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*Adab Literature ki Tapashiya*

**Sohaila Javed, Ph.D.**

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**Abstract**

This qualitative hermeneutic paper comes with some “mead of in-spiration” (Kraemer, 2000) ... and imagination... in attending to *adab* literature and its trigonometry of *adib* (creator of literature), *tahdib* (educative culture) and *adaab* (manners), and with its related trigonometry of reading, creativity and criticism, calls literature as the ‘educare’ of human life. The hope of education is that such a mode of being will manifest the word in the world with affection, and let us live well together in the living world. For that matter, it encourages us to take our children to the cultural texts of literature and begin to live and speak from within it. Such transformational praxis will disrupt reductionism, essentialism, and alienation, and initiate a discourse of possibility in these distressing times.

**Sensibility of Literature to Life**

The co-creative dynamism of literature and life opens us to their symbiotic relationship, and their being together with humanity. Their humanness evokes a family resemblance, images the sensibility of literature to life, and opens us to their existential unity. Necessity brings them together in touching and

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creating impact upon our souls. Where life is manifestation of Creation, literature mediates between creation and life, and thus becomes the concrete of co-Creation, another Real besides life. To read and see life, read this Real as we are impacted, that is influenced, changed, and directed subtly, in silence. Kuang-Ming Wu (1998) quotes Confucius when telling us to “follow what heart desires without trespassing regulations,” and know something about ourselves through these life-expressions. (Dilthey, 1985). The powerful reality is its capacity to interest us, its ability to alter life, and augment our *amour propre*.

### **Human Meaning of Self and the World**

With ideas represented as life’s reflections and myriad meanings in another trigonometry of creativity with writing, reading and critical reflection, literature relates meaning, and more than ever, human meaning of Self and the World. For an intuitive sense of meaning, and a sense of ‘sense,’ we read and see literature as our mirror, and so affirm our co-existence and our reality. We impact each other’s being, and uniquely facilitate the conveyance of the impact (Kuang-Ming Wu, 1998), and so mutually see *each other* as literature, the next living text. Literature moves to make a difference in the real world that confronts us and surrounds us. We are literature, and become ourselves by making literature, and by being re-created by literature. As creative coexistents, we dance our mutuality, and move out to warm up the world for our new beginning, and our new present and future. And where we may go for the beginning of our future with futuristic fervour is an imaginative re-enactment of our lives as human being. We will see ourselves as “the paragon of animals” (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*) with *pure transparent humanness* as our personal integrity; a repository of human commUnity, where we all meet and are re-born.

### **Othering – The Concept of Inclusivity**

Here self-realization comes with Othering<sup>1</sup> (an alternate concept of inclusivity) in literary experiences, and inspires self to shape and refine itself, and then, be Itself. Finding another self in the literary mirroring, stretches our knowing to that which is different from first, experiencing this another as we co-respond with the living world that is also another, as we begin to imagine what it might be, its imaginative co-relative in the concrete. This is literature’s existential imperative, its *amor fati*. Its creatively ontological being excites the creative drive in us, and thus becomes Necessity to our living creatively in the élan of all others. This is living un-dividual lives with humanity, in quiescence with all others. In fact, that is what constitutes the human un-dividual, brought out by the sensibility and sensitive

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ethos of literature. The unidirectionality of this human person is toward the fullness, integrity and dignity of humanity, of human subjectivity that *adab*<sup>2</sup> literature as cultural hermeneutics so wonderfully addresses. This is the actual horizon of the world, and wants us to understand, and become available to its creative touch and aesthetic impact, in Real.

### **The Meaning and Purpose of Human Existence**

It brings us finally to a metaphysical question: What is the meaning and purpose of human existence? Such questioning naturally takes us to self-realization through others that distinguishes us from the beasts. But there is more to it than that. Our understanding of human suffering transcends all meaning, and reminds us of Nietzsche's teaching that pain is the authentic origin of human memory (in Roemer, 1995). Pain, as a significant teaching besides pleasure, takes us beyond mere existence to living meaningfully. Its meaning becomes clear in a letter written by a man who suffered immensely and who, in so doing, came to understand the meaning of suffering (in *Aesthetics Today*, 1980, pp. 284-285). The letter, dated February 14, 1819, is by John Keats.

Man [sic] is originally a poor forked creature subject to the mischances as the beasts of the forest, destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or other ... The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is "a vale of tears" from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to heaven. What a little circumscribed notion! Call the world if you please "the vale of Soul-making." Then you will find out the use of the world.... I say "*soul making*"--Soul as distinguished from Intelligence. There may be intelligences or sparks of divinity in millions--but they are not souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself.... How then are Souls made? How but by the medium of the world like this?... I will call the *world* a School instituted for the purpose of teaching little children how to read--I will call the *human heart* the *horn book* read in that school--and I will call the *Child* able to read, the Soul made from that *School* and its *horn book*. Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul? A place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways .... As various as the Lives of Men are--so various become their souls, and thus does God make

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individual beings.

Herein lies literature's significance as a soul-making resource, second to faith, our dependent origination in life, and our vocation to which we respond as human beings. This kind of culture experienced through literary texts makes literature a provocative curriculum that comes with much metamorphic wind as Bloom claims (1998), and with creative processes of transcendence and inclusion, of continuum and change, of safety and salvation, facilitates the process of becoming through literature.

### **The Creative Play of Self-conscious Art: Ideological Expression and Aesthetic Ethos**

All fine imaginative work is self-conscious and deliberate.

