

PERPETUAL THRONE OF VERDANT WOODS

The Eternal Beauty of Nature



Dr. Sreekala K.L.

In short, "Perpetual Throne of Verdant Woods" is an important contribution to our understanding of the natural world and our place within it. It offers a vision of a world in which human and nature can coexist in harmony, where our interactions with the natural world are guided by a deep understanding and respect for the beauty and complexity of the ecosystems that sustain us.

I commend Dr Sreekala K.L. and the authors of these papers for their contributions to our collective understanding of the beauty and wonder of nature. I believe that this edited book will be a valuable resource for scholars, students, policymakers, and anyone with an interest in the natural world and our relationship with it.

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PERFORMING ARTS FOR GENERATING ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSES

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Abstract

The persuasive element of performing arts is a universally accepted feature which makes them perpetual and efficacious. The captivating impact and the undeniable components of entertainment and enjoyment created in the viewers of performing arts can be channelised for the benefit and security of the environment. The process by which man learns to coexist peacefully with nature can be preeminently considered as a cultural awareness when they are practised through environmental discourses. The replenishing component

of performing arts based on the the themes of environment create empathy for nature and auspiciously inspire the public to generate environmental discourses. Thus the ultimate meaning of life is revealed enabling the reconstruction of environmental policies.

Keywords: *Performing Arts, Generating, Environmental Discourses.*

The persuasive element of performing arts is a universally accepted feature which makes them perpetual and efficacious. The practice of utilising theatrical techniques in transforming the society's notions and generating a sense of belongingness in individuals to the world around them has a long record in the chronicles of man. It has been indicated and demonstrated by performers of various art forms that the captivating impact of music, drama and dance cannot be declined. The convincing evidence of psychological processes through appreciation of arts, leading to the metamorphosis of a generation, is acknowledged not only by the artists but by laymen as well. The beliefs, norms, attitudes and conventions imprinted in the cultural configuration of individuals gravitate them to accept a set of ideologies which form the basis for a political or economic system. The undeniable component of entertainment and enjoyment created in the viewers of performing arts can be channelised for the benefit and social security of the environment. The replenishing components of performing arts, based on the themes of environment, auspiciously inspire the public to engage in environmental discourses.

The concept of 'environment' carries two meanings. It can be the conditions in which we live, work, etc. It can also be the natural world which we inhabit. 'Discourse' is the use of language in speech and writing in order to produce meaning (Oxford learners dictionary, 2022).

They are effective means for communicating our thought processes. The term 'environmental discourses' is a framework

of meanings about the biogeophysical world and its natural and social qualities (Mels, 2017). Broadly speaking, 'environmental discourses' are discourses on the environment. They can be spoken or written reciprocal action about the environment. They can also be the perspectives towards the conditions for the natural world in which we exist.

Environmental Discourses: Care for Nature:-

The shielding of the environment becomes the encompassing issue of our times since we encounter climate change, loss of biodiversity, scarcity of water, pollution, global warming, overpopulation, waste disposal, deforestation etc. The preservation of the environment will be materialised only if a sense of empathy and belongingness are brought about in the cultural consciousness of individuals existing on earth. The processes by which man learns to coexist peacefully with nature can be pre eminently considered as a cultural awareness when they are practised through environmental discourses. Discourses about the environment and formulation of view points for protecting nature, contemplating upon the subsequent posterity, will be realised only if man imbibes the essence of humanity. The natural expressions originating from a feeling of unity are depicted on the wide canvas of artistic endeavour by a culturally sensitive human being. The discourses on the environment play a significant role in disseminating knowledge on burning issues related to man's treatment towards the environment. The interrelationship between man and nature, man's attitude towards nature, his roles in maintaining and destroying environment, the political practices in environmental policies, the rationality in preserving nature, the aesthetics rendered by nature etc. are certain areas which reinforce the possibilities of environmental discourses in them.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, environmental discourse is a thinking tool and conceptual means to perceive and understand the state of the natural environment which has an important impact on constructing

environmental reality (Zheng, 2022). Cognitive linguistics includes the inseparable interaction between man and his environment. When we engage in environmental discourses, we manage issues pertaining to environmental reality. The literal and figurative meanings of language are effectively conveyed through generating context oriented discourses. It has been proposed that meaning is the result of the interaction between discourse context and mental changes of cognitive subjects; therefore, the human mind endows language with life and reality (Breal, 1964). According to the embodied view of language of the late 1970s, meaning originates from the interaction among the human body, brain and physical environment (Zheng, 2022). From the experientialist view, experience is the result of embodied sensory motor and cognitive structures that generate meaning in and through our ongoing interactions with our changing environment (Johnson & Lakoff, 2002). Developing discourses which successfully convey the intended meanings based on a contextual understanding in which language originates is a strategy for effective communication.

