CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

There is nothing in the theory of evolution that suggests that we should be able to answer questions that we can pose, even in principle, even if they have answers, or that we should be able to pose the right questions.

(Chomsky 2000: 73-74)

7.0.

We started this dissertation with the assumption that a discourse analytic framework, in spite of the diversity and enormity of the field, is possible and worth exploration. We evolved a framework and using a combined methodology, applied it to four different discourse types in chapter three, four, five, and six of this dissertation. In this chapter, I would like to summarise the results of these chapters, which would lead to a general discussion, followed by the implications of this study and the possibility of further research that it opens up in the field. The chapter has the following structure:
7.1. Introduction

The two complementary objectives that we started with were to hunt for a discourse analytic framework that is comprehensive; and to explore the applicational possibility of the framework. Before starting with a new framework, we overviewed the existing definitions, approaches, issues, and literature in the area of discourse and signalled the enormity of the field. The critical assessment of each approach disclosed the complexity of the problems involved in finding a satisfactory way of analysing discourse. Chapter one tentatively presented the synthetic framework to be tested in this dissertation. The framework is a synthesis of whatever we considered to be positive in the Gricean, Hymesian, Critical Linguistic, Austinian and other theories.
Chapter two examined another related area – methodology in linguistic research. We looked at the two basic philosophical trends involved in methodological considerations – the quantitative and the qualitative trends. After looking at the basic characteristics and the theoretical backbones that shape these characteristics, we arrived at a combination.

With the tentative framework and the tentative methodological tools, we analysed short samples of four different discourse types in the four subsequent chapters. Within each discourse type, different samples were looked at, four of them presented and one analysed in a detailed way, constantly referring and cross-referring to the others, comparing and contrasting them with many more. Each of the analyses was then complemented by reviewing works already done in related field from a similar or different perspective. At the end of each of these chapters, the framework was evaluated and the problems faced in applying it were mentioned. This led to the following results.

**7.2. Summary of Results**

Through a process of selection, analysis, comparison, and critical assessment, we arrived at the following tentative generalisations as far as the four discourse types are concerned:

- The main function of a discourse unit is communication.
- Communication is carried out through the interpretive meaning loaded in the discourse structure. In the context of the discourse types we were analysing, the
discourse structure was mainly linguistic. However, it can be largely non-
linguistic as well, as instanced in sample 4.3.

- The linguistic structure is developed hierarchically – from phonological and
intonational unit to grammatical unit to discoursal unit.

- The grammaticality or ungrammaticality of the structure is relegated to a
secondary position while assigning primary importance to the message that is
sent.

- The sent message is deciphered in terms of the clues provided by the context, and
by the shared knowledge.

- The message is sometimes provided explicitly (for instance, in the legal discourse
we analysed), and sometimes in different indirect ways implicitly (for instance, in
the poem by Eliot, or the conversation). When the intended meaning is received,
communication takes place; otherwise it breaks down.

- Coherence is perceived when the message that a discourse unit conveys could be
interpreted in a meaningful way. Coherence therefore is rather a non-structural
feature.

- In almost every discourse type, coherence is more important, significant, and
binding a feature than cohesion. Of course there is a gradation – in legal discourse
and metalinguistic discourse we find strict adherence to cohesion to create
coherence. In literary discourse, on the other hand, violation of cohesive rules is a
frequently exhibited phenomenon that creates coherence in a different way. Every
literary discourse starts in the author’s mind as a coherent piece. This coherence
may rest at the explicit or implicit level. In the latter case, coherence might
become a relative term depending upon the extent to which the reader can recreate the coherence intended by the author. A lot of shared knowledge is generally presupposed, sometimes even without giving any clue to the presupposed shared world. Therefore, the perlocutionary effect of a literary text remains open-ended. Open-endedness is a graded phenomenon. Any speech act in any discourse might remain open-ended; however, literary discourse in general is the most open ended of all the discourse types.

- We started with the assumption and arrived at the conclusion that a text is the product of intrapersonal as well as interpersonal conflict/s, a process of selection and elimination of narratives, genres, events, ideas, images, interpretations in terms of the actual and implied participants, and local and global goals of discourse. Therefore, every text is a multitext, we said, embedded in the linguistic, generic, psychological, social, cultural contexts of previous, simultaneous, and future discourses. Analysing the interpersonal process, we showed that the different types of texts were all multitexts, whether it is a highly condensed literary piece or an apparently simple conversation.

