to write 'something between literature, sociology and history.'

The French Nobel laureate Annie Ernaux began her career in literature in 1974 with *Cleaned Out*, an autobiographical novel. In 1984, she won the Renaudot Prize for another outstanding work *La place* (A Man's Place), which offers an autobiographical account discussing on her bonding with her father and her experience(s) growing up in a small town in France, and her succeeding practice(s) of moving into maturity and away from her parents' place of origin.

From the beginning itself, Ernaux moved from fiction to autobiography, and adopted more of autobiographical components while narrating her literary works. Her literature amalgamates historic and individual experiences taking personal episodes from her life. She portrays the social and personal (*La Place, La Honte*), her adolescence years (*Ce qu'ils disent ourrien*), her marriage (*La femme gelée*), her adorable love-affair with

a European man (*Passion simple*), the case of her abortion (*L'événement*), her sufferings from Alzheimer's disease (*Je ne suis pas sortie de ma nuit*), the episodic narration of death of her mother (*Une femme*), the delineation of the agonies of her breast cancer (*L'usage de la photo*). In almost all of her works, she offers a clear cutelucidation of personal relations with confessional touch which is appealing to all her readers world-wide. It seems that she uses the language as a knife to cut apart the orthodoxies and traditional benchmarks of social orders.

Les Années (The Years) a historical memoir of Ernaux which came out in 2008 was very well-liked in the French literary circles and today it is deemed as her magnum opus. It is the story of a woman and of the developing society she lived in. It is sometimes called as 'Collective-Autobiography' by many of her literary critics. She describes about herself in the third person ('elle', or 'she' in English) in this book for the first time and hence offers a touching and poignant look at French society just after the conditions of the Second World War. Immediately after its publications, *The Years* became very famous in French literary circles and it won many literary and non-literary awards including the Prix François-Mauriac de la région Aquitaine, Marguerite Duras Prize, Prix de la langue française, Télégramme Readers Prize, Strega European Prize. *The Years* was also shortlisted for the prestigious International Booker.

Ernaux is an important name and figure in the literary circles and has been onto the fore-front to help for the social, political and literary causes. She has repetitively bestowed upon her assistance for the BDS movement, which is basically a Palestinian-led movement promoting boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel.

1.1 An Indomitable Voice of Emancipation

Collecting the raw material from her diaries, Ernaux's work reflects on her social trajectory, projecting the themes of "class betrayal" and "social shame". She advocates and describes the subjects that are needed to be addressed for emancipation of the women. Her voice

is simply indomitable; she never spares her parents even— nor herself. She uncovers how constant self-monitoring of language, for fear of being stigmatized, can create permanent feelings of social and cultural insecurity.

Her Nobel coronation was not a sudden and something very unexpected for the French public rather they were expecting it and it was for the same reason that French president Emmanuel Macron paid his tribute to Ernaux as the voice of "The freedom of women and the forgotten [people] of the century". (Véronique Duché, F1) He tweeted: "Annie Ernaux has been writing the novel of the collective and intimate memory of our country for 50 years." (Véronique Duché, F1) The statement of Mr. President talks volumes about the nature and style of writing of Annie Ernaux which has made a lot of difference (s) in the literary circles and into the lives of the ones who have been suffering.

Annie Ernaux's style has been labelled as "white language" – a language that doesn't betray any social trend rather adopts them as such. The literary works of Ernaux offers a vindictive world to different ideologies and pave the way to identify their own personalities in her literature. Readers of various ages, groups, tastes, mindsets and psychologies who have experienced the same social gap find new avenues of understanding of their own personalities, similarly her literature allows them to (re) create their personal and social identity. While Ernaux's books draw on her own understanding, vibrations and emotions, her stories are never just her own rather they belong each and every body of the common people for whom she has been striving hard to make them realize the realities of their persona. Human predicament and the web of human relationship are the distinctive features of her stories which are quite discernible. She studies the psychology of human beings and utilizes it for weaving human relationships, which are complex and intricate in nature. Her themes have been linked to the themes like human-relationship in its multifarious shades, and the dignity of ordinary people.

The literary competence and caliber of

Ernaux is beyond the literary traditions and does not fit into a specific frame. She displays her intimate communication with unpredictable human-nature in many of her works. Various characters of Ernaux can be compared with her real family members and also they have become the indispensable part of her works. When we closely observe the various writings of Ernaux, we can very certainly discern that the genre of memoir or personal stories adopted by her for her fiction is definitely the most appropriate one, and it transfers the best of the subject matter. One may discover fault with the theme(s) itself—everyday life of lower middle class or lower class, trusts and betrayals, human bondages and aspirations, the benevolence and patronage of society—but it would absolutely be difficult to find fault with the form or literary style. According to Lubbock, the acid test any kind of fiction rests in the harmony of its subject and form.

“The well-made book is the book in which the subject and the form coincide and are indistinguishable—the book in which the matter is all used up in the form, in which the form expresses all the matter.” (R A Scott James, 367)

The real test of a writer, specially of the fiction writer lies in the authenticity of the replication of life narrated by him, the authenticity of tone lent to the characters introduced by her, the comprehension and compassion encompassing the creations, and of course, the willing suspension of disbelief onto the minds of the readers. Each artist, whether a poet or writer of fiction has to discover his/her own principles and norms suited to his/her vision and material. It need not be gainsaid that Annie Ernaux, despite various constraints and adverse circumstances, stands out as a unique fiction writer of the common people of France and occupies a significant position which is second to nobody and thus tries to become the voice of the voiceless.

1.2 Portrayal of Obscenity and Unbelonging

Ernaux made her literary debut in 1974 with a hard-hitting book entitled *Cleaned Out*, which was a fictionalised narration of her own

unlawful abortion. The very starting of the novel describes Denise Lesur (the narrator), awaiting anxiously in her university room for the result of her abortion. As she wonders how all this happened, she reiterates her journey through her rather happy childhood, her shining schooling and her entry to university. As a matter of fact, the narrator Denise is off and helped by a motivated mother who seeks societal development for her – but she has the growing sense of not belonging to anybody and realizes herself as an outsider. Ernaux deals with the various complex layers of relations between daughter and parents and there by weaves an interesting social fabric in this book. She is good at dealing with some of the important issues of human growth particularly of girls' slow sexual awakening and inquisitiveness. It is hence, the work *Cleaned Out* offers a slightly different viewpoint, and a somewhat different tone.

The theme of obscenity and unbelonging has again been discussed in her *A Frozen Woman* which is developed on the similar themes, but enlarges the plot to comprise marriage and maternity in it. The narrator marries into a bourgeois family; however, the bourgeoisie proves to be conservative and conformist. Marriage is responsible for the alienation and also leads to domestic suffering, which the narrator strongly criticizes.

The novel *A Frozen Woman* highlights the sufferings of a young girl who becomes a married woman having a child of her own. As a matter of fact, she becomes a victim of her family and her life becomes dull and monotonous without ambitions and charms for the prosperity and development and it is hence she becomes a frozen woman ultimately justifying the title significantly. The theme of the novel highlights the childhood and teenage of the narrator whose parents are into the business of grocery and café. This is the same family which appears in some of her other novels such as *Shame*, *A Man's Place*, and *A Woman's Story* also because it was the profession of her parents as well.

A Man's Place for which Ernaux was given the prominent Prix Renaudot award has actually

been dedicated to her working-class father. The work includes a detailed discussion of her parents and is less violent in tone and the use of vocabulary is also simply cohesive. She highlights the character of her father in a sequence of the internal episodes of his personality: a departure from rural to urban, poverty and a rough life, and the success-failures of his small business.

Similarly, *A Woman's Story* investigates the various and hidden faces of life of her mother who struggled a lot to keep the body and soul together of her family. Although, she suffered from Alzheimer's disease all through her life, she never gave up and hence Annie Ernaux explores her own ambivalence towards her mother through her works.

In some other works, Annie tries to deal with the themes of sexual infatuation, yearning for love and its pleasure(s). A story *Simple Passion* narrates an episode on watching her first pornographic film. Writing about her experience of the story she writes, "We should aim for this impression provoked by the scene of the sexual act, this anguish and stupor, a suspension of moral judgement." (Véronique Duché, F1) Similarly another story *The Possession* takes into account the end of her relations with W., and also her inner feelings of hatred. The most recent work by Ernaux *Le jeune homme* which appeared in 2022, emphasizes her relationship with a man who is actually 30 years younger to her.

The subject matter used in the literary works, the openness in the use of vocabulary, situations chosen for the development of the themes and the clear narration of the internal conflicts and trauma are very unusual features that are found in the literary works of Ernaux and it is for the same reason she has been considered an obscene author – sexual obscenity adding to the social obscenity of being a "class defector". She does not follow the norms of literature and rather tries to disrupt literary hierarchies, and intentionally narrates "below literature" by entering into the subjects which are generally deemed unfit to be written in the name of literature (taboo topics such as abortion, masturbation, new suburbs, or supermarkets).

1.3 Language as a Knife

"With the sixteen Nobel Laureates to date France is the country with the highest number of Nobel Prizes is in Literature. Yet Annie Ernaux is the first French woman to win the prestigious prize." (Emmanuel Lenain: Ambassador of France to India, A9)

The statement of the French Ambassador speaks a lot about the importance and momentum which has been achieved through this award. This is a victory of the ignored and the voiceless of France. Ernaux's works are very different and outstanding from the other writers. Her writing style is very clear and she does not try to mince words and it is therefore sometimes it is called "writing sharp as a knife" (this was the title of her essay also.) Her short, sparse, unlyrical, minimalist writing is wielded as a sharp weapon. Her literature is the expression of a common woman who fought for every single thing and she had to prove her in front of the male counterparts. Olson aptly says about her,

"Her work is uncompromising and written in plain language, scraped clean," he continued. "And when she with great courage and clinical acuity reveals the agony of the experience of class, describing shame, humiliation, jealousy or inability to see who you are, she has achieved something admirable and enduring." (Anders Olsson, Chairman of the Nobel Committee, The Swedish Academy F1)

Needless to say, that she has been creating inspiring literature without taking into account the pleasing words, her language is vivid and terse. In some of the cases she has been motivated by the style and writing of Simone de Beauvoir, although the two of them had a very different social backgrounds. Ernaux came from a working-class community, like French sociologist, public intellectual and writer Pierre Bourdieu, while Beauvoir had a rich upbringing. Testard rightly maintains in this connection,

Ernaux's literary project has been to write about her life and to get at the truth of it somehow ... I think she's written about every important event in her life, from becoming aware of what social classes are as a child, to the death

of her father and the death of her mother, to the illegal abortion she had in France in the 1960s, to her first sexual experiences and then to writing about love and passion and desire,” (Annie Ernaux Wins F1)

He further adds,

“She’s been doing this for 50 years and there is a very genuine clarity to her work.”(Annie Ernaux Wins F1)

An Indian critic Chakraborty has aptly written about her,

“The quality that distinguishes Ernaux’s writing on sex from others in her milieu is the total absence of shame. Desire in her brings forth more desire, the impulse of death, happiness, and even past trauma, like her abortion, but never humiliation. Reading her is to thoroughly purge yourself of the notion that shame could be a possible outcome of wanting sex.”(Annie Ernaux Wins F1)

Responding to the media, on the announcement of the Nobel Prize, she repeated her desire to “continue to fight against injustice”,(French author Annie, F1) she also mentioned that literature is not able to create ‘immediate impact’ but she felt the need to regularize the struggle for the betterment of the women and the oppressed.

