

Dr Eric's Notes for Talk on Tues 18 Sept
at the English Dept, Annamalai University

What does it mean to start an English Literary Association today?
Why English language? Why a Literary Association?

What are some values and importance of English Literature?

Spoken and written Language skills.

Discover, communicate, and share what makes us tick.

Understand, comfort, and guide people.

The study of story can be applied to almost every professional field --
medicine, architecture, design, engineering...

Identification, Empathy, Projection, Imagination, and Imitation are important processes when it comes to people and stories. People project themselves into story characters. They identify with the characters. They feel empathy with the characters. This occurs through the use of the listener's imagination. The listener may then imitate the character.

Play presents a model of the past, and a model for the future.

Regardless of whether a story's characters are humans, animals, divinities, aliens, etc -- all stories are about situations. Story listeners can project themselves into these characters, and imagine themselves in these situations. The listeners can consider if they might do things the same or differently from how the characters do things. This gives the listeners and readers practice for living.

Let us play some situations

Silappathikaram

Chennai Storytelling Festival 2013, 1-3 Feb

Kannagi Tour -- Tues 5, Wed 6 Feb 2013

"Strong and Clever Women" -- **Kannagi re-attaches head with silver thread.**

Poison Him, Marry Him (Alli)

Rajah-Rani Kathai, Paatti Kathai, Kathaiyum Paattum.

Folklore Dept, Tamil University -- Dr A Ramanathan, retired. Dr C Sundaresan.

Nalla Thanga.

The Youngest Brother.

The Tempest -- Prospero's kingdom is taken away from him by his own brother. Prospero is exiled -- put to sea in a small boat, left to die (similar to how Kannagi is put in a basket by her father, the Pandian king, after an astrologer says she would lead to his downfall). Prospero patiently plans how to recover what is his. Causes a tempest, to gather the guilty parties, then puts a mirror up to nature, forces them to see themselves.

The thief's son is led to believe his father has been drowned in the tempest. A spirit of the island, who is working for Prospero, sings to the young man at one point

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made,
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

This gives hope that the young man's father, can be transformed, reborn.

Later, Prospero, once he has succeeded in his mission of justice, philosophises,

The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Writing Exercises include

- 1) Experiences you have had in the past 24 hours.

Personal-Experience stories

Why do people remember and decide to share certain experiences? What events tend to be considered significant enough for one to make a story out of them? Telling a story involves expressing points of view -- that an event is significant, and how one feels about it. Thus telling a story is an act of moral persuasion. If teller and listeners can agree that a story is worth telling, and that it has a certain point and meaning -- they are members of a community together.

- 2) What do you tend to daydream about?

This is the stuff great works of art are made of.

- 3) Your unique interests and talents -- how you discovered and developed them.

What are you good at?

What do you know a lot about?

If you could have any piece of technology -- What would it be?

What would you do with it? Who would you do it with?

- 4) Turning points in your lives.

- 5) Your Life Stories.

ROQI -- Remember, Observe, Question, Imagine.

1) 1st to 3rd person.

2) Exaggerate, change elements. Make metaphors for reality. External symbols of inner self. **Mother Hulda.**

Possible values of finding and creating metaphor stories (metaphorical narratives) that are based on, or inspired by, real-life situations and characters include:

1) Doing so distances oneself from the material, so that one can consider it calmly and coolly.

2) Doing so may make the situation more of a public, shared issue.

3) Doing so may help to establish that others have had such challenges, and that our culture has traditional ways of handling such situations. This might communicate that a character is not alone, and is not starting from scratch in seeking solutions to challenges.

4) Doing so may relate elements of the story to larger forces in the universe -- including "Mother Nature"; Gaia, the Goddess of Earth in ancient Greek religion; and other Divine figures.

In sum, using metaphors in relation to one's experience may help one to feel and communicate a sense of connection between one's self and the world beyond.

- 6) Favorite traditional stories (especially animal fables, fairy tales, and episodes of epics).

- 7) Social and Environmental issues.

- 8) Stories relating to your (imagined) Companies and Industries.

- 9) Stories you may create.

Story Elements include

- 1) The **Title** of the story.
 - 2) **Characters** -- their histories, thoughts, decisions (and follow-through), actions, etc.
 - 3) **Characters' Ways of Speaking** (voice modulation).
 - 4) **Characters' Ways of Moving** (body language).
 - 5) **Place**.
 - 6) **Time** -- continuous, skipping ahead, flashbacks, etc.
 - 7) The **Storyline** (also known as, the Plot). What happens in the story?
 - 8) **Objects** in the story.
 - 9) **Sensory Elements** in the story: things perceived by Smell, Taste, Touch, Hearing, and Sight.
 - 10) **Emotions** in the story (for the characters, the teller, and the listeners).
 - 11) If the story is being **told by a character** in the story:
Who is the Narrator? What is his/her Point of View, Tone of Voice, Attitude, and Style?
 - 12) **Point** (Theme, Meaning, Moral, Message).
- Elements 1-11 added together may produce Element 12.

Types of Stories include

- 1) **Personal Experience** stories (and other Documentary stories).
 - 2) **Traditional** stories (such as Fables, Fairytales, Legends, Epics, and Myths).
 - 3) **Created** Stories.
- Created stories often involve a mix of elements from Personal Experience stories and Traditional stories.

Story Formulas include

- 1) **Fairy tale** -- He/she is alone, but is kind and humble. Mother Nature helps him/her, so he/she finds a spouse and treasure and is set to live happily ever after.
- 1) **Togetherness lost and regained** -- Individuals are together, apart, and together again.
- 2) **Heroic** -- He/she suffers, escapes, succeeds on a mission, returns, and triumphs (Joseph Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*).
- 3) **Conflict-centric** -- Competition and confrontation between two or more ideas, individuals, or groups.
- 4) **Mission-centric** -- He/she is on a mission; wants something.
- 5) **Rise-and-Fall** (Catharsis) -- He/she rises, but due to a fatal flaw (especially pride), falls (Aristotle, *Poetics*).