

Emerging Trends in Research and Development: Exploring Blogs in Digital Era

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Abstract

Many of us have been using social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc., in this digital era. Sometimes we come across the thoughts, feelings in the form of poetry, quotes, short notes, etc., of a user in a particular platform. Some of these contents can motivate, encourage, educate, and entertain us. While some of others can be applicable to our personal situations.

Some people may blog and write short stories, poems and publish them in social media platforms which are open to their readers, this giving the latter the chance to read and criticize in the form of comments. Online publishers can read these comments and improvise their writings. Such forms of writings can be known as digital literature.

According to the Wikipedia, Digital literature otherwise called as electronic literature is an emerging genre of literature which is written on computer, tablets, mobile phones and has the capabilities of multimodality, interactivity, and algorithmic text generation in an aesthetic way to study and enjoy the literature.

As generations have passed, the medium of publishing books has been changing. Examples are manuscripts which were copied on palm leaves and handwritten papers to printing press which made publishing of books easy and from printing press to digital publications, where publications are done through social media platforms.

In this paper, digital literature will be studied, taking blog as a central idea. Light will also be shed on the social media platforms used by the authors and how they are reaching out their audiences.

Keywords: - Digital Literature, Manuscripts, Social Media, Publications, Multimodality, Authors and Audiences.

1. Introduction

Literature has been produced in different mediums as generations passed. First, the definition of literature and the mediums that have been produced will be presented.

1.1 Literature: Literature is an authenticated written form of imaginative and creative work by an author. It is divided into prose and poetry of various types of genres according to the intention of an author. When it comes to prose, it is further divided into fiction and non-fiction, while poetry falls into ballad, sonnet, elegy, etc.

According to the 11th edition of Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, literature is an excellent form of writing which expresses the ideas of universal interest.

According to Walter Pater, a 19th century critic, literature is the matter of imagination or artistic. On his part, Rexroth (2024) states that, while describing literature it is misleading to use the word writing as before the alphabet was invented, there had been oral literature.

2. Evolution of Literature Production

2.1 Oral Literature



Oral literature is a type of literature where in prose and poetry are produced through mouth. Elders of the tribes used to say stories, myths, wars, etc. through their mouths which could be passed to other generations. The oral form of literature precedes its written form.



(Source: <https://search.app.goo.gl/gFoapRp>)

2.2 Manuscripts Literature

After the development of alphabets and before the invention of printing press by Johannes Gutenberg around 1455 literature was produced through manuscripts in the form of handwritten composition. Usually manuscripts were written on palm leaves, bark, cloth, paper, and metal and were produced by Scribes, Monks, Church officials and other persons who were in high positions.



(Source: <https://search.app.goo.gl/Vstmnzs>)

2.3 Printed Literature

After the invention of printing press by Johannes Gutenberg around 1455 literature was started producing through printed texts. Printing press made the life easy for the publications of books that became available to people to read at lower cost and printing press became the new technology for storytelling. Printing press allowed publications business to grow, and more authors were introduced including unknown ones whose were also published.



(Source: <https://search.app.goo.gl/PLJUMGE>)

2.4 Digital Literature

In the 1970's, a new technology began to rise, namely the personal computer. In the 1990's, the platform world wide web (www) started providing a huge landscape as it allowed content sharing in a user-friendly way. This paved the path way to the digital revolution.



(Source: <https://search.app.goo.gl/AzuDgyA>)



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In this era of digitalization, we are spending most of our time posting our thoughts, sharing our content, motivating each other, etc., through Blogs, Instagram, WhatsApp, LinkedIn. We are also noticing social media platforms where authors are publishing their works, and readers are reading the content, sharing their opinions and thoughts, and criticizing the works. Digital literature is a platform where authors and readers can connect to each other through social media (online).

2.5 Blogs

Before handling the history of blog, let us check its definition of it. Weblog, in short blog is a website run by an individual, group, or private corporate and is informational in nature.

In 1994, Swarthmore, a college student in Justin Hall, believed to be the first blogger who created the blog page named Links.net. He simply used to call it as his personal home, as the term 'blog' was not yet use. In 1997, blog page was created by John Barger named Robert Wisdom, and the term 'Weblog' was also created.

In today's scenario, blogs have become highly recommended journals or informational sites and blogging has become an integral part of an individual. There are blogs where people are posting their narrations or stories and are edited by editors and criticized by audiences.

