

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

**International Journal of English Language,
Literature in Humanities**

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed), UGC Approved Journal



**A Two Day International Conference on
Emerging Trends in English Language Teaching
(ICETELT 2019)**



Organised by

The Department of English, School of Science and Humanities

Kongu Engineering College (Autonomous)

Perundurai

Volume 7, Issue 8, August 2019

www.ijellh.com

Ms. I. Vidhya Sruthi

I-M.A. English Literature

Vellalar College for Women

Thindal, Tamil Nadu, India

Vidhyasru26@Gmail.Com

Cross Cultural Understanding and Learning through Teaching and Learning In The 21st Century

Abstract

Every commonwealth country suffers from the inability to provide education that suffices the norms of the accepted standards in English Language Teaching. With constant rise in Diaspora, the necessity in having a deeper and profound understanding of the English language has become evident. To understand a foreign language, empathizing with the ebb and flow of a Country's cultural changes must be a given approach. The advancements in learning methodologies with new and successful implementation of ideas for a cross cultural understanding of another culture's native language are of greater need.

Key Words: Cultural difference, Margaret Atwood's "*Rape Fantasies*", Diaspora.

Introduction

The importance of understanding the cultural variance in Countries and between societies is important for a student of Literature to understand the true essence of every work of art. Scholars of English Literature are one step ahead in empathizing with fellow human beings when compared to scholars from other fields of study. It is to be noted that a person's

emotional wellbeing and understanding can be improvised with the slightest leisurely reading of literary pieces. There are many graduates of Literature, who have marked their places in the fields of Psychology, Politics, Motivational speaking, Cinematography, Entrepreneurship and so on. Unlike many fields, Literature is not only about a degree and profession relating to English Literature. It is much more; Scholars of English Literature, by the time they become graduates, would have looked into and deeply analyzed the lifestyle and thought process of multiple writers from different parts of the World from different parts of time. Literature is thereby, an evolution in the humane qualities possessed by man, which make him superior to other life forms on Earth. The diverse world of culture, tradition and religion has brought about many genres of literary pieces. These literary pieces, in the hands of many critics and readers have found themselves different meanings, far different than what they had been originally composed with. This variation in culture has given the worlds of Literature and History, a rich enigma of a vague understanding of the past. To understand the past is to give life to the understanding of the many problems man faces for a peaceful World. Such an understanding requires true efforts from the learners to wholeheartedly comply with the true understanding of a different culture.

Importance of The Past

“What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you.”

- Ralph Waldo

Emerson.

Man is seldom preoccupied with the happenings of the past, while he worries about the future and loses focus on the present. Very few realize the truth in the direct dependence of the past and the future. However, it is not necessary for man to ponder over the past. The

past can be left uninterrupted, which is the best to be done. Truth lies inside of all men and a quick realization of that truth will give a vivid picture on the happening.

Cross- cultural understanding is a study mostly focused on the communication and understanding between people of different cultures. Their understanding of another culture will be influenced by the already existing ideas of that particular culture. This subconsciously biases people's understanding and empathizing with people from another culture. It is normal for a person to feel superior of the society which they belong to. This feeling of superiority is not any fault of their own and this can be traced back through many centuries, when these prejudices and feelings of superiority had been established. It always lies in a person's true want of connecting with another culture by completely suppressing all prejudiced notions and biases of that culture.

Deprivations In Learning Due To Lack Of Cultural Understanding

Literature students of many Indian colleges are literary critics with a much narrowed approach to deconstructing a piece of literary work. The concepts of love, religion, equality of women and men, social strata and much more are tabooed topics to be discussed. Children are not given the open option of having to discuss these topics with anyone while growing up. From what they hear, watch and learn, their minds are closed to the variations in opinion of these topics in the minds of people from across half a dozen Continents. With such less exposure, they take up literary pieces to analyze and interpret. This interpretation turns out to be completely different from what the author might have intended to express. Every interpretation is the liberty of the critic to express. However, as a literary scholar, it is the moral ethic of the critic to do justice to the literary work. The critic cannot be blamed for the lack of exposure he/ she had had in interpreting and

expressing his/ her ideas. As a result, it is in the hands of the College and the Department of English Literature to produce title worthy scholars.

Ideas and Methods To Improvise The Skills Of Scholars And Literature Students As A Commendable Critic

A discussion of Margaret Atwood's "*Rape Fantasies*" in a Post Graduate English Literature classroom had students scorn and cringe at the mention of the topic and even more at its contents. Rape is a pressing issue at the present and it has been even more problematic in the past, where women hindered from expressing their traumatic experiences. This short story was composed with an earnest intent to help break prejudices against rape and to motivate women to come out with their problems on the same. While the intent was understood by the students, discussions were barred by their own minds for the fear of being judged. When such a fear stops them from expressing their ideas to their classmates, it becomes worse with expressing the same to their Professors. Before initiating a sensitive subject, professors must do the least of breaking down the stereotypes and preconceived ideas on rape. They must encourage the students to express their ideas with ease without having the fear of being judged. This is the least that a Professor of Literature can do, to enhance his/ her pupil's healthy interpretation and understanding of the concept.

In the first semester of the students' Under Graduate course in Literature; their syllabus must focus only on the history of England, England and France, American and the rest of the Commonwealth Countries. England's history must be completely understood by the students with its social evolution as the epicenter. The history of the rest of the Countries must be read in relation with England and about their impact in Literature and in literary works. The history of the students' native Country must also be

given a thorough read, as it will help them interpret the works from different Countries in the most ethical manner. This thorough understanding will help students establish a sturdy base as a student of English literature. Later when they are brought to the world of literary pieces, they will have a better understanding of the work's background and would be able to do justice to the work which they are interpreting.

Diaspora is another concept that strikes home to the readers and critics of literature. When a writer has lived in cultures of different countries, he/ she will have an entirely different opinion on their varying cultures than a reader would have. These writers would write about the impact of these cultural changes in their life and would give their personal opinions on the same. They would also express the conflict they witness in the next generation, which grows up in a new culture which its parents are not entirely accustomed to. This transition between cultures is also important for a student of English Literature to understand and learn prior to criticizing a piece of a literary work.

Conclusion

The importance of understanding an entirely different culture does sound perplexed. However, it is a must for a student of English Literature to learn the historic evolution of a Country's culture before interpreting and analyzing a work from that Country. It cannot be done on a whim and it involves a deep and an earnest attempt in understanding its culture without prejudices. The above mentioned methods when applied can bring out positive outcomes through the interpreted works of Literature.

Work Cite

https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/ralph_waldo_emerson.