No poet sings because he must sing. At least, no great poet does. It is so now.... There is no fine art without self-consciousness. (Wilde, cited in Rank, 1932, p. 89)

Oscar Wilde's play impulse immediately draws us to creation in 'pathic' texts of literature, as self-inspired text, creation of inspired *adibs* (creators of *adab*), that abound with humans and human experiences, and step us into the heart of humanity, giving

a living picture of all the most minute and secret artifices by which a feeling steals into our souls, of all the imperceptible advantages which it there gains, of all the stratagems by which every other passion is made subservient to it, till it becomes the sole tyrant of our desires and our aversion. (Schlegel, 1840, ii, p. 137)

Such knowing text has power to tap responses deep within our hearts; and according to Schlegel, these are responses that consciously we might prefer to deny, but our desires, springing from the deepest source, create aversion for that is bad and reprehensible, and love for that is good and beautiful. Such soulful desire takes us into this educative ethos to fulfill its need of culturing the spirit for that seems to be its greatest desire, first and unceasingly. This desire works toward harmonizing our love for creation with our compulsive act of creativity.

## **Domains or Centers of Caring**

Noddings (1992) too, considers academic subjects in this spirit as “domains or centers of caring.” “There clearly are connections that can be made here to the subjects we call history, geography, literature, and science, but I would like those subjects to contribute to centers of care, not to substitute for them” (p. 49). These subjects live and enjoy an in-built camaraderie with the actual world of living beings. Here learners at all stages of learning will learn about “caring for the self, for others (strangers and distant others), for animals, plants and the earth, for the human-made world and for the world of ideas” (p. 49).

This comes in as Noddings’ immediate response to her own question: Can we make caring the center of our educational efforts? (p. 14), which immediately takes us to a field of knowledge, deeply stirred by issues that challenge the contemporary world, drawn to the dilemmas and potentials of the young people who come into class each day. This knowing subject has the powerful educational potential for creating and enacting a vision of Education as a culturing discipline, centered around caring relationships that “promote the growth of students as competent, caring, loving, and lovable people” (p. 154).

## **From Heart to Soul**

Eisner (1985) in his own sensitive way commits us to genuine knowing: If to cognize is to know, then to have a feeling and not to know it is not to have it (p.20). Passionately agreeing with Eisner, I contend that the biggest challenge is to have affection, and have no affective activity in the classroom or any other room. This is an affront to human emotional potential that decapacitates us of a human right: loving each other. Such a potential begins its flow from the palpitating heart and reaches the soul that would want no other. Literary texts and our experiences overflow with such plain human living, and gifts of joy and sorrow, our hopes and desires amidst much unhoping. This is Life contextualized in our texts that open up new meanings in the world of the work, surprisingly connected to our own in the real life context around us. And in connecting, William (1981) says that we become the living prodigy of so many learnt hopes and desires that we know from our poems and prose texts. So we learn from the ever opened world pages and these opening pages of texts, of life and lives which we read with a more imaginative love that may teach us a better service. Soon we aspire to delve into text to know more, search more and research most for helpful metaphors that will help us to open ourselves more to explore the perfectly magical-perfectly ordinary living for the present ‘now.’

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## **To Imagine is to be True**

What works this miracle is that miraculous “Queen of the faculties” (in Madison, 1988), the imagining functioning power, revered by the great mystic philosopher Ibn al Arabi as *khayal*, and Shakespeare, Poe and Baudelaire’s creative imagination. Its creativity is the power of Imagining; its compelling dynamism further develops and whets our aptitude for meaningful action. It is a mental, metaphoric act that opens the door of productivity, and “mirrors” the creation in Wordsworth, Coleridge and Goethe, for example, and that lets, in Ricoeur’s view (1981) “new worlds shape our understanding of ourselves” “by the emergent meanings in our language.”

## **Imagined Meanings**

Entering through this “half-open door,” and the self-opened contemplative Eye, the lumen superior of this poetic I, the reflective subject of connected knowing searches open texts for meaning that the living language of imagination inhabits. By virtue of habit and action, this creative being, divers to the roots, sees into “the internal dynamic” of these “autonomous linguistic entities called literary texts” (whose meaning is not to be explained subjectively, in terms of authorial intention, says Ricoeur). Imagined meanings are simply ways in which, by means of language, we relate to, take up an existential attitude toward what Ricoeur calls “the world of the work.” New or unusual usages of words as *metaphors* help us find new meanings and ways of relating to things, and making text what the literary hermeneut Stanley Fish (1980) calls “not a spatial object but the occasion for “a temporal experience” (p. 3). By linking imagination with language, we take up the hermeneutic view toward imagination and language, and its centrality in the “life of the mind,” and its expression in the text. The presence of such a text in our minds and our reactions to it is the way by which we “animate the meaning of the text as a reality.” It is thus that the imaginative texts, through the dimension of language, open up a world for imaginative activity, much interpretation and understanding, and creative being outside the text.

## **Dimension of Subjectivity**

Believing that there is nothing fixed, determinate, and so hidden as not to be known, imaginative thinking allows the reader to subject her/his being to the original author’s dimension of subjectivity. Of course, fiction is a fundamental dimension of the reference of the text, the world in the work, and it would

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be unfictive of the reader as not to realize the very *being* of text's subject, and experience imaginatively what had gone into the making of that text. Just to have a relish of the original experience is itself a stepping into the unknown, unfamiliar, hidden. Being open to everything robs life of curiosity and wonder that lie between concealment and illumination. But, reading something of the writer's soul is itself another experience, another understanding. This is relating with a being with another perspective, another dimension from another culture not known to the reader. Keeping one's own dimension under check, it becomes the reader to enter the text's world, as a new site, and by means of the dimensions of language and culture, inhabit it. It opens up new domains, new cultures, and other worlds for new experiences. The text's meaning and understanding allows the interplay of creativity "for what we essentially are is what we can become, the being 'otherwise' and being 'more' that are the objects of effort and desire, the two basic characteristics of the act of existing" (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 96). What more can the reading egos want but Desire's desire that is self-understanding, and a way of shaping, cultivating, and refining the higher self within us?