3. Literature Review

Arsel and Zhao (2013) discuss two central issues about blogs and digital consumers. First, they discuss the consumption of blogs as cultural resources and cultural catalysts for social influence. Second, they discuss the production of blogs as medium for expressing and experimenting with consumer identity through the representation and reinterpretation of consumption experiences.

Langett (2013) points out the way to extend beyond individual relationships characteristic of public relations practitioner-blogger discourse and promote a dialogic approach to blogger out reads ethics. This article ends with several recommendations for public relations practitioners who are looking for ways to facilitate dialogic civility within their own blogger engagement efforts.

Devi (2019) highlights the role of weblogs in promoting literature in this digital era by exploring the recent form of journalism where bloggers describe an event, express their views on daily happenings, and promote a book or update articles. The paper also discusses how blogs cover a wide range of writing from poetry to lengthy prose and suggests various blogs that tackle literature, and how blogs help readers to take quizzes on an author's famous works and also provides them with a chance to win.

4. Research Gap

Numerous studies have been conducted on digital literature, blogs, blogs in digital era, blogs as literature review, etc. However, there is no study handling or exploring the blogs in the perspective of narratives. There are some blogs by good authors who produces novels, short stories, poetry, etc. In this paper, we are going to explore the blogs which produces narratives that have themes, dialogue, characters, setting, and all the traditional narrative techniques.

How is a text considered as a literature? For this question, some critiques who have forwarded certain rules for considering any text a literature. To consider a text as a literature, it should contain the traditional narrative techniques, symbolism, and storytelling aspect. By keeping these techniques in mind, this paper is going to analyze some of the blogs which produce narratives.

5. Aim

To study and analyze the blogs which produce narratives by content creators and to critically analyze the way they come under the authentic literature.

Objectives:

1. To analyze the selected stories from the selected blog.
2. To study the narrative techniques of the selected blog stories.
3. To study the symbolism of the selected blog stories.

6. Methodology

1. **Qualitative Research Method:** Qualitative research method aims to collect data by analyzing, interpreting, reviewing the descriptive data or non-numerical data to get the information. It can be achieved through focus groups, interviews, questionnaire, or observations, etc. In this paper we have observed and studied the digital literature and gathered the information about blogs and its data.
2. **Library Research Method:** (adopted from Thomas Mann's Library Research Models: A guide to Classification, Cataloguing and Computers.): Library research method is a method developed by Thomas Mann, who have worked as librarian for 18 years. In this method, data are collected from books, journals (online and offline), theories, notes, etc.
3. **Critical Analysis:** Critical analysis interprets a work of novel, short stories, poetry or drama and explains it. Critical analysis gives deeper understanding of a work.

6.1 Tools

Tools are nothing but the device or instruments that are used to do research. The tools used in this paper are-

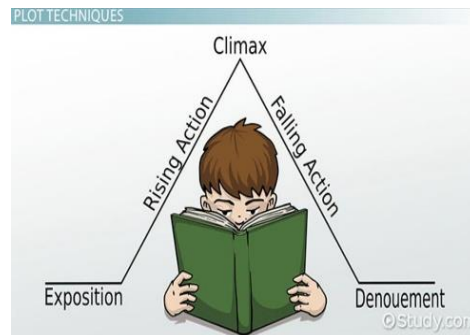


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1. Research Gate
2. Google scholar
3. Google/Wikipedia

7. Analyzing The Narrative Techniques and Narratives/ Stories from Selected Blog

7.1 Narrative Techniques



Narrative techniques are very important to build a story line, author keeps their readers engage and to dwell in their stories by the skill of Narrative techniques. The narrative techniques in literature are-

