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**The Stylistic Ideology and the Social Documentation behind The Aesthetic Production's of Honoré de Balzac as represented in *Eugénie Grandet*.**

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My aim in writing this paper is to examine the stylistic ideology and the social documentation behind the artistic productions of Honoré de Balzac (1799 to 1850) as represented in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century provincial France backdrop of *Eugénie Grandet*, his masterpiece, completed in 1883, considered the most classical of his entire body of writing.

After 1850, a vibrant trend towards Realism developed in French Literature which depicted reality rather than the idealism of its previous aesthetic era of Romanticism. It is noteworthy that this period of Realism was a moment of the novelist and short-story writer and the philosophy of this Movement was to portray the genuine truth about life without any pretence, hypocrisy and idealism. It wanted to show things in their true nature as these are in real life, free from prejudice and convention. This attitude gave the realists an opportunity to achieve a glaringly successful response from the reading public of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century France. More relevantly, the members of the Movement refused to accept superficial themes, elaborate styles, ornamental language and flowery images which governed the work of their Romantic predecessors like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Victor Hugo (a close acquaintance of Balzac) and Alfred de Musset. Hence, the Age of Realism certainly entailing some radicalism, played a vital part in the unfolding of French Literature and consequently, was a very substantial force influencing French literary thought in its entirety.

Honoré de Balzac is generally considered the forerunner (*avant-coureur or précurseur* in French) of this predominantly significant, Realistic Movement in French Literature which was largely substantiated and sustained by his gigantic, artistic project for which he gave the collective title of *La Comédie Humaine*. Comprehensively presenting a broad panorama of his contemporary French society, it

comprised ninety-one novels which included two thousand characters out of which five hundred appeared in more than one story. All these integral parts comprising the different novels, were centrally important to the whole, in that, Balzac, through each of these, examined every major aspect of 19<sup>th</sup> Century France, involving a wide range of characters from the nobility to the poorest country peasant, depicting the actual world as it existed. It is generally believed that he is second only to William Shakespeare in creating characters ruled by a specifically acute passion, for example, greed, hatred or ambition, qualities or traits exemplified in *Eugénie Grandet* although I detect greater Jonsonian affinities very clearly in the portraits. By the age of thirty, he was also acclaimed as *The Napoleon of Letters*, a distinction constructed by himself, illustrative of his own aspirations. Gradually, Balzac was looked upon as *The Father of the Modern French Novel* and his justifiably extensive contribution to the literature of the country, reflected a rather amazing productivity compared to those of his counterparts of the same period like Gustave Flaubert and Stendhal, two centrally-significant literary figures of the time. In order to reach a fuller understanding of what he has produced, I think that it is obligatory for me to look at the Balzacian age from the perspective of this unique, artistic background from which he has emerged.

Balzac showed with wonderful force that the mere common details of everyday life were filled with drama, that, to him who had eyes to see, there might be significance in a ready-made suit of clothes, and passion in the furniture of a boarding house..... The whole of France is crammed into his pages, and electrified there into intense