I think this is a noble task that reading performs: introducing reader to "imaginative variations of the ego. The metamorphosis of the world in play [in the text] is also the playful metamorphosis of the ego" (Ricoeur, in Madison, 1988, p. 168). Furthering Ricoeur's observation, I contend that such reading also directs us to the metamorphosis of the world we inhabit as an act of existing, and the effort and desire needed for actualizing this understanding. But what is paramount for the reader is to "unrealize" self, and lose the subjectivity as "radical origin, if it is to be recovered in a more modest role." This is also the original Word's content that came to humanity from the First Hermeneut in an Inspirational text with *Read*, and the moral and ethical action desired for the metamorphosis of the world we are connected with. In opening wor(l)ds which express possibilities of being and becoming in a new way, as also Ricoeur, the sufi mystic of phenomenological hermeneutics states, texts become express desires and hopes of a veritable change that may come. Only if we desire...

### **Chiaroscuro of Scenes, Images of "Magical Instantaneity"**

The inspiring texts of literature offer chiaroscuro of scenes, images of "magical instantaneity" that fascinate us by their awe and beauty, and make us look at them and find in them, as Kenneth Clarke (1949) suggests:

recognizable experience-recognizable views, the kind one  
meets in routine, which raises the humble to the memorable

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with suggestive strokes of brush and pen that elevate the ordinary to the condition of art. (p. 45)

Here you may find, according to Clarke, a sensitive juxtaposition of ideas, diverse images complementing each other, enhancing the general scheme, and bringing the general and personal views into “a compositional unity.”

### **Communicates more than the Visual through the Visual**

So standing on the peripheral parts of the page, the poetic teacher communicates more than the visual through the visual, and so leads the readers into many consensual landscapes. This is the call of the consensual, exciting sensibilities and inflaming them with aspiration to see more, understand more, share more, and simultaneously, enriching them with its meaning and significance to them. They return with reasons which motivate their choice, as Cardinal Newman might say, with the “grammar of assent” (in Donnelly, 1938) to the purity of the creative impulse, of painting, of poetry or prose, that is music of love for the creation, and returning creative acts as expression of our soul. They understand Alexander Pope’s conspicuous point of view:

Little learning is a dang’rous thing,  
Drink deep--or taste not the Pier’ean spring;

and so prepare for repeated dips into the lure these painters’ paintings present, and in one intent moment, stretch their imagination to the creation, now embodied in texts before us which includes us, creatives and noncreatives all. The painters’ keen sense awakens this pathic team--teacher and students to a deep, positive, and illuminating response. This is the abode of what Madison (1988) calls phenomenological hermeneutics, where both “enter to make a choice, produce something or educe a course of action, the outcome of which is contingent in that it depends precisely on the subject oneself” (Prologue, p. xiii). For both, textual meaning has “a temporal mode of being,” which is not fixed or determinate, and in its interplay with ambiguity, uncertainty, unmeaning, lends reality to experience, making reading an act of courage, a space of generative possibility. It is, in fact, the desire for meaning that stretches our imagination, moves our potentiality into actuality, alters Intelligence into Soul or Active Intellect, and overwhelms non-sense in our lives with sense and soul perception that essential, meaningful experiences bring.



## **Eternal Feature of Human Predicament**

So spiritual knight-errants, the knights of hiddenness, do not turn back but march breast forward, taking a comprehensive view of life with dauntless courage, will and effort, strife and struggle as the eternal feature of human predicament. So Robert Browning persevered as T.S.Eliot did as did Walter de la Mare, Shakespeare and John Keats, Rumi, Assadullah Khan Ghalib, Tagore and Muhammed Iqbal, and so many spirited fortes in all disciplines before and after them, with their belief in Robert Browning's: The best is yet to be.

Thus academic life can be a well-directed chiaroscuro of colors and visions in the world, arousing sensuous appetite for work and fulfillment that brings academic joy, and awakens meaningful action. This is a gift of soulful living, awakened by desire of consensual beings for more sensitive thinking about education with rich possibilities of throbbing pain and pleasure. This is a poetic response to life, the temptress. Is not then, aspiration a joy forever, awakening academic communities to full living that act of reading literature promises and the outlining in education of a true *poetique du possible!* (Ricoeur, in Madison, 1988)

## **Same act, Another End - The Beginning of Critical Understanding**

The beginning of critical understanding as the end of reading is a possibility that enables us to see “the impressive constitutive authority in a powerful textuality as that of a broadly based cultural discipline,” in Foucault's (1965, p. 119) sense of the word. This is literature's natural habit, the comprehensive authorization it inherits from life itself. Texts are open, non-constitutive things, deconstructing borderlines and tethering coextensive webs of relationships that defy non-culture, non-spirit, non-sense. This Foucaultian propensity, if properly dispensed with, can open borders and build the necessary, valuable connection between the affirmative powers of Western discourse, and affirmation and inclusion of everything designated as nonwhite. Non-affirming and excluding everything that is beyond the hegemony of an imperialistic culture is the third dimension--the thing that speaks of itself, never spoken to, never heard but always there, waiting to be heard, reaffirming its unheard profundity and timeless density. This silent viable necessity is the cultural one for all to hear and absorb before it diffuses or disseminates as a difference, and thus restricts the culturing of scholarship. Even then, is this difference negligible?

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## **A Non-divisive Approach**

A non-divisive approach to texts, whose goal is to understand and overcome, is needed for releasing the imaginative and intellectual abilities from prison houses of disciplined authority. These are, therefore, relentless to *human understanding* that will release intellectual discourse from white or nonwhite hegemony, and give a new cultural adage to education.

