THE REALITY OF READING IN THE TERTIARY LEARNER'S WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Teaching literature at the tertiary level essentially involves facing the reality of students' capabilities in terms of reading texts and consequently responding to their readings in writing. Encountering, more often than not, responses that regurgitate lecture notes at times coupled with well informed but barely discussed citations of blocks of paragraphs by critics, many often choosing to let the latter speak for themselves, one begins to comprehend that a majority of these students appear to be insufficiently equipped with the skills of recording and discussing their responses to the reading materials assigned to them. Yet one also significantly learns of the possibilities and impossibilities of the various reading and writing skills of learners in the tertiary classroom and these may be invariably linked to the reading and writing skills fostered in Malaysian schools. This paper will engage in a discussion of the reality of reading in the tertiary classroom by presenting a range of samples of writings by students and examining the reading skills they reflect. It will also discuss possible ways to guide readings with the aim of prodding and provoking independent responses to the texts assigned.

Introduction

Teaching literature at the tertiary level essentially involves facing the reality of students' capabilities in terms of reading texts and consequently responding to their readings in writing. More often than not, one encounters responses that regurgitate lecture notes, at times coupled with well informed but barely discussed citations of blocks of paragraphs by critics. The tendency of many students is to let these external references speak for themselves without engaging with their ideas or linking them to the texts assigned. Faced with this, one begins to comprehend that a majority of these students find it difficult to record and discuss their own responses in their own words. Yet this does not necessarily mean that achieving this is an impossible task.

This article focuses on the ways in which reading skills can be fostered in tertiary students through exercises that guide them into thinking about literary texts such as the short stories, poems, drama and novels as less as an entity that is divorced from their world and more as one that can provide them with insights into

real world issues. The discussion draws on material introduced to Second Year Bachelor of Arts (English Language Studies) undergraduates enrolled in the course 'Readings in Literatures in English.' This course was essentially designed to introduce students to methods that they could use to aid their reading and subsequent understanding of selected literary texts, consisting mainly of poems and short fiction, through the incorporation of key aspects of significant literary theories or critical reading approaches as these are otherwise known.

Critical Reading Approaches to Literature

The term 'critical reading approaches' or critical approaches to literature is widely used in literary studies to refer to methods of reading literary texts using literary theories. Another term that is commonly used is literary criticism. All terms synonymously refer to ways in which one is able to analyse, interpret and thus understand literary texts, in short reading approaches. The passage below contextualises further the frame of reference for the term 'reading approaches' that will be used throughout this article to refer to the theoretical frameworks that were taught to the students of the 'Readings in Literatures in English' course :

> *Literary theory offers varying approaches for understanding the role of historical context in interpretation as well as the relevance of linguistic and unconscious elements of the text. Literary theorists trace the history and evolution of the different genres—narrative, dramatic, lyric—in addition to the more recent emergence of the novel and the short story, while also investigating the importance of formal elements of literary structure. Lastly, literary theory in recent years has sought to explain the degree to which the text is more the product of a culture than an individual author and in turn how those texts help to create the culture (Brewton, 2006).*

The students of the aforementioned course were guided through six different reading approaches to literature over a period of 12 weeks. These approaches consisted of the theoretical frameworks of Formalism, Reader Response, Psychoanalysis, Feminism, Marxism and Postcolonialism. The following is a summary of the essential elements of each approach taught.

The formalist approach to literature centres on what makes a literary text 'literary,' that is, identifying various literary devices and determining their aesthetic functions in the literary texts that were read. The Reader Response approach essentially guides students to chart their responses to the literary text read through identifying milestones in their reading journey and to record how they made sense of the content of the literary text through external sources. The subsequent reading approach, Psychoanalysis, takes students into the world of characterisation and

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the ways in which one is able to understand individual characters in a text through an in-depth study of their personalities as projected through various narrative techniques. As the students learnt to distinguish between various portrayals and the many ways they engaged with the complexities of the world, they were subsequently presented with Feminism, a reading approach that brought gender into the sphere of interpersonal relations. With this approach, students learnt of the dynamics of gender roles as they were prompted into identifying the different ways in which male and female roles could be constructed within a literary text. Such an approach also led them into witnessing ways in which one could determine gender oppression as well as identify both submission and resistance to its power structures. The next reading approach, Marxism, led students further afield into human power relations as they were introduced to the ways in which one could determine social hierarchy within a text and how this influences social relations. They were taught ways in which to identify the divisions between social classes and issues of submission as well as resistance to socio-economic domination. Such issues were expanded to include the dynamics of race relations and attendant domination when they were introduced to the last approach, Postcolonialism, which centres on colonial relations and the formation of greater and lesser notions of race identifications. This last approach was introduced to create an awareness of power relations that hinged on issues of race and ethnicity and its roots in colonial domination.

