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Motion Pictures in Teaching Poetry

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Abstract:

Teaching poetry is one of the interesting and trying tasks of the literary genres. Students often develop indifference as their involvement in developing the imaginative vision becomes far-fetched for the tender minds to understand and experience of the word pictures. In the light of insufficiencies in Traditional Method of teaching poetry, new methods have arrived making use of animated pictures and pictorial representation of the images and ideas of the poet. This paper, “Using Motion Pictures in Teaching Poetry – A Pragmatic Approach,” discusses the classroom practice of teaching poetry with the help of moving pictures rather than computer animation, for the visual realization of the images. This is an attempt at evolving a slightly different teaching practice as the animated models of teaching poetry through an experimental method is looked upon as passivizing the agential role of the teacher with the pictures transcending the imaginary bounds of the learner.

Keywords: Motion Pictures, Traditional Method, Pragmatic Approach, Multi-Media.

Poetry is arrangement of words in metrical form in decorative language. It is art of rhythmical composition to create pleasure through imaginative or profound thoughts. Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds (Shelley). Poetry is a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by laws of poetic truth and beauty (Matthew Arnold). Poetry is the imaginative expression of strong feeling, usually rhythmical..... the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility (Wordsworth).

Poetry has a significant place in literature as it reflects varied shades of human emotions. Poetry is an ancient form of arts and produce of human feelings and emotions. It has great

power to influence the human being. Poetry has been taught in schools and colleges all over the world because it has the power to tap the emotions of human beings. If we love poetry, it embraces and offers a way to empathize with human being and leads us a way to show love, mercy, and pity.

Poetry is one of the important literary forms and it is replete with great emotion, and lyrical quality. It is between songs and stories. With its magic power, it prevails even in our speech. It uses words in sequence and order with rhythm and rhyme and linear thought process. It influences the people to live in a new world of imagination

It is a fact that a text carries meaning, and a poem (poetry) also carries meaning. The variation between text and poetry is that the text carries direct meaning, but Poetry carries a connotation or implication or symbolic meaning. Generally, a symbol is not directly known and therefore it needs interpretation.

Teaching poetry is one of the interesting tasks of the literary genres. Students often develop indifference as their involvement in developing the imaginative vision becomes far-fetched for the tender minds to understand and experience the word pictures. The Traditional Method of Teaching Poetry falls away as new experimentation in teaching this difficult genre and, it would be handy through interfacial computer tools. This experimental method enables the student to understand the imagery, symbolism and the embedded figures in a poem in a more comprehensive way rather than its counterpart, the traditional approach. The complexity of the poetic tradition becomes even grim for the students with regional medium background to gain a comprehensive view of the tenor and the trade of the poet in his resonant vein of creative prowess. This paper, “Multi-Media: Using Motion Pictures in Teaching Poetry – A Pragmatic Approach,” discusses the classroom practice of teaching poetry with the help of moving pictures rather than computer animation, for the visual realization of the images. I found this practice helpful for the students from the rural and non-literature background, for an experiential realization of these poetic devices in a more comprehensive way. This is an attempt at evolving a slightly different teaching practice as the animated models of teaching poetry through an experimental method is looked upon as passivizing the agential role of the teacher with the pictures transcending the imaginary bounds of the learner. Though I do not take any dig against this practice, I improve upon the same with live-picture images providing the much-yearned

space for the teacher to explain and define the wordy images, with the pictures taking the secondary role and the teacher's role brought to the centre. Here technological tools are not downplayed but they are finely interwoven to facilitate teaching without losing the human dimension which is the endeared principle of aestheticism. The new era assigns new challenges and duties on the modern teacher. The tradition of English teaching has been drastically changed with the remarkable entry of technology. Technology provides so many options as making teaching interesting and also making teaching more productive in terms of improvements. Technology is one of the most significant drivers of both social and linguistic change.

In the technological world, one of the most predominant approaches to teach and learn poetry is using Moving Images in teaching poetry, which is a very new way to increase the students' comprehension. Beyond the traditional way of teaching, teaching of poetry with the help of Moving Images facilitates students to enhance their comprehension capacity. When we hear poetry, we appreciate the rhyme and rhythm which enhances the oral and written vocabulary. But when we look at the Moving Image suitable to the verse, it creates aesthetic sense and creates more imagination, and imagery. Use of Moving Images in teaching poetry focuses on creating mental pictures from words. The Cognitive theory of multimedia learning (CTML) also believes in that learner enhances his imagination capacity when he creates connections between pictures and words compared to teaching and learning with words only.