Seeing literature as a collective traversal of all forms of human experiences in any language, and the trend of my inner energies toward ‘doing literature’ or more philosophically ‘doing education’ or more specifically ‘a doing humanistic pedagogy,’ brings a sense and feel of joy and freedom. You enjoy being on wings of your own, and like Iqbal’s Eagle have no fixed destinal points: *tu Shaheen hei, pervaaaz hei urraan teri.*

## **Mysticism and Mystics**

Texts, unlike the firmly entrenched philosophical disciplines, have “fine invincible strategic lines” (Foucault, 1965, p. 120) that define their own unity and purpose, and therefore like aesthetics, give ample charge to those who dispense with these texts to be free and open. Unlike modern trends, traverse through textual spaces is, in the classic sense, ‘healthy,’ and it represents an action that is properly human. For those who do not see it as such, it is environmental blindness and augurs the ills of humanity, most properly “man’s inhumanity to man” (Shakespeare, *King Lear*). This is, however, not a novel situation. There certainly has been a horrendous tapping of the human soul, heard and tapped forth by Rabia and Rumi (sufi mystics), Bulleh Shah (Punjabi poet of the Indian sub-continent), Shakespeare, Wordsworth and William Blake, John Keats, Browning, T.S.Eliot, de la Mare, Ruskin, Carlyle, Tagore, Muhammed Iqbal and Assadullah Ghalib (Urdu poet), Faiz (Urdu poet), all social constructs in the spiritual sense. They are philosophers to their heart’s core, taking in their own way the problem of philosophical textuality and reading, that is not without metaphysical being and mystical sensibility. Can any intellectual engagement be vulnerable to proper limits?

## **The in-between of Reading**

As a self-conscious activity, I think, closures would be impossible here, making reading ‘unreadable,’ presenting literary text as *text within text within text*. The in-between spaces that are beyond the closure of beginning and end leave ‘between’ the text, a gap always there, always meaning something,

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and keeping us between concealment and illumination (Gadamer, 1983). For if it did not mean, reading would become redundant, really unreadable. Thereby leaving reading to a kind of reading autonomy that thereby renders the teacher effaceable. Reading as a textual discipline of knowledge is like knowledge contentious, too. Its illimitable expanses and in-between gaps as “erasures” are open for disclosure with their being and becoming more autonomy, making reading like any human activity autonomous, meaningful, cooperative and, most importantly institutionally non-restrictive, even if it is found in individual texts. This *more* has immensities for esoteric or hermeneutic probing, and thus makes *criticism* a hermeneutic additive to critical understanding of literature, and teacher’s presence, a necessity. Then, does literature need so many supplementary words of criticism?

The answer lies, Paul Gudel and Stephen Melville (1980) say, in our recognition of “the inner discontinuity in literature which demands (and also repels) the supplementary language of criticism.” The “critical Fall” that it takes us to after some “Paradise of literature” is, in fact, not a fall but an encounter with reality. If this is so, criticism and literature coexist in a deeply relational domain with criticism as the fruition of this knowledge. Their understanding is that following the logic of reading, literature must find its completion in what is “not literature” (pp. 1-5). Teachers then, would like to enter the new dimensions that criticism brings to literature-- “a critical understanding” that Northrop Frye rightly considered “the end of reading or listening,” in fact, all learning. And what of its applicability, then?

Reading literature as philosophy allows in the bold union of reason and revelation, a defiance of all boundaries that open texts educe for teachers and students alike, makes this team of knowers vulnerable to experience, and to answer the human needs which reading as philosophy would like to answer. But can reading like any philosophical ‘*theoria*’ be separated from any ‘*practice*’?

The “purification” attempt at philosophy in the twentieth century by the tools “analytical” and “existential” has separated theory from practice. Gudel and Melville (1980), the co-Editors of *Aesthetics Today* (1980) engage Heidegger’s critique in their understanding of philosophy: “to be *sophia* without the *philia*, replacing the idea of the philosopher as the highest form of life (as in Plato) with the pathetic image of the fly in the bottle” (p. 7). The ills of humanity seem to be issuing forth in this separation of theory and practice of any philosophy or belief. Any activity if it is ‘cognitive’ and connected with ‘knowledge’ is bound to be emotive and contemplative, and will inspire a course of action as a (w)holistic package. And like all knowings in Knowledge, reading too as a branch of knowledge is contentious. With its in-depth hermeneutic element and critical understanding as its end, what will this *sophia* do without

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the *philia*. It has the revelatory, plasmic intent that begins with the initial impetus *Read*, and opens up a universe of discourse, which would use mind and heart and soul to talk about meaning, and joining these knowings into one big theory of Knowledge. It also miraculously conjoins the one ‘who’ taught and ‘what’ as philosophy in education. And for what purposes?

### **Why Read, Think, and Write Literature?**

This question at once answers the impossibility of separation between theory and practice, and brings in doing philosophy as practice that is a living pedagogy of any branch of knowledge. As human knowers, we can see no contention in the investment of the larger contexts in which literary texts are embedded. This is then, inextricably linked to a perennial textual connection with the larger context, namely, the human and other than human as well. Through these textual discussions, what I see emerging is the description of text as *praxis* and that is how it can complete literature with “what is not literature.” Its existence, as Edward Said (in *The Problem of Text: Two Exemplary Positions*, in *Aesthetics Today*, 1980), taking Foucault’s position, wisely affirms is “associated not with the univocal authority of the author but with a discourse constituting author, text, and subject which gives them a very precise intelligibility and effectiveness” (pp. 87-129).

