THE IMPATIENCE IN APPREHENDING EDUCATION WITHIN SOCIAL DIGITALIZED MEDIA

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Abstract

As the underlying theme of this conference brings the interceptiom, intervention and intersection of digital interface with Education, I will take social mass media as my pivot and present this paper with an aim to vivify and convey the grim reality of our millennial generation depending upon half baked knowledge from digital media and trading bookish wisdom in return of it.I would thus talk of the evolution of media and digitalization into education.

Keywords: Social Degitalized Media.

Introduction

The concern of this paper can be best delineated by paraphrasing Haruki Murakami's statement, "Social media is so convenient that it is an inconvenience." (Qtd. in The Times of India) This very quote can vivify the contemporary twenty first century prevailing attitude wherein social networking and virtual media have become so convenient so as to be an inconvenience. The very inherent human interaction has been incorporated and molded into a faceless, digital interface which in turn has brought forth a conspicuous revolution throughout the world. This closing and intricate knitting and blurring of spaces could apparently trace its trajectory back to the 1990s wherein the world evolved and transformed into a globalized, boundary less space and the geographical lines gradually diminished to give way to inter spatial interactions throughout the world. Thus, it would be no less astonishing or inevitable to assume that the niche of literature too must have struggled to adopt, adapt and adept at the changing phenomenon. The text in itself could not have prospered isolated and alienated from the upcoming revolution cum globalization. It was as Francesca Coppa diligently enunciates how text and media could never be construed as mutually exclusive domains. He further qualified that printed text was invariably the first mass media and remained, whether printed or online, a significant form of multi cum mass media. Coppa also demonstrated how text too, was and is a form of social media and how readers and other consumers of writing quickly adopted and adapted a variety of text based communication technologies in order to foster communication amongst themselves. (Qtd. In The Social Media Handbook, pg 79) This in turn vivifies the improvisation of the niche of education and concerned narratives themselves to keep pace with the rapid transformation worldwide. Thus, as the digital interface and social media continues to increasingly intervene and intercept the lives and perceptions of the masses, it is significant to delve into the machinations of how this digital interface has affected education and the response of the masses to it.

Before one delves into the nitty gritty of the interception of education and digital medium, one invariably needs to understand what social media is all about. Social media is technically defined as networked information services designed to support in-depth social interaction, community formation,

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collaborative opportunities and collaborative work. (Qtd. in The Social Media Handbook, pg.1) This apparently highbrow definition is reflective of how social media has massively intervened and infringed upon the private, human interactions and communities. It is as Jeremy Hunsinger and Theresa Senft diligently elucidate that, as the number of users drawn to social media increase on a daily basis; this broad user base has made social media platforms into a huge social and commercial success, thus in turn percolating deep into our lives. Social media seems to derive its very essence from the Aristotelian notion that people are inherently gregarious by nature and thus want to be perpetually connected with other people. (The Social Media Handbook, pg 1) This is where social media garners its popularity from as it facilitates an in-depth interaction in ways that traverse both the online and offline worlds.Immediacy, constant accessibility, and availability- these concepts are inadvertently being embedded into the society as the very online and offline dimensions, which were formerly thought of as mutually exclusive or at least conflicting, are becoming intertwined. (Hybrid Media Culture, pg 1)

So, as interactions become more and more internet dependent , one begins to see how even the social, cultural and literary aspects of life get caught and entangled in the web of contemporary digital communication technologies. Furthermore, as the digitization of society seems to continue with uninterrupted swiftness, "virtuality" starts to appear as an inescapable dimension of sociality. Thus, by penetrating the very fabric of social reality, the virtual or digital is becoming an everyday feature of human, as well as non human interaction, more or less encompassing all human exchanges. (Hybrid Media Culture, pg. 1) With time, it soon became apparent that both online and offline were not isolated dimensions. People inadvertently bring offline norms and experiences to their online selves, thereby reproducing offline power structures and narratives, and in much the same way, even the online activities impact people's offline existence. This concept is further reiterated by Adriana de Souza e Silva who calls it a "doubling of space" wherein mobiles and virtual media facilitate simultaneous presence in the two domains i.e. real, physical existence and a virtual, digital presence. (Qtd. in Hybrid Media Culture, pg.7)

Having delved into the mechanizations of the digital domain, one methodically moves towards how this phenomenon has impacted education and appropriation of varied genres of education.. As mentioned earlier, every educational narrative in itself a mass based entity.