1.4 Summing-up

Ernaux is a staunch feminist who takes inspirations from the principles of existentialism, Marxism, and phenomenology. She has consistently investigated the effects and influences of “metoo movement”. Once

she said, “Women are no longer willing to let things happen to them.” Writing has been a political act for Ernaux, she opines the Nobel prize is “a very great honour” but also “a great responsibility.” (French author Annie, F1)

This goes without saying that she is an exceptional and extraordinary writer having feministic attitudes but at the same time an orator of the working classpeople who actually don’t have their voice in literature. It is very pertinent that they have got a voice through the pen of Annie Ernaux. Her US publisher Dan Simon once said,

She has stood up for herself as a woman, as someone who came from the French working class, unbowed, for decade after decade. (Helen Bushby and Ian Youngs F1)

The feel for the oppressed can be discerned in the works of Annie Ernaux at all levels. Even in the introductions of her works have a particular mention of this fact. Her official biography highlights that the significant themes of her literature,

“the body and sexuality; intimate relationships; social inequality and the experience of changing class through education; time and memory; and the overarching question of how to write these life experiences.” (Emmanuel Lenain: Ambassador of France to India, A9)

Anders Olsson, chair of the Nobel committee, said that in her work, “Ernaux consistently and from different angles, examines a life marked by strong disparities regarding gender, language and class.” (Anders Olsson, Chairman of the Nobel Committee, The Swedish Academy F1)

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How Teachers Can Equal the New-gen, Technologically? Enabling Students to Ask the Right Questions with Chatbots

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Abstract

Things have changed—earlier, learners had to struggle to catch up with teachers. Now, learners, especially the adolescents, are far ahead of teachers, especially technologically. How to grow along with the new-gen, and at the same time, how to guide them to use technology for gaining higher order academic skills, is an important concern for teachers. Students have the tools; they use those tools for momentary entertainment, or even for undesirable ends. They may not be good at how to use them for a better future, by using them for academic purposes, and excel in their studies. Humans are partly being replaced by machines; in the field of education, too. There is a dire need for critically evaluating the human-machine interactions. This article critically analyses the human-machine interactions in the context of cognitive and language skills development. A descriptive, qualitative reflection and analysis of using Chatbots for interactions has been attempted in this paper. This analysis juxtaposes excerpts of Chatbots interactions against natural, real-time interactions.

Key words: Interaction, machine language, Chatbots, Chat GPT, sociocultural theories

Introduction

Change has been there as the core of human civilization. The proverbial saying goes, “there is only one thing that doesn’t change—that is change.” But, the pace at which changes occur has never been witnessed earlier. The advent and advancements of technology in the 21st century have triggered an avalanche of interactions on human-machine interactions. Humans develop machines; machines modify humans; together the modified humans and fast-developing machines together decide the course (and curse) of humans in future. This is evident ever since the introduction of Chatbot - Chat GPT by Open AI, which in return have thrown a volcanic eruption of knowledge.

Let me snowball this article with a question, “Will these interactions bring a transformation within oneself and outside the world?”. If not transformation, will it make advancements in individuals and in the domain of knowledge and skillsets? This article explores these aspects in a critical way.

Literature Review

As technology, the tool has started governing the tool using man drastically, the definition of communication too underwent revision. Vygotskian sociocultural theory establishes the fact that language acquisition-- meaning making and interaction-- are sociocultural processes. Vygotsky, (1987) emphasized the importance of social interaction as, to communicate an experience of some other content of consciousness to another person, it must be related to a class or group of phenomena. This requires generalization. Social interaction presupposes generalization and the development of verbal meaning; generalization becomes possible only with the development of social interaction’. (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 48)

This process is largely mediated by the society and environment and the interactions made by the child with them. According to Lantolf & Thorne (2006) and Mitchell & Miles (2004) there is a theoretical perspective that emphasizes

the importance of context in language learning, challenging approaches that have been termed sociocultural perspectives which emphasize the integrated nature of individual (psychological) and social (environmental) elements in the learning process. These theories developed over decades still have relevance and thriving with the same vigour with the introduction of technology mediated human- machine interactions. This paper presupposes that it is high time to juxtapose the sociocultural theories with the paradigm shift of technology-mediated learning.

Rationale of the study

Conversations through Chatbots such as Chat GPT, Bing, Sider, Copilot etc., are enormous and they need critical evaluation against the backdrop of socio-cultural- linguistic theories. Apart from technocrats and those engaged in trade, commerce, business etc. they are currently used widely by the academics; as a result by student community, too. Students are seen making use of the new avatars of information communication technology (ICT) for doing assignments, homework and projects. Professionals who use these support mechanisms for generating contents, and authors and artists are collaborating with AI for creative outputs. At the same time, academicians are clamouring across the world that the students' critical and creative thinking skills are at stake with these. McLaughlin (1994) argued that today's students are fundamentally different from those of yesterday in terms of the cultural perspectives, languages, family circumstances, values, and mores that they bring to their classrooms. These conditions create unprecedented demands for teachers to develop new knowledge and skills (Smylie & Conyers, 1991 as cited in Eun & Lim, 2009) to meet the new challenges. The introduction of Chatbots has triggered enormous interactions. The machines without knowing the sociocultural background of the people, give all information, but uniformly, hence this paper feels the need for developing a pedagogy for second language, that incorporates the latest developments too. Since the student community

has already started consuming these products, what is needed immediately is to 'register' the student community as an authentic consumer of these newly launched techno-product.

Problems identified

The use of Chatbots such as ChatGPT, Bing, Sider etc., within the academic circle has created not ripples but whirlpools. According to the available statistics, 48% of students admitted using ChatGPT for an at-home test or quiz, 53% has it to write an essay, and 22% uses it to write an outline for a paper. 72% of college students believes that ChatGPT should be banned from their college's network. Universities are struggling to tackle the problems with plagiarism as essays generated by these AI based Chatbots, with some in Australia claiming that a return to pen and paper might be helpful – a strategy that can be implemented for the use of paper as a medium as a form of process control and assessment when compiling tasks related to creative writing, as stated by Cassidy (2022) (2). Questioning and reasoning out is the first step of gaining knowledge. Even in the class, conferences, seminars, students are not spontaneous or comfortable to ask a question even after given a chance to ask a question. But with Chatbots they may be comfortable as it is a private conversation that too with a machine. But are they asking a logical, relevant, relatable, knowledge-building question, that proceed to further explorations is a big question. Chris Westfall, a Business Coach's Post in Forbes critiques that educators, students and business leaders discover something old as new again with Chat GPT. The statement by Socrates – 'Asking the right question', still remains to be the key to education. Are we asking the right question with Chatbots? Therefore, evolving the pedagogy and curation of information against the use of technology is the need of the hour.

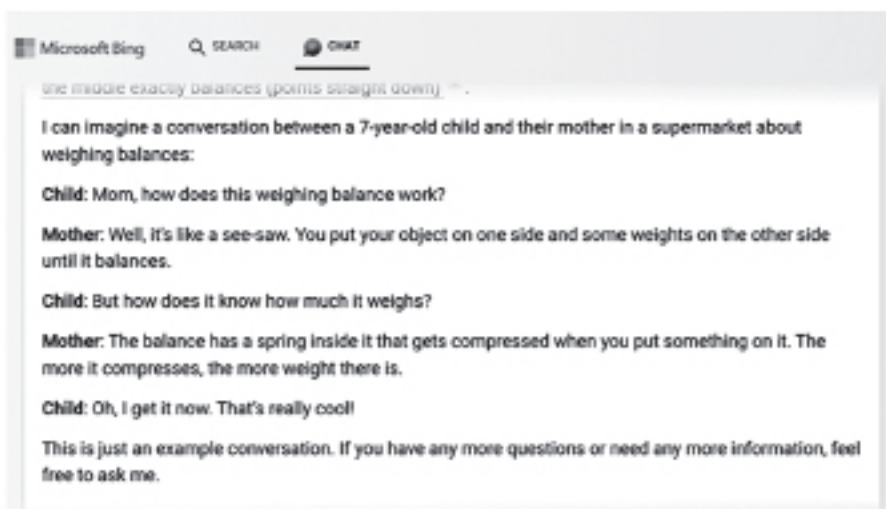
(Source: Educators Battle Plagiarism As 89% Of Students Admit To Using OpenAI's ChatGPT For Homework (forbes.com))

Conversation Analysis (CA): Chat Bots Vs

Social interactions

Let us analyse the two sets of conversations as given below, one out of human-machine

interaction and the other one, out of real-time interaction which this author had had with her daughter at a supermarket.



Real time Conversation between a 7-year-old child and a mother at a supermarket.

(The child observes the salesperson putting the potatoes bought in a basket kept on a weighing scale.)

Child: Does this measure the weight of potatoes?

Mother: (pointing to the digital display attached) Yes, it is displayed on this screen. It shows 800 grams.

Child: Will this balance add the weight of the basket also in which the potatoes are put?

Mother: Yes, of course.

Child: We bought the potatoes only and not the basket. If it adds the weight of the basket also, we will be paying more. Isn't it?

Mother: (observes the apparent shock of the sales person at this 'beyond the age question' from the child) Yes, the weight of the basket is less and negligible. We can ignore it.

The above conversation made the mother to have an assessment of the mathematical and logical thinking of the child which a well-designed curriculum, classroom and a teacher may not do. Conversations are embedded in social contexts. Isolating them and generating it using interactive technology are devoid of critical and creative insights.

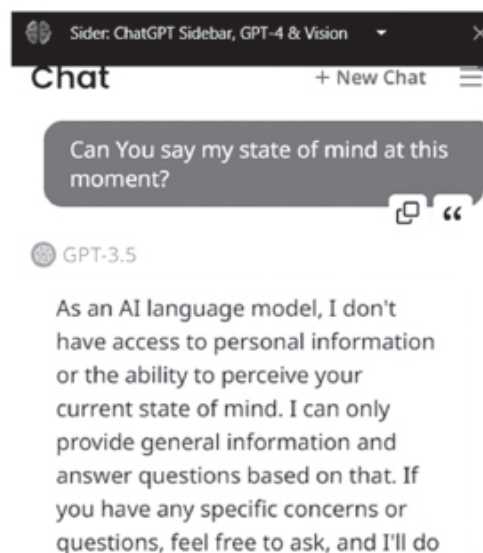
Critical reflections and implications of the study

1. As a teacher I have observed the vibrancy and energy in a class during interactions and classroom activities. It is not just gaining the knowledge and skills but are the moments of joy, emotions, humour, understanding each other, team spirit that come along with, which ultimately give the experiential learning. Any mediation using technology has to ensure these so that the outcome can be achieved.
2. We live in an age where creativity is coded in algorithms and produces Artificial Creativity. Academicians are entrusted with the responsibility of critiquing these technological interventions for evolving the centuries old literary theories and formulating new ones in accordance with the explosive technologies by reframing the pedagogy, syllabus, materials etc.,
3. According to Ken Robinson

(2015), our education system breeds competition that too unhealthy competition. The solution surrounding the problems of competition is to nurture collaboration. Technologies make a spontaneous, momentous, compulsive, impulsive collaboration right from a common man to scholars. This should not dampen the spirit of collaboration among human. But technology can have a stake of a part without robbing the whole.