Involving the students in such performances and discussions and reading and writing of poetry, teachers can develop the multiple goals such as making inferences, aesthetic appreciation, literary development, identifying the main idea of the poem, making their own judgments, and conclusions. The usage of Moving Images using Multimedia for representing poetry promotes an exploration between text and image. The Multimedia has an immersive potential that encourages students to involve in the appreciation of poetry.

Imagery promotes students to form a visual picture and sensory impression based on the description and the emotion associated with the description. Objects of perception of all our senses produce images in the mind. Such mental reproduction of sense perceptions is called imagery. The diction in poetry calls up imagery because poets like to deal concretely with experience. Visual Imagery in poetry may be the most frequent. It varies from person to person because they create imagery from the words of poetry in richness and ability of their mind. Some

people may have rich and full and distinct when compared to others. The imagery becomes elaborate with use of Moving images and creates rapid understanding, as is often the case in poetry. The poet, then, is said to have caused an impact on the mind of the reader. Therefore, it takes time to understand and to comprehend fully the development of imagery in the mind of the reader. Auditory imagery means the mental reproduction of sound. We feel two kinds of auditory images when we read poetry silently: the imaging of the sounds that words symbolize and the imaging of the sounds of the words themselves. For example, when we read, 'lion roars' we can get an image not only of the sound of the roaring but also of the sound of the word 'roar'.

Traditional method of teaching poetry holds out the conservative teaching practice of glossing vocabulary, explaining the imagery, and a gleaming import of the imagination that seeps sparingly into the students' vision from the teacher's overpowering indulgence of explanation. Despite the teacher's integral role in orchestrating his role to perfection, the students are in ambiguity to draw on the teacher's exertion to realize an experiential communion. These flaws are inherent and can be stalked through a handy use of technology in propping up the free-lance imagination of the students objectified by the motion pictures using the applications of a media-player. The traditional method in its unguarded excesses dwells on the background study tempering it with the biographical sketch of the poet. Further, the poem is located in the poet's oeuvre along with his emotional concerns either in their reflective practice or through the meditative art get substantiated in artistic form. Often the students' flight of imagination is controlled by these controlled reflections impeding their emotional excess to draw parallel with the teacher's analysis and demonstration. Wordsworth compares the traditional method with the dissection of a living organism wherein the species is murdered. Or Ted Hughes described a poem as an assembly of living parts moved by a single spirit. The living parts are the words, the images, and the rhythm.

The Experimental Method focuses on paying special attention to the students' gaining on the innate pleasure that transcends the subjective to the objective experience. As this method is an outgrowth of audio-visual approach, the students are at liberty to think, imagine and catch up with the creative process by developing critical impressions on the poem. Falling short of this pleasure and the imaginative indulgence in the student would lead to reducing the poem to condensed essays, close-study sections of paraphrasing or summarizing the content; in the act of distancing the student from the pleasing aesthetic. Poetry which is relegated to the background in

the modern times owing to its demand for resonance, rhythm, an appreciating eye of the artistic finesse and the flight of the imaginative meditation; can at best find its role recast through this method where the sensory perceptions are delightfully served by the audio-visual duo to win over the readers' imagination for a throbbing pleasure-principle experience. In introducing a poem, teachers draw the interest and attention of the students through a lyrical rendition and the symbolic subtleties in making leads to inquisitiveness and familiarity. David Capella and Baron Wormser put it thus: Poetry Frightens. Over the years when it has come up in conversation that we write poems, dozens of people from all walks of life have paused and then diffidently or straightforwardly confided that poetry means nothing to them.

Multi-Media tools offer a fair involvement of students' perceptions as they converge on their divergent comprehensive levels effecting motivation and intuition. It is not uncommon to know that the modern classrooms are enabled by the multi-media tools to provide three-dimensional view of the design and assembly of the technical devices especially in the technological disciplines. The same can be imported with a literary dimension to embody the metaphorical language of the poet.