The meaning of this collision can be significantly understood by the co-creative combine of teacher and students, when using Foucault’s project of cultural hermeneutics, they can be accounted for reading texts, that like writing is:

no private exercise of a free scriptive will but rather the activation of an immense complex tissue of forces for which a text is a place among other places (including the body) where the strategies of control in society are conducted. (Foucault, in *Aesthetics Today*, 1980, pp. 87-129)

Here is Edward Said’s implemented, effective power of textual statement, and the huge unbinding engagement that can emerge between teacher and students on matters pertaining to discovery and knowledge, freedom, oppression, or injustice. The very exclusive matter of differences between classes, people, positions, discourses, ideologies, Said supposes, can be finely addressed here “without the power of making decisions about the finally reconciling element of textuality” (p. 115). If the teacher is able to address to the human community’s silent victims, and create the actuality of discourse that makes visible the repressed voice of its subjects everywhere, s/he’ll be putting *theoria into practice*, becoming

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educational philosopher and elevating teaching to onement point of knowing being and beingknowing. This is an ensemble of relationships done from the perspective of an engaged worker for whom power lies in what is shared within the human community. This discourse, like all discourses, is a moment of revelation for Foucault, being as he says:

composed of signs; but what they (discourses) do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this 'more' that renders them irreducible to the language and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe. (Foucault, 1972, p. 53)

### **Entwines Texts and Reading**

The '*more*' in any living discourse entwines texts and reading as a context for hermeneutic understanding and critical consciousness. This reading discourse takes readers on a traversal of human experiences along open borders to 'more' cultures that inspires:

a situated and responsible adversary position for itself, this consciousness begins its meaningful cognitive activity in attempting to account for, and rationally to discover and know, the force of statements in texts: statements and texts, that is, as doing something more or less effective, with consequences that criticism makes its business to reveal.

(Edward Said, *Critical Inquiry*, 1978, Vol. 4, No.4)

These texts, adopting a revelatory and reconciling function in many if not all cases, become a form of *impressive* human activity, in correlation with other texts of their own kind. These adopt the quality of being distinct too. Text alone then, is not a provincial domain for use of criticism or even hermeneutics. Both elements of functional use, starting from the initial text, inhabit a cultural space that goes beyond historical conditions to connect to the contemporary world context that guarantees the closure of beginning and end. These (extra) terrestrials of imaginative and concrete experiences, while sustaining our thought and our existence, contain the continuity and transmission of knowledge as an event that has left lasting traces upon the human subject. Once we take that view, Edward Said portends, then literature, like any other intense and inspired text, is beyond historicity and exists in the broad cultural field, not as "an isolated paddock" but as an intertwining humanistic pedagogy. We are ready for a cultural interchange in a broadly based cultural field, taking the cognitive acts of *read, think and write*

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with what Edward Said (1978) portends “a sense of the greater stake in historical and political effectiveness that literary, as well as all other, texts have had.” (p. 129)

This is the kind of literary engagement that can recover the possibility of meaning, intention and significance of knowledge in Education, and liberate “folly from its forcible enclosure” (Edward Said) inside any culture. This is a gesture that promises continuity to all cultures in the recovery of positiveness, and the possibility of meaning in general for the human community, withal. But what is paramount to this recovery is the emergence of something ‘more’ in education.

### **Reflection on Necessity: The Moving Impulses - Why be Literature?**

Serious reflections on literature, culture and society anywhere, in academic and non-academic portals of Earth, begin and culminate with movements of criticism and creativity, emanating from reflections on the human condition as Necessity. The urge and desire to respond to this age’s urgent necessities cannot be without openness to human condition, and service to one’s conscience and action that is, as Hannah Arendt tells us, “on the basis of keeping promises, mutually binding one another, covenanting” (Cohen and Arato, 1992, p. 178).

The challenge is to remoralize our lives by discovering our essential nature (Heidegger, 1968) that to Varela is our dependent origination. From here, we can reconstruct our identities and intersubjectivities on the ground of the dignity of our human nature... on the basis of our human belongingness. On this firm foundation, even the most alien person becomes a member of our community. This is not a wild conjecture or a veiled abstraction and extravagance, but a warm pleasant response to their sitting in our sacred heart with our love and reverence for them as the only becoming expression. Rejecting power over others as the aim of dialectic, our dialectical move and striving as conscious human beings, is to enhance human functioning and facilitate human flourishing (Giri, 2002), and actuate the *tapashya* of human becoming.

The project of a good life, of humanness for everyone is possible only when we see the dawn of a more dignified Relationship on Earth in contrast to the present death and darkness. The striving for such a Kingdom (or *Kindom*) of ends, as Kant calls it, does not bind human beings in the chains of possessive and annihilating Individualism. Rather, it creates a creative and transformative point for both self and all others that is beyond a “demeaning narcissism.” This for Gandhi “consists not in outward ceremonial but

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an ever-growing inward response to the highest impulses that man is capable of.” And to be true to all practicing believers, “one has to lose oneself in continuous and continuing service of all” (in Iyer, 1990, p. 159).

This is not the reflection of a solitary individual, but the conscious decision of the human person who makes a law, and then obeys this law which has been enacted and which is good in itself. It ascribes for the Latin *vocare*, and “our vocation to better ourselves (both individually and collectively)” (Wood, 1992, p. 408), and then will ourselves to “Act as if the maxims of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature” (Guyer, 1992, p. 320). The horizon of this vision moves the hearer to touch both the within and without, and be a seeker in this great pilgrimage of life. To connect to this humanitas, we have to feel this as Kant (1964) describes a “duty sui generis” not as “a duty to oneself but a duty of the human race to itself to fulfill its common vocation to progress as a species.” We have to feel this not only as a “duty generis” but a joy of the seeking souls that have “capacities for inner perfection which form part of nature’s purpose for human in one person” (pp. 407-408). The promotion of this end, (in)deed, depends upon our strivings, and if it is full of true joy, Gandhi would prompt “Such life is the source of ever fresh springs of joy which never dry up and never satiate” (in Iyer, 1990, p. 382).

Such a life adorns self-willed sacrifice for the human community as “a people of God under the laws of virtue” (Gandhi quoted in Wood, 1992, p. 407), joyfully inspiring us to act for welfare of others without desiring recompense, only moral and aesthetic relish. Such an inspiring relation with *all* stems from the belief that every place is God’s, and action comes from the belief that “God sits in the hearts of all and that there should be no fear in the presence of God” (in Iyer, 1990, p. 273).