Such a varied exposure to reading approaches was intended to have aided students in obtaining a basic grasp of the various reading approaches and consequently discovering the various possibilities involved in studying literature. My focus in this paper is on the reading responses generated from the first four approaches and my discussion will show among other things how the initial aims and objectives set out at the beginning of a course may often veer from the actual outcome as we are faced with the reality of there being different categories of learners in one classroom and the responsibility of guiding their skills in both reading as well as writing through various means. As Bretz and Persin (1987: 166) put it :

Recent theories of language and of literature-reader-response, feminist, contemporary psychoanalytical criticism, and deconstruction reveal a multiplicity of meanings that constitute even the 'simplest' of texts. Within the classroom, these approaches to literature offer new possibilities for active student participation. Freed from the need to 'explain' the correct meaning of the text to students who remain mystified as to how this meaning was extracted, the classroom becomes a place of discovery, of dialogue, and of cooperative reading. Provided their interpretations are cogently argued and textually verified, students learn that their ideas can help to expand the possible meanings of the text.

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The responses that students articulated in the various modes of learning and the subsequent assessments of their understanding of the reading approaches demonstrated the immense possibilities that were accessible within the world of reading literary texts. While it will be seen in the end that problems in terms of language proficiency ultimately stood in the way of the cogent articulation in the majority of the responses, there were nonetheless rays of light that illuminated the reading path, especially with regard to students' understanding of the texts that they read.

The Reading Tasks

The mode of learning in the course was based on an hour that comprised of a one hour mass lecture followed by a two hour tutorial session where students (approximately seventeen to a class) were divided into small groups of not more than four and given a series of tasks, ranging from class discussions to folios that incorporated responses to literary texts, mainly short stories and poems, based on the four reading approaches as well as two presentations, the first being an oral presentation and the other a poster presentation. Class discussions focused mainly on material conveyed during the lecture coupled with guiding students through reading of either a short story or a poem from the assigned reading approach. This was done through a tutorial task sheet consisting of a number of questions that directed the students to respond to the short story or poem selected by identifying various key devices or issues linked to the assigned approach.

After four two-hour tutorial sessions on each of the reading approaches, students were asked to select a short story of their own choice and create a folio in which they were to compile four sets of responses to that very same text utilising the four reading approaches. Before they commenced on this however, they were given specific guidelines to aid in their reading, as illustrated below.

Reading Approach One: Formalism
The anticipated outcome of introducing the students to this first reading approach is to enable them to connect the form of the literary text to its context or main issue. With this skill, they were expected to move a few steps away from merely retelling the sequence of the text, a common tendency among most students, and be able instead to critically connect the little parts that make up the whole of the text to a main theme. At the end of the exercise, they were expected to be able to view these individual aspects as various devices that were used to enhance the literary quality

of the text. The following tasks were prepared through an incorporation and subsequent modification of material on the Formalist Theory from Hans Bertens'

Literary Theory: The Basics (Bertens, 2002 : 31-52).

Methodology

1. Students were asked to begin their reading by firstly identifying the various linguistic features of the respective text, that is, the repetition of a word or the repetition of a certain phrase
2. They were then prompted to connect the repetition of the above to an idea that they seemed to emphasise.
3. They were then asked to think about whether the repetitions of the identified words and phrases created certain patterns of sound in the text?
4. After they had established the above, they were then asked to identify points in which the above patterns were broken, i.e if a once repeated phrase appears in a different form or in a different arrangement and whether this altered its earlier meaning?
5. After all the above had been recorded, they were asked to study the patterns of parallelisms and deviations, similiarities and contrasts that were created and to determine whether they centred on a common issue, what is otherwise known as the theme of the story. Consequently, they would come to the realisation that all the above aspects of the story that they identified were devices that helped to reinforce the main theme.