- In discourse types such as legal discourse, power distribution is fixed and unchangeable in the local, immediate context of the discourse as well as in the global context of the setting. Nevertheless, even in this kind of discourses, meaning remains flexible to the empowered participants of the discourse. In other discourses, such as conversation, power swings among the participants until one participant takes over the others. We have already seen how power dwindles, and because of that, a constant tension remains in a conversation. Exploitation of
power, both local and global, vitally shapes the discourse, assigning turns, ascribing meanings, and leading on to different topics.

- The difference between a written discourse and a spoken one is at times blurred. For example, legal discourse exists as a complex mixture of written and spoken texts. The written texts are interpreted orally and the spoken texts are given existence on the basis of some previous written texts. We have already seen that the term ‘prayer’ has validity and existence only as long as it falls within the written criteria and a long and complicated oral procedure validates the latter.

- Metalinguistic discourse, and intimate conversation aim at a narrow audience group and thus they contrast with discourses meant for wider audiences such as advertisements, traffic signals, and so on.

- Conversation is by nature dialogic and very dynamic. This leads to the fact that conversation can break down depending upon the immediate response that it receives from the participants. Conversation is socially carried out. In other words, it progresses in a social context, which assigns meaning to it. The context includes not only the linguistic context but also interpersonal, social, cultural, topical, discoursal and other contexts. Silence plays a significant role in the progress and interpretation of conversation. Here it differs largely from different written discourses.

- The different discourse types have their different manifestations depending on the context. For example, the vitally dialogic nature is almost a universal characteristic of conversation as a discourse type. However, conversation would have different manifestations that can be formal, and/or academic, or informal,
and/or intimate, and so on. A very formal conversation can be vastly different in characteristic features from a very informal intimate one. The former would exhibit more features of formal discourse – carefully chosen vocabulary, well formed syntactic structure, persistence with one discourse topic – and might exhibit tactful delivery of the discourse strategy. On the other hand, a very informal, intimate conversation may discard well-formed syntactic structure for half formed, apparently chaotic syntactic structure; use in-group meanings of words and phrases; the discourse topic and along with that, the discourse strategy might change from moment to moment. There can also be mixtures of different types of conversation. A formal interview might end in an informal manner. Within an intimate conversation, there can be diverse ways of expressing the intimacy – through greetings and partings, through address terms, through eye contacts, body gestures, and intonation. A slight mismatch in the illocutionary effect and the perlocutionary one might lead to very different results. The problem becomes all the more acute when culture specific characteristics are intertwined in the discourse topic and ends.

We note that this list is not exhaustive – these comprise only some of the characteristics of discourse. The reason for this inexhaustiveness lies in the unlimited possibilities of interaction, setting, role-relationship among the participants, topic, interpretations, and similar other features.

We land ourselves in a dichotomy here. If there are so many variations in the formation and interpretation of discourse, how do we analyse it in terms of a set of
checking points that are fixed, as attempted in this dissertation. Our answer is, though there are context specific variations in every discourse, the set of criteria that I decided to apply can explore these specific variations within the universal elements. A little elaboration would make the argument unambiguous. When we analyse any kind of discourse, we would first categorise the sample into discourse unit/s, examine the elements that lead to the multitextuality of the discourse, explore the textual and contextual features in terms of the SPEAKING grid, explicitly mention the methodology of interpretation and then re-interpret the interpretation reflexively. This is the general and universal set. However, once the setting, the participants, the instrumentalities, the genre of the discourse, and similar specific features are identified, they would lead to certain local examinations and explorations, which would be different in different discourse contexts. For example, in the first sample of conversation, we had to look at the speed of delivery, intonation and so on, while in case of the samples of legal discourse, we did not have to look at these features. Hence, we say our framework is flexible enough to capture the specific variations of the different discourse samples and rigid enough to capture the discourse universal characteristics within these.

In chapter one of this dissertation, we started with the definition that a discourse is one whole unit of language use within a particular communicative event. However, in analysing the samples we faced a problem in the division of a sample into discourse units and the discourse units into speech acts. The problems related to speech act are already discussed at various points in this dissertation (for instance, Chapter five) and in other works (for instance, Mey 2001). As far as the demarcation of a discourse unit is concerned, I have already mentioned this to be a problem related to the field in general
and not specifically to this dissertation. I took the stance that we should posit a hierarchy of discourse in terms of discourse and subdiscourses. Since topic is the most essential feature that carry the message of the discourse and thereby mould and sustain a discourse unit, the latter can be divided into smaller units or subdiscourses in terms of the subtopics surrounding which a complete message within the larger message is sent and received. For example, in the first sample of the sixth chapter, that is, the conversation from “Big Fight”, it is the topic of the political situation in the North Eastern part of India that is the most significant unifying factor in the discourse. Within the larger topic, there are smaller related topics such as the loss of credibility of the politicians, the relationship between the central government and the state governments in the North East, the relationship between economic development and insurgency, and similar ones. The discourse can be divided into subdiscourses on the basis of these topics. Nonetheless, one can argue that the setting, the participants, the role relationship, the spatial and temporal limits, the power distribution, all these similarly play important roles in the formation as well as the development of the discourse. Again, several of these terms can have multiple ways of use and interpretation. The role relationship can be on the basis of the professional self (a political leader, a police official, a journalist, an anchor); or they can be defined locally in terms of the discourse (attacker, defender, mediator); or they can highlight the familial role (father of so and so, son of so and so). The familial role is totally negated in this particular discourse. The professional role remains fixed and unchallenged. The discoursal role keeps shifting on the basis of group identification, local and global manipulation of power, and so on. The setting, the spatial and temporal limits, the topic, the role relationship – all these participate in the selection of the mode – a formal, rather
rigid form of spoken language where formal expressions and words are presupposed. The setting and the declared rules of the discourse also fix the turns and the power distribution. However, in course of the discourse, the fixed rules are broken; power distribution is shackled; denial and modification of former utterances took place; formality of the discourse got broken down to a considerable extent. These issues can be either highlighted or relegated in the context of the larger discourse or the subdiscourses, but they are not dividing components. Their existence is vitally bound to a topic, i.e., without a topic they do not exist. It is because of the fact that the topic carries the message, which is, along with the sender and the receiver, one of the essential elements of any discourse.

However, not all the discourses can be divided into subdiscourses. In certain discourses, the subtopics are so intricately interwoven that they cannot be separated. Our sample 4.1. exhibited that kind of an intricacy.

We assigned a lot of importance to the unwrapping of multitextuality in the discourse samples. Nonetheless, in the sample of legal discourse, we identified the multitextuality in terms of one key item, whereas, in case of the literary discourse, we discovered the multitextuality in terms of the whole discourse. This micro and macro analytic perspective is but an enhancement of the analytic flexibility of the framework.

One issue not foregrounded so much is the difference between discourse universals and their language and culture specificities. Since discourse is closely bound to the context in which it is produced, it remains culture bound and whatever universal notions we extract, they take a local shape in the context of an actual discourse. More specifically, we can say discourse strategies vary according to the differences in the local
and global contexts. For instance, in the conventional Indian context, a husband is not called by name by the wife. There are various context specific devices to refer to one's husband, such as pronouns (you, he), vague expressions, passives, deixis, and so on. Interestingly, even if there are many participants in a discourse context, the reference is deciphered generally by all the participants correctly. Though interesting, this kind of culture specific features did not emerge much in the discourse samples analysed in this dissertation.

At this final stage, I would like to show the possibility of making an analysis of this dissertation itself in terms of the discourse analytic framework that it presents. The whole dissertation is a discourse unit along with the sender, receiver, and the message. Within the larger discourse, there are several smaller discourse units or subdiscourses in terms of each of the chapters. Several subdiscourses would emerge in the local context of each of these chapters.

The whole discourse can be analysed better if we place it in the larger context applying the SPEAKING grid:

**Setting/Scene:** Previously fixed, institutionalised setting of one of the premier research institutes of India

**Participants:** The researcher, her guide, and the other readers of the dissertation

**Ends:** To hunt a discourse analytic framework (global)

To frame the issue in the form of a Ph.D. dissertation (local)

**Act sequence:** The speech act of assertion (global)

Various speech acts of assertion, denial, refutation (local)
This contextual analysis makes it easier to understand why certain formal expressions, discipline specific words are used, why certain messages are sent directly and why certain others are sent in a hedged way. For instance, let us look at the first sentence of the first chapter of this dissertation:

1.0. This chapter presents the theoretical orientations leading to this dissertation in terms of the field of discourse in general, the schools within discourse, the approaches within the linguistic school in particular, and finally, it puts forward the necessity of an eclectic framework and approach to analyse Discourse.

This sentence exhibits an instance of formal writing. Formal writing can be of different types – a formal business letter can be different from a formal speech written to be delivered at a particular occasion such as an award bestowing ceremony, or the formal presentation of a report of some project undertaken by certain authority. The sentence we are examining is a research report presentation. Again, within the research report
presentation, it is concerned with one particular chapter of the whole presentation, and therefore, it makes explicit mentioning of that. Since a chapter in the formal writing of a dissertation is assumed to be preceded by a chapter summary, where the main issues and points of the whole chapter is encapsulated, the sentence attempts at that. The numbering at the beginning shows the way the dissertation follows a stiff format, which is adopted by the researcher and her guide together, in terms of the common norms followed by researchers in general. The numbering also hints at the linking threads of that part of the chapter to the other parts and that chapter of the dissertation to the other chapters. The sentence highlights what the chapter presents, instead of who presents all these. Therefore, the author/narrator/researcher is not directly there as ‘I’.

There are numerous genre specific characteristics. For instance:

Genre specific words/phrases/expressions: ethnographic sensitivity (p 45); communicative repertoire (p 45); framing move (p 53); quantitative and qualitative methodologies (p 67); observer’s paradox (p 68); discourse marker (p 215).

Formal expressions: assigned more importance instead of ‘gave more importance’ (p 68); such as instead of ‘like’ (p 69); such alternative terms have not attained wide currency (p 76).

Preference for roles: the author, the linguist

Use of passives: not all the discourses can be divided […] (p 265); The whole discourse can be analysed […] (p 266)
Moreover, there are numerous instances of intertextuality in the whole dissertation. This intertextuality, however, is slightly different from that of the poem by Eliot we analysed in chapter four. Eliot quoted, hinted at, and referred to various texts and characters freely; but here the researcher exactly mentions the author, book or article, page number/s and every other minute detail in a strictly conventionalised manner. In fact, a section of the dissertation is allotted to the mentioning of the references and bibliographical details.

The way of expression, the way of presentation, as well as the message content narrow down the reader group to a limited few who are interested in Linguistics or language related studies. This deliberate delimitation of the reading circle makes the discourse more precise and at the same time more channelised.

This exposition can be extended to a full-fledged analysis as has been carried out in the chapters three, four, five, and six. It can also be compared and contrasted with other dissertations on similar as well as different topics, other research reports and so on. The limited exposition above is tried only to show the possibility of applying reflexively the discourse analytic set of tools that this dissertation foregrounds. I, therefore, propose to put an end to this analysis here.
This dissertation promises immediate relevance and implications in a number of contexts. Let us have a bird's eye view of some of them in the next section.

7.3. Theoretical Implications

At the theoretical level, this study shares the general linguistic, philosophic, or in the broadest term human attempt to explore the special endowment of language that human beings enjoy. It thus forms part of a broader study encompassing linguistic signs, their use, and interpretation in a particular communicative event, and the why's and how's of that linguistic exercise. It presupposes that if there is a unit called discourse that we can discover in different linguistic exercises, there must be a unifying factor that ties up a discourse unit. Various discourse analytic processes are explored for that and found that they discover the unit discourse with different subunits that lie in a particular discourse type such as conversation/spoken discourse, literature, legal discourse. This study contributed to a unification of the methodology and the techniques of these existing researches.

Theoretically, the framework presented here is very flexible and is supposed to be capable of applying to any kind of discourse. If this framework becomes successful, then it would be of help for discourse analysis, language analysis, language acquisition research, as well as language pedagogy.
7.3.1. Theoretical Implications in terms of Discourse Framework

In terms of Discourse Analysis, this study presents a synthesis of different technical tools from different discourse analytic framework. The discourse framework provided here is neither very rigid nor unlimitedly flexible. The very fact that there is a framework implies that it imposes some checking points. However, they are just checking points, not rigid and unchangeable rules. The context sensitivity of a discourse unit makes it unique and an analysis of any discourse has to start with a recognition of that. Nonetheless, if a discourse analytic process can be captured looking at certain criteria through which we can arrive at an interpretation, and the process is subsequently extended to various discourse types, it can be of signal importance in the field of Discourse Analysis.

In research methodology also, this dissertation attempts unification, which is worth applying in any research project. The following section briefly mentions some theoretical implications in terms of research methodology.

7.3.2. Theoretical Implications in terms of Methodology

Research methodology is always a debatable area, which assigns relative importance to the results that are deducted from a particular study. The dilemma that is time and again faced is between the urge for perfection and the impossibility of moving on to perfection and establishment of absolute truth. Life becomes much simpler when we accept the simple equation that we always have to work in relative terms since there is nothing absolute in this world, and nothing can be proved as absolute. Nevertheless, for
every bit of our life, we set certain relative criteria on the basis of which we talk, we work, we live.

When it comes to carrying out a research expedition, issues become a bit complicated. We seek certain answers, examine certain data, and arrive at certain generalisations. We accept and want others to accept these generalisations as the outcome of the study. To make these generalisations persuasive, the quantitative analyst looks at large chunks of data, and deducts the results through logical reasoning. The qualitative analyst, on the other hand, relegates the importance of the quantity of data collected, foregrounding the subjective nature of every data collection and analytic process. They, therefore, extend subjective, interpretive judgements to the research data, the socio-politico-ideological background that formulates, deformulates, and reformulates the data. Now, if quantitative methodology is biased for statistical data collection and scientific objectivity, qualitative methodology is also biased for too much subjectivity. Without adhering to either of the two methodological groups, my study showed a possibility of combining the two. The methodological features that I devised for this dissertation attempts at negating the shortcomings of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. It uses quantitative data collection procedure to an affordable extent, analyses the data through subjective judgements, but makes the analysis undergo a process of comparison and contrast with other researches carried out in the field from similar as well as different perspectives. Therefore, it appears to me much more balanced than an analysis carried out closely following either of the two processes. Nonetheless, a Critical Discourse Analyst would probably find this analysis to be lacking the depth in the exploration of the politico-ideological background, which they think, shapes a
discourse. Similarly, a hard-core theoretical linguist would find the same analysis to be probably probing too much into the socio-cultural whirlpool. A literary critic would perhaps find it too dry and lacking the interpretive judgements that a typical literary criticism contains. Leaving aside this kind of discipline oriented judgements; I believe a balanced analyst would be able to find the methodological technique used in this dissertation to be worth consideration.

7.3.3. Theoretical Implications

in terms of Language Use, Language Learning,
and Language Analysis in General

A mind boggling exploration, examination, conclusion formation process has been going on right from the second half of the twentieth century concerning whether it is innate human ability or the circumstances in which a child grows up that shapes and builds up language acquisition and learning. A complementary and more rational approach can be to accept that the innate language ability is developed in the context of a particular language, which is moulded by a particular society and culture. Nevertheless, a satisfactory combination of the two is not yet explored.

So far, child language acquisition studies carried out with a neurological basis have focused mainly on the phonological, morphological, and syntactic features. Kuhl (2000) says there is no strong evidence at present that the bias towards left hemisphere processing for language is present at birth. He suggests that the left hemisphere
specialization is produced through experience with linguistically patterned information. Thus, there is support for a specialization for language in infancy, but one that develops, rather than one that exists at birth. Moreover, the input that is eventually lateralized to the left hemisphere can be either speech or sign indicating that it is the communicative significance of the signals, rather than their specific form, that accounts for the specialization.

On the basis of this, we can argue that if communicative significance of a symbol is so important in the acquisition of language, they will have to be learnt in the context of the discourse in which it occurs. We have already repeatedly mentioned that discourse is a very context specific production and therefore it is not easy to capture anything like the universal structure of discourse. However, with the criteria that we applied to the four discourse types in this dissertation, we can observe and analyse diverse kinds of discourse. With this set of criteria, discourse could be analysed, learnt, taught more systematically, and it would be of immense help in language learning and teaching.

7.3.4. Implications at the Applicational Level

I believe every study has to bear a certain applied value, or else it remains at the level of linguistic gymnastics, extending the limits of knowledge without serving any purpose. The study carried out here would definitely be useful in language pedagogy.

At present, psychological and sociological views of second language learning and teaching converge at the point where the problem of developing the ability to manage interactions arises. Psycholinguistic theories (cf. Corder 1978) suggest that more effective
second language learning would take place if the emphasis is on getting one's meaning across or understanding one's interlocutor rather than on formal accuracy. Sociolinguistic theories suggest that second language teaching programmes should be approached from the starting point of language needs and the kinds of meanings we can express through language rather than that of a priori analysis of the target language. Both points of view come together in the field of Discourse Analysis. It makes us look at a language and the structures of that language through the communicative purpose that they serve in a particular context. Therefore, a discourse analytic approach to language teaching would make the teacher concerned with “who says what, when, where, how, and why”. This would mean attention to roles (teacher, student, doctor, patient) and interactions (superior to inferiors? equals?) - in other words who - as well as the surface semantic content in the form of topic and notions (what), the influence of temporal and physical setting (when and where), linguistic form and medium, mode, and channel (how), and intent (why). In addition, one has to consider how what is uttered forms coherent discourse, and how one can interpret it.

All these bring us back to the notion of Communicative Competence, which can be enhanced with a knowledge of Speech Act Theory, functional theories of language, ethnographic approaches, and Discourse Analysis.

Discourse Analysis contributes theoretical constructs that are directly useful in second language teaching. Widdowson, for example, introduced the term ‘capacity’, that is, “the ability to use a knowledge of language as a resource for the creation of meaning” (Widdowson 1983: 25). He feels that what is needed for linguistic education is a model of language use that accounts for the essential features of the discourse process, rather than
simply atomising the user's behaviour into components of communicative competence. Widdowson developed a model for this purpose (1983; Chapter 2), in which the concept of 'schema' is central. Widdowson defines schema as a "stereotypic pattern derived from instances of past experience which organises language in preparation for use" (1983: 37). His procedure is based on Grice's Cooperative Principles (cf. p. 47 of this dissertation) and Searle's Felicity Conditions (cf. p. 40 of this dissertation).

Since the framework presented in this dissertation is enhanced with ideas of Grice, Austin, Searle, Kitis, Fairclough and others, it appears to me to be more encompassing. The process of comparison and contrast with other analyses sifts subjective prejudices to a considerable extent. The reflexive interpretation also enhances the process. Therefore, I feel, the set of criteria that I developed in this dissertation is more comprehensive. Widdowson's schema emerges out of the intrapersonal conflict and the shared knowledge we talked about so much. In familiarising the notion of discourse to the learners, we should introduce the intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts and the consequent resolution through which the discourse constantly shapes and reshapes itself. We should also exemplify them through different examples of discourse from contexts that are familiar to the students.

7.4. Limitations and Scope/Suggestions for Further Research

I started this research expedition with the firm conviction that every research is a collaborative process that takes on the works of others, attempts a bit of addition to the knowledge already existing in the field, and paves the way for another and a better one. Therefore, however sincere a study is, it can never be complete in absolute terms.
This dissertation might have several limitations. One self-imposed limitation is that in the definition of discourse, we have confined ourselves to particularly linguistic events and the context that can be deduced mainly from the linguistic data available, thereby pushing certain non-linguistic features to the background. Again, in our analysis, we explored the interpersonal process in greater detail, keeping aside the intrapersonal one. It might appear lopsided. However, a study of the intrapersonal process leads us more to Psycholinguistics on the one hand and attitudinal study on the other. Due to the temporal and spatial limits of this dissertation, we decided not to explore these areas in the present study. Moreover, the intrapersonal analysis is very difficult to work out and in certain discourse types it remains very much covered. The process of disclosing might move on to imaginative conjectures that can lead the analysis to a never-ending route of deflection.

Nonetheless, I understand this study could be taken as the starting point in a long, elaborate, and complex process of theorisation, application, and modification. The methodology and the framework could be applied to a considerably larger amount of data, diverse in terms of discourse type, discourse features, participants, place of occurrence, topic and so on. The framework can also be applied to neurological and psychological case studies of discourse and discourse analysis. Similarly, it can be applied to Forensic Linguistics and case studies of crime.

Even at the end of the dissertation, the framework is left open, so that further applications lead to a better version of it. I am aware of the limitation that it imposes on the study – it looks open-ended everywhere. Instead of getting disheartened, I am pleased to work in this mess. I would be the happiest if this mess leads to some unified, coherent
analytic procedure in a continuous cooperative process with other researchers in the field.

After all, in a universe where everything is relative and constantly shifting, I firmly believe: "It is the effort that matters for thee, not the outcome" (Shreemadbhagavatgeeta).