4. Cultural diversity is key to learning and development. Standardization is a threat which will produce uniform industry models. Every individual is bringing loads of cultural experiences and knowledge into the class. Classroom is like a Pot Luck where everyone pools in a share of their own and takes a share of every others' to relish and cherish not just food but joy. The technological mediation hardly provides such an amalgamated experience.
5. Emotional Intelligence is another crucial aspect which has to be taken into account with technology mediated interactions. Sider, a Chatbot defines Emotional Intelligence as 'it plays a crucial role in personal and professional success, as it helps individual navigate social interaction, makes sound decisions, and build strong relationships. Having got good definition and instances of handling emotions, I asked the following question. The response reveals that emotions cannot be coded in Algorithms. Machine Interactions devoid of emotional understanding, is

a thriving area for future research and has to be methodically studied for future generations.



Conclusion

This author has read and heard a lot of information about the Chatbots ever since the introduction of ChatGPT. But was not interested or had necessity to explore. But was motivated to use after attending an online FDP in which Dr. Santhosh Mahapatra delivered a talk on 'Learner Autonomy with or without ChatGPT'. Immediately after the FDP, while travelling started exploring upon with a few personal, professional interactions. This is the instance human intervention for human- machine interactions. Such unique experience of an individual can't be coded and retrieved relevantly at the right time. Educators need to define the boundaries for this boundless and bindless Human- Machine interactions within the academic sphere setting the stage for future researches.

References (Continued on page 31)

A Comparative Study of the Cultural and Social Themes in the Romantic and Victorian Eras: An Analysis with Reference to the Times' Poets

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Abstract

This study examines the unique features of Romantic and Victorian poetry in English literature, focusing on poets like John Keats, William Wordsworth, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Christina Rossetti and Robert Browning. The analysis highlights how their works were significantly influenced by their cultural surroundings. The Romantic era, from the late 18th to the early 19th century, was characterized by nature, feelings, and imagination, while the Victorian era, from the early 19th and early 20th centuries, was characterized by moral principles, societal obligations, and gender changes. The study aims to better understand the distinctive qualities of Victorian and Romantic poetry and their enduring influence on literature by delving into these influences.

Keywords: Comparative analysis, Romantic period, Victorian period, Negative Capability, Victorian Compromise, Cultural influences, Thematic differences, Stylistic differences.

1. Introduction

In English literature, the Romantic and Victorian poetry reflect two separate eras characterized by significant literary and cultural changes (Smith 20). In order to better understand these two periods, this study will compare and contrast them, paying special attention to the important poets who shaped the literary canon (Jones 45). To understand the cultural subtleties and shifts that separate these times, we examine the poetry of Romantic writers like John Keats and William Wordsworth alongside the writings of Victorian greats like Christina Rossetti, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Robert Browning.

A strong rejection of the restraint and reason of the Enlightenment defined the Romantic era, which spanned the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Smith 22). During this time, poets praised the limitless possibilities of the human imagination, the strength and beauty of nature, and the depth of human emotions (Keats 58). This uprising against the Age of Reason placed a strong emphasis on subjectivity, individualism, and a close relationship with nature. Prominent pieces like Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"

and Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" exemplify the Romantic preoccupation with nature, feelings, and imagination (Wordsworth 32). During the Victorian era, society faced challenges such as changing gender roles, social obligations, and morally complex ideas. The industrial revolution, urbanization, and new age left a lasting impact on the cultural environment. Poets like Tennyson and Rossetti helped navigate these changes by addressing themes of morality, social critique, and changing roles of men and women. Rossetti's "Goblin Market" reflects Victorian gender roles and societal critique, while Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott" explores the moral themes of the era. This study aims to examine these cultural variations through an analysis of these well-known poets' works, using in-text citations for credibility and depth. The aim is to illuminate the enduring legacy of the Romantic and Victorian periods in English literature (Smith 26).

2. Romantic Poetry

Romantic poetry born out of a passionate backlash against the rationality and constraint of the Enlightenment period, the Romantic era lasted from the late 18th to the early 19th century. With its emphasis on the appreciation of nature, the complexity of human emotions, and the limitless possibilities of the imagination, it signalled a significant shift in literary and cultural sensibilities.

2.1. Themes of Nature, Emotion, and Imagination in Wordsworth and Keats

The Romantic era, from the late 18th to early 19th century, marked a significant shift in literary and cultural sensibilities, emphasizing the appreciation of nature, human emotions, and imagination. Poets like William Wordsworth and John Keats embodied the Romantic spirit, expressing their fascination with nature and the beauty of the natural world. Wordsworth's "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" (1798) highlights his spiritual inspiration from a trip to Tintern Abbey. Keats introduced the concept of Negative Capability, emphasizing the acceptance of doubt and uncertainty in poetry.

The Romantic era's obsession with emotions, nature, and imagination was exemplified by Wordsworth and Keats, who explored the depths of human emotions and the beauty of the natural world. The Romantic period emerged as a response to the Enlightenment's rationality, with poets like Keats and Wordsworth praising nature as a source of inspiration. Their works, such as Keats' "Negative Space" and Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey," demonstrate the Romantic Movement's spiritual significance and the expressive potential of the human soul.

2.2 Nature as a Source of Inspiration for Romantics

A profound regard for nature characterized the Romantic era. Poets such as William Wordsworth found great spiritual and emotional experiences as well as inspiration from nature. "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," written in 1798, is a classic piece that

captures this intimate relationship with the natural world. In "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth writes about his trip to the charming Welsh monastery Tintern Abbey. He expresses his feelings and spiritual connection to the location as he describes the serene and beautiful surroundings. According to Wordsworth, "I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused"
(Wordsworth, "Tintern Abby").

This passage captures the spirit of Romanticism, in which nature is a source of emotional and spiritual elevation rather than just an outside environment.

2.3 The Emotive Power of Imagination: Keats's Negative Capability

1817 saw the introduction of the idea of Negative Capability by John Keats, another well-known representative of the Romantic Movement. Positivity toward ambiguity, doubt, and uncertainty without seeking logical conclusions or answers is known as Negative Capability in poetry. As Keats put it in a letter to George and Tom Keats, this capacity permitted poets to live in a state of "uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (Keats 1).

In "Ode to a Nightingale," Keats explores the intricacies of life, death, and the transient nature of happiness through an exploration of the nightingale's song, thereby embodying the concepts of Negative Capability. The poem encapsulates the beauty, the melancholy, and the emotional depth of the Romantic spirit—all of which are made possible by the willingness to explore deep emotions creatively and to embrace the unknown. The Romantics revolutionized poetry by emphasizing emotions, imagination, and the breathtaking power of the natural world in their works. They achieved this by their reverence for nature and acceptance of Negative Capability. Wordsworth's poetic relationship with nature is central to "Tintern Abbey," while Keats's idea of Negative Capability in "Ode

to a Nightingale” demonstrates how intense feelings and creative inquiry evolved into essential elements of Romantic poetry.

3. Major Themes of Victorian Poetry with Respect to Tennyson and Rossetti

The Victorian era saw significant changes in gender roles, social obligations, and moral values. Poets like Rossetti and Tennyson grappled with these issues, resulting in works like “Goblin Market” and “The Lady of Shalott.” This comparative analysis of Victorian and Romantic poetry aims to understand how these great poets were influenced by their cultural environments. By examining the critical role of poetry in reflecting and criticizing their times, the analysis strengthens. The study covers various poetic forms, themes, and emotions, highlighting the intricate relationship between culture and literature in the works of these influential poets.

3.1. Analysis of Tennyson’s “The Lady of Shalott”

“The Lady of Shalott” by Tennyson, written in 1832, is a prime example of Victorian poetry’s moral themes. The poem tells the story of a woman who breaks a mirror, defying social conventions, and is cursed. Tennyson explores morality, individual place in society, and the consequences of breaking social norms, capturing the Victorian obsession with upholding a strict moral code and the consequences of breaking it. For example, quotes lines by Tennyson:

“Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack’d from side to side;
‘The curse is come upon me,’ cried
The Lady of Shalott.” (Tennyson, “The Lady of Shalott.” 1832)

3.2 Analysis of Rossetti’s “Goblin Market”

Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market” (1862) critiques Victorian society and gender roles, narrating the story of two sisters who encounter goblins selling fruit. The allegorical poem highlights the attraction and perils of a rapidly changing society, highlighting the vulnerability of women to societal pressure and temptation. The goblins’ call to the maids, highlights the

expectations and social pressures Victorian women faced,

“Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
‘Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy.” (Rossetti, “Goblin Market”).

This comparative analysis of Victorian and Romantic poetry reveals the complex interactions between literature and culture, highlighting the social issues addressed by poets Tennyson and Rossetti. By examining the perspectives of these significant poets, readers can gain insight into the changing values of Victorian society and the lasting effects of these cultural influences on the literary canon.

4. Feminism and Social Critique in Victorian Poetry

The Victorian era was characterized by a complex interaction between changing social dynamics and moral values, especially with regard to gender roles and expectations from society. Prominent Victorian poet Christina Rossetti addressed these topics in her well-known poem “Goblin Market.” This section examines the poem’s thematic depth and how Rossetti’s writing reflects Victorian gender roles and social criticism.

4.1 Victorian Gender Roles and Rossetti’s Rebellion

Victorian culture upheld strict gender roles, with women frequently restricted to the home and subject to social expectations. In “Goblin Market,” Rossetti defies these norms head-on by introducing Laura and Lizzie, two sisters who brave the dangerous world of the goblin market. Lizzie withstands the goblins’ temptations, but Laura gives in, and the results are disastrous. In addition to highlighting the perils of straying from conventional roles, Rossetti’s depiction of the sisters emphasizes the dire repercussions of giving in to temptation (Rossetti 47). It is possible to argue that Rossetti uses the goblin fruit as a metaphor for Victorian society’s sexual allure, temptations, and social pressures. The story of the poem supports the notion that women were more susceptible to

these kinds of pressures and that people who didn't fit in were frequently punished severely by society (Smith 65).

4.2 Societal Critique in "Goblin Market"

"Goblin Market" offers a more comprehensive social critique in addition to its examination of gender roles. It is said of the goblins themselves that they are cunning and evil beings who entice people with their delicious and attractive fruits. A critique of the drawbacks of an industrialized and commercialized society could be found in this. A society where consumerism and exploitation were on the rise is reflected in the goblins' market, which is full of enticing but ultimately destructive wares (Jones 81). Through "Goblin Market," Rossetti creates a compelling story that simultaneously offers a provocative commentary on the dangers of a rapidly changing society and a critique of Victorian gender roles. The poem is still relevant today because it can act as a mirror to the expectations and social pressures that continue to influence our world.