Reading Approach Two: Reader Response

The main objective of introducing the students to this reading approach is to create an awareness of the process involved in the act of reading and understanding a literary text. Their main focus is to record all the associations that they make as they read the text as well as the external sources that they use to help them understand unfamiliar content. At the end of this exercise, they would be able to witness the changing shape of their reading process as they record the changes to their original assumptions of the content of the text. The following tasks were prepared through an incorporation and subsequent modification of material on the Reader Response theory from Tyson's *Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide* (1999: 153-195).

Methodology

1. Students are to begin with studying the title of the text and noting down what associations first came to mind.
2. They are then to begin reading the text and noting down details of their responses to particular words, phrases, passages, that is:
   - what were certain feelings that they evoked? Did they think further about the meaning of these details?
   - Did they create links between what was read and familiar events?
   - What judgments were made about specific characters, events, passages, words?
   - Were all the above influenced by personal memories and associations?
3. Students are also made to think of other sources that can be used to fill in the gaps in their understanding of unfamiliar content in the text, that is, dictionaries, cultural texts, communities etc.
4. Once they have recorded all of the above, they are then to reassess their first assumption (based on the title) and note down how this has changed and why. This way they become more aware of the process involved in the act of reading and move towards substantiating and supplementing their understanding of the content of the text.

Reading Approach Three: Psychoanalysis

The objective of this reading approach is to guide the students into analysing individual characters in any given text with some depth. The focus of their reading centres around recording the various ways in which each character responds to situations as well as identifying any conflicts that arise both within the character as well as in the encounters with the other characters in the text. They should, consequently, be able to learn more of characterisation. The following tasks were prepared through an incorporation and subsequent modification of material on Psychoanalysis from Chapter 2 of Lois Tyson's *Critical Theory Today* (13-47) as well as Chapters 6 and 7 of *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (Guerin *et al.,* 2005: 152-221).

Methodology

1. Students are to determine, through detailed evidence from the text, the different kinds of characters that exist in the text by dividing them into the following categories:

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    a. Characters who are more concerned with pleasing themselves at the expense of others, that is, those who show no regard for social conventions, ethics or lack moral restraint and have no regard of consequences as a result of their actions.

    b. Characters who are concerned only with social rules and regulations, that is, family, religion, the law and consequently suppress their own individual needs and desires.

    c. Characters who balance the extremes of (a) and (b) by fulfilling the needs and obligations that are necessary without overtly suppressing or indulging the self.

2. Students are then to discuss whether the above traits create conflicts within the characters as well as with other characters in the text, that is, feelings of guilt or suppression of needs, feelings of envy etc.

3. Once they have established the above, students can then be led deeper into the aspect of characterisation by being asked to analyse the various literary devices used in the text and to determine if these aid in the aspect of characterisation. For instance, do certain images or the use of certain colours in relation to the characters reveal more insights into the character?

4. Once they have recorded all of the above, they should have a good grasp of the characters in the story and be able to substantiate their responses through such detailed analysis.

Reading Approach Four: Feminism

The objective of this reading approach is to take students deeper into the dynamics of the literary text through exploring gender relations as they are described and depicted in the narrative. They would do this by analysing literary devices, characterisation, images and traditional associations of women and to reflect on whether these aspects demonstrate a fair treatment of women in the text. The following tasks were prepared through an incorporation and subsequent modification of material on Feminism from Barry's (2002) *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (121-138) as well as Lois Tyson's *Critical Theory Today* (81-116).

Methodology

Students are to first determine the differences, if any, in the portrayal of male characters as compared to female characters through focusing on the following:

1. Do male characters dominate the dialogue found in the text?

2. What status do female characters have in the text? For instance are they secondary to male characters through either being voiceless or nameless?

3. How are women described? For instance are they
   i. described in ways that focus on physical traits instead of their inner thoughts and power of reasoning?
   ii. compared to women characters from mythology or legend?

4. How do female characters interact with the male characters? Are they timid or more vocal? Are their roles confined to only that of daughter/sister/wife/mother?