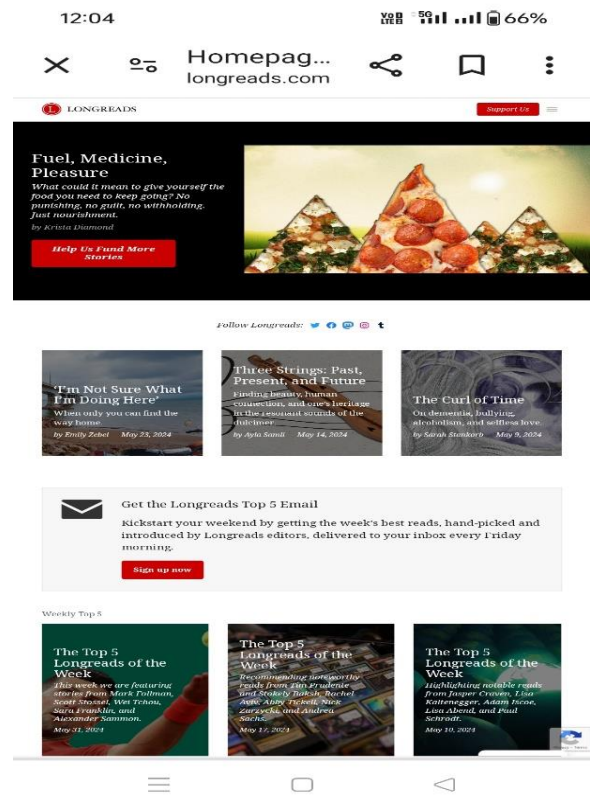
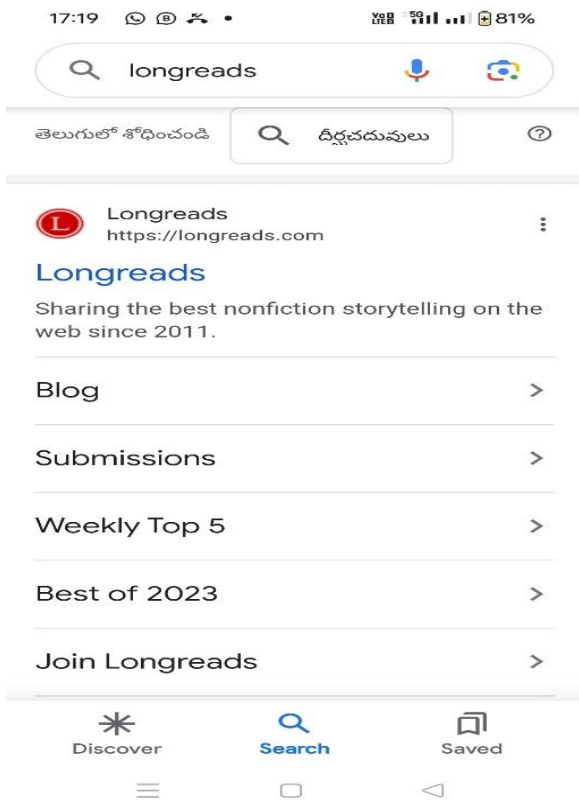
1. **Setting:** Setting in literature refers to time and place which was used by the author to introduce his/her story line. It helps the author to set the mood and interest of their audience.
2. **Characters:** Characters play a vital role in developing the narrative and to keep their audiences engaged throughout the story.
3. **Plot:** Plot is narrative technique which knits the story line together and makes it interesting. The plot consists of five elements as followed-
 - a. **Exposition:** introduces setting, characters and key information of the story.
 - b. **Raising action:** the section of plot which begins with conflict and where the protagonist tries to solve the conflict.
 - c. **Climax:** The most intense or interesting point of developing a story to resolution.
 - d. **Falling action:** where the story follows the climax and leads to the resolution.
 - e. **Denouement:** The conclusion of the story with resolution of all conflicts in the story between the characters.
4. **Theme:** The theme is a major idea given by the author throughout the story, which he/she wanted to reach out to their audience.
5. **Style:** Style is a literary device which describes the way that author uses the word or style.
6. **Point of view/ Perspective:** Point of view plays a vital role in storytelling; without it the author cannot be able to narrate a story. There are three types of point of views, namely- first person (where the author uses 'I and We'), second person (where the author uses 'you' and involves the readers) and the third person (where the author uses 'they, them, their').
7. **Symbol:** A symbol is something that hints and idea or belief.

To see or to analyze narratives post by the content writers, the blog that is selected is "Long reads". Longreads is a digital publishing company (website) which was founded in 2009 by Mark Armstrong. This digital company (website) is a dedicated platform which finds and shares the best long form non-fiction, storytelling on the web. They publish criticism, essays, reading lists, and occasional book excerpts, interviews and more in-depth features.

Longreads was nominated for four National Magazine Awards and won, a 2020 ASME for Best Digital Illustration and a Canadian National Magazine Award (Gold). It has been cited for digital excellence by the online News Association and Peabody Awards.



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From the website longreads, this paper is going to analyze 3 stories in total to see whether they fall under the literature category or not. The selected stories are:

1. Three strings: Past, Present, and Future. By Ayla Samli on May 14, 2024.
2. The curl of time. By Sarah Stankorb on May 9, 2024.
3. Where the wild things are: the untapped potential of our Gardens, parks, and balconies. By Kate Bradbury on May 28, 2024.