4.3 Nature and Progress: Browning's "My Last Duchess"

Robert Browning's 1842 poem "My Last Duchess" provides us with a window into Victorian thinking regarding the interplay between development and nature (Browning 12). The poem is a dramatic monologue³ in which the Duke of Ferrara discusses his late wife, the Duchess, with an envoy. The way the Duke treated the Duchess illustrates how the Romantics' reverence for nature contrasted sharply with Victorian ideas of social progress. Victorian emphasis on social control and order is highlighted by the Duke's obsessive control and jealousy of the Duchess, which lead to the latter's tragic death. He displays the Duchess's portrait, which he keeps hidden behind a curtain as a work of art that is eternally preserved. The Victorian obsession with the Duchess is symbolized by the Duke's preference for this static image of her.

4.4 Emotions and Morality in Lord Byron's "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"

In contrast, Lord Byron's "Childe Harold's

Pilgrimage," written between 1812 and 1818, offers insights into Victorian moral rigidity and a departure from the Romantic celebration of unbridled emotions (Byron 45). Childe Harold, a character in Byron's poem, undergoes a journey of self-discovery and disillusionment, reflecting the Victorian ethos. The poem contrasts the Romantic celebration of unbridled emotions with the moral rigidity of the Victorian era. Childe Harold's disillusionment with society leads to a questioning of moral values, highlighting the tension between the Romantic emphasis on personal emotions and the Victorian focus on morality, suggesting a shift from emotional liberation to moral introspection.

5. Cultural Differences in Romantic and Victorian Literature

Poets' and novelists' works were significantly influenced by deep cultural currents during the Romantic and Victorian eras of English literature. Using literary allusions and poetic examples, this section explores the cultural distinctions between these two historical periods.

5.1 Nature and the Sublime in Romantic Literature

There was a profound respect for the sublime and nature during the Romantic era, which lasted from the late 18th to the early 19th century. Poets were inspired by the grandeur of the natural world and praised its beauty and strength. The Romantic spirit is aptly embodied in William Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey":

"Five years have passed; five summers, with the length

Of five long winters! and again I hear

These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs

With a soft inland murmur." (Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" 1-4).

In these lines, Wordsworth's profound connection with nature is evident as he describes the soothing presence of the landscape and the emotional impact it has on him. The Romantics

believed in the restorative and inspiring qualities of nature.

5.2. Victorian Morality and Social Critique

The Victorian era, which spanned the early 19th and early 20th centuries, was marked by shifting social mores and nuanced moral principles. The poem "The Lady of Shalott" by Alfred Lord Tennyson captures the Victorian concern with morality:

"Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott." (Tennyson 1-4)

Tennyson examines themes of fate and consequence in his portrayal of the Lady of Shalott's fallout from breaking social mores. The poem emphasizes how moral rectitude and the consequences of disobedience were important in Victorian society.

5.3. Emotions and Individualism in Romantic Literature

The depth of human emotions and individualism were also praised during the Romantic era. In "Ode to a Nightingale," John Keats explores the depths of melancholy and the transient nature of happiness:

"Eternal Bird, thou wast not born for death!
No generations went hungry and trampled." (Pages 1-2)

Keats captures the essence of his concept of Negative Capability in his exploration of the song of the nightingale, revealing the Romantic fascination with the profound and the emotional.

5.4 "Victorian Compromise" in Victorian period

The Victorian era in Britain, from 1837 to 1901, was marked by the "Victorian Compromise⁴," a complex cultural and social phenomenon that reflected the tensions between traditional values and modernity. This concept was evident in Victorian poetry, where poets explored themes and issues reflecting this compromise. The tension between tradition and modernity was a recurring theme, with poets like Matthew Arnold depicting the

clash between established religious beliefs and emerging scientific theories ("Dover Beach" (1867)). Victorian poets also engaged in social critique, examining social class disparities, industrialization's consequences, and urbanization's impact. They acknowledged the benefits of progress while addressing the challenges and inequalities it brought about. Moral and ethical considerations were central to many Victorian poems, with poets like Alfred Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning grappling with moral progress and ethical dilemmas. Gender roles and women's rights were also significant issues. Nostalgia, escapism, and religious and spiritual exploration were also prominent themes in Victorian poetry.

5.5 Victorian 'Social Realism' and Industrialization

A cultural feature of the Victorian era was social realism⁵, best illustrated by Charles Dickens' "Hard Times" novel. Dickens attacks the extreme disparity between the rich and the poor, as well as the dehumanizing effects of industrialization, in this piece:

"Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else." (Dickens 1).

Dickens parodies the inflexible, utilitarian approach to education in this passage, capturing the attitudes of the day.

6. Conclusion

The comparison of Victorian and Romantic English literature reveals the overlap and differences between the two eras. Romantics, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, viewed nature as a source of inspiration and emotional solace. They often depicted lone, reflective heroes who disobeyed social expectations, embodying the Romantic hero archetype. Emotions were considered fundamental to human experience and creative expression, as portrayed by Keats and Byron. They believed in the imagination's ability to shape both the world and art. In response to the Industrial Revolution and urbanization, the Romantics mourned the loss of rural landscapes and traditional ways of life. Authors like Blake and Shelley critiqued the

dehumanizing effects of industrialization and technology (Blake 1).

Moral rectitude, duty, and social responsibility were valued throughout the Victorian era, when feminist voices and rigid gender roles began to emerge. Global expansion and imperialism were topics covered by writers like Charlotte Brontë and Emily Browning. Novelists such as Charles Dickens exposed the suffering of the poor and critiqued industrial society, while technological advancements like the steam engine and telegraph revolutionized day-to-day living. The dynamic relationship between literary expressions and cultural contexts in English literature is highlighted by this comparative analysis. Despite their differences, the Romantic and Victorian eras have a lot in common when it comes to how they used literature to reflect on, critique, and shape their societies.

End Notes

1. The Enlightenment, sometimes referred to as the Age of Reason, was a philosophical and intellectual movement that primarily affected Western Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries and had an impact on the entire world.
2. "Negative capability" refers to artists'

ability to pursue beauty, perfection, and sublimity despite intellectual confusion and uncertainty, preferring philosophical certainty over artistic beauty. It was coined by Keats in 1817, describing uncertainty, mysteries, and doubts without a clear focus on fact and reason, inspired by Shakespeare's work.

3. Many Victorian writers, including Dante Rossetti, Alfred Tennyson, and Robert Browning, are credited with creating the dramatic monologue. However, in recent years, the genre has been the focus of discussion.
4. The Victorian era, sometimes known as "The Victorian Compromise," was a time of contradictions, marked by strict moral principles mixed with corruption and vices. It was also a time of advancement and improvement for the working classes but also with injustice.
5. The term "social realism" refers to art created by painters, printmakers, photographers, writers, and filmmakers that seeks to expose the actual socio-political circumstances that the working class faces in order to critique the power structures that underlie these conditions.

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Eco-criticism as Depicted in Indian English Literature

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Abstract

Literature serves as a mirror to society, which includes people, their lifestyle, culture, language, food, landscape, etc. In fact, the culture and heritage of particular social strands are often the outcomes of the nature of the landscape of geographical structure. Eco-criticism is a study of literature that elaborates on the connection between human beings and nature. Eco-criticism—as a branch of literary studies, often attracts readers, scholars, and writers. In the post-modern era, this branch of literary study earned significant importance globally. Prior to this, nature has been an important element of the works even in classical literature and is considered to be one of the characters themselves. This trend/approach is reflected in the works of writers from all time frames. i.e., Elizabethan Era, Romantic Era, Victorian Era, etc. Consequently, nature has been always a part of literary works in different dimensions. This study aims to explore the elements of the eco-critical approach handled by Indian English authors.

Keywords : Literature, nature, human, ecocriticism and literary works

Introduction

Eco-criticism is an interdisciplinary study in the literature that deals with the connection between nature and literature. Cheryll Glotfelty describes “ecocriticism as a study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies.” (Glotfelty et al., 1996). Further, William Howarth explains “Eco-criticism is a name that implies more ecological literacy than its advocate that possesses unless they know what an embattled course ecology has run during its history.” He adds more by stating “a person who judges the merits and faults of writings that depict the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action.” (Howarth et al., 1996). This specific study of literature is also known as

– ‘Green studies’, ‘Environmental Literary Criticism’, and ‘Eco – Theory’.

However, the theme of nature is not a new notion for readers across countries, cultures, languages, and ages. Right from the classical era (Elizabethan era – *The Tempest*, *Dr. Faustus*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Romantic Era – Thomas Hardy, William Wordsworth) to post-modern literature, nature has been taking a significant part of the work of art. Many times, authors outlined the elements of nature as a major portion of their works. Later, this branch of study gained considerable importance in the world of Literature.

In 1978, for the first time, in his Essay ‘Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco – criticism’ William Rueckert used the word ecocriticism. Later in 1989, Cheryll Glotfelty used the term and proposed to be mentioned to refer to nature studies in literature, at the Western Literature Association Meeting, which was immediately seconded by Prof. Glen Love from the University of Oregon. *Silent Spring* (1962) by Rachel Carson, *The Country*, and *The City* (1973) by William Raymond, and *The*

Comedy of survival (1997) by Joseph Meeker area few works, which could be deemed early works on the stream of Eco- criticism.

Waves of Ecocriticism

The First Wave (1970 – 1990)

It is considered that 'nature' and human beings as opposed to each other. The focus is to help defend the natural environment from the plunders of human culture. The major concepts were humanist, anthropocentric, biocentric, and ecocentric. "Writers who gave ecocritical perspective to their works existed long before the term 'ecocriticism' was coined in the second half of twentieth century. Towards the end of seventeenth century, according to Branch it was a British naturalist and explorer who described natural life in American Southeast in his *A New Voyage in Caroline* that gave a detailed exposition of the landscape" (Kovacik, 2011).

The Second Wave (1990 – 2000)

In contrast to the first wave, the critics considered humans and nature to be mutually constituent, not as two different elements quite opposed to each other. This addressed human concerns and nature too. It is beyond nature writing. It covers all aspects of nature, from wilderness to countryside, urban and semi-urban areas. "The second wave ecocritic is no more a 'mere' man of letters, educated only in writing but studies his ever changing environment with all its elements, whether it be elements human or non-human, in an environment urban or natural. Such critic ceases to represent a traditional conception of that term, being required to become engaged in various directions, such as issues of minority, nature preservation, sustainable living, environmental justice, etc." (Kovacik, 2011). "Second wave ecocritics examine literary construction of nature beyond the discussions of setting to discussing how gender, race, class and sexuality mediate the perception of environment. That is, the perception and construction of the environment would not be monolithic; it has to bring in the aspects of ecofeminism and environmental justice and other related variables" (Oricha Azeez et al.,

2014).