5. Do male characters oppress the women through certain actions or words?

6. Are there any female characters who resist traditional expectations of women? For instance do any female characters
   i. voice their own opinions as opposed to merely submitting to those of the male characters?
   ii. act against oppression by the male characters?
   iii. speak up against injustice to other women characters?
   iv. resist the fixed female roles that they are expected to conform to by behaving in unconventional ways?

7. After the students have determined most of the above, they need to think about what they reveal about gender relations and the status of men and women in the selected literary text? Are men and women treated as equal or do men have an unfair advantage over women? Consequently, does the text also reveal ways in which women can resist gender oppression?

Assessments of Reading Responses

Once the students had noted down all of the above, they were then asked to work in groups to compile a folio in which they were to collate their responses to a short story of their choice from the angles of the four reading approaches above. The following are the short stories that they chose:

Group 1 : *The Prophecy* by Anjana Appachana
Group 2 : *Mariah* by Che Husna Azhari
Group 3 : *Trifles* by Susan Glaspell
Group 4 : *The Prophecy* by Anjana Appachana
Group 5 : *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant
Group 6 : *The Drover's Wife* by Henry Lawson

Group 7 : *Looking for a Raingod* by Bessie Head
Group 8 : *A Rose for Emily* by William Faulkner
Group 9 : *The Story of an Hour* by Kate Chopin

The following illustrations of student responses are based on that of Group 6.

Responses to Henry Lawson's *The Drover's Wife*

Reading Approach One : Formalism

Excerpt 1

The author named the black dog as "*alligator*". In familiar language the word alligator refers to a kind of crocodilem; the author uses the word alligator to equate the alligator to the dog.

Excerpt 2

"alligator lies … he is not a very beautiful dog to look at and the light shows numerous old wounds where the hair will not grow. He is afraid of nothing on the face of the earth or under it. He will tackle a bullock as readily as he will tackle a flea" and *"the big black yellow eyed dog-of-all-breeds, who has shown his wildest interest in the proceedings, breaks his chain and his nose reaches the crack in the slabs as the end of its tail disappears …"*. These excerpts from the text show the physical appearance and strength of the dog. The dog is depicted as big, fearless and strong. The dog is protecting the drover's family. It has killed many snakes. The dog is depicted as the loyal guardian of the drover's family.

Excerpt 3

"*Battle light is in his yellow eyes*" refers to the anger of the dog to attack the snake.

Excerpt 4

The word "*bush*" is repeated many times in the text. *"bush all around— bush with no horizon … bush track."*

Excerpt 5

The author repeated the image of the thunderstorm throughout the text to indicate that the image of thunderstorm represents an important message or value. The author wants to equate the difficulties faced by the drover's

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family with the image of thunderstorm. For example *"the thunderstorm comes on and the wind rushing, through the cracks in the slabs wall, threatens to blow out her candle"*.

Excerpt 6

The author uses *sunset* and *midnight* to show darkness. The author wants to equates darkness to the difficulties faced by the drover's wife during the night because of the snake. "*it is near sunset, and a thunderstorm is coming*" and "*near midnight. The children are all asleep and she sits ..."* These excerpts show the difficulties faced by the family. But it all changes when the author deviates from darkness to into new hope by introducing lights. '*It must be daylight now,'* "*battle light is in his yellow eyes"*, "*a small bright, bead like eyes glisten"* and "*sickly daylight breaks over the bush."* They managed to kill the snake when it turns into daylight and Tommy promises that he will never go droving and will look after his siblings and meanwhile helps his mother. The light brings new hope in their lives.

These responses were based on the guidelines that were given to them earlier. These guidelines appeared to have helped them delve deeper into the pattern and choice of words used by the author and to make links with issues that help them understand the content of the story. They were able to notice the repetitive patterns of words, phrases and colours that in turn aided their comprehension of the link to issues such as hope, anger, fear etc. Admittedly, they lack skills in writing gauging from the many grammatical mistakes in their responses but this should not deflect us from noting how they have tried to engage further with the text instead of merely re-telling the story, as many are inclined to do. In this way, they are encouraged to engage with the text on their own as the specific questions connected with this approach has guided them through the text and consequently their establishment of the various patterns of repetition and deviation such as evident in the responses above how students develop their reading skills.