7.1.1 STORY 1: Three strings: Past, Present, and Future. By Ayla Samli.

About the author:



Ayla Samli is a professor of Sociology and anthropology at Elon University in New Carolina. She is also a creative writer whose works can be found in Longreads, Oripn, and The Rumpus. (Source: <https://therumpus.net>.)

Summary of the story:

This is a story about a lady who dives back to her memories while listening to a music played by an instrument called Dulcimer near a local bakery. She goes back to the memories where she spent her times with three generations of females in her life. Both sides of her family are skilled players of instruments: piano, banjo, and organ are existed on her mother’s side and piano, violin and other string instruments were played by her father’s side. The protagonist says that her 11year old daughter had genetically got the talent of playing instruments. She recalls one day her father had said that his mother was a very talented in playing Qanun an old-world aunty of the Dulcimer. She says her father also loved playing instruments and was very fond of music but his family never allowed him to learn music and asked him to focus more on academics. She then recalls her paternal grandmother who used to play piano with great skills. **“There have been many piano players in my family—my paternal grandmother, with a fourth-grade education, could play any song on the piano by ear, like many of my father’s relatives”** (Samli, 2024).



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Then she recalls about her maternal grandmother who was a skill full player and majored in piano with her elder sister and left her passion or dropped out to provide her nine younger siblings. **“She and her older sister both majored in piano but my grandmother dropped out to provide for her nine younger siblings”** (Samli, 2024).

She then recalls her mother who was a great player of organ and piano, who won prizes at her graduate level. She says that her mother used to play occasionally for her in her childhood and her mother used to play piano when she was visiting her friends on Sunday. **“My mother played occasionally when I was growing up”** (Samli, 2024).

She becomes sensitive towards her three generations mothers who eventually left their passion in order to take care of their families, to provide their siblings, to support their husband, and to raise their children. She says in a great belief, if they were made music professionally, they had become great artists and produced great music. **“Although I believe that the women who came before me would have made music professionally if it had been possible, they worked hard their whole lives under difficult conditions”** (Samli, 2024). She also adds by saying that these three women felt happy and released their pressure which was given by their families by playing music. Music was the solution for their frustrated life style, which gave peace and serenity to them.

She then realized that she belongs to music and chooses to learn Dulcimer which bridged the gap between the old and new generation music forms or instruments. **“Just as a line connects two points, the mountain dulcimer’s strings link people through time and space”** (Samli, 2024).

The story ends with our protagonist buying a Dulcimer and becomes very passionate to learn it. She becomes very excited to meet the old owner of the Dulcimer and her future tunes with her new instrument. **“Who had played this dulcimer before me, who I would meet because of it, and how joyful and sweet our music would one day sound”** (Samli, 2024).

Story analysis:

1. Narrative techniques:

A. Setting:

- a. Place: ‘North Carolina’ is the setting of this story.
- b. Time: Past, Present and Future.

B. Characters:

- a. Protagonist, whose name is unknown. Who referred to her self as “I”.
- b. Protagonist’s eleven years old daughter.
- c. Protagonist’s father.
- d. Protagonist’s great grandmother, grand mother (maternal and paternal), mother.

C. Plot:

- a. Exposition: The protagonist was introduced and the setting was introduced.
- b. Raising action: The protagonist was dwelling in her memories by listening to the music.
- c. Climax: The protagonist is realising her identity and connecting to her families heritage of playing instruments. Bridging the gap between old and new generation by selecting Dulcimer as her instrument of interest.
- d. Falling action: The protagonist was in search of Dulcimer to buy online in second hand.
- e. Denouement: The protagonist finally bought a Dulcimer. And looking forward to produce aesthetic music in their combination.

D. Theme:

The themes of this story are:

- a. Quest for Identity.
- b. Finding beauty, and
- c. Human connection.
- d. Discrimination of women.

E. Style: The author used the narrative and descriptive style of technique in this story.

F. Point of view/ Perspective: In this story, the author has used the ‘first person point of view’.

G. Symbol: Here in this story, the symbol used by author is ‘dulcimer’, a musical instrument.

7.1.2 STORY 2: The curl of times. By Sarah Stankorb.

About the author:



Sarah Stankorb is an Ohio-based author. She is the author of national best-seller “Disobedient Women”. She is an award-winning author and writes about feminism, religion, politics, technology and the public good. Her works were published in



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namely: The New York Times, The Washington Post, Cosmopolitan, O Magazine, Marie Claire, Vogue, Longreads, Glamour, Catapult, Slate, The Guardian, The Atlantic, Newsweek, CNN Money, GOOD Magazine, Salon, KIWI, Babble, The Morning News, DAME Magazine, Cincinnati Magazine, and formerly as a regular contributor to GEN.