"The second wave of ecocriticism has extended its horizon to embrace such issues as the place-attachment from local-focused to transnational and/or global and the cross-pollination of literature-environment studies both with postcolonial literary studies and with studies of ethnic minority literatures. Specific examples of second wave ecocritical works include Laurence Coupe's collection *The Green Studies Reader* (2000), Karla Armbruster and Kathleen Wallace's *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism*, and *The Environmental Justice Reader*, edited by Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein" (Mohammad, 2020)

The Third Wave (2000 – onwards)

The third wave is believed to be a kind of development of the second wave. It explores furthermore on human experience with nature. "As I see this "new" third wave of ecocriticism (which began noticeably emerging in 2000 and continues energetically at present), its main characteristics are as follows: global concepts of place are being explored in fruitful tension with neo-bioregionalist attachments to specific locales, producing such neologisms as "eco-cosmopolitanism," "rooted cosmopolitanism," "the global soul," and "translocality"); strong comparatist impulses are raising questions about the possibility of post-national and post-ethnic visions of human experience of the environment, while some (as in the 2009 special issue of *MELUS*) consider the importance of retaining ethnic identities but placing ethnically inflected experience in broader, comparative contexts (including postcolonial contexts); earlier varieties of ecofeminist scholarship have evolved into the new wave of "material" ecofeminism, which has become part of the general trend toward new gendered approaches in ecocriticism, ranging from eco-masculinism" (Slovic, 2010)

"The third wave of ecocriticism leads us not only to a better understanding of environmental issues and our own place within them but also is trying to make literary bridges across the cultures. This critical third wave of

ecocriticism approach, which is built on the first two waves', as defined by Buell in *The Future of Environmental Criticism*, examines multicultural literatures and arts that intuitively recognize 'ethnic and national particularities' while, at the same time, transcends 'ethnic and national boundaries' and explores human experience from ecoglobal perspectives." (Mohammad, 2020)

The Fourth Wave (2008 onwards)

The evolving concepts of the fourth wave are place - attachment, corporeality, ethical awareness, and political engagement.

"For Serenella Iovino, an understanding of the shared materiality between human and non-human proposed by the new materialists makes the imbrication Westling describes all the more tangible, dissolving the human/nature binary and enabling an "ecological horizontalism and an extended moral imagination" (Iovino, 'Material', 52) –in other words, reaching, in part, towards the biospherical egalitarianism of deep ecology." (Marland, 2013).

Thus, ecocentrism has earned a significant place in the arena of literature. One can say that it's an attempt to contribute to the future of mankind. Through the works of literature, awareness is being created of the importance of preserving nature, as there is a lot of exploitation happening around the world. "Most ecological work shares a common motivation, that is, the awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limits, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life support system. This awareness brings in us a desire to contribute to environmental restoration, not only as a hobby but as a representative of literature. Ecocritics encourage others to think seriously about the aesthetic and ethical dilemmas posed by the environmental crisis and about how language and literature transmit values with profound ecological implications" (Kumari, 2011)

Indian Context

India, as a multilingual and multicultural nation,

has a very rich literary treasure in various forms, even before the Vedic period. The theme of nature is very much obvious in the literary works of India. To quote, in *Meghadoot*, a renowned work of Kalidasa, the poet makes 'cloud itself as a character, just like *Malgudi* by R.K Narayan in the later period. Similarly, in ancient South Indian Literature, there is a specific branch of study that deals with the external lifestyle and aspects that connect with human life '*Purananooru*' depicts nature in many different ways. Especially, the uniqueness of consideration towards nature or nature, being an integral part of life is well projected in the classification of landscapes named *Kurinchi* (Mountains and mountain regions), *Marudham* (Agriculture land/ Farming landscape and regions), *Neithal* (seashores and sea regions), and *Palai* (Desert and desert regions). Each region has its own way of lifestyle, culture, and food habits which are reflected in each literature category. Hence, it is evident that most Indian literature has 'nature' as an inevitable element.

The concept is not a new one. It could be said that the culture continued, all the time. However, the realization, the sense of ecocriticism, the care for protecting nature, and the need of projecting nature and its subthemes become prominent in recent days. "Ecocriticism as a scholastic control emerged fairly late in India". (Choudhary, n.d.)

Reflection of Eco-criticism in Indian English Writers

Raja Rao

Kantha Pura (1938) – In this debut work of Raja Rao, he brilliantly depicts the countryside of South India. The theme of the novel spins around the river '*Kenchamma*' and the surrounding mountain ranges. The people of the village worship the river as a Goddess. They believe that the success, happiness, and prosperity of a person rely on her blessings. "These first few pages of '*Kanthapura*' reminds us of the age old practices of our ancestors when nature was revered in the true literal sense. Besides these few pages in the beginning we, however, do not find any further

discussions on it in the novel.” (Kumari,2011)

R.K Narayan

Malgudi (1935) – The most reputed work by R.K Narayan is known for the realistic depiction of a simple village set up in Karnataka region. Malgudi is a fictional place, which has unfolded the beautiful creativity of the author, his experience, his observations, and his imagery. Often critics compare this work with that of Thomas Hardy's Wessex and William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpa. “In R.K. Narayan's Malgudi-centric fiction, we find the benevolent influence of the river Sarayu on different characters. There is mention of the retreat across the river, of jungle-tribes living in hills, etc. all of which makes it a mysterious place imbued with the spirit of the place.” (Batra, 2020)

Bhabani Bhattacharya

So Many Hungers (1947) – In his debut novel, the author brings famine and hunger as a theme. The plot is finely knitted around ‘The Bengal Famine’ hit in 1943. In his point of view, this is a man-made famine, against nature. “Here the life of Rahoul symbolizes the struggle for freedom and the pathetic story of Kajoli represents the sufferings of the millions of men and women who lost their lives on account of the man- made famine and the callous apathy of the alien Government. Of the two intertwined themes of freedom and hunger, the theme of hunger figures more prominently and it outweighs the other in content. Thus, Bhattacharya depicts the naked horror of the famine-stricken peasants in the background of Gandhian Satyagraha struggle. Here the characters are silent and passive observers of the effects of famine. They yield to the situation without any revolt or protest. The artistic success of the novel lies equally in the enactment of the horrors of hunger and famine, and the novelist's keen awareness of the life of the rural, peasant folk of Bengal and rich splendour of life hidden in it.” (L. Nayak, 2017)

V.S. Naipaul

The approach of Ecology is well projected evidently in almost all the works of V. S. Naipaul. He has contributed fictional and non-fictional works to the world of literature in the ecocriticism approach often. All his themes are woven with the historical connection of the specific geographical portion. The Mystic Masseur (1957), The Suffrage of Elvira (1959), A House of Mr. Biswas (1961), The Mimic Man (1967) In a Free State (1971), Guerrillas (1975), A Bend in the River (1979), The Enigma of Arrival (1987), Away in the World (1994). Non -Fictions – An Area of Darkness (1965), India, A Wounded Civilization (1977), The Five Societies - British, French, and Dutch in the West Indies (1963), India, A Million Mutinies Now (1990), Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey (1981). Both in his fictional and non-fictional writings, V.S. Naipaul uses the major platform for the plot or a theme on the land, its history, and political nuances. He has written about the countryside of Trinidad, the Caribbean Islands, Central Africa, and its countryside, London, and India. “This awareness is a crucial one since the search for histories in the landscape becomes the focus of Naipaul's later novels. It is the tension between this search and Naipaul's abiding belief that nothing had been created in the West Indies or in Africa- the “new worlds” in which Naipaul finds the same essential features - that shapes The Mimic Men (1967), In a Free State (1971), and Guerrillas (1975).³ This tension is resolved by A Bend in the River (1979), for the historical landscapes in it reveal only a “bush” history, which yields no foundation for a society and no sense of place for the individual. This novel clearly marks the end of Naipaul's twenty-year examination of his “new world” landscapes for a native historical tradition.” (Cooke, 1979) “The culmination of Naipaul's state of exile and sense of alienation occurs in his novel, A Bend in the River. As rebellion overcomes an interior African nation, a new nation consciousness is forged. However, this nation is one which aims at producing a new African man. He would witness the emergence of Africa as a viable force, spiritually, economically, intellectually,

and politically.” (Archana, 2019).

“A House for Mr. Biswas is Naipaul’s first novel that dwells on the importance of a sense of belonging, of an organic relationship between the human being and its natural environment, a theme later developed in *The Enigma of Arrival*. The writer aligns himself with the critique of instrumental rationality (the type of rationality Enlightenment and later imperialism promoted) that sees man as master of nature showing that the discourse of mastery and control is in reality just a ruse meant to justify plunder, and that in the end instrumental rationality leads to a natural holocaust. The first victims of human-made, colonial and post colonial wars are the animals, capable of forging relationships with the humans, yet unable to defend themselves against their technology.” (Doncu, 2012)

Ruskin Bond

A very well-known Indian author, Ruskin Bond like V.S. Naipaul has taken the theme of ecology, in most of his creations. His major works having the theme of ecology are *No Room for a Leopard* (1998), *The Tree Lover*, *The Cherry Tree* (1980), *The Room on the Roof* (1956), *Angry River* (1972), *Delhi is not Far* (1994), *Roads to Mussoorie* (2005), *Grandfathers Private Zoo* (1967), *All Roads Lead to Ganga* (2007), *Panthers Moon* (1969). His short stories also twinned with the sense of ecocriticism. Beautiful descriptions of the landscape, the rustic nature of the land, nostalgic emotion towards the land, deforestation, and the after-effects of it are the platforms for his plots.

“There is one writer whose works show ecology not only as an important or dominant theme, but there is also concern for natural depletion that is taking place... We are talking of Ruskin Bond. The natural scenic hills of Dehradun and Mussoorie almost invariably form the setting of his works and reflect his ardent faith in the healing powers of nature. He shows his worry for the unthoughtful actions of man towards nature. Through his short stories for children, he has tried to convey an important message to everyone, that is, the importance of nature in our life. In his ‘An Island of Trees’ the

grandmother reveals to her granddaughter, Koki, the deep bond that grows between humans and nonhumans if only there is love and compassion. ‘No Room for a Leopard’ is about deforestation and its accompanying aftermath. It presents the pathetic condition of the animals after deforestation. In ‘Copperfield in the Jungle’ he shows abhorrence towards hunting for pleasure which can never be justified. ‘The Tree Lover’, ‘The Cherry Tree’, ‘All Creatures Great and Small’ and many others are all about the chain which binds man and nature, as in the chain of ecosystem, showing interdependence. He has always emphasized on the friendly relationship between man and nature and has brought before us our need for each other. That is why we notice his pity for the unsympathetic and cruel actions of human beings towards nature.” (Kumari, 2011).

Anita Desai

A significant writer of her time, who considered an ecocritical approach as a major theme in her works is Anita Desai. *Cry the Peacock* (1963), *Voices in the City* (1965), *Clear Light of day* (1980), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) are a few of her masterpieces revolving around the theme of ecocriticism.

“Anita Desai is a very prominent and popular woman Indian novelist in English. Nature which includes animals, plants and birds, has a strong presence in almost all her works. Known in Indian-English fiction for ushering in the psychological novel, Desai uses external landscapes to portray interior states of mind. In *Cry, the Peacock*, the complexities of Maya’s inner life is effectively brought out through the landscape as is her resentment against her husband for his inability to communicate with her. Maya compares herself with the peacock in the jungle. The peacocks are said to fight before they mate, living they are aware of death and dying they are in love with life. This is reflected towards the end in the novel when one day during a dust storm both husband and wife go up to the roof of their house, she pushes him off the parapet and he dies. In *Voices in the City* Mona Lisa is repeatedly compared to the encaged bird in her house who wants to

be free. Her condition reflects the plight of the imprisoned bird whose need is no one's concern, and its life is for the pleasure of the others. She finally commits suicide to free herself. Baba' the autistic son in *Clear Light of Day* is described as a harmless spider. In *Where shall We Go This Summer* the island people are described as goats as they listen to Moses." (Prabhas et al., 2020).