The complex phenomena of transacting the pre-determined and proposed meanings from the sender/ speaker/writer to the receiver/ listener/ reader demands the necessity of striving to achieve a particular goal. This phenomenon requires an attempt to become an indistinguishable member of the target community. This involves experiences gained from constant exposure to environmental reality. How can a speaker or writer, engaged in environmental discourses, achieve this status?

The pursuit for cultivating environmental literacy and environmental vocabulary stipulates a thorough understanding of environmental affairs, often influenced by the cultural practices prevalent in a society. Artistic methods provide valuable insights to enhance communication about the environment and create empathy for nature. Performing arts are forms of creative activity that are performed in front

of an audience, such as drama, music and dance (Oxford Dictionary, 2022). The common features of music and spoken language are that both are meant to be heard and both involve sounds. The universality of music makes it an effective tool for evoking emotions and creating moods advisable for reaching a consensus in conveying the messages inherent in concepts. Listening to music may provide an awareness on how language sounds to us and how we gain better experience of our world. The process of communicating meanings and emotions related to the sounds is made possible by relating emotions with particular 'ragas' in the tradition of Indian Classical music. The parallel attributes in the processes of learning to sing a song and reciting a poem can have an appeal to memorizing words. The affinity of music to the feelings may transform the listener to a novel method of analysing the world. This unique experience has an impact in motivating the listener to transact their emotions in words. The power of music to inspire people has been proved in the study conducted by Ahmed and Rana (2015). Songs related to environmental issues can be effectively performed enabling the listeners to get motivated to engage in environmental discourses. This will be especially significant while practising constructivist and reflective pedagogies in classrooms.

Performing arts collaborate and reach out by ensuring a common ground between the performers and the audience. A performing artist portrays reality to the audience, instigating the viewers to comprehend evolving meanings in a variety of situations. This guides the observers to watch a plethora of realism on stage. The spectator, while viewing a dramatic performance on stage, identifies oneself with the characters and their settings by recognising and experiencing the context in which the characters emerge. The impact that a character poses on the viewers' values, beliefs, attitudes etc. are determined by the quality and substance of the performance.

The essential objective of performing arts, based on environmental themes, is designed to modify the reflections

of the spectators by cultivating and promoting environmental awareness. The cultural factor of performing art manages the spectators to imbibe and internalise the discourses delivered by actors through a meaning making process. The captivating power of arts synthesizes ideas on environmental practices through the artistic talents exhibited in front of the audience. The performing arts act as a catalyst in promoting environmental discourses by utilising a feeling of empathy. The revamping power of arts is reflected in the creation of appropriate rhetoric on the natural world, analogous to the images of a beautiful earth where man coexists with nature.

The regulating pattern of environmental discourses originates from affinity towards nature and to oneself. Accomplishing unity with nature is aesthetically realised by integrating performing arts with relevant environmental themes. In short, the ultimate meaning of life is revealed through environmental discourses generated by performing arts, thus enabling reconstruction of environment policies.

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CULTURAL AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

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Environmental science

The word environment is derived from the Sanskrit root pari and sthiti. It means surrounded everywhere. Many systems like air, water, soil, climate, food and shelter come under the scope of environment. All these are the right of all living beings in the universe. Thus, environment can be generally said to include all the external factors necessary for the survival of living organisms. The old concept was that environment meant forests, fisheries and wildlife. But today it has become a part of every field we can imagine. Ecology is the science of basic principles applicable to both humans and plants. This science transcends zoology and botany by aiming to conserve natural resources.

The term ecology was first coined by the German zoologist Ernst Haeckel (1866). Ecology means home and Ghee means science. Ecology is science. Ecology is about preserving the home.