(Source: <http://sarahstankorb.com>.)

Summary of the story:

The story is about Sarah, whose parents were suffering from dementia because of which they were in nursing home. It was set in COVID pandemic time and her parents were tired of being in nursing home; they were waiting for Sarah to take them home. Our protagonist, Sarah was an author who published her first book and got professionally successful. She then talks about when and how she started and became fond of writing. She slowly dwells or takes us into her childhood, teenage, and adulthood at her parents' home. How she used to fear her father who was an alcoholic and how she used to go to church on Saturdays with her mother to play while her mother cleaned the bathrooms and swept floors. **"I went along with her each Saturday to our empty Presbyterian church, where she cleaned bathrooms and swept floors while I skipped around playing make-believe"** (Stankorb, 2024).

Sarah started writing in her third grade. She wrote a story about a teenager who stole a diamond ring to pay off his debts. Sarah's teacher never believed that story was written by her because of her writing skills. **"The teacher gently asked if I had copied the story from somewhere—why should a kid of my age know about bookies?"** (Stankorb, 2024). Her father loses his job as a bus driver when he crashes a bus.

She penned super natural short stories and poems about pain and anger in her high school. This writing helped to avoid her father's screaming at home and also the noise too. **"The clatter of fingers on keys became a funnel for the noise in my mind and our home, a place to pin ideas while my father screamed"** (Stankorb, 2024).

She then comes to the present and talks about how she was excited to tell her mother about her success and goes to nursing home and hugs her mother to make her feel that she is her daughter at the same time she was worried to transmit any COVID germs to her mother. **"I hugged her quickly, needing to make myself real to her"** (Stankorb, 2024). Her father after seeing her demanded to take them with her. She was worried about their children and her parent's condition of dementia. But eventually agrees to her parents demands and realizes that it is time to take care of them by keeping them near her. She was feared to take her parents with her because, she recalls how her mother forgot everything as she was suffering from dementia and how her father got anger attacks as he was also suffering from dementia. She fears that their problem may affect her children as she suffered in her childhood. **"I remember a time when she was in the kitchen popping popcorn and forgot to put the top on the popper...My father exploded, Lois, you could break a wet dream! (one of his favorite insults). Sometimes she would threaten to leave, but he countered that he would track us down and set fire to wherever we went, with us inside"** (Stankorb, 2024). When our protagonist was 21 years old, her father got into sober and replaced wine with ginger ale and they never talked about how terror was he.

Finally, the day has arrived, Sarah and her husband are packing the bags of her parents to vacate them from nursing home. The story ends with how the protagonist penned her real story into book. **"Tapping my own story into the draft pulled old memories out of me, put them elsewhere, on a page"** (Stankorb, 2024).

Story analysis:

1. Narrative techniques:

A. Setting:

- a. Time: COVID pandemic (2021).
- b. Place: A nursing home in Ohio.

B. Characters:

- a. The protagonist: Sarah
- b. Sarah's father
- c. Sarah's mother, Louis.
- d. Sarah's husband.
- e. Sarah's children.

C. Plot:

- a. Exposition: The author introduces the characters, setting and all the key information.
- b. Raising action: The Protagonist's parents who are suffering from dementia are demanding her to take them back home from nursing care.
- c. Climax: The Protagonist recalls her childhood how she became victim of her father's anger attacks and her mother's forgetting nature. And how she wanted to escape from them both. But cannot leave without her mother.
- d. Falling action: She thinks of her children and the causes of taking her dementia parents with her which affects her children. However, she realizes that her parents need her and she should take them with her and keep them near her place to take care of them.
- e. Denouement: Sarah finally comes back to her parents with her husband to take them back with her and place them near her place.

D. Theme:

- a. Loneliness
- b. Dementia



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- c. Insecure childhood
- d. Selfless love

- E. Style: The author has used narrative, descriptive, and figurative style of language.
- F. Point of view/ Perspective: In this story the author has used ‘first person point of view’.
- G. Symbol: Dementia and loneliness.