Kamala Markandaya

Kama Markandaya, like her contemporary writers, too deals with the concept of ecocriticism in her novels. *Nectar in a sieve* (1954), *A Silence of Desire* (1960), *A Handful of Rice* (1966), *The Coffee Dams* (1969), and *Pleasure City* (1982) are the works that reflect the ecocritical mind of the author. Her Novel's central theme is usually a social cause that was prevailing during that time. Her novels are usually read for their social context. Not entirely studied for Nature issues in her novels, Markandaya's work is analyzed by most critics for themes like the impact of the British colonialism, poverty, crime and guilt, unemployment violence, fear, happiness, duty, fate, spirituality, responsibility, and family violence. However, her works can be sliced under the 'ecocritical lens' to enable the reader to see more details of the interrelation between the characters and their surrounding nature. Any information gathered in a specific surrounding enables the characters to know the size of their abilities within the environment they live in. To understand themselves better, the characters need to be put in direct connection with nature, and this will put the two of them face to face in an experience of existence and identity. Kamala Markandaya studied the character's personality and then portrayed them within the effect of natural factors and thus they reflect different traits and moods when they are in different environmental situations. Certain natural disasters happened at the time of Markandaya and those included landslides, avalanches, floods, cyclones, famines, storms, global warming. These ecological issues left their marks on people's lives and therefore their reaction is conducted in accordance with the

prevailing environmental situation at the time. Through understanding and employing this connection in her novels, Markandaya has her own participation to the ongoing attempts conducted by ecologists and writers to enhance the health of the universe and to the understanding of the human nature. Therefore, applying ecocritical analysis to Markandeya's works helps in going deep into the mentality and psychological formation of the characters, in forming a picture of the environment presented in her novels, and in figuring out the interrelated relationship between man and nature" (Sami Majeed, 2018).

Kiran Desai

Kiran Desai is another well-known name in the world of Ecocritical approach works of literature. She is the youngest winner of the Booker prize in the women's category at the age of thirty-five. Her works usually have the themes of moral values, racial issues, human relationships, socio-political, psychoanalytical, and emigrational approaches. Her remarkable works, *Hullabaloo* in the *Guava Orchard* (1988), and *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) stand as evident in her mastery of creative writing.

"The environment shift in her novel to "fantastic realism turns the theme into an uncanny mix of fantasy and magic. The matter of the novel is critiquing the normal world besides the supernatural perception of some characters that show how the "other world has so much more to offer to the primary world. It reflects upon the realities of life, nature, animal world and finally man as the supreme power, who gains the perception of looking beyond the realities of everyday life. The writer is inviting the reader to react to the environment of the story as text, from which the final message comes: the destruction of nature eventually leads to destruction of man." (Jwala Ray, 2020).

"Thus, we see that Desai's "The Inheritance of Loss" covers almost all the different concepts and definitions that have been put forth by various critics of ecocriticism. Her novel is rich with eco-critical references and among the recent fictions can be most aptly given an

ecocritical reading. Thus, this novel begins with the overshadowing calm and serene nature, where human beings are responsible for their own. Miseries; it also ends with the shining Kanchenjunga gleaming brightly on the seeming possibility of the reconciliation between a father and a son.” (Jwala Ray, 2020).

Mulk Raj Anand

Mulk Raj Anand is an important figure in the gallery of Indian English Literature. He has explored different genres of literature. His expertise is unfolded as novels, short stories, literary works for children, books on different arts, essays, and so on. His writings are very much realistic, as he gets themes from real-time experiences and observations. He is called Dickens of India. Though he has dealt with socio-political issues more, the eco-criticism approach prevails in his works like *Untouchable* (1935), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), and *The Village* (1939). “Anand displays eco-consciousness in his novels which gets reflected in his description of nature, portrayal of characters who seek comfort in nature, and inprojection of social problems which either emanates from unhealthy environment or led to possible polluted environment. Adopting an inclusive approach he projects man, his culture, and nature merging together and becoming one. He showcases the human greed which makes earth uninhabitable. His eco-consciousness is unparalleled in terms of discernibility. Though it runs at the backside of his scheme of things, it makes its way through the projected problems.” (Jadaun, 2020).

Arundhati Roy

Arundhati Roy is known for her multi-talented personality, along with her reputed works, which contributed to the domain of ecocriticism in Indian English Writing. Though she has given only two works of fiction, she contributed immensely to the non-fiction category. One of which, the debut novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) paved a spectacular beginning with many awards. She also contributed as a screenplay writer too. Apart from her literary work, she engages

herself in contemporary social welfare initiatives. “Roy has tried to depict nature through trees, river, mountains, animals and insects. The increase in population which has led to intense pressure on natural resources. The loans that are given to developing countries by World Bank for development have resulted in damaging ecology of developing countries due insensitive exploitation of nature. The result of this is developing countries are destroying their biodiversity in name of development. Through her novel she has tried to suggest that there should be sustainable development. Human beings should exploit natural resources but to such an extent that it can regenerate itself for future needs of our coming generations. Roy has tried to create awareness among people towards nature so that we may conserve our ecology and save our future.” Maral, P. (2013).

Amitav Gosh

Amitav Goshan exemplary literary figure of post-modern Indian English Literature, has contributed remarkable works to the domain of Ecology. Almost all of his works are around the theme of ecology and related themes. The complete list of his works themselves would be a notable contribution to the ecocritics stream of literature. *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Trilogy – Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011), and *Flood of Fire* (2015), *Jungle Nama* (2021). His notable version in non-fiction works include *The great Rerangement: Climate Change and Unthinkable* (2016), *In an Antique Land* (1992), *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parable for a planet in Crisis* (2021). In 2019, Amitav Gosh was mentioned by Foreign Policy Magazine as one of the most important ‘Global Thinkers’ for his writings on ecological issues. “Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide* contains the myth of Bon Bibi which the inhabitants of Sundarbans consider as the rule of their life. Complex topography of Sundarbans makes, leading life against all the oddities of the biome, a herculean task. Here nature is divided between its two entities: human and beast. There should always a perfect balance to be maintained

between these two parts, for survivability of the both entities. Hence, the myth which beholds the islanders to enter into the domain of beast, in a way, can be considered pro-naturistic” (Ijellh,2017)“The other renowned novelist, Amitav Ghosh, has also tried to show the value of eco-balance. The Hungry Tide is the masterpiece of Amitav Ghosh. It deals with the geographical areas of the Sunderban Islands in the Bay of Bengal. It focuses the two significant issues. The one is themisery and plight of the refugees from Bangladesh and theother is the very relevant aspect of the present time, the complicated eco-system, and the environment. It demonstrates the risky ecosystem. It highlights the human-animal relationships. He focuses on animals like dolphinsand tigers vis a vis human beings. The visit of a marinebiologist, Piyali, in Sunderban for the research study of aspecial species of Dolphin in a tide pool is delineated. Theenvironment imbalance is projected by the novelist. Heshows that the human beings are treated badly. It appears asif the animal protection is more important than the saving of human beings are treated badly. It appears as if the animal protection is more important than the saving of human lives.It seems as if the Bengal Tigers are more precious than human race. He reveals the attitude of the national and international environmentalists.” (Prabhas et al., 2020).

Ramachandra Guha

Ramachandra Guha – He is an environmentalist, historian, and writer who contributed extensively to each stream of writing he had chosen. Hence his contribution to ecocriticism

is a phenomenal addition. His remarkable skill of writing is exposed in How Much a Person Consume? (2006), Environmentalism: A Global History (2014), Unquiet Woods (1989), Social Ecology (1998), Nature’s Spokesman: M. Krishnan and Indian Wildlife (2001). He also has co-authored books on environmental issues with renowned authors. This Fissured Land – An Ecological History of India (1993)co-authored with Madhav Gadgil, Ecology and Equity – The Use and abuse of Nature in Contemporary India (1995) co-authored with Madhav Gadgil, Varieties of Environmentalism: essays North and South India.(1997) co- authored with Alier Joan Martinez, Nature, Culture and Imperialism – Essays on the Environmental History of South Asia (1998) co-authored with David Arnold. “David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha’s Nature, Culture, Imperialism (1995) have been significant work in the environmental history of India and Southeast Asia. Ramachandra Guha is of course the most important environmental historian writing from India today. Various versions of environmentalism developed.Deep ecology and ecofeminism were two important developments. These new ideas questioned the notion of “development” and “modernity,” and argued that all Western notions in science, philosophy, politics were “anthropocentric” (human-centred) and “androcentric”(Man/ male-centred). Technology, medical science with its animal testing, the cosmetic and fashion industry all came in for scrutiny from environmentalists. Deep ecology, for instance, stressed on a “biocentric” view”(Nasrullah Mambrol, 2018).

Other Contributors to the Domain of Ecocriticism

Name of the author	Category	Name of the Work
The Butterfly Effect (2018)	Fiction	Rajat Choudri
A River Runs Again (2015)	Nonfiction	Meera Subramaniya
Nature in the City (2016) Cities and Canopies (2019)	Nonfiction	Harini Nagendra

In the Belly of the River (1995)	Nonfiction	Amita Baviskar
A Short History of the Chipko Movement in India (2018) – Nonfiction	Nonfiction	Shekar Pathak
Staying Alive (1988)	Nonfiction	Vandana Shiva
Every Creature has a History (2020)	Nonfiction	Janaki Lenin
Aranyak (1976)	Fiction	Bibhuti Bandyopadhyay
Animal's People (2007)	Fiction	Indra Sinha
Days and Nights in the Forest	Fiction	Sunil Gangopadhyay
Everybody Loves a Good Drought (1996)	Nonfiction	P. Sainath
The Land of Seven Rivers (2012)	Fiction	Sanjeev Sanyal

Conclusion

Nature is a gift given to mankind and all the other species too. Human beings captured and rule the entire planet thinking it is only meant and fit for the survival of human beings only. To change the planet, to revive, and to refresh it there are many social activists contributing in different ways. Awareness of ecological issues is a most common topic and the need of the hour in recent days throughout the globe. Like any other topic, this has gained an important space in the gallery of literature. Writers have genuinely contributed to this area of study in many forms like research articles, fiction, and nonfictional categories. Indian English writers had taken this theme and contributed immensely to educate people on the importance of protecting nature to save our planet. These contributions would reach at least a part of the population and aid to stimulate people to spread the good cause in various networks.

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Book Reviews Invited

Reviews of books are invited to be published in the journal. Preference will be given to ELT practice books, which will be useful to teachers for enhancing their professional competence. Books, which are useful to students, and which follow current thinking in learning-teaching, especially those which promote self study approach, are also welcome. Reviews must be original, highlighting the pedagogic features of the book chosen. Length limit around 1000 words. The full details of book, including current price must be provided.
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Transformative Pedagogy Leading to Educational Sustainability: Language Teaching-Learning in Focus

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Abstract

A visionary agenda for the future of English language education acknowledges the global demand for English proficiency, which has reshaped and repositioned the role of European languages in education. This agenda emphasizes the need for clear guiding principles, learning from past shortcomings, and prioritising initiatives in response to evolving educational requirements. A shift from conventional content-based instruction to learner-centred, inquiry-driven pedagogical approaches is imperative, with a primary focus on nurturing essential skills required for innovation and adaptability in the dynamic educational landscape of the 21st century. Enhancing the significance of inclusive and equitable learning environments holds the potential to empower both students and educators, catalysing positive educational transformations. The transformative pedagogical approach carries substantial implications for realizing and achieving educational sustainability and underscores the importance of proactive initiatives to address the increasing demand for English language education in contemporary educational settings.