### **Silent Enactment**

Silent enactment of this ideal in terms of self-chosen ethical preferences urges spiritual empiricists to walk the way which we know to be true, and that which is true is our conscience that dwells in our hearts, and after a heart realization, becomes an intellectual belief in our conscience. Gandhi writes, “... the etymological meaning of conscience is true knowledge. Conscience means listening to the inner voice” (in Iyer, 1990, p. 212). Trusting the little voice of our heart, we open our ears and eyes, and arms to suffering.... “Suffering that is infinitely more powerful... for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason” (Gandhi quoted in Narayan, 1968, p. 202). Such

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enlightenment must issue forth from someone who knows the heart so as to touch each individual's inner disposition for bringing it to perpetuate peace and end suffering as the best ethical ideal.

The pursuit of such an ideal can have intrinsic significance as a star of our life if it is pursued with the morality and ethology of an example, not an ideology. It has to be an idealology of passion that is an invocation to compassionate construction for "The day humanity ceases to believe in ideals, it will descend to the level of beasts" (Iyer, 1990, p. 131).

Herein lies the task of creative literature and criticism to step into human lives, and create an integral link between strong transcendental idealization and the aesthetic development of individuals. Literature, as expression of aesthetic sensibilities, goes beyond mere possession of creativity to sensitizing us to our moral and spiritual elevation. Moreover, just having taste is not like having an extra sense, nor like exercising a special intellectual power. For Kant, it is the:

ability to respond with immediate pleasure and unclouded vision to beauty in nature and in art, and further, to communicate this pleasure to others who are capable of sharing it. Communicable pleasure, moreover, informs an attitude of wonder to the world, and he who feels it does not satisfy to possess the objects of pleasure. (Schaper, 1992, pp. 371-372)

This brings us to the aestheticization of ethics that is the ideal here as we begin the primary task of ethical engagement: Being-for-oneself that in the project of self-cultivation and self-fulfillment is not without being-for-others. The radical here is to socialize the aestheticizing of life that is through the beautiful. A dialogue with the beautiful rejuvenates us, fluoresces us, and places us in the foreground with ethics, where we continuously make, and also recreate ourselves. Here the ideal of Karl Philip Moritz (in Dumont, 1994) ushers us on making life a work of art for which "man [sic] must reach beyond himself," and in the process of transformation that is all-inclusive:

For man [sic] as an individual it is clear that the beautiful replaces God as transcendence. We subordinate ourselves or we "sacrifice" ourselves to a higher existence in order to attain beauty ... aesthetic unselfishness requires the same abandon toward the beautiful that pietism required toward God. (p. 78)



For myself, satisfaction and fulfillment lie in co-responding with all from the axis of combination and communication, in matters of art and literature, and spirit that fills form of relationships, imagination, and creativity, and transmits true joy. Transfusion of pure joy is the pinnacle of art and artistic performance that pirouettes a practitioner of literature in aesthetic ethics (Giri, 2002), in her/his silent process of transformation that is continuously directed toward the strength of the ideal, and is drawn by the ideal: Keep Moving! This is possible while making our life a heaven of freedom and joy, and while striving to transform the world, not condemning ourselves and others to hell, but submitting and surrendering to each other in love as our primary identity and perennial presence before God and humanity at large. Such artistic creation, where understanding our world and our being with Being as an original creation is the paradigm mode, widens and strengthens the horizons of meaning and meaningful existence.

### **Literature as a *Tapashya*: Literati's *Weltanschauung***

*Tapashya*<sup>3</sup> as a way of being in the world, and with poet Robert Browning's co-responsive cry: Strive and/ Thrive, literature can raise the plane of consciousness to a comprehensive and higher stage, while contributing to a more dignified and qualitative relationship to the present world. Experiencing literature as a *tapashya* of self-transformation, one walks beyond techniques and technicians to more into literature for experimenting with truth in our life as the only additive to true knowledge and being-in-truth. A surge of palpable joy and addition of beauty to truth simultaneously leads us to transforming of the world--its ugliness and many indignities which literature unveils, and at the same time, points to a more dignified place as a transcending vision where we can arrive to be and become. A foundational shift in world education with the human person at the centre of world consciousness, and with literature as the *humanitas*, can continuously transform consciousness and this earth into a heavenly abode, "a fit home for thee" (William Wordsworth, To the Cuckoo).

### **Living Language of the Heart**

Seeing in literature a life-affirmative love, the poets and writers, as genuinely committed creators, become people's leaders. They see themselves with Chittaranjan Das (1982a) always on the side of man, of the future and of truth in spite of the pretensions that seem to rule all around, always on the side of affirmation, on the side of love (in Giri, 2002, p. 71). This love gets expressed in the living language of the heart and soul, the language of literature that arises in moments when the writer presents a new

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language to the people in order to describe the emergent world s/he has envisioned, strives to create, or has created. This is the people's language that answers the calling of the universal self within us as we reach out to experiences in literature that forever shows people in struggle, their pangs, aspirations, and their striving for a more dignified future for others than just self. This is an additional seeing opportunity that insightful experiences, without expressing "lethargies and eccentricities of skilful artists," as Das proclaims, take us into the heart of suffering humanity, and connect us to the real issues and real privations experienced by people in literature. This is the life of self and all others that literature can provide as an alternative to technicians' skills: ornamentation, gimmicks, and style technicalities. Without exaggeration, literature has a leadership and alternate performance in confronting the existing dehumanization of people with its self-conscious aesthetic ethics<sup>4</sup>, imagining potential, and literati's supreme courage to love.