Reading Approach 2 : Reader Response

Excerpt 1

First time I saw the title of this short story "The Drover's Wife" my first horizon of expectation is this must be a story about the life of a woman

who is a drover's wife. In this story, the writer will be talks about the daily routine of a drover's wife, for example how she takes care of her children and husband. Besides that I also expected that this story will tell us the relationship of this woman with her husband. As I proceeded I realised that the drover has leaved his wife and children, "*The drover, an ex-squatter is away with sheep. His wife and children are left here alone*".

Excerpt 2

I found that there is some words that I not familiar with and not understand. Therefore, I go to check the meaning by using the dictionary and search in the internet. In the first and second paragraphs, I was not understand the meaning of the words 'slabs', 'stringy-bark' and 'sheoaks'. Then I go to search the meaning, what I got is 'slab' means a thick and flat wood, 'stringy bark' means tough outer covering of tree trunk and 'sheoaks' means a kind of tree. After I go these meaning, I can imagine how the house looks like and the scenery around the house.

Excerpt 3

After I read the Henry Lawson's biodata, I know that he is an Australian writer and his works always related to the environment in Australia. Most of the Australians who live far away from the city are working as a drover. Actually I was not really understand why Australians like to be a drover, but after I searched the information about the culture and lifestyle of an Australian in the internet, I have more understand towards this story.

Excerpt 4

Through the process of finding meanings, my understanding towards the story also changed. At the beginning I assumed that this is just an ordinary story and nothing special about a woman (a drover's wife) life, but lastly I found that is a story not only talking about the life of a woman who lives without husband, but also how this woman survives and faced the problems in lives. I was very admired the spirit that she has.

Through the process of recording the detailed steps involved in the process of reading the text, the students become more aware of the limitations that they started out with and are led to see how this is consequently expanded through their own initiatives to fill in the gaps that create these limitations. This approach ultimately opens up new worlds and new pathways of understanding different, unfa-

miliar worlds and cultures. The use of the internet to supplement their reading also speaks of the bridges that are created between the the individual reader, the literary text and the larger worlds that exists outside the original point of reference.

Reading Approach 3 : Psychoanalysis

Excerpt 1

Most parts of the short story indicate that the drover's wife is a nice mother, nice wife and a nice person as well. She is mostly dominated by the moral principle. She seldom selfish and prefers to consider the others feelings and conditions rather than herself first. There are some evidences that support the statement above. "*She gives some supper, and then, before it gets dark, she goes into house and snatches up some pillows and bedclothes- expecting to see or lay a hand on the snake any minute. She makes a bed on the kitchen table for the children and sits down beside it to watch all night.*"

Excerpt 2

Tommy focuses more on the self : "*Shet up you little -! D'yer want to be bit with the snake? " If yer bit, you'll swell up, an' turn red an' green an' blue all over til yer bust.*" These show that Tommy is using his authority as an elder brother to frighten his younger brother Jacky.

Excerpt 3

"*Mother I won't ever go drovin' blarst m if I do!*, "*will you wake me if the snake comes out?*" Tommy seemed to protect and love his mother.

Excerpt 4

There are some images and figures that are symbolic and represent some meanings in them. First is the snake. It indicates something which is poisonous, evil, harmful, death and scary. "*A little son of her brother-in-law was lately bitten by a snake, and died.*" The Drover's wife really wants to kill the snake because it indicates negative effects.

Excerpt 5

Dog indicates big, kind, helpful, loyal and brave. "*Alligator takes small notice of this proceeds to undermine the building; but he is subdued after a struggle and chained up. They cannot afford to lose him*." The dog is

indicating positive effects. Hence the whole family appreciates the dog very much.

Excerpt 6

Different colours indicate different things also. Black symbolises evil, darkness, frightening, mystery, chaos, and hopeless. The black indicates negative elements. The red symbolises hope blood and bright. The red indicates the elements which are more positive compared to the black. The thunderstorm indicates noisy, frightening, uncomfortable and impatient.

The excerpts above indicate the beginning of an awareness of details connected to characterisation and context within a literary text. By focusing on details in dialogue, setting, descriptions, students gain a better insight into individual characters as well as relevant devices such as symbols that are used to reinforce the tone and mood of the story. While there are a host of other issues that they could have delved deeper into, these excerpts serve as a testimony to their initiation into the complex world of characterisation as they studied the ways in which individual character engaged with other characters as well as the environment as depicted within the text.