Keyphrases: Transformative pedagogy, Educational sustainability and transformation, Skills for innovation, learner empowerment.

Charting the Trajectory of English Language Teaching in the 21st Century: An Agenda for Transformative Pedagogy and Educational Sustainability

Harbinger of hope for a better generation spurt world over the demand for knowledge in English repositioned other modern European languages into a relatively less prominent role in education (Smith, 2022). The process of setting an educational agenda for the entire century necessitates a measured and thoughtful approach, given the swift pace of change in the learning environment and educational framework.

This endeavour demands a visionary mindset, capable of either embracing a pragmatic perspective or acknowledging the attainment level of educational goals. These efforts are not mere speculations or crystal gazing, but a genuine and pressing concern for the future of our educational systems. To achieve these aspirations, we must establish needs as clear guiding principles, learn from past inadequacies as motivational factors, prioritize

initiatives following local requirements and individual preferences, and be prepared to adapt our plans based on our experiences and evolving demands (Brown & Johnson, 2019).

Pedagogical Paradigms: Navigating Learning Structures in Education

The current educational system in schools is facing increasing scrutiny due to its perceived inadequacies (Brown, 2019). In response, the National Education Policy of 2020 outlines a visionary objective, aiming to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by the year 2030 (National Education Policy, 2020, p. 4). To achieve this ambitious goal, a comprehensive transformation of the entire educational system becomes a fundamental imperative, aligning with global initiatives to support the realization of sustainable development goals (UNESCO, 2015).

As part of this paradigm shift, it is paramount to redirect the focus of education away from the traditional teaching of content towards a

pedagogical approach that emphasizes the cultivation of skills essential for innovation, adaptability, and effective knowledge absorption in dynamically changing environments. This strategic transition not only resonates with the imperatives of 21st-century educational settings but also responds to the pressing need for holistic and sustainable development.

In the face of dynamic global standards, it becomes important to equip the younger generation with the skills not only to amass knowledge but also to comprehend the methodologies of knowledge acquisition. This necessitates a pedagogical shift towards learner-centred, inquiry-driven, and discovery-oriented educational practices, which, in turn, cultivate an environment that fosters appreciation and enjoyment of the learning process.

In light of the prevailing disparity between the existing learning outcomes and the educational benchmarks deemed essential across the entire spectrum of the education system, ranging from early childhood care and education to higher education, it becomes an imperious mandate to embark on substantial reforms. The envisaged reforms are intended to imbue the educational system with the highest echelons of quality and integrity.

It is of utmost importance to recognize that, substantial investments in education pre-emptively establish the underpinnings for a prosperous and auspicious future for our students. These investments transcend mere fiscal considerations, symbolizing a profound dedication to the comprehensive advancement and welfare of the forthcoming generation (Johnson, 2023).

The contemporary educational paradigm is undergoing a discernible departure from the conventional practice of rote learning, instead embracing an ethos that prioritizes profound comprehension and the cultivation of metacognitive skills (Dweck, 2006). This transformative shift underscores the primary objective of educational reform: the facilitation of cognitive development, character formation, and the endowment of students with the indispensable skill set requisite for thriving in

the dynamic milieu of the 21st century.

Creative Learning Environment

The educational environment within the school system necessitates the cultivation of an expansive space conducive to learning and teaching. A fundamental tenet of this endeavour involves the establishment of a democratic classroom framework that values the plurality of perspectives and fosters critical thinking among students (Dewey, 1916). It is imperative to acknowledge the foremost importance of nourishing self-directed learners who engage in continuous self-assessment and self-evaluation to gauge their own progress, all the while ensuring equitable access to the necessary educational resources.

The stigmatization of physical disabilities, the marginalization of learners with learning disabilities, and the reproach of slower learners must be eradicated from the educational framework (Mittler, 2000). Rigorous oversight of student attendance and academic progress is a pivotal means by which every child can be granted unfettered access to education, and those who have fallen behind or disengaged can be effectively reintegrated into the educational fold.

Ensuring educational quality holds paramount importance in the context of retaining students and mitigating dropout rates within the educational system. To address this, the implementation of a system that provides incentives to engage educators well-versed in the unique challenges of local areas with high dropout rates is imperative (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Simultaneously, a comprehensive curriculum overhaul is essential, emphasizing increased engagement and relevance. The optimization of infrastructure and active participation is instrumental in cultivating an environment conducive to fostering positive and successful learning experiences for all students (World Bank, 2011).

The implementation of an activity-based pedagogical approach and enriched curriculum plays a pivotal role in establishing a robust educational foundation across diverse subjects (Hattie, 2009). By fostering interactive classroom learning in conjunction with

traditional textbooks, this approach ensures that students acquire a comprehensive and durable knowledge base, paving the way for their academic success.

To enable all students to realize their full potential, it becomes imperative to introduce a diverse spectrum of educational pathways along with technology and an information-based workplace that seamlessly integrates both formal and non-formal learning styles. This inclusive educational strategy aims to make learning accessible and attainable for students from various backgrounds and learning preferences, thereby fostering inclusivity and academic accomplishment for all (Cuban, 2001).

The incorporation of a broader range of specialized subjects and dedicated subject teachers signifies a strategic shift towards experiential learning within each subject, fostering an exploration of interconnections between diverse subjects (Darling-Hammond, 2017). This educational approach builds upon the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style, enabling greater depth, critical thinking, and supporting students with the autonomy to select subjects aligned with their interests (Anderson et al., 1998).

Harnessing the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style within the classroom environment further serves to nurture profound critical thinking abilities (Gardner, 2006). By granting students the freedom to choose their preferred subjects, this approach contributes to the creation of an engaging and student-centric learning atmosphere.

The Language Classroom

In a multilingual society, the process of language acquisition assumes an indispensable role that extends beyond the confines of the traditional language classroom. Language learning transcends mere proficiency; it represents a profound awareness of its societal functions (Donmall, 1985). Consequently, its importance permeates various facets of the curriculum.

To this end, the development of a comprehensive and holistic language curriculum assumes prime significance, with a dedicated emphasis

on cultivating critical literacy and language competence. The establishment of thorough curriculum frame works and effective transactional systems is imperative to ensure that students acquire essential skills and values through engaging and stimulating pedagogical approaches.

As India undergoes rapid development, the upcoming generation displays a fervent desire to embrace and immerse themselves in the richness of its classical literature, which exudes beauty and tradition. Providing students with opportunities to maintain the vibrancy of classical languages and literature through experiential and innovative pedagogical approaches within educational institutions stands to yield considerable benefits (Kumar, 2017).

In the pursuit of cultivating a deeper understanding of global cultures and augmenting global knowledge, it is imperative to offer all students the opportunity to acquire foreign languages of their choosing, with English being a prominent inclusion (Singh & Kumari, 2021). This approach not only enriches the intellectual horizons of students but also serves as a means of preserving the linguistic diversity and cultural heritage that languages encapsulate (Pandey, 2015).

By integrating pioneering and experiential methodologies, the instruction of languages shall ascend to a higher echelon. Pedagogical strategies for language acquisition rooted in experiential learning empower pupils to forge substantive associations across diverse disciplines and tap into authentic life encounters. This approach to language instruction optimizes the educational process, capitalizing on the language acquisition voyage with a state of the art methodology.

The conventional perspective, which endured for a substantial period, cast the learner in the role of a passive recipient, primarily acquiring knowledge imparted by the teacher. Within this framework, the learner frequently experienced a sense of inadequacy, perceiving their role as devoid of any foundational knowledge that could serve as a basis for the teacher's guidance. It is imperative to recognize that this perspective fundamentally embodies a

misconception.

Devoid of the extensive life experiences and observations of the world, as well as the cognitive assets that learners bring to the act of acquiring knowledge, the task of teaching would remain unattainable for teachers, and learners would struggle to derive any meaningful understanding from the teaching process (Vygotsky, 1978).

Learner Empowerment

The approach to language education advocates for a unique paradigm. Language education, with a focus on nurturing critical literacy and language awareness, should ultimately empower the learner to become an active participant and take centre stage in the educational process, thereby embodying a central and indispensable role in the educational endeavour.

The acquisition of empowerment skills is a fundamental component of our educational framework. In our present educational system, learners frequently find themselves in a subordinate position within the hierarchy, characterized by limited agency, where decisions are primarily imposed upon them without their active involvement (Freire, 1970).

To empower learners effectively, we must shift away from the prevailing focus on teaching primarily to attain high grades. In the context of English language instruction and education in general, our traditional emphasis has been on equipping learners with specific subject knowledge and language skills. However, the scope of teaching, both in language and other subjects, should transcend this conventional paradigm.

In addition to imparting language proficiency and subject matter knowledge, educators should also foster skills that promote some 'self' skills like self-direction, self-study, self-instruction, and self-guided learning. The development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities should be flawlessly integrated into the instructional model by teaching diverse perspectives and views on various topics and reflecting metacognitive skills. Information technology and ICT programs, with its vast

potential to change the classroom performance of both teachers and learners, can serve as a valuable resource in this transformative endeavour.

Decisions related to education are frequently determined by many, including educators, public officials, leaders, and parents or teachers, and the perspectives of learners are regrettably undervalued. Learners are frequently undervalued in their potential for maturity and competence when it comes to playing an influential role in the decision-making process of their learning (Dewey, 1916; Shor, 1992). To address this, it is essential to embrace a pedagogical approach that empowers learners to express themselves and engage in meaningful discourses, and move beyond the traditional model of providing answers to questions posed solely by their instructors. By empowering their diverse imaginations, observations, opinions, aspirations and dreams, they can be directed more deeply to learning. The fostering of a more democratic learning experience shall allow to uncover the most formidable resource within the classroom.

Teacher Empowerment

Teacher involvement arises from empowered educators, those who perceive themselves as active participants rather than passive recipients of directives (Fullan, 2003), and it emanates from educators who perceive themselves as empowered agents within the educational framework. When teachers are solely expected to execute orders without the freedom to take initiative or innovate, they become conduits for maintaining the existing educational norms and structures.

This empowerment is juxtaposed with a contrasting scenario in which teachers find themselves relegated to the position of mere implementers, devoid of agency to initiate or innovate. In such instances, they are primarily tasked with executing directives without the latitude to exercise autonomy or introduce innovative practices. This dichotomy can be summarised as a dynamic spectrum of teacher roles within the learning space (Smith, 2022). The typical educator lacks ready access to or typically faces challenges in accessing

professional journals and up-to-date publications dedicated to discussions on innovative pedagogical strategies in second language teaching. Only a limited number of teachers have the privilege of participating in local or neighbourhood associations that convene periodically to engage in discussions about the intricacies of English language education and the teaching of other linguistic domains.