### **O Literature, Creative Companion and Re-creation *ki Tapashya!***

Brimming with the creative instinct, imagination, and insight, literature goes beyond parochialism, and becomes meditation, a prayer, a *mantra* on life, poets and creativity (Das, 1982a). The aspirations of creator here abound with an intimacy for life and creation. Here there is an alternate consciousness, an alternate vision of the world and an alternate way of expression. The expansion of consciousness that happens with creative imagination knows no bounds, accepts and acknowledges no limit. This expanding urge brings to self-consciousness an intimacy when we feel at home with the entire world. At that time all our fears vanish. There is also no hatred, and no threat of terror. The aspiration of living in love then, becomes a mode of being, a way of life, and creativity a compulsory action. It takes writer to the stage of 'self-creation' in this life where one strives to continually re/create oneself. This insight IS transformation.

Here the creator knows no ends and means, but surrendering self continually to creation, gives expression to an intimacy with all the cumulative aspirations and urges of her/his life. The creative travel, beginning as immersion, absolves distinction between prose and poetry with the openness of language for the maker of literature. Responding to intimacy for life, the writer discovers the poet within, and once this outpouring begins, spontaneous expression emerges itself in poetry or prose. Then all is poetry or *mantra* emerging as the living language of imagination and soul, a rhythm composed from the axis of combination, with even criticism realized so beginning in a self-reflective mood, in its urge for critical expression and its intimacy for life.

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## **A Vision, a Perception of Creation**

Poetry then, is not primarily a work, literary text: this is a vision, a perception, way of looking at oneself and the world. *Takhaiyul* (Vision) gives rise to creation (*Takhleeq*). This creation is fundamentally meant to take us from what we are to what we ought to be, from being to becoming what we are. Vision wins the creator over hesitations and hopelessness to consent for creation in reality. Here poetry itself is *sur* (music), a *Sruti*, a rhythm of the Wor(l)d that begins by itself becoming an associative link, assenting to hope and affirmative love for affirmation of life. After this, everything looks beautiful here---- Once we clamber over, loneliness departs and the unreachable reaches us as our very own. The poetic eye sees the future as a beyond, and yet lives in continuous touch with what psychologists call the peak experience of one's life (Giri, 2000).

Seeing is believing in peak experience, a spiritual experience when we touch Being in us that makes the poet a traveler, and 'art and poetry' as embodiment of this integral experience, the peak of creative literature. It is in creative companionship of Literature that this creative person is warmly present, and s/he affirms creative subjectivity on the promise that s/he is to exist in association and intimacy of life and light, and thus consciously averts death and darkness.

The very simplicity and comprehensiveness of its context and love expression selects the axis of combination for you and me in the communication situation. This becomes a basis for a context-oriented understanding of poetic activity, and also an active poetic quest that is not only to communicate with a pre-existing community, but to re/create that community, and elicit a compassionate response. Such a select and progressive community that includes all is beyond limited selection and rejection, and constantly remains in the recreational mood, so that 'I' never loses the touch of the one in the play of the many.

## **About Recreativity**

Literati's palpable presence and presentness to life in literature is not creativity if one does not also create one's life. Creativity is one long spiritual expansion, and in the integral unfolding of one's life, one is continuously in the recreational mood. Otherwise, "a divided life is a diseased life and a diseased life can never be creative" (Das, 1989 a, p. 157). For the creative then, literature or creation in literature alone

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is not enough; it is a means to leading a more dignified and qualitatively different life that is otherwise than mere being, antithesis to creativity and Creation.

It has a relational approach to aesthetics where aesthetics is an essential part of the quality of life that constitutes the total context (Giri, 1998). Only true adoration for beauty and truth makes life truly artistic, and creates desire for making life artistic. The aesthetically alert artist elevates and expands to such a level that s/he sees both truth and beauty inside “one gestalt plane” (Chittaranjan, p. 133), and simultaneously creates an in-built *beqarari*<sup>5</sup> to begin the *tapashya* against ugliness and untruth.

### **A *Tapashya* of Transformation**

For fearless and progressive aesthetics, mere knowing of “beauty is truth and truth beauty” (Keats: *Ode to Grecian Urn*) is not enough. For aesthetics faithful to beauty and truth, that is what you need to be and become, and with courage and struggle to protect, preserve, and nurture both. Literature as the *tapashya* of transformation takes creative travelers beyond Harvey’s (1989) “aestheticization of life” to bring aestheticization in life. Literature and creative composition of beautiful life thus made more beautiful when fought through literature against alienation and suffering in life and society. In literature, there is a commitment to truth, beauty, and the wider relationship with open totalities where these are manifested. Commitment to journeying through literature with co-partners of life, and bringing to them the vision of beautiful life and the promise of recreating that beauty in life, makes literature and making of literature a transcendence. For Chittaranjan Das (1989a): In the process of transcending from one step to the next in the inner path of our life, literature can become at once a means as well as companion (p. 183).

Literature in its relational domain becomes *tapashya*, adoring and enhancing human dignity in its creative immersion and intimacy with the total context that is a global cosmography (Giri, 2002). Literature, as said earlier, is beyond parochialism, against boundaries, beyond discrimination. It is one with life and one with the creation and Creator of us all. Inspired by the culture of Spirituality, literature wants to tell us something, and as creative beings, our primary task is to listen and understand this voice rather than only be obsessed with how this voice has been constituted and determined by culture, history, and society, as Das (1989a) proclaims. Our primary task as creative critics is to understand the meaning of the text and the voice of the author, and the experimental/experiential subjectivity that it asks of us. Instead of contaminating ourselves with what Chittaranjan (1989a) calls “the disease of determining

sources” in literature, we need to understand the emergent world and consciousness as it relates the text to the creator.