Reading Approach 4 : Feminism

Excerpt 1

The title itself has shown a nameless female character by using "The Drover's Wife" instead of a name of her own. The character of the female appears to be tied to the relationship with the male character. … She is confined to a traditional female image as the mother to the children and the wife of a drover.

Excerpt 2

Gender stereotyping is clearly reflected in the story. Both the character of the drover and his wife are fixed in certain role. These two character contain as expected gender role as the male character is out to earn a living while the female character has to stay at home

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Excerpt 3

She killed the snake after so much oppression and struggle. Her overt urgency was strongly depicted through her action while she was hitting the snake.

Excerpt 4

She has to struggle through her daily life in such challenging condition in spite that she is only an ordinary woman. I have deep sympathy for her uphill struggle against poverty and at the same time being repressed by this male dominant society.

The excerpts above show a certain degree of awareness of differences in gender roles based on the scenes studied. While the students have pointed out how oppressed the situation of the drover's wife is by taking into consideration the struggles that she undergoes, they also recognise certain modes of resistance on her part and see the killing of the snake as one indication of this. When they approach the text from this angle of gender, they are able to understand how most gender roles are socially constructed and that literary texts can be used as a mirror in which to view the complexities that arise as result.

Students' Reflections on Using Four Reading Approaches to the Same Text

At the end of the reading folio that collated all the responses above, the students were asked to write a one-page reflection on the overall experience of working on the folio and the advantages of approaching a text from different reading perspectives and this is what group 6 had to say:

We now have a better understanding in the various approach that we have to deal with. We do not only improve in our specific reading approach but other reading approaches too. We can now apply the various reading approach in the literature text and understand why each text is constructed the way it is written. Being able to look at the text in a different perspective helps us to be a critical reader rather than a passive reader. Most importantly, we have obtain a fundamental grasp of a variety of reading approaches and the way they can be applied in reading literary text with the objective of discovering various possibilities in understanding literature.
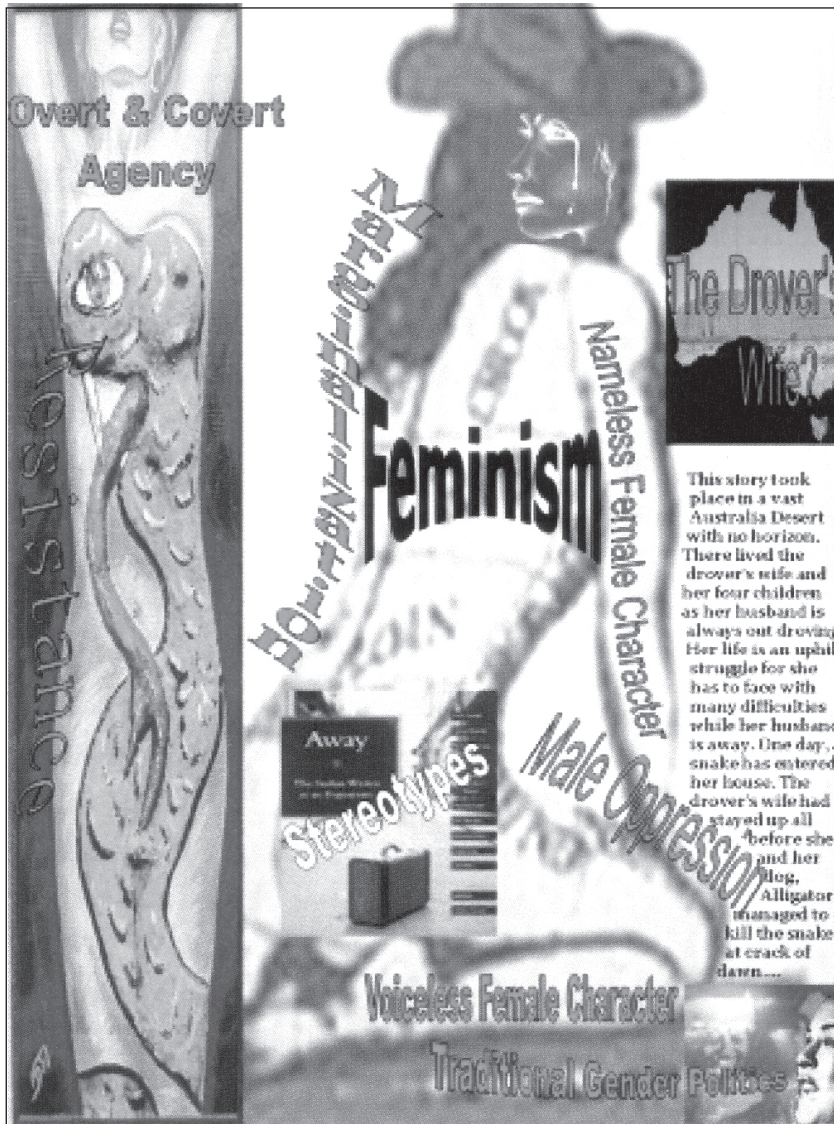
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Apart from the folio, students were also asked to visualise their reading of the short story from the angle of any one of the four approaches and to present it as creatively as possible in the form of a poster. They were told to think of specific images that would best illustrate the various issues connected with the selected reading approach. The group in question decided on the fourth reading approach with its focus on gender and the following illustration is the poster that they created:

