

Book Review

1. Individual Preferences in E-Learning

By Howard Hills

Gower Publishing Limited, UK (2003)

Howard Hills is an expert practitioner in learning technology and also a senior analyst at *Towards Maturity*, an online organization that provides assistance to improve the impact of e-learning materials. His book *Individual Preferences in E-Learning* is based on his long experience as an E-learning Instructor, and the researches conducted in different modes of learning and personality assessment, by different theorists. The book reflects the author's belief that e-learners act differently in the interactive digital environment so they need to be provided with appropriate learning material keeping in view their preferred learning style. The focus of the book is on understanding the environment of the e-learners and their different personality types, and thus it presents a learning model based on the extrapolations and vast experience of the author. The book consists of seven chapters. The first two chapters encompass the difference between the e-learners and the non e-learners and here, Hills discusses the cultural and commercial aspects of the internet and the individual preferences regarding the use of internet. He also defines the possible reactions of the individuals regarding the different types of e-learning. In the next two chapters Hills brings out the interpersonal differences as well as interactional bases between different types of learners. He notes the impact of visual effects on the e-learners. He also observes that they wish to "search, enquire,

control and direct” while interacting with the online material. Next three chapters, 5, 6 and 7 are the crux of the book as Hills himself states in the first chapter of the book. Chapter 5 discusses Kolb’s (1984) learning modes and Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) inventory. Here he defines four personality dichotomies of learners as Extrovert/ Introvert, Sensing/ Intuition, Thinking/ Feeling, Judging/ Perceiving mentioned in MBTI. In the next chapter, he introduces his learning model of 16 personality types based on the four personality dimensions and provides guidelines for the designers/ creators of e-learning courses. His model is based on the individual preferences of e-learners and “the make-up of their personality”. The last chapter exhibits the application of Hills’ model as to how the designers should prepare online course materials and “what they need to create”. His inferences are based on the researches conducted by different researchers and the data is gathered mainly from UK and USA based population. Hills suggests many guidelines for the designers of electronic courses; however, his delineations are based on the studies of a few researchers as Myers and Briggs, Kolb and Pask. Overall, the book is an insightful read for the “designers and implementers of e-learning” as it brings forth the observations and vast experience of a seasoned technology instructor.

Reviewer

Mudassar Mahmood Ahmad

Ph.D. Scholar, English (Linguistics)

Faculty of Advanced Integrated Studies & Research

National University of Modern Languages

Islamabad.

2. Telling Stories: A Theoretical Analysis of Narrative Fiction

By Steven Cohan and Linda M. Shires

Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001

Steven Cohan and Linda M. Shires are Professors in the Department of English at Syracuse University with several books to their credit individually as well as in collaboration with each other.

Cohan and Shires emphasize the importance of a society with reference to narration. The focus of discussion is the influential relationship of a culture in all its aspects to how a story is told and heard. In other words, the authors tell us that no narrative can exist in isolation. The debate starts from Terence Hawkes' Preface, as the general editor of the book, where he states, "It is easy to see that we are living in a time of rapid and radical social change. It is much less easy to grasp the fact that such change will inevitably affect the nature of those disciplines that both reflect our society and help to shape it."

The primary message is that each word exists not only in its own context as a morpheme but also as a semantic unit in the context of a society and, as we move from one society to another or evolve within a society, the word and its implications move with us. Human beings cannot be separated from a society and language cannot be separated from them. So the "art" of storytelling requires a focus on language in the background of a culture; however, this does not devalue the importance of individual thought and expression. It is about a balance between the individual and the socially monitored being.

The book, with its first four chapters, offers a critical evaluation of Language, Textuality and Structures of Story and Narrative; leading the readers into the technical details of each, highlighting the conceptual differences among these and pointing out the role of social values in how a message is conveyed. This is elaborated through references from common fiction, classics, movie genre and social systems; such a rich variety of analogical (re)sources makes it easy for readers from diverse backgrounds to understand the importance of the relationship of a culture and its narrative. Chapter five may be considered the most important information-source as it describes the significance of ideology, subjectivity and discourse in decoding texts. Decoding a code (the message conveyed through Syntax and Grammar) is the most critical task as it determines how a narrator's intentions and purpose are met. A message conveyed may not be what is received. The ideology a person has, as an individual, reflects his/her subjectivity- his/her bias and that, in turn, determines the content and expression of his/her chosen discourse- what (s)he wants to say, when, to whom and why. The final chapter deals with the subject of narrative and the ambiguities related to it. A basic yet important issue of society and individual is discussed in detail. The questions addressed deal with how a voice may keep its individuality and still remain socially acceptable and influential; moreover, what strategic factors can help remain subjective without any invitation to unnecessary negativity and finally how a narrative can be appealing and convincing.