I have chosen Windows Media Player on an experimental basis in teaching a few poems in the syllabus. But technology is justifiably used, as I have already made a mention of, not to de-center the teacher but relocating his locus with an added dimension of technology. The Media Player features the life-size images of the poetic flight in which both the vehicle and the tenor can be played with the dual-splitting of the screen where one half shows versification and the other half shows the deciphered motion pictures for a graphic presentation of the poetic fancy. The player is tuned to the recitation of the lines by the teacher which provides listening comprehension skills to the students. In the process the pre-reading skills of glossing difficult vocabulary, phonetic variations and rhythm can be explained better. Asserting the preeminence of action over idealized thinking, Frank Tibolt says

“We should be taught not to wait for inspiration to start a thing. Action always generates inspiration. Inspiration seldom generates action”.

To substantiate further in the words of William Shakespeare, “Action speaks louder than words” and “Action is Eloquence,” (Coriolanus, III, 2.76.) it can be affirmed that this practice to a far extent proves effective in teaching poetry where the teacher gains the role of an explorer of

selecting right images to run his ideas in consonance with the pictures. Further, the teacher can attempt at a uniform comprehension of his students to re-adorn the famous wish of Lawrence Ferlinghetti, "Poetry is eternal graffiti written in the heart of everyone" (Americus, Book I).

With teacher's instruction leading the way, teaching poetry through this method reinforces the teaching-learning process and provides greater opportunities for student interaction and participation. It motivates them to think and configure the abstract into vividness, thus transforming cognitive-enablement into capacity-building and knowledge-enhancement. Further, the teacher upon the active involvement of the students can chart out group activities in groups of various sizes, debates and opinion-making which will empower them to communicate better and enrich their argumentative skills.

The Planning stage: Role of the Teacher:

- The player shows two parts: one-part scrolls with the poetic stanzas in line with the motion pictures evenly composed while the teacher can either recite the lines that are slowly scrolling by or can record the voice that is in consonance with the motion pictures.
- Teacher reads out the verses which provide pre-reading skills and listening comprehension.
- The teacher can also opt to make one of the students read out the verses which will expose them to speaking and reading.
- Teacher asks the students to recite the poem which is screened on the screen to develop reading skill and listening skill.
- In this pre-reading the teacher can gloss difficult words and ask them to bring out the shadow meaning of the words while he can explain later the lexical usage and meaning.
- Motivation is done through the above means.

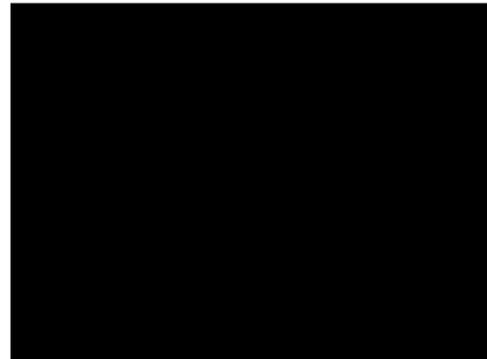
The Presentation Stage:

I have taken Hopkins's "Windhover" and projected the poem on the screen and asked the students to recite the poem. While this is done, I have asked them to mark difficult vocabulary so that from the context they would recognize the shadow meaning if not the suitable meaning of the words. For example - I wanted to teach the word "Falcon". Then I showed a moving picture of Falcon to make the students understand it. Further, I taught new words, phrases, and idioms:

velocity, pace, the bird's eye view, hand-in-hand, minion, dauphin, wimpling wings, skate's heel, hurl and gliding, rebuffed, plod, plough, sillion, blue-bleak embers, gold-vermillion.

- **Windhover**

- I caught this morning morning's minion,
kingdom of daylight's dauphin,
dapple-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him
steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of
a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! Then off, off forth on
swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a
bow-bend; the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in
hiding
Stirred for a bird—the achieve of, the
mastery of the thing!
- Brute beauty and valor and act, oh, air,
pride, plume, here
Buckle! And the fire that breaks from
thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O
my chevalier!
- No wonder of it; sheer plod makes plow
down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my
dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-
vermillion.



This method can further be improved as technological trends are fluidly evolving erecting wonderful possibilities which can enliven classroom practices also. It is observed that this teaching method offers full play to students' ideation and improve their communication skills

which are ideal objectives in shaping their career and mental-makeup.

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