Literature in its existential making is for understanding. It is textual hermeneutics where even critical encounters with texts and authors are creative engagements in understanding and dialogue, and becomes a global conversation in its engaging talk with authors of universal dimension. Literary hermeneuts begin their travel with the statement and world-view of the texts and authors concerned, and describe their points of view. Then slowly and step by step, raise probing and transforming questions which are a starting point for a subsequent exploration (Das, in Giri, 2002). It points to a move from description of the author’s world-view to widening discourse to the present world in reality. What is striking is the dialogical nature of the move itself, and the intimate connectedness and fellowship this experience embodies and unfolds. Encountering inmates of this universe, and conversing with them and their author, deepens and widens the Universe to become an all-encountering and all-embracing Relationship with the contemporary society, and the questions of the present. It is about feeling the need of a perennial seeking of human value, and a striving for dignified human relationships in the Real, so Das, like all creative literateurs, portends.

This is literature’s significance as a soul-making resource, second to faith, our dependent origination in life, and our vocation to which we respond as human beings. This kind of culture learnt and experienced through literary texts makes literature an aspiration of change, and it is in contexts where literature as provocative curriculum is the practice that insight becomes transformational, and silently inducts change as permanent in Education.

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## Endnotes

1. Othering. As an alternate mode of thinking to exclusive self-thinking with supremacy, othering comes in deep reflective practices, as in self-reflection, when devoid of self, we are capable of alterity and alternative modes of human existence. That is by transcending ‘I’, we open self to the concept that ‘I am nought without the Other’, transfiguring our sense of self to understanding ‘self and others’ as “participant integrals” (Lex Hixon, 1988) of the widening universe within and without. Othering then, comes as a natural emotional accompaniment of Self, and with this feeling imperative, we find ourselves in a culturally diverse world whose “Content is otherness” (Huebner, 1999), and self becomes empathetically open, available, and vulnerable to not only difference and the different, but to something “higher” as well. With this spiritual attitude, we will look to accepting others to confirm our humanity and our human individuality, and also enlighten the understanding of knowing and being in diverse modes, and “hence inform and enlighten the understanding of education” (Huebner, 1999).

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2. *Adab*. An Arabic term that, as a rich cultural heritage, ascribes to an immense literature, including history, literary history, and lengthy discussions of politics (Kraemer, 1986). The term commonly applied in classical Arabic to these writings is *adab*, which initially expresses political culture, but later acquires an ethical and practical content. In the first sense, it has a connotation of good breeding, courtesy, and urbanity; in the latter sense, of civility, etiquette, and correct behaviour in both social and political contexts. In order to meet these requirements, the *adib*, the creator of *adab*, must exemplify the arts of elegance and intellectual sophistication that his writings express. For further nourishment and acculturation of the mind, knowledge of Arabic poetry, letters, history, and antiquities, as well as of the increasingly ramified non-religious literature is an added embellishment. The ancients accredited learning more than mere gathering of knowledge, and then, not mere possession of it, but actualizing it for being in “an affective state” (Levinas, 1996) by personal example. This was the truth and worth of learning in its practice and experience, its use and value—the real of reality and their constant relation to the realm of *acts* and not just ideas. By the ninth century, *adab* comes close to expressing meaning that is ascribed to ‘literature’ in the present day. Familiarity with *adab* and its ethos of educativeness, openness to vast human culture, alive with the *adab* (respect) and art of humanity, and the multiplural diversity it represents and extends into being *literature* today, is the next creative resource and imago of educative existence.

3. *Tapashya*. A Hindi word that carries Sanskrit implication of self-renunciation and austerity--though not for the sake of escapism or world-denial but to return to the world with altruistic fervour (Giri, 2002). It is the discipline of meditation, one of the ‘technologies of the self’ that carries the Beyond spirit, and enables the concentration of consciousness and action in order to transcend the narrow limit that is given to oneself. For me it means living life for a more enriching intimacy, a qualitatively different kind of togetherness in society and the larger world. It thus becomes a deeper engagement, a continued seeking and striving as a movement for transformation, with immense transforming potential. It is spiritual praxis, in effect, a life-long commitment reminding us of Browning’s promise of Strive and Thrive.

4. Aesthetic ethics. As a theme of normative conversation, aesthetic ethics asks for broadening and deepening the project of human development. Its moral imperative is transformation of both self and world society, and that engages self in a limitless “round of exchanges with the other, and a system of reciprocal obligations” (Foucault, 1986). Taking self as the subject of human action, aesthetic ethics vows for unselfishness and self-commitment as the ideal of highest morality, and self-cultivation and self-fulfillment as the primary task for ethical engagement through artistic creation. Both intentions focus attention to responsibility towards others and require unconditional relationships and moral demands beyond the self in same forms (Taylor, 1991). Our spiritual imagination calls us to infuse our ethical sensibility with love so that a supplement of both reason and love animates our conversations and relationships with self and others. The inclusion of love will transform an otherwise impartial and narrow ethical perspective to human relationships, inspiring us to bring caring as a manifestation of love and concern for then, one is deeply moved to taking caring for the genuine well-being of the peoples of the world (Sunder Rajan, 1998). Such a spiritual supplement will transfigure aesthetic ethics as leadership, will make us avoid the trap of “Self’s work on itself” (Foucault, 1986), and engage us willingly in our holistic human development. This new ethics, once activated, will inspire our participation as in a movement that will put us spontaneously in an ethos of relationship and shared responsibility, of awakening and inspiring both to see our life as an artistic creation and then, work on it as a subject of art. Recreating human living on a new pedestal of aesthetic existence, will confer greater reverence for life and all life forms, and restore joyous being to humans. As a rich experience in the grand project of human development that already includes self-reflection and self-cultivation as part of self-development, aesthetic ethics, as a conscious way of artistic being-in-the-world, becomes an urgent need if we are to live differently in the present and future.

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5. *Beqarari*. Word in the Urdu language expressing anxious spiritual tension and excitement, and to me, it carries an insisting desire for *qurb* (nearness) and *qarar* (peace and calm).

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