The book is a substantive resource for not only academic purposes but also for people who want to be writers because when a

person understands what impact the “words” may have, (s)he can play with the expression more convincingly and purposefully. Both researchers and writers-to-be can learn from the world of the word that allows it to open up and liberate its content and meaningful intent; also allowing its effects and implication(s) to grow with each generative reading of narrative fiction, which is what stories tell.

Reviewer

Ms Wajiha Shah

Lecturer

Faculty of Quality Enhancement, Research & Publication

NUML, Islamabad, Pakistan

Cover Art Image: Artist Statement and Biography

The art image adorning the cover of this journal, identified as 'Border Crossings', is one of a series of spontaneous artworkings, still in process, that respond to the commercialized phallic driven world of contemporary art. With intense physical gestures, I draw and move within the trauma of the art world's edges, tracing and retracing the rectangular form of the mail-in subscription card found within the art magazine.

Densely drawn lines of black and blue oil pastel colors mask the return postage emblem and blanket the publisher's address. Its intended transport and return, with the promise of payment for future connection to the art world, is interrupted and rerouted back to its matrixial origins--the sacred act itself of making art. Rendered unreadable in the English language of business, an oracular voice emerges in response to the artworking. Non-verbal acoustic sounds emerge from my throat, my belly, as a layer of sound is drawn onto the image, offering com-passionate counsel to those willing to listen to the submerged voice of knowing and unknowing from the matrixial sphere (to listen to the sound drawing go to <http://www.gestareartcollective.com/barbara-bickel.php>)

The art and writing of artist, psychoanalyst and theorist Bracha L. Ettinger (2004), who has developed a theory based in matrixial borderspaces, offers an aesthetic and ethical feminine-based embodied and relational language to articulate what has been suppressed and lost within the phallic sphere.

To be an artist operating in the matrixial sphere is a fragile endeavor where “the future traumatically meets the past... and the outside meets inside (p. 77).” As I draw and sound my way through/with/beyond/behind this series, I engage what Ettinger calls *metamorphosis*:

a process of inter-psycho communication and transformation that transgresses borders of the individual subject and takes place between several entities. It is a joint awakening of unthoughtful-knowledge on the borderline, as well as an inscription of the encounter in traces that open a space in and along the borderline itself.

As I encounter the momentarily opened spaces of the borderline that separates me from communication with others in the phallic sphere of the art world, I reach out to the other with a radical trust in these artworkings that was not possible otherwise.

From the borders and edges of the phallic sphere of the contemporary art world oracular movements, images and sounds from the matrixial sphere continue to lead us into/through/beside/behind the trauma of erasure and separation, returning us to precious aesthetic and ethical moments of interconnectivity, and our jointers in difference.

I invite you to contribute to future art in this series by mailing me the mail-in subscription card from inside contemporary art magazines that you may have in your possession. Thus far I have worked with North American art magazines and I would like this series to cross continents as well. Contact me at bickel.barbara@gmail.com for the mailing address.

Ettinger, Bracha L. (2004). Weaving a woman artist with-in the matrixial encounter-event. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 21(1), 69-93.

Artist Biography

Barbara Bickel is an artist, researcher and educator. An Assistant Professor in Art Education and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, USA, Bickel teaches art as an inquiry process. Her arts-based Ph.D. in Art Education from The University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada, focused on women, collaborative art making, ritual, and spiritual leadership in multi-faith contexts. It was awarded the Arts Based Educational Research (ABER) Outstanding Dissertation Award from the American Educational Research Association in 2009. Her MA in Education at UBC, which inquired into the body as a site of knowing -- performing itself as text was awarded the ABER Thesis Award in 2005 from AERA. She holds a BFA in Painting from the University of Calgary and a BA in Sociology and Art History from the University of Alberta. Her art and performance rituals have been exhibited and performed in North America since 1991. Her articles on arts-based inquiry and a/r/tography have been published in numerous journals and book chapters. She is a co-founder and member of the Gestare Art Collective. To view her art portfolio and arts-based research on-line visit <http://www.barbarabickel.com> and <http://www.gestareartcollective.com>

Academic Achievements and Performance

English MPhil Theses Completed during January-June 2011

Rizwan Aftab, “Exploring Relationship in Language, Culture and Interpretive Frames in Pakistani Texts”

Amina Ayaz, “Translation as an Act of Manipulation”

Adnan Rashid, “An Interplay of English and Urdu Languages in Pakistani ESL Learners: Implications of Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis of Linguistic Relativity”

Urdu MPhil Thesis Completed during January-June, 2011

Muhammad Javed Khan, “The Tradition of Urdu Research and Criticism in Azad Kashmir”

Seminar

Teaching of Urdu in Universities: New Perspective

Two day International Seminar, organized by the department of Urdu language and literature in collaboration with Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, 7 – 8 June 2011

Teacher Training Program

Professional Competency Enhancement Course for University Teachers under the project National Academy of Higher Education, Phase-II, 4th May to 24th May, 2011