7.1.3 Story 3: Where the wild things are: the untapped potential of our Gardens, parks, and balconies. By Kate Bradbury:

About the author:



Kate Bradbury is the author of ‘The Bumblebee Flies Anyway’. She is specialized in wildlife gardening and she is the Wildlife Editor of BBC Gardeners’ World Magazine and has a regular Country Diary column in The Guardian. Kate is an award-winning writer who lives in Brighton with her partner Emma. (Source: <https://googlebooks.com>.)

Summary of the story:

The story is about a woman who loves nature and does not want to separate from it. She was from a gay village in Manchester. She used to work in gay bars and clubs, while going back to her flat she used to enjoy watching hedgehogs who were her neighbors living in her garden. Soon she realized that the place was not belonging to hedgehogs only. There were also birds, butterflies and bees who occasionally visited her balcony.

Years later she was living in Brighton and visited Manchester for work and before leaving to South by train she took a walk for gay village, the bars, the clubs, and finally her estate where she used to live years before. Everything was changed, the flats were makeover, the balconies were sealed with airtight windows which made the flats warmer and soundproof. The author further states that they became distant from nature and the natural world. She also adds that these people were suffering from loss of green space. She wondered how hedgehogs were getting on without the garden. **“It wasn’t just the people who would be suffering from the loss of green space” (Bradbury, 2024).**

The author then says that she was posted the entire situation that she had witnessed on Twitter, where her old neighbor who was the eye witness of all these changes got in touch to explained what had happened and how the total area was makeover since years separating themselves from nature and how hedgehogs were died because there were no gardens and huge fences. And how she rescued them in nights. Later the author talks about how we people in the era of development, were cutting the trees for making them into parking lots, etc. She poses a question that in the name of progressing and development we are polluting the nature by cutting down trees and becoming distant to nature. Is this what we call development?

She then goes on talking about the information of plastic grass, theme parks, council giving money to cut down trees and to build parking lots etc. She gives some numbers and official information about the changes that took place in Manchester.

Story analysis:

1. Narrative techniques:

A. Setting:

- a. Time: contemporary world
- b. Place: Gay village, Manchester and Brighton.

B. Characters:

- a. Protagonist, the author.

C. Plot:

- a. Exposition: The author introduces the setting, characters and key information about the story.
- b. Raising action: The protagonist enjoys watching hedgehogs and realizes the importance of nature and natural world. After years when she comes back to visit her place, she finds that lot has been changed and hedgehogs were found nowhere.
- c. Climax: The protagonist posts her experience in Gay village, Manchester on Twitter to share her agony and pain to watch a development where people were losing green space.
- d. Falling action: The protagonist talks and questions her readers what is the real meaning of development and are we really developing while distancing ourselves from natural world.
- e. Denouement: The protagonist gives the information about the plastic grass and their arrival into the world, how council giving money to cut down the trees in order to build parking lots and high fences to get rid of hedgehogs and the list goes on. And she wants to go back to her childhood where she witnessed abundance of species around her.



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D. Theme:

- a. In quest for hope in change in climate
- b. Loss of green space.
- c. Fencing ourselves from nature.

E. Style: Expository style of narrative.

F. Point of view/ Perspective: The author has used 'first person point of view'.

G. Symbol: hedgehogs, gardens, fence, and airtight windows.

8. Conclusion

This paper has studied the digital literature which was produced by bloggers/authors in blogs. It has pointed out that the content produced by bloggers can be considered as authentic literature which has its own set of rules by selecting a blog named 'Longreads'. From this blog where fiction and non-fiction is published, three stories have been selected in order to analyze the content by following traditional narrative techniques, themes, style, point of view, and symbol.

Firstly, this paper has defined narrative techniques, themes, style, point of view, and symbol. And further proceeded to analyze the stories that were selected.

Additionally, it has analyzed the selected stories to see whether they have followed traditional narrative techniques, themes, style, point of view, and symbol or not.

In conclusion, this paper has found out that Longreads as a blog contains the content which follows the traditional format of literature. It can be considered as digital literature. And as the title suggests "Emerging Trends in Research and Development", blogs that were published in different websites, which publishes short stories can be considered as digital literature and conduct research by exploring their themes, narrative techniques, symbol, imagism, at the time critical studies can be done on them. There are many websites like, Storymirror, Reedsy, and many more to explore in this digital era.

For future researchers, there is a scope for exploring digital literature in the form of blogs, Instagram Posts, Facebook posts, LinkedIn, etc.

Limitations: This paper has been limited to on blogs because of limited time.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest in this manuscript in any manner.

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