

DEVELOPING CREATIVE WRITING AMONG PROSPECTIVE JOURNALISTS AND WRITERS

Shafaat Hussain, Assistant Professor of Journalism and Communication, Madawalabu University

Ethiopia, Phone: +251-921796055, Email: shafaat.hussain6@gmail.com

Sadaquat Hussain, Managing Director, Encyclomedia Communication & Entertainment, Hyderabad,

Telangana, India, Phone: +91-9989374953, Email: sadaquat.hussain@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Creative writing is an art and skill to produce literary pieces which is traditionally known as literature with its varied genre. Whether one wants to become a journalist or a communication expert, creativity in writing is in the first place. Writing for television, radio, film, magazine, news reports, PR, and other communication areas need utmost creativity and caution. A teacher has ample opportunities to help students in developing creativity through their classroom sessions, assessments and testing. This article reflects on developing creative writing in the communication classroom with special reference to literature and the need for a change in our attitude on creative writing development. The article attempts to define creative writing; looks into the different forms of creative writing; tries to identify the various literary elements of creative writing; investigates the qualities of creative writing; assess the challenges of creative writing; examines the reasons to develop creative writing in the communication classroom; and finally draws the method how to develop the art of creative writing in communication classroom.

KEYWORDS:

Creative writing, communication classroom, literary elements, literary forms, journalism

INTRODUCTION

Chambers Dictionary defines 'creative' as 'having the power of imagination and originality' and 'creative writing' as 'the act of literary production or composition'. Therefore, the term 'creative writing' may be defined as having the power to create an imaginative, original literary production or composition which can be categorized into a broad spectrum of writing genres. Creative writing is an original contribution of a writer traditionally known as literature with its varied genre. It is a skill of crafting the thoughts in order to produce an original piece (Marksberry, 1963). It is a verbal art in performance (Morley, 2007). Creative writing is writer's work of art, his self-reflection, self-expression, belief, idea, and value. It is a medium of

generating image, perception, and original communication pattern to explore the creative abilities of a writer. Creative writing provides a genuine ground for a multi-transactional process among reader, writer and the creative text. There is no end to the process of decoding a creative writing, revealing its layered meaning, and deciphering its influence (Eliasova, 2001).

LITERARY ELEMENTS OF CREATIVE WRITING

Character

A character (or fictional character) is a person in a narrative work of arts such as a novel, play, television series or film (Baldick, 2001). Character, particularly when enacted by an actor in the theatre or cinema, involves "the illusion of being a human person" (Pavis, 1998). In literature, characters guide readers through their stories, helping them to understand plots and ponder themes (Nancy, Martinez, Fuhrken & McDonnold, 2001). The art of creating characters, as practised by actors or writers, has been called characterisation. A character that stands as a representative of a particular class or group of people is known as a type. Types include both stock characters and those that are more fully individualised (Baldick, 2001). E. M. Forster defined two basic types of characters, their qualities, functions, and importance for the development of the novel: flat characters and round characters. Flat characters are two-dimensional, in that they are relatively uncomplicated and do not change throughout the course of a work. By contrast, round characters are complex and undergo development, sometimes sufficiently to surprise the reader (Michael & Murphy, 1996). Another type of character is dynamic versus static. Dynamic characters are those characters that show many personality traits. Static characters are those that show one or two personality traits only.

Point of view

The narrative mode (also known as the mode of narration) is the set of methods the author of a literary, theatrical, cinematic, or musical story uses to convey the plot to the audience. Narrative point of view in the creative writing of fiction describes the narrator's position in relation to the story being told (McCracken, 2011).

Plot

Plot is a literary term defined as the events that make up a story, particularly as they relate to one another in a pattern, in a sequence, through cause and effect, how the reader views the story, or simply by coincidence. An intricate, complicated plot is called an *imbroglio*.

