CHAPTER III

THE ENABLING MODEL: AN EXPLORATION

Introduction

Having characterized current KLT as predominantly based on an 'equipping' notion of learning, we examined the nature and implications of the equipping model for a literary pedagogy and concluded that it was not a desirable educational model. Implicit in our critique of the equipping model are the seeds of an alternative model, which has been variously described as 'enabling' (Prabhu 1985), the 'problem-posing concept of education' (Friere 1972), or 'education' (Widdowson 1983). In this chapter, we shall explore more deeply the notion of enabling as a general educational principle and based on this principle, work out the objective and a consistent methodology for teaching literature.

'Enabling': A definition and an explication

If formal education has to be a preparation for life, then, our notion of education will have to transcend the self-prescribed, short-term perspective of the equipping model. Given the information revolution of the present times and the essential unpredictability of life's situations, the equipping model which sets out to provide the learner with one kind/body of knowledge, often unrelated to the learners' immediate concerns, is untenable. A more realistic and feasible alternative is to help the learner with ways of tackling problems; in other words, providing him with ways
of learning to learn, ways of coping with new and unforeseen problems. Prabhu makes this point (1985: 2):

"Indeed, education is necessarily a matter of enabling, not equipping, since it is concerned not with lending and borrowing knowledge but with increasing the capacity for knowledge. The learning that takes place in school or college should be the basis for further learning and what is of abiding value to the learner is not what he has learnt now but how far he has, in the process, learnt to learn".

Like Prabhu, Widdowson also argues that "... education is essentially a matter of developing abilities, understood as cognitive constructs which allow for the individual's adjustment to changing circumstances" (1983: 18). Further he points out that the process of learning cannot be directly influenced by teaching: "It is important to note, however, that teaching stimulates the educational process only by indirect effect which, it seems to me, must be mediated by learning" (ibid).

Friere (1972), criticizing the 'narration sickness' of present education in which "the teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized and predictable" (ibid : 45), argues most powerfully that "problem-posing education affirms men as beings in the process of becoming - as unfinished, uncompleted beings
in and with a likewise unfinished reality. ... The unfinished character of men and the transformational character of reality necessitate that **education be an ongoing activity**". Hence Friere asserts that education should help men to develop their ability to perceive their own self in and with relation to the reality outside which is essentially always in a state of flux. Comparing the two opposing educational principles, Friere says "whereas banking education anaesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality" (ibid: 54).

If we define education then as an ongoing activity aimed at liberating the individual from an unthinking conformity, we have to adopt an enabling model which believes in 'educating' the learners about ways in which problems are perceived and resolved (as general learning strategies) and which further believes in doing this by making the learner the true centre of such an educational process.

Having argued that our teaching should be based on the notion of enabling the learners rather than equipping them, we can now explore if this general educational principle is compatible with current notions about the purpose and function of literature in society.
Implications for literature teaching

Aims and objectives

The distinction between aims and objectives is well-established in the literature on educational research. While aim refers to the purposes to which learning will be put after the end of the course, objectives refer to the pedagogic intentions of a particular course of study to be achieved within the duration of the course. Having argued that the larger aim of literature teaching is to enable learners to read, perceive, think and assess for themselves the message and value of literary texts, the problem before us is to define the objectives of literature teaching so that they project learners towards the achievement of these aims.

In order to provide greater opportunities for the ongoing process of educating and evolving oneself beyond the confines of the formal educational system, the curriculum has to create a greater number of learning resources for the students to choose from. The reading of literature is an activity which is highly valued in this context of self-development. The process of evolving oneself by interacting with literature can happen both in informal and in formal contexts. While a large majority of students, after their formal education, read literature for pleasure as a leisure-time activity, for the aesthetic satisfaction it provides, only a few of
them pursue literary study as a discipline at more advanced levels within formal education. The first category of learners are content to remain as readers of literature in that, for them, the reward is in the practice of the activity itself i.e. one reads literature because one enjoys it. Hence a culture which through its educational system makes room for the institution of literature is richer because it offers one more resource which makes the life of its members more varied, interesting and satisfying. The other category of learners who go on to specialise in literary study will also be able to pursue their interest in literature meaningfully only if they are able, in the first place, to read and respond to literature independently. Thus what contributes commonly to the success of both category of learners is their ability to read and respond to literature first-hand. Hence any literary pedagogy which is committed to the long-term benefits that literature reading confers on individuals should base itself on this core, viz, the ability to read literary texts.

If we want to enable learners to benefit from reading literary texts in the long run, it is not enough if we simply teach them the meaning/s of a few, selected texts; we also need to teach them how these meanings are arrived at. Further, we should use the context of teaching the text to make them aware of the general processes of meaning - creation that operate in the reading of any literary text. Thus the
first objective of literature teaching should be to develop in the learners an awareness about 'the rules of the game' that constitute the reading of literature. Accordingly the objective of a course in literature teaching, for instance, at the degree level, should not be to produce a batch of sophisticated literary critics who are experts only on the texts they have studied, but to produce a batch of trained readers who can apply the principles of reading to read any literary text they come across. Bondi (1962) makes out a similar case for training in 'learning' in the context of science education and writes: "The aim of training out a man or woman after three years or even four years at the university, saying that he is a competent chemist or mathematician, or whatever else his field may be, is simply absurd. The best we can hope to say is that the student has been taken through some of the most striking, original and important ideas in the field, that he has learned the techniques required to appreciate these ideas" (ibid : 267). In the same way, we are arguing here for an enabling notion of literature teaching which trains learners to read literature as a first requirement.

There is nothing particularly novel about this perception about the objective of literature teaching as it is already voiced in current KLT by various people. Outlining the objective of teaching contemporary literature, Gopalakrishnaiah writes:
"Contemporary literature should be taught with the objective of making students confident enough to study modern poetry on their own, which will encourage their interest in poetry" (1985).

Raghavendra Rao makes a stronger statement:

"The success of a literary pedagogy lies in its ability to make students read great literature even after their academic studies" (1985).

Srinivasaraju (1985) who stresses the importance of developing in the learners a taste for literature writes:

"Creating literary taste in students constitutes the first stage in a literary pedagogy. The initial step in the acquisition of literary taste involves an understanding of the writer's experience, his mode of presentation and his ideological framework in the context of the reader's personal and cultural background".

The B.Ed book writers generally endorse these goals of KLT.

Two features seem to characterize the above formulations about the ends of literature teaching. First, from the way they are phrased and from the context of these quotations, we can see that they are not describing the current aims of KLT, but the aims of KLT as they should ideally be. Secondly, a careful study of these statements reveals that they are more in the nature of the 'aims' of literature
teaching, the larger purpose which literary study is to serve rather than 'objectives' which help a classroom teacher to translate the underlying principles into actual teaching procedures. Even as statements of the 'aim', they are often far too general and vague to be of any help to teachers.

3.3.1.1 Reading ability and literary sensibility

Let us consider the two phrases 'reading ability' and 'literary sensibility' which capture the essence of what KLT should be promoting according to the writers quoted above. How exactly do we define reading ability? Are we operating with the notion of reading as a fairly mechanical activity in which the reader takes in what is on the page; or with the notion that reading literature is a transaction that grows between the world of the reader and the world of the text? Are we preparing him for the activity of reading, which is the most individualized and private of all the activities in our midst in this century? If we are, then, why do we expect a generalized answer from a specific reader in our evaluation of his reading ability? The same kinds of questions can be asked about 'literary sensibility': Is there a standard, universal and eternal sensibility which we can help our students acquire? Or are we operating with a 'relative' notion of sensibility bound by constraints of space and time? Further the relationship between the two aims, viz, developing 'reading ability' and 'literary sensibility' is left unstated. It must by now be clear that the two phrases under discussion are little more than
phrases and that they need to be given substance, a certain 'toughness of definition' if we have to usefully adapt them as realisable objectives of literature teaching at any level.

We can now attempt to get behind terms 'literary sensibility' and 'reading ability', and explore briefly the relationship between them. We find an adequate definition of literary sensibility spelt out in fairly explicit terms in Raghunatha Rao (1985):

(4) "This ability to respond to literature, to distinguish between 'art' and 'trash' requires that the reader know how to read in the first place. It is only by developing in the reader the ability to read that we can hope to achieve the larger goal of literature teaching viz. literary sensibility. Consequently developing reading ability in learners becomes the immediate objective of literature teaching".

3.1.2 Literary competence

Concretely, the question before us now is exactly what is involved in developing reading ability in learners? What does the teacher of literature hope to achieve in teaching a poem, a novel or any literary text in a classroom. We have indicated earlier that the teacher has to use the text as a means to make learners aware of the 'rules of the game' that operate in reading literature. Culler (1975), extending the notion of 'creativity' in
language use (in the Chomskian sense - the ability to understand and produce utterances not heard before, i.e. 'linguistic competence'), refersto this knowledge about the conventions of reading literature as literary competence'. Prefacing his chapter on 'Literary an Competence' (ibid: 113) with extremely insightful statement about the nature of language learning by Wittgenstein "To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique", Culler posits that the literary work has structure and meaning because it is read in a particular way, that the meaning potential of a work is realized only when the reader applies a theory of discourse in the act of reading. He writes "To read a text as literature is not to make one's mind a tabula rasa and approach it without preconceptions; one must bring to it an implicit understanding of the operations of literary discourse which tells one what to look for" (ibid: 113-4). Arguing for the Structuralist position, which effects an important reversal of perspective by granting precedence to formulating a comprehensive theory of literary discourse over interpreting individual texts, he writes "The task is rather to construct a theory of literary discourse which would account for the possibilities of interpretation, the 'empty meanings' which support a variety of full meanings but which do not permit the work to be given just any meaning" (ibid: 119).
But all along the equipping paradigm in KLT, which has rooted itself in KLC, has been operating with the assumption that the study of literature is equal to the elucidation of individual works. Since interpretative literary criticism has been seen to be the end, the teaching has also concentrated upon helping learners to reach this end by providing the widely accepted interpretations of literary critics. Because the text is seen as an end in itself, the meaning/s of that text, which are the product of reading processes, have become the centre of teaching rather than the generalizable reading strategies which make up one’s literary competence. But at the same time there has also been a sense of withholding, a certain hesitation voiced by a few teachers about imposing an external interpretation on learners, as the meaning/s of a text are considered rightly, to be subjective and personal, thus leading to questions on the teachability of literature.

3.3.2 The teachability of literature
The complexity involved in articulating what is to be taught in teaching a literary text and whether the meaning of a text is teachable at all comes through most vividly in the B.Ed course books. Anantharamu, for instance, formulates the objective of literature teaching thus:
(5) "Even common people enjoy poetry; but theirs is an uninitiated enjoyment. People well-versed in literary criticism also appreciate poetry, but theirs is a sophisticated response. The aim of the teacher is to take the learners from the first stage to the second" (1983 : 32).

He is also perceptive enough to quickly add that this process of training cannot be direct:

(6) "Is it possible to teach literature? Direct teaching of literature is not possible. But it is definitely possible to teach the art of literary appreciation in an indirect manner and hence it is said that 'Appreciation is caught but not taught!'" (ibid).

One cannot agree more with what these writers are saying that literary appreciation is not a tangible process which can be influenced directly. If it cannot be directly influenced, then how is it to be taught? This question is often not answered and when it is, it is done in very vague and general terms as when Krishna writes (1984 : 177):

(7) "... but a conducive atmosphere for literary study can certainly be provided. Therefore it is essential that the teachers are sympathetic and persevering".

Thus the solutions they propose do not address the issue at all.
Balasubrahmanyam (1985) also voices the same problem in the context of teaching the novel at the college level:

(8) "The teacher should attempt to communicate the unique literary experience of fiction. It is obvious that we are depriving our students of this literary experience, which is the very essence of literature. The reason is our practice of teaching a work of fiction by summarising it. Our pedagogy indulges in post-mortem oration after killing the literary text".

Balasubrahmanyam is content to criticise the present method as grossly unsuitable, and does not attempt an adequate solution to the problem.

1.1.2.1 The intuitionist view

One kind of solution that has been proposed is rooted in the theory of intuition in the Romantic tradition. The premise here is that because literature is an expression of intuitive awareness controlled by some mysterious, irrational power, which is not always accessible for conscious analysis, literature teaching must also reflect this. Therefore literature is not something that can be rationally, explicitly taught. Reading and understanding literature, according to this view, are essentially matters of 'gut feeling' which one is either born with or not at all. It is particularly intriguing when such a view is expressed by teachers and heads of departments of literature,
who all their life have been engaged in training students to read literature. Such a view belies the rationale behind literary training of any kind and this obviously cannot be true. Further, though we may concede that the creative artist is inspired by a power beyond in creating the work, it does not follow that literature teaching should also be a similar enterprise. In fact, it cannot be, for the artist uses the raw material of a common language which he shares with his readers, to give shape to his perceptions. And those perceptions of the artist can be decoded by us only with reference to the language of the text, as it is conceived by the artist. Therefore the hidden solution sought by the intuition theorists—namely talking about the work and paraphrasing its meaning, without relating their interpretation to the text, is not acceptable.

3.2.2 The process view

Frye (1957), who throws some very useful light on the problem argues in the introduction to his book, for a form of criticism which directly deals with "a coherent and comprehensive theory of literature, logically and scientifically organised, some of which the student unconsciously learns as he goes on, but the main principles of which are as yet unknown to us" (ibid : 11). Discussing the implications of such a criticism, he writes "It implies that at no point is there any direct learning of literature
itself. Similarly, the difficulty often felt in "teaching literature" arises from the fact that it cannot be done: the criticism of literature is all that can be directly taught" (ibid). Frye is closest to our own perception that literary appreciation, interpretation and evaluation cannot be transferred from the teacher to the student as it violates the essentially subjective nature of literature reading and does not facilitate the building up of a coherent theory of literature. Frye even offers a solution to the problem when he says that it is only criticism, as defined above, (as making explicit the reading processes behind interpretation) that can be taught.

Frye maintains "Everyone who has seriously studied literature knows that the mental process involved is as coherent and progressive as the study of science. A precisely similar training of the mind takes place, and a similar sense of the unity of the subject is built up" (ibid : 10-11). What constitutes the 'unity of the subject' cannot be the established body of largely interpretive criticism on given canonical texts but the publicly shared general conventions of reading literature. Bondi (1962) also makes a similar plea in the context of science teaching that in an age of rapid changes there
is no point in teaching students to be skilled and proficient in a particular subject, which may be useless after a time, nor can we teach a science that does not exist yet. So he argues, "... but we can teach him some of the science of our time, not as a be all and end all, but as an example of how the human mind, by a co-operative effort evolves new ideas and develops new concepts" (ibid : 266). Thus literary training is indeed a training of the mind that takes place in the context of reading literary texts. Hence even though literature itself, in terms of literary interpretation and evaluation cannot be taught, we can still indirectly enrich the interpretation that students arrive at by influencing their reading processes, by building up a 'sense of the unity of the subject', for these processes can be extrapolated from one text to another. Culler (1975 : 121) elaborates this point : "But it is clear that study of one poem or novel facilitates the study of the next : one gains not only points of comparison but a sense of how to read. One develops a set of questions which experience shows to be appropriate and productive and criteria for determining whether they are, in a given case, productive; one acquires a sense of the possibilities of literature and how these possibilities may be distinguished".

Consequently when we teach a literary text, we are teaching students the processes of reading which will help them to acquire, not so much the meaning/s of the text, but a larger sense of the possibilities of literature in general.
To sum up, we opened this section by raising the question of the teachability of literature. We have shown how this becomes an issue because of a certain lack of clarity about what is being taught in teaching a literary text. Within the equipping model the aim of teaching a text is to help learners to interpret and evaluate the text like a critic and this is done by directly providing the superior interpretations of literary critics. This model rests on the assumption that a teacher's or a critic's superior evaluation leads to the improved interpretive ability of the learner. But in reality, because the learner is not being trained in reading literature, which precedes any interpretation of literature, he, merely accepts these imposed interpretations and abandons his own subjective interpretation. This imposition of an outside interpretation on a reader militates against our notion that literature is a personal, subjective matter, which manifests itself in the formulations of the intuition theorists. But the intuitionist position on this issue is unacceptable as it dismisses the very idea of literary training. Here, we are proposing the enabling model as a feasible alternative to the earlier two propositions. The enabling model believes in making the student a better critic of literature only indirectly by improving his reading ability, the assumption being that the greater one's proficiency in reading, the greater one's sense of the possibilities of literature and the better one's interpretation of literature.
If developing literary competence, which would enable the learner to make sense of any literary text, is a legitimate and desirable objective of literature teaching, then the literary text, which provides the necessary context for acquiring this competence, cannot be an end in itself. It should instead be a medium for imparting reading strategies. As the definition of the literary text within the equipping framework does not allow for this, we need to redefine what constitutes a literary text within the enabling model.

Implications of the enabling model for a view of the literary text

Text as construct

In the expressive-realist position which is endorsed by the equipping model, the literary text is assumed to be a direct reflection of life (art as mimesis) and therefore the task for literature teaching is to deal with life and living. This position further assumes the existence of the story/experience in the mind of the writer prior to and independent of its formulation. Therefore reading itself was seen as a quest for this pre-existing experience which was expressed in the text, thus confining the text for all time to a single and univocal reading located somewhere outside it. But within the enabling model, because we believe that literature teaching is about ways of reading literature, we need to look at the text from the reader's end instead of from the
writer's and examine the text-reader relationship.

Consequently the text cannot be seen as an object which contains a 'slice of life' or 'value' which is apparent for anyone who knows the language, and reading cannot be a matter of getting at this experience, outside of the text. The text only has meaning potential (Halliday 1973) and this potential has to be and can only be progressively discovered by the reader in the process of reading. Hence reading in this sense is not a mechanical, passive process of recognition and acceptance, but an active, creative attempt to produce meaning: the text does not exist, it is constructed by the complex chemistry that occurs in the encounter between the reader's world and his knowledge of the conventions of reading, on the one hand, and on the other, the world inscribed in the text which constitutes the raw material to be transformed by the reader. Text thus defined, recognises the possibility that the world may be perceived and represented in different ways without any way being simply false and that the text may be read in different ways by different readers.

3.4.2 Text and reader

As a consequence of the view of literature outlined above, the author loses complete authority over the text. To put it in Macherey's words as quoted by Belsey (1980:138) "The work that the author wrote is not precisely the work
that is explicated by the critic". Though it is true that the milieu of the writer will have determined the conditions of the text's production, once it is created the text becomes self-contained. The relationship between the text and the writer's world in which it was created, should be subordinated to the relationship between the text and the world in which it is being read, especially so in the context of teaching. It is necessary to stress here that the text and writer conjunction may be of interest within literary criticism and literary theory. This is not being questioned here.

However, it is interesting that within literary criticism at present there has been a gradual move away from the text and its writer towards the text and its reader. While New Criticism declared that knowledge about the intentions of the writer is 'neither available nor desirable' (Wimsatt 1970 : 3), it still seems to believe in a kind of 'implicit intentionalism' "a quest for what it appeared the author had had in mind on the evidence of the text itself" (Belsey 1980 : 16). Frye, who goes beyond the New Critics in rejecting totally the quest for even hidden intentions, describes the earlier attempts as the quantum formula of criticism which asserts" that the critic should confine himself to "getting out" of a poem exactly what the poet may vaguely be assumed to have been aware of putting in" (1957 : 17). He argues for a criticism that
is self-conscious and systematic, independent of literature which would make the text inevitably plural, open to varied readings. The extreme position on this issue (as quoted by Belsey 1980) is taken by the reader-power theorists like Slatoff (1970) and Fish (1967) who believe that texts cannot determine across history and for all readers how they are to be read and therefore argue that reading is a dynamic process while "meanings are events in the reader's consciousness" (Belsey 1980: 32).

Whatever be the concern of literary criticism, in literature teaching has to achieve its aim of developing literary competence, it has to view the text primarily in relation to the reader.

3.4.3 Text and meaning
Within this redefined perspective on the literary text, the text, liberated from the tyranny of the author, becomes open to a number of readings. Consequently an interpretative interpretation is simply one that is endorsed by the author. Hence the question of assessing an interpretation against a single, most acceptable meaning of the text intended by the writer does not arise. Taking the notions of the complete autonomy of the reader and plurality of readings to their logical conclusion, we end up in a chaotic situation, with numerous readings competing with each other and it could be argued that this is not desirable anywhere, less so in a classroom. What we are proposing here is an
argument that the meaning/s that learners arrive at while reading a text need not concern a teacher as much as the processes of meaning-making employed by them. The end product is of interest to us only in so far as it is an indication of the reading strategies involved. The relevant yardstick for assessing any interpretation would be to see how authentic and plausible it is, given our knowledge of the conventions of reading literature. As Olsen sums up "An authorial interpretation need not be an authoritative interpretation; an authoritative interpretation is one which can be proved to be good, given certain conventions determining what goodness in interpretation consists in" (1978: 117-8).

The notion that the meaning of a text is constructed by the reader in the process of reading has spin-off on the current notion of complete meanings or adequate interpretations. Because various readers are at varied levels of proficiency in reading, we cannot reasonably expect uniformly exhaustive and equally well-worked interpretations from all students. The aim should be to ensure that each learner is able to come up with better interpretations than he would otherwise be. In view of this, suggestions for improving the present textbooks such as

(9) "It will be very helpful to teachers if proper interpretive guidelines are provided for every poem in the text, in the body of the text" (Ramaprasad 1985)
which assume that the meaning of the text remains the same for all learners at a particular level across the State and that text-book writers should provide that particular meaning unambiguously in the notes on the text, are not valid within an enabling approach to literature teaching.

**Text as discourse**

The question of whether literature is form or content, still debated issue in literature, can be traced back to Plato. As pointed out earlier, the expressive-realist position holds that literature expresses a reality/experience/story that exists independent of its expression and hence literature is considered important for the truth value it represents, thus subscribing to the dichotomous relationship between the form and the meaning of a literary work. Because literature is seen as a means of expressing a certain truth that the writer perceives, the truth or the message thus represented became all important to the exclusion of any consideration of the medium. This assumption has made it possible for entire generations of teachers and critics to operate solely on the basis of paraphrases and substitute texts which render the message of the text in an unambiguous manner, obviating the need to read the original text. Balasubrahmanya (1985), when he writes:
There are instances where in many of my colleagues have completed the teaching of novels like Chirasmare, Tungabhaire, Nirakarana and Karvaloh in a couple of periods by resorting to the method of summarising the story. The pattern of question papers and the expectations of the evaluators complement this practice seems to attribute the reasons by and large to the requirements and expectations of our evaluation system. But this phenomenon has deeper roots within the literary critical tradition in strongly-held notions about the nature of literature.

On this issue the New Critics differed radically from the expressive-realists in asserting that the meaning is the message; that the poem is. They believed that the poetic experience exists only in the specific formulation of it. They consistently demanded that the formal properties of the text be given attention as they believed that the artist does not first cognize reality and then find a suitable form to express it but rather that it was in and through the form that he at all understands and when explores reality. However, even New Criticism asserted that the form of the work should be objectively analysed, it failed to develop a persuasive account of the relationship between language and meaning.

Widdowson (1975) makes up for this lack by exploring this relationship much more convincingly, by studying the
special nature of literary communication. According to Widdowson, literary discourse is independent of normal interaction and has no links with any preceding discourse and anticipates no subsequent activity. It is a self-contained whole, which is in suspense from the immediate reality of social life. What the writer wants to convey cannot be done by using conventional means and therefore he has to devise his own fashion of communicating. This is the reason why the writer should fashion language into patterns over and above those required by the actual language system and in consequence our notions of reality as expressed/realised through language are disturbed. The writer captures his perception of reality, his vision in the way he manipulates language. "What literature communicates, then, is an individual awareness of a reality other than that which is given general social sanction but nevertheless relates to it. ... An understanding of what literature communicates necessarily involves an understanding of how it communicates: what and how are not distinct" (ibid: 70) and so Widdowson argues that literary works can never be paraphrased or explained by any one interpretation as this would amount to transforming the essentially ambiguous, open-ended text into an unambiguous, definitive conventional statement. Given this relationship between the form and meaning of the text, it is imperative that we preserve the particularity of the literary text and accord it the primacy that it
requires to function as literature, instead of reducing it to its content, presented in the form of sub-texts.

So far we have attempted to outline the larger aims and the more specific objectives of literature teaching within an enabling model and accordingly redefined the literary text. We have argued that while literature teaching cannot directly influence literary appreciation and interpretation, it is possible to teach strategies of reading literature which in turn will have an impact on the interpretive ability of learners. We can now turn to literary criticism, another issue crucially related to literature teaching and explore what should ideally be the relationship between criticism and teaching.

3.5 The teacher and the critic: role differentiation in the enabling model

3.5.1 Interpretation as a reader function
The same literary work is read differently by different readers, a fact which at first sight seems paradoxical. But as we have defined it, the literary text is essentially a construct allowing various points of entry to the readers for its reconstruction, thus throwing itself open to a plurality of meanings. Hence what each reader gets from the text depends on what he brings to his reading of it, thus creating the possibility of different texts having different meanings for different readers. Consequently, interpreting texts and making value judgements is essentially
personal and subjective, and is a legitimate function of every reader of literature.

But within the equipping model, the teacher has always imposed his interpretation/evaluation on the student assuming that his superior evaluations of literary works would automatically lead to superior evaluations by the students. Outside the teaching situation, the literary critic too, taking his function basically to be that of an evaluator, has provided his readers with his own literary critical opinions and evaluations. But the critic in his capacity as an evaluator is just another reader, another consumer of literature, and his values need not and cannot be every reader's values. Every reader, in his own capacity as a reader, is entitled to his own opinions based on value systems resulting from his socio-economic, cultural background; literature can have meaning for an individual only against this background. Therefore evaluation has validity only in the reader's function and not in either the teacher's or the critic's.

Hence the most viable and meaningful objective of literature is teaching/to train learners not so much to make absolutely sophisticated and totally faultless evaluations, but to make more reliable, considered and coherent evaluations than they would have done otherwise. As we have argued earlier, trying to do this by substituting a critic's or a
teacher's interpretation for a learner's undermines the whole enterprise of reading literature. In practice, such a substitution prevails widely; it is based on the assumption that training our learners to become better evaluators can be done by providing them with better evaluations of literary works. Because both the teacher and the critic are superior evaluators compared to the learners, the practice is to impose their evaluations on the learners.

But the equation that a teacher's or a critic's superior evaluation leads to the learner's ability to make better evaluations is faulty. For, in principle as well as in practice, a wide gap exists between the evaluating abilities of the teacher/critic, and the learner. If the learner cannot see any relationship between his own faint, inadequate evaluation of a work and a very superior one, then he would not know how to relate the superior evaluation to his own perceptions and responses. If he is unable to see the processes that the evaluator uses to arrive at that evaluation, then he cannot relate it meaningfully to the text that he knows. And given the pressures of the evaluation system, he would either have to surrender his own interpretation or ignore the critic's/the teacher's. In actuality he can only ignore his own, (because it is inferior) thus allowing the critic/teacher to usurp his own function as a reader by letting them evaluate the text on his behalf. Thus the basic objective of enabling students to make first-hand, authentic responses
to literary works, by and large, remains unfulfilled.

What is being argued here is that the teacher and the critic are not important for us in their role as superior, evaluators of literature, but in their role as superior readers of literature. The relevance of a critic or a teacher comes from their being superior readers, which results in their also being superior evaluators. This claim is based on the assumption that better reading ability leads to better evaluations. Therefore if the learner's reading ability can be improved, his ability to evaluate will also improve. It is for improving the learner's reading ability, that the critic and the teacher are important to us; in other words, not in their role as superior evaluators, but in their role as superior readers. By saying this, we do not imply that the critic/teacher should not make value judgements. The teacher or the critic is also a reader of literature and as a reader he is entitled to his own evaluation. We are only arguing that their evaluations are less relevant to our purposes.

While evaluation is personal, subjective and hence a reader function, reading has an objective, concrete and sharable basis, which can lay bare the processes of decoding a text, the processes of creating meaning in the face of a text. These processes of reading form the common core of our experience of literature. It is these reading processes
which help us build in our students 'a sense of the unity of the subject' that Frye talks about. We need to help our learners to become aware of the conventions of reading literature which lead to the construction of a theory of literary discourse. Such a theory would account for very different readings of a work by providing the yardstick of plausibility. As Barthes (1964) argues (quoted by Culler, 1975) what we need to understand is a 'science of contents' but a 'science of the unit of content' which only an awareness of what goes into reading conventions can foster. And it is in this that both the teacher and the critic can help/learner by extending his awareness of the these condition of meaning-making in reading literature.

Role differences between teacher and critic

Stated thus, there seems to be a role identity between the teacher and the critic. We can ask whether the critic's function is to train the reader to read better outside the classroom while the teacher performs the same function inside the classroom. But this is not the case.

Although both the critic and the teacher focus on the reading process, there is a real difference between them. When a critic is a superior reader he may be so by instinct; he may not have conscious knowledge about the reading processes to be able to impart them to his readers. But
a teacher, in addition to being a superior reader, needs to be consciously aware of the processes of reading. In short, a teacher has knowledge about the processes of reading while a critic has only the ability to read. Given his status as a teacher, who has already undergone literary training, he is a superior reader compared to his learners and as a result, a superior evaluator. This is not being questioned here. But it is not his being a superior reader or evaluator that is of value to his learners; it is his expertise in reading: his conscious knowledge of the reading processes and a methodology to impart these skills to his learners which enables them to become better readers.

But this is not a role we can legitimately expect the critic to play, as his major preoccupation is the practice of reading itself. Does this mean then that a critic’s superior reading has no value for us in teaching? To answer this question, we need to ask whether an exchange of evaluations between a reader and a critic or between two critics is impossible or unproductive.

An exchange of evaluations between two critics is possible, productive and can lead to improved reading processes. When a critic reads another critic’s evaluation, he does so without surrendering his own evaluation. He compares the two and tries to find out how they are different, which
evaluation is more satisfactory and why. In this process he re-reads the work and relates it to the evaluations under discussion. He is able to do this because he is in the position of an equal who is capable of seeing the reading processes which have led the other critic to his evaluation. He is also in a position to compare the two critically and in the light of the comparison modify or strengthen his own evaluation. Such an exchange sharpens his own reading processes, making them more refined and subtle. This process of professional debate helps to sharpen or revise the evaluations of those engaged in the debate.

Thus the critic's superior evaluations, which is a product of his superior reading ability, can contribute to improvement in another critic or reader's reading processes. But the reader can benefit from this interaction only if he is already proficient in reading and confident about his understanding/evaluation. The critic's evaluation can help the learner only when he has reached a certain stage in his reading ability, a certain point of development in his proficiency which he is able to refine his evaluation further on his own impetus or against a rival impetus. If he is able to do this, then he has the status of a trained reader, almost another critic. This assumption of equality does not hold in the teacher-learner or critic-learner relationship. And when the relationship is unequal there is always the danger of imposition.
Implications of these role relationships for a literary pedagogy: first and second phase

Extending these implications to pedagogy, we can argue that the objective of a course in literature should be to take the learner to a level of reading ability which thereafter is self-generating. It is in this first phase that the teacher should lead his learners towards the take-off stage, after which all the thinking, reading and learning can be done by the learners, on their own. It is only in the second phase that the learner can dialogue with benefit, with a critic. Whether this phase, in which he is able to confront another evaluation critically and thereby improve his reading processes, happens within the classroom or outside is immaterial. What is important, however is that different critics' evaluations are available to others for examination, and this interactive process has pay off in that it contributes to greater proficiency in reading.

A clarification seems necessary here. Saying that the critic's evaluation can be used with benefit in the second phase does not rule out the possibility of the teacher using literary critical material as part of training the learner in the first phase. In fact, evaluations can be used to show what is involved in arriving at an opinion, to make the learner assess opinions. Evaluations have to be used tentatively to suggest that there are
other ways of looking at a work, that other evaluations are possible. They should not be used conclusively to indicate that that is the evaluation of the work. In short, evaluations have to be used formatively rather than summatively, as samples, not as models.

To restate, the aim of literature teaching, then, should be convert the totally unequal relationship between the critic and the reader, which only results in equipping the learner with a limited number of given evaluations, into a less unequal relationship, which would enable the learner to read, form opinions, make evaluations and benefit from interacting with other evaluations. It is only on this assumption that a critic writes complexly— for fellow critics, for readers for anyone who can engage in an exchange of ideas. And it is also for this reason that the critic needs the teacher of literature. In the absence of proficient readers trained by the teacher, he cannot hope to have a dialogue with his readers and thus develop his own critical abilities. Similarly the literature teacher, in turn, also requires the critic to enrich his teaching and strengthen his own reading abilities.

We had indicated in the first chapter that KLC and KLT share a very complex, near mirror-image relationship, leading to a conceptual as well as a historically-real role identity between the teacher and the critic. Though the historical
role identity is now less predominant because of the emergence of a considerable number of non-teaching critics, the conceptual role identity between the critic and the teacher continues. As a result in actuality both the critic and the teacher are being misused. The teacher, by imposing superior evaluations (conclusively and summatively) on the learners, is forcing them to abandon their own responses to a text. This substitution of second-hand, alien evaluations has rendered the reading of literature a meaningless activity perpetuating an unproductive relationship between the critic and the reader. Without a readership to dialogue with, the critic stagnates his critical work stands to gain nothing, and thus literary criticism is impoverished. By trying to duplicate the critic's function within the classroom, the teacher is undermining his own value which lies in his expertise in reading, which alone can make the teaching meaningful and relevant for himself or his students.

Summary
Therefore, to make both enterprises—the teaching of literature and literary criticism—productive, the teacher and the critic need to identify the boundaries of their role functions and work in complementation. Though both have the common focus of improved reading processes, even though both are valuable for us in their role as superior readers of literature, they are of value at two
different phases in the teaching programme. While the teacher's task is to prepare the learner to reach the 'take off' stage in reading which would enable him to dialogue meaningfully with a critic, the critic's task is to make available to such readers the product of his superior reading for re-examining their own evaluations and thereby improving their reading ability.

Having argued for a central status for reading processes as a means of enabling learners to read and respond to literature first-hand, we shall, in the following chapter, review various approaches to literature in the twin traditions of literary study in Kannada and English to examine what they have to offer to a reading-based approach to literature.
CHAPTER III (Notes)

(1) ಅನುಕೂಲ ಚಿತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು, ತೆಗ ಸೂತ್ರಂಗಡಿಸಿದ್ದಾನೆ ಅನುಕೂಲ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂದರ್ಶನ ಸಮೂಹ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪನೆಯ ಆಧಾರಗಳನ್ನು ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. (ಗಾಯಾಲ್ ವರ್ಣೋಪಯು 1985)

(2) ಸಾಗರಗಳ ಸ್ವಾಧೀನದ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆ (ಆಧುನಿಕ) ಸಂಸ್ಥಾನದ ಸ್ವತ ಸಾಗರಗಳು ಇದರು ಸ್ವತ್ತಿವೇಗ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸುವುದರ ಮೂಲಸ್ಥ. (ಗಾಯಾಲ್ ವರ್ಣೋಪಯು 1985)

(3) ಸಾಗರಗಳು ಸಮೂಹದ ಪ್ರತಿ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ, ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಆಟಲು ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಸಾಗರಗಳ ಸ್ವತ್ತಿವೇಗ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸುವುದರ ಮೂಲಸ್ಥ. ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸುವುದರ ಮೂಲಸ್ಥ. (ಗಾಯಾಲ್ ವರ್ಣೋಪಯು 1985)

(4) ಕುಲವೆಂದರೆ, ಸೆಂಟರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು ಕಚಾರಾ, ಗೋಟಮ್ಮನೆ ಅಡುಗೆಯಂದು, ಪ್ರತಿಸಾಮ್ಯ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಸಾಗರಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಭಾರತ ಸಾಗರಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. (ಪಾಲಿ ವರ್ಣೋಪಯು 1985)

(5) ಅವರು ಅವರು ೨೦ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಅವರು ಅವರು ಅವರು ೨೦ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಅವರು ಅವರು ಅವರು ೨೦ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. ಅವರು ಅವರು ಅವರು ೨೦ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸಲಾಯಿತು. (ತ ವರ್ಣೋಪಯು 1983)

(6) ಹಾರೆಯ ಸಾಗರಗಳು ವಿಶೇಷ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾನ ಸಹಾಯಿಗೆ? ಸಹಾಯಿಗೆ ಸಹಾಯಿಗೆ ಸಹಾಯಿಗೆ. ಸಹಾಯಿಗೆ ಸಹಾಯಿಗೆ ಸಹಾಯಿಗೆ ಸಹಾಯಿಗೆ ಸಹಾಯಿಗೆ. (ತ ವರ್ಣೋಪಯು 1984)

(7) ... ಅವರು ಆಧುನಿಕ ಸಾಗರಗಳು ಕಂಡು ಬರುವುದು ಸ್ವತ್ತಿವೇಗ ಸಂಸ್ಥಾಪಿಸುವುದರ ಮೂಲಸ್ಥ. ಅವರು ಆಧುನಿಕ ಸಾಗರಗಳು ಕಂಡು ಬರುವುದು. (ತ ವರ್ಣೋಪಯು 1984)
(8) ಹಾಗು ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ ಹೊಸ ಹೆಸರು ಹಾಗು ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್, ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ (ಹಸ್ತವಸೂನ್ಯ, 1985).

(9) ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ (ಹಸ್ತವಸೂನ್ಯ, 1985)

(10) ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯು�ದ್ ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ ಹೊಸ ಸೇವಾಸಾಲಾಗಿ ಸಿಗ್ಗೆ ಸಿದ್ಧಿಯುದ್ (ಹಸ್ತವಸೂನ್ಯ, 1985)