

Phenomenology is another important area that the book introduces to Sinhalese readership, perhaps, for the first time, in a substantial manner. It basically studies the structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view.

The innermost structure of an experience is its intentionality which is being directed towards something, as it is an experience of or about some object. An experience is directed towards an object by virtue of its content or meaning (which represents the object) together with appropriate enabling conditions.

Another important concept is the reader. The book codifies in an interesting manner, How the reader became important in literary studies with the evolution of phenomenology and the Reader Reaction theories. The thesis basically states that the reader should not be considered as a passive participant but as active partner in rendering meaning to the text.

Although the role of the reader has recently been recognised in Western literary criticism, it has been well recognised as a central concept in Sanskrit literary theory the book stressed.

The book sheds light on the latest developments of the concept of Context against the evolution of Post Structuralism and Post Modernism as major literary theories.

The authors should be commended for the attempt to introduce the essence of the most advanced literary theories in Sinhala. The book must read for scholars as well as the general public. The book is published by S. Godage Publishers.

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Dons delve into literary criticism

Edwin Ariyadasa

Ambiguity is very much a part of the prosodist's armoury. When a creative expression yields layers of ambiguous meanings, it invariably tickles and titillates the imagination of the aficionado.

The joint discourse of the duo of dons, focused upon here, has a title that tends towards ambiguity.

The work is named "*Satara Doratuwa*". This Sinhala usage could be interpreted either as "Four Gateways" or The Portal to Knowledge.

In their forward, the two authors provide an exegetical note about the title and the intent of their exercise.

"Literature is like a vast mansion. There are four doorways to enter it. Those four are the writer, the work, the reader and the ambience. Our effort in this work is to provide a comment on these four concepts. In consequence, we decided to call this book "Four Gateways". The title of the book could be interpreted in another way too that is as the portal opening to literary knowledge. The work proceeds to explore the intricate inter-relationship between those four forces that facilitate entry into the mansion of literature.

As things are, the conducting of a sustained discussion on such a profound and complex issue like ramified literary criticism, is a daunting task indeed.

They have set up a format, to meet this challenge head on. The work is composed as a dialogue, in which the give-and-take is between Prof. Wimal Disanayaka and Prof. Kulatilaka Kumarasinghe.

Both these personalities are men of considerable academic stature and are known for their unswerving pursuit of scholarship.

Of the due, Wimal has a globe-girdling reputation as an exceptionally articulate exponent of the theoretical aspects of communication and allied issues. In spite of the fact, that he has scaled daunting academic heights, he has never ceased exploring.

Prof. Kulatilake kumarasinghe, who seems to assume the role of interviewer in the current dialogue, displays a felicitous capacity to move with perceptible ease, in the arena of advanced thought in literary criticism.

It has to be said unambiguously that, the present dialogue is a wholesome Sinhala contribution to the proper understanding of the essential areas of theoretical literary criticism.

The work could have easily deteriorated into an intimidating display of erudition and overpowering bookishness. Instead it has evolved into a clear-cut discourse on the predominant theories of literary criticism and the avowed postures of some of the outstanding schools of thought in this specific field.

The structure of the work has helped immensely the disciplined mustering of the available plethora of material. The book is divided into four parts, reflecting the four doorways that provide entry into the magnificent mansion of literature. Under each section the relevant quantities of knowledge are amassed, after they have been duly processed for easy consumption by the reader. The joint authors make it clear in their foreword, that they fully imbibed the difficult tomes of the authorities in this field and presented the predominant notions in them to enable these to be readily grasped by the Sinhala reader.

In the history of literary criticism, the prioritizations veered from time to time. In the present dialogue the joint authors, offer centrality to the writer.

The structural style of the book, enables the reader to keep track of the argument as it progresses from stage to stage. One of the due makes a point. The other, either counters it or substantiates it. This form of procedure, imparts a liveliness to the discourse. This swing of the pendulum, instils a welcome vitality and élan to the total work.

The reader invariably discovers, that the interchange of views between the two authors, is exceedingly stimulating. In the initial segment of the book, the joint authors establish that, in an earlier era 'creation' was predominant over the 'creator', who remained anonymous, for the most part. According to them, it was in the post-renaissance world, that the phenomenon of "personality", began to assert itself.

What is highly significant about this whole discourse, is that, views are not at all introduced with a dogmatic stubbornness. As there should invariably be in any liberal discussion, there is in this presentation, ample room for reservation, hesitation and healthy doubt.

This book places marked emphasis on the role of the ambience, in the production of creative work. The authors point out that, in the current milieu of literary criticism, the significance of the ambience is stressed to the ambience is stressed to such an extent, that, the background has turned out to be the foreground.

In the course of their dialogue, the two authors make references to such schools of literary criticism as "New Criticism", "Structuralism"

etc., providing testimony to their level of "trained frequentation" of this field.

The book enlightens the Sinhala reader, as no other work has done hitherto, especially by "de-mystifying" the esoteric generally associated with the theories of modern literary criticism.

My considered view of the matter is that, the book by Wimal Disanayake and Kulatilaka Kumarasinghe, is the most important contribution to Sinhala learning, in the field of advanced literary criticism. Their vocabulary enriches the Sinhala language.

But, I have a mild hesitation, though. Incidentally, it may not be that mild either.

Generations of scholars and savants, have evolved theories and norms relating to proper literary communication. For ages they have worked with utmost care and aplomb. But, as Wimal may very well know, in some instances, today's social media, have brought into being a category of miscreants, that could be characterized as "communications terrorists"

With scant regard even for the basic tenets of the civilized practice of "Communications Terrorists", destroy reputations with impunity, utterly abusing the freedom available for expression in social and digital media.

The harm wrought by these terrorists, raised wave after wave of sympathy, worldwide, when the tragedy of suicides of young American students, all below 18, was reported recently. They were all pathetic victims of bullying through social media. And, it all happened within 19 days. The impact of such "terrorism" is so extensively felt, that a research project is being conducted about this kind of bullying, in collaboration with the University of Hawaii.

My point is a new phase of literary criticism urgently called for to curb the human tragedy caused by this "Communications Terrorism", in the era of social media. The joint authors of *Satara Doratuwa*, could add a fresh chapter on this issue, when they continue their esteemed discourse.