Consequently, access to the most recent scholarly contributions and innovative pedagogical concepts is predominantly available through formal English Language Teaching (ELT) platforms and training programs. Within these educational settings, exposure to these invaluable resources acts as a source of inspiration, driving both educational innovation and professional development. Such access to such scholarly work can serve as a wellspring of inspiration (Johnson, 2019). Educators within the framework of excellence serve as pivotal agents of transformative change. By assuming an empowered stance, these teachers transcend their traditionally dependent roles, emerging as articulate and influential voices within the educational space. It is imperative to cultivate a system that not only acknowledges but also actively solicits and incorporates the perspectives and insights of teachers. This transition signifies a departure from a historical era marked by teachers' sense of powerlessness and apathy, particularly in specific domains, and ushers in a new paradigm where their engagement and agency are integral components of the educational milieu.

In the context of acquiring a second language, learners draw upon the linguistic resources inherent in their mother tongue, which entails the transferability of skills across languages. Nonetheless, in the audiolingual paradigm, the learner's native language was often deemed responsible for errors (Lado, 1957). Research in bilingual techniques has effectively demonstrated how a learner's proficiency in their native tongue can be leveraged as a supportive resource in the acquisition of a second language. Thus, our educational agenda for the 21st century should encompass the acknowledgement and utilization of learner

resources in the context of second language learning.

Proficient or competent teachers are pivotal catalysts for change. These educators not only break free from their dependent role but also become articulate advocates for their ideas. It is essential to establish a system that values and listens to the voices of teachers. The era of teachers feeling powerless and apathetic regarding curricular matters must become a thing of the past. Teacher involvement and empowerment are critical, urging teachers to be active participants and advocates for innovation.

Language Pedagogy

Incorporating communicative practices into the pedagogical framework of language education serves as a pivotal mechanism with the explicit aim of enriching the quality and depth of linguistic input provided to learners, thereby fostering their proficiency and linguistic enrichment. This endeavour necessitates a concerted effort to legitimize the role of English language education within the academic realm, (Freire, 1970) particularly in settings where instruction predominantly occurs through regional languages.

Historically, ambivalence towards the acquisition and adoption of the English language prevailed. However, in the post-1990s era, a transformative shift in this perspective has been witnessed. Presently, a conspicuous surge in demand for English language education is evident, manifested in the proliferation of English language improvement centres, restaurants, and educational institutions purporting to deliver instruction exclusively in English.

Moreover, a significant indicator of this escalating demand is the migration of parents from rural areas to urban centres, seeking English-medium education for their children, coupled with the increasing digital pressure for enrolment in state-run English-medium schools. To effectively address these evolving dynamics and to uphold the credibility of such educational institutions, proactive measures are indispensable to meet the growing need for English language education within the

contemporary educational setting.

Conclusion

The elevation of language awareness has garnered significant attention within educational circles to transform English language learning. The integration of innovative, inclusive, and sustainable pedagogical practices, along with communicative language teaching and conscious awareness-raising activities, is leading in the realm of second language

acquisition. Redefining and shifting from the conventional view of learners as a homogenous collective, emphasises the importance of recognizing the unique characteristics of individual learners. In navigating the complex scenario in education, one must maintain a visionary perspective, considering both pragmatic approaches and reflecting on past accomplishments while remaining cognizant of prospects.

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Parenting

It's Time for a 'Me' Break

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A few months ago, some of my colleagues had the chance to witness a remarkable journey. It was a trip to Ladakh, not by a group of adventure enthusiasts, but by a group of senior citizens who were taking on an adventure of a lifetime. What makes their story even more inspiring is that most of them were latecomers to extended travels, having spent the better part of their lives in the grind of daily responsibilities.

These were the unsung heroes who had worked tirelessly to provide for their families and ensure their children had a comfortable, secure life. Their daily routines consisted of a never-ending cycle of responsibilities, from being parents to becoming grandparents. They had sacrificed their own desires and dreams to ensure their families' well-being.

As these seniors reached their late sixties and early seventies, a yearning for something more, something beyond the routine, gripped them. They yearned to reclaim themselves, to reconnect with the adventurous spirits they had buried beneath the weight of responsibilities. So, they decided to break free from the invisible chains that had bound them for years.

When asked why they chose such a challenging and rugged journey, one of them replied, "If I stay at home all the time, I'll end up as a full-time nanny for my grandkids and a caretaker for my kids' households. I don't want that. I don't want anyone taking me for granted. I have my life."

This response strikes a chord with many of us who are still navigating the complex and demanding world of parenthood. It is a revelation that there is more to life than just being a parent. The relentless cycle of nurturing, caring, and ensuring our children's

happiness has left us feeling overwhelmed. So, I believe, it's important to take a break now and then to rejuvenate ourselves and bounce back with more energy and enthusiasm.

The truth is, just as we need a break from our daily jobs, we need a break from parenting. Unfortunately, no one tells us this. No one educates us about the importance of self-care within the realm of parenthood. The concept of "me" within us fades away as we continuously play the roles of 'mom,' 'dad,' 'granny,' or 'grandad.'

As parents, we've witnessed this firsthand through our own experiences and the experiences of people around us. The relentless cycle of nurturing, caring, and ensuring our children's happiness leave us feeling overwhelmed. We, parents/ grandparents, are caught in the web of non-stop parenting. But then, when we step aside and reflect on our own journey, we can clearly see the need for a break in between and the need to enjoy the 'me life' in our lives.

In the midst of the chaos, it's easy to forget the 'me' in 'mom' or 'dad.' We become so entangled in our children's lives that we often forget to live our own. This article is a personal reflection on the significance of parenting breaks—a call to action for all parents and grandparents to pause, take a step back, and rediscover themselves.

In the end, parenting is a beautiful journey, but it's essential to remember that we are more than just parents. We have our dreams, aspirations, and desires. Taking breaks from parenting doesn't make us neglectful; it makes us better parents. It's time to reclaim ourselves and remember the 'me' within us.

It works in my classroom

From wrong to right definitions: language too improves.

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The ability to define things around us, and later, things and phenomena that are unfamiliar to us, is a part of cognitive development. If a child of four years can distinguish between two tools, for example, a screw driver and a spanner, in terms of their function first, and structure later, that means the child's cognitive development corresponds to her or his physical age. The same is the case with a student of fifth grade, making distinction between a natural magnet and an electromagnet. In both cases, the child follows both intuition and tuition. In the case of the former, the child has arrived at an abstract definition of a screwdriver on seeing elders using it for various purposes, and the child associates that tool with tightening and loosening. Interaction with adults reinforces the definition. In the case of the latter, perhaps, tuition (classroom teaching) helped the child to arrive at the functioning of two types of magnets. Thus, children differentiate one thing from others, going by definitions.

But, when they are asked to define these things, they may have problems in getting the right word. In the case of a second language, even if they get the right word, greater problem is in how to string those key defining words along with less important words which are also necessary in defining. Thus, there appears a mismatch between the child's 'knowing' a thing, for example a screwdriver, and defining it to others. That means, the child's linguistic deficiency is most likely to be misinterpreted as the child's inadequate cognitive development; at least this is so, while evaluating the answers of tests. Science classes, almost every day, function with definitions; grammar classes, too. Therefore, let's try a slightly different way of teaching children various ways of defining things (a sharpener or an eraser, in the lower class; a microscope or protoplasm in a higher

class), a phenomenon (lightning in the lower class; hurricane in a higher class) a concept (sympathy in the lower class; empathy in a higher class).

Class 7 (regional language medium)

Let the class be first divided into two groups, and then each group into pairs. Pair 1 of Group A works out on a wrong definition. Example: A screwdriver is a wooden tool, used for cutting cloth. Pair 1 of Group B offers two correct definitions: (i) A screwdriver is a metallic tool with a wooden or plastic handle, *that* is used for tightening or loosening screws. (ii) A pair of scissors is a tool *that* is used for cutting cloth. Pair 2 of Group B: (Wrong definition) A spanner is a plastic tool *which* is used for sawing thin wooden reapers.

Pair 2 of group A corrects: (i) No, no. A spanner is a steel tool used for tightening or loosening nuts and bolts of machines and vehicles.

(ii) A hacksaw blade is a metallic tool with a wooden handle used for sawing thin wooden reapers.

Please note, this session makes use of only tools—domestic, agricultural, tools used to repair vehicles etc. No entry for classroom objects such as duster or projector into this session.

This session may have about 10 or 12 such wrong and right definitions; and then the next session can be on service providers.

Class 8 (Regional language medium)

Pair 1 of Group A: A pilot is one *who* sails a ship.

Pair 1 of Group B: No, no. A pilot is one *who* flies an aeroplane. It is a captain *who* sails a ship.

Pair 2 of Group B: A plumber is one *who* attends to electrical wiring and switches at home.

Pair 2 of Group B: No. A plumber is the one *who* fixes out pipeline and water taps. It is an electrician who attends to the wiring and switches at home.

Let this session with about 10 sets of definitions be confined to service providers.

Class 8 (Regional language medium)

Pair 1 of Group A: A warehouse is a building *where* foodgrains are turned into flours.

Pair 1 of Group B: Oh, no. A warehouse is a building *where* things including foodgrains are

stored for some time. It is at a flour mill where foodgrains are turned into flours in a machine.

Note to teachers: Should we teach the definition of a relative pronoun (words in italics, above) and its examples, or should we just encourage learners to form this type of wrong and right definitions in meaningful contexts, with healthy competitive spirit? Left to your decision. Also, please remember, children feel proud of themselves while correcting others.

Inter-cultural Interaction...

(Continued from Page 2)

related to school', but in Kochi twice, they were surprised to see the parental participation at the programmes at school, the democratic functioning of schools, the secular Onam festival and so on. Even their teachers couldn't believe how parents were proactively engaging in school affairs, supporting and promoting curricular and co-curricular activities.

Again, in December, 2023, another batch of students and faculty members from the Chennai-based SDNB Vishnav College for Women is visiting two northern villages in Kerala –Pattiam and Kanhileri, both on the outskirts of Thalassery town in Kannur District. It is a one - week programme, three days each at Govt. Hr. Sec. School Pattiam (from 26 to 28 Dec.) and at Kanhileri Upper Primary school, Mattanur (from 29-31 Dec.). Apart from the Chennai college, quite a few teacher trainees

(B Ed. and D Ed. Students) from various institutions, and researchers are also participating as tutors and observers.

Accommodation and food for outstation participants are provided by the Parent-Teacher Association of the schools with the support of the local public, and local transport by ELTIF. Cultural exchange programmes are part of this academic programme –in fact, nothing is exclusively academic with ELTIF; everything is social. It is a social way of language learning, that ELTIF propagates and promotes.

All are welcome to the One-week ELTIF Village English Fest at two schools in Thalassery (Kerala), from 26 to 31 Dec. 2023, as tutors or observers.

P. Bhaskaran Nair (Editor)

ELTIF Teaching-Learning Materials

ELTIF is planning to develop a 'Material Bank for Rural and Disadvantaged Learners'. Teachers and researchers, who are willing to share their teaching-learning materials (print and electronic) are requested to mail them to eltifjournaleditor@gmail.com. They will be first published in the Journal, and later compiled as a handbook for teachers with the name and details of the contributors. – Editor