The poster reflects the creative ability of the students to visualise their reading and the key aspects of the reading approach chosen. Interesting concepts were highlighted such as the stereotype of the serpent and the sinful woman, the woman on her knees and the superimposed tearful face, both indication of the oppression of women and the glimmer of hope placed at the edge of the poster created. It must be said that most of the students in the class enjoyed the creation of the multimedia poster the best and this can be another pathway into enhancing the reading experience in the classroom, especially as we deal with a media generation that focuses on things visual and vivid.

Conclusion : Implications of the Various Reading Approaches

There are a number of implications that can be gleaned from the incorporation of the various reading approaches discussed above. Firstly, they created a whole new avenue for students to develop their reading skills. What they were given were guiding questions to help their entry into the text and with these they learnt to articulate their responses in a structured way. Consequently, they also learnt to move away from merely summarising the plot and identifying the names of characters and instead were guided into looking at the whole process of writing a literary text and the significance of the choice of words and phrases. Apart from the above, they learnt to link what they gathered from their reading to the larger context of the world in which they lived and those of other cultures that they could access through their readings.

The ways in which they articulated their responses in writing is another matter altogether as the excerpts illustrated above clearly show poor grammatical structures and a lack of skill in articulation, a matter that will make for another paper in the near future. However, this should not tarnish the larger and more significant message, that pathways towards generating possibilities of reading skills in students, no matter the proficiency, can be promising, with the introduction of these various reading approaches as well as the various assessments of their reading responses in both writing as well as visual tasks. Ultimately, the study of the latter especially

revealed that students need structured routes into the reading world, especially with regard to literary texts, which are more often than not seen as daunting tasks. When these pathways are initiated, they are able to open up a multifarious world where learners are able not only to develop their reading skills but also participate in the development of their own creative and cognitive abilities. As Tobin (2006) puts it,

> *As language users engage in a discourse, they have a view of several different aspects of the activity in which they are participating. The participants in the discourse, their roles, their relationships to one another, the genre(s) of discourse they are taking themselves to be engaged in, the setting in which the discourse is taking place, and the status of what they can take to be common ground between them are all elements of the discourse situation they understand themselves to be interacting within. These elements of discourse situations exist in the physical world, outside of the minds of the participants [...]but it is in the participants' conceptualizations of those circumstances that they are meaningful as situations, and, as with any conceptual content, discourse situations can be framed (Goffman, 1974; Fillmore, 1982) in a variety of different ways (76).*

The various conceptualisations of the reading experience that took shape in the tutorials, the folios and the multimedia posters offered the readers various pathways in which they could actively participate and cleave out new worlds through the various aspects generated by the frameworks of the reading approaches introduced to them. Lastly, it must be pointed out as well that though this article has focused on the reading responses of tertiary students, the various reading tasks and modes of assessment presented can be significantly employed, with appropriate modifications, in the primary and secondary schools as well. The reality of reading need not necessarily be bleak if one is able to formulate spaces in which to ease learners into a more accessible plane, as I have attempted to demonstrate in this article.

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