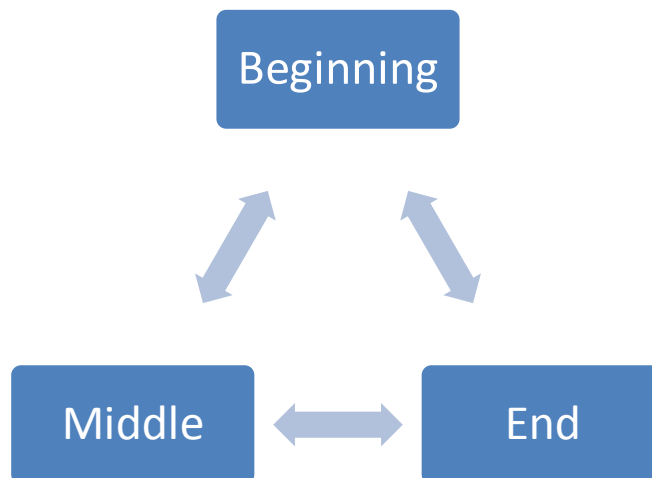


Figure 1: Aristotle's Plot

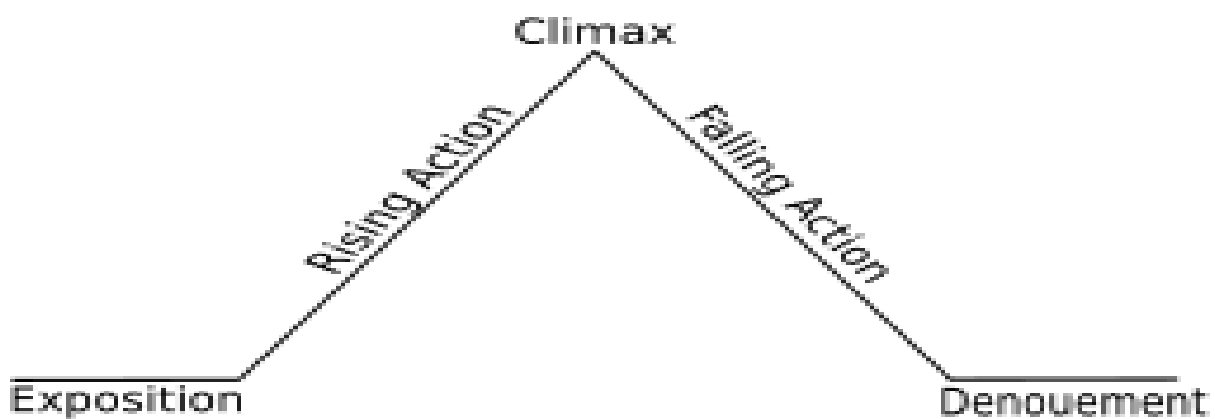


Figure 2: Freytag's Plot

Setting

The term "setting" is often used to refer to the social milieu in which the events of a novel occur (David, 1992). One of the fundamental components of fiction, the literary element 'setting' includes the historical moment in time and geographic location in which a story takes place, and helps initiate the main backdrop and mood for a story. Setting has been referred to as story world or milieu to include a context (especially society) beyond the immediate surroundings of the story. Elements of setting may include culture, historical period, geography, and hour. Setting is

a critical component for assisting the story, as in some stories the setting becomes a character itself (John, 2007).

Dialogue

Dialogue in fiction is a verbal exchange between two or more characters. If there is only *one* character talking aloud it is a monologue. The word *said* is the best identifier to use in a dialogue. For example, "*This breakfast is making me sick,*" *George said*. The *George said* is the identifier.

Style

In fiction, style is the codified gestures in which the author tells the story. Along with plot, character, theme, and setting, style is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction (Obstfeld, 2002). The components of style are -- fiction-writing modes, point of view, allegory, symbolism, tone, imagery, punctuation, word choice, grammar, imagination, cohesion, suspension of disbelief and voice.

Theme and motif

Theme is an idea or concept that is central to a story, which can often be summed in a single word (e.g. love, death, betrayal). A story may have several themes. Themes often explore historically common or cross-culturally recognizable ideas, such as ethical questions, and are usually implied rather than stated explicitly. It is difficult to distinguish theme and motif precisely but the former is abstract and the latter is vivid in a literary work.

QUALITIES OF CREATIVE PIECE OF WRITING

The general principle of creative writing is write and rewrite - many times over, so the words flow better each time. The aim for perfection is very hard to achieve although one can always improve through brevity, easy to read, improving repetitive words, incorrect grammar and punctuation. The Style of writing may be brief, long-winded, chatty, wacky, breezy, light, and heavy and so on as per the demand of the target audience.

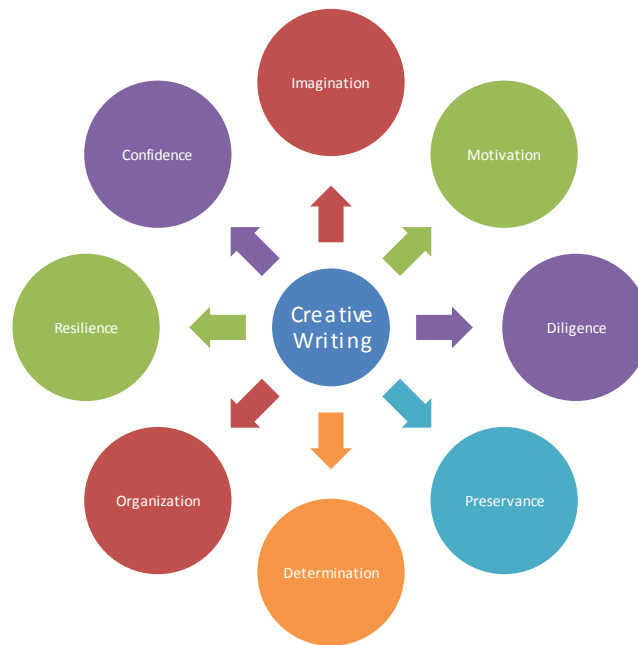


Figure 3: Qualities of a creative writing

CREATIVE WRITING STRATEGY

In the first phase a creative writer generate possible issue/s for a writing task. Thereupon, he identifies important ideas and information to include in the writing. Finally, he identifies the audience and purpose for the writing. In the second phase, a creative writer identifies relationships and make connections among ideas and information, select ideas them for possible sub-issues. In the last phase, he revises and brings precision through diction, grammar, syntax and other corrections.

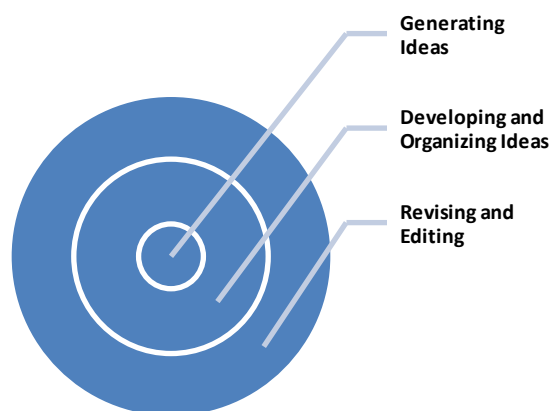


Figure 4: Strategies of Creative Writing

CHALLENGES OF CREATIVE WRITING

According to Morley (2007), many would be prominent creative writers perished with their potentials. A creative writer should know that life is short and art is long. Innumerable creative writers were challenged by page-fright, word-blindedness and blockage. A writer should know to overcome these. Self-doubt is a mental police which prevent us from going ahead. A creative writer has to be alert and proceed. Talking in advance before a literary piece is expensive oxygen and it causes self-distraction. Perfectionism challenges a creative writer like an enemy but perfect writing doesn't exist. If a creative writer has no perfect work-life balance, he will dwindle somewhere. There is no early and no late in creative writing. It is never too late to begin your creativity seriously. Rather people are best at their forties and fifties with their cumulative experiences. Creative writing is meant for a scheduled person at his best productive time slot which may vary person to person from late night to early morning. If not, the writer may flop due to his disciplinary reasons.

WHY TO DEVELOP THE ART OF CREATIVE WRITING?

The main objectives of developing creative writing in the mass communication classroom are to: encourage the development of English communication skills; help learners to explore their own creative as well as empathic abilities; encourage learners' personal growth by means of exploring and expressing their own perception and experience; raise learners' interest in reading and writing; get them to feel pleasure in the work that communication can generate (at the level of production as well as at the level of perception); promote learners' cultural enrichment; and open a window on to the curriculum for the introduction of a creativity component into communication teaching.

HOW TO DEVELOP CREATIVE WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM?

Implementing literature and creative writing into the mass communication classroom requires more than training, more than knowledge and skills transmission, it needs to generate in teachers change in attitudes (towards themselves, teaching content, teaching activity and students) and awareness of how the new or changed attitudes are productive. It cannot be carried out by providing the teachers with directive instructions, recipes or models that can be directly copied, on materials coming only from outside. Using a developmental approach the teacher trainer should generate qualitative changes in beliefs and expectations, initiate a continual and open process of the teacher's self-reflection, self-education and self-construction. And not only that,

the teachers who have started the process of reshaping and redefining the teaching content and forms should play the role of change agents among their colleagues teaching English, other foreign communication as well as among native language teachers.

To be more detailed about the particular steps to be taken in developmental education of teachers is rather difficult, because concrete forms of this work depend on a wide range of various factors, for instance, different communication competence of students, different teacher's experience in creative work, etc. Anyway, through training, a few general principles of the educational process of influencing could be given which is as under:

- teacher's re-evaluation of the content and forms, with attitudes and awareness, should be first of all in the minds of teacher trainers;
- the process of changes should be start by clarifying and expanding the teacher's awareness of what that teacher is doing and why;
- the solutions should be again generated by the teacher, based on the teacher's awareness and understanding of the situation;
- a teacher trainer should not play the role of a knower, but of a co-operator, or a facilitator, working with the trainees on a partnership level;
- no model could be used as the only working one, developmental shifts should not be carried out by copying of the teacher trainer's model or attitude, but by creating teacher's own one, the emphasis should be on trainee's design;
- teacher trainers and trainees should look for effective ways working together;
- some of the materials, especially in the final phase, should be generated from the trainees;
- changes can be achieved by constant attention, critical evaluation and involvement of the teacher in her/his teaching (keeping diary studies may be very effective);
- sharing personal teaching experience may facilitate evaluation of achieved changes; and
- results of the changes cannot be seen or expected within a short period of time.

CONCLUSION

In sum, all writing is creative even journalism and mass Communication fall under the banner of creative writing; because it also utilizes one's imagination in how one **chooses** to report an event and the **style** to write. Every one of us has a story to tell within oneself... just waiting for the time and opportunity... but most of all, we have to have the drive and dedication to get it down on paper. There is no set formula, which guarantees about developing successful creative writing. Everyone is a unique individual with his

innate capacity: his experiences, perspectives and highly individual style of writing. The ability to put words down on paper is only the beginning to writing. There is a great deal more to be learned on the part of techniques. The essence of good writing style lies in **precision** and **accuracy**. Creative writing is an art, which like other artistic skills, can be learned and developed with practice. Just like an artist, sportsman, potter or artisan, the more one writes, the better he will become. Confidence breeds confidence and success breeds success.

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