Education is inevitably meant to be consumed by the masses and no matter how may one deny it, yet there's always an anxiety of acceptance and mass consumption for Education. Now, as the globalized and digitalized world grappled with increasing and instant need for gratifications, the niche of education subsequently followed suit so as to comply with the prevailing norms and preferences and appropriate themselves accordingly. As there invariably came to exist a vicious circle of interaction within the online and offline interfaces, education too paved way into this popular, mass based medium. Restricting this paper to the platform of social networking, specifically so the most popular one i.e. Facebook, the most conspicuous evolution as well as popular existence is that of education generated in excerpts and as fragmented chunks of knowledge through Wikipedia etc. The Plagiarized Education.

Yet, capitalist enterprise is popularizing such notion as of something is better than nothing, or some knowledge is preferable to no knowledge. Also, it is basic and innate laymen psyche that shirks from a reading in general construing it as an "highbrow" art constricted to intellectuals, elitists.

Thus, the capitalist enterprise which is infamous for creating demand where there's a need has intermingled mass based social media platform with the mass need for narrative appropriation in a condensed, consciously selected and fragmented form.Yet, there is no denying the fact that the two interfaces of offline and online identity are not completely isolated and de-spatialized from each other. More often than not, the two create a vicious circle wherein the online and the offline persona command the other and is a reflection of the other self. In this age of fast paced conversation through virtual , faceless intermediate such as WhatsApp or Facebook etc, the very impatience in waiting or working hard on something be it communication or readability etc , everything has been reduced to convenient shortcuts. Avoid calling, text instead; then expect an instant gratification through instant replies. Found a book cover interesting? Turn up to Goodreads, read several reviews, summaries, selected quotes and that's it, you are almost through with the book. Need to write an impressive term paper or an assignment, turn up to the plethora of specific pages providing one with the best, selective, theme based quotes and excerpts and there you have your impressive introduction or a quote. This is sadly reflecting on the physical spaces such as the libraries and text books becoming obsolete and running their course out in an absolutely digitized world. This notion of 'culture in conflict' is diligently expressed through Battles quote on this inevitable loss,

"It may not be too much to say that the sudden disembodiment of the book in the late twentieth century- as text disappeared first into the grainy obfuscations of microfilm and eventually into the pixilated [sic] ether of the Internet-began with crude renewals of violence against the book in the First and Second World wars. (Qtd. in Digital Media and Society, pg 11)

Also as Anna Johansson elucidates that appropriation of narratives into virtual media was an inevitable occurrence wherein the disembodiment of the physical self, the textual shelf and the libraries inevitably paved way to the mass based and popular platform of Information and communication technology. (Hybrid Media Culture, pg 16)

"Technological change is neither addictive nor subtractive. It is ecological. I mean 'ecological' in the same sense as the word is used by environment scientists. One significant change generates total change. If you remove the caterpillars from a given habitat, you are not left with the same environment minus caterpillars; you have a new environment, and you have reconstituted the conditions of survival; the same is true if you add caterpillars to an environment that has had none. This is how the ecology of media works as well. A new technology does not add or subtract something. It changed everything including narratives (Qtd. in Digital Media and Society, pg 116)

Thus, this ecological shift cannot be shrugged aside as inconsequential but seen as a massive evolution cum revolution from reader based education to surfer based education.. One has to invariably come to terms with the changing realities and accept, appropriate this blurring of divide between offline-online, real-virtual, textual-digital and not to shrug it aside as a non entity.

Henceforth, to conclude in a nutshell, one would paraphrase Charles Dickens popular quote from The Tale of Two Cities,

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair..." (Book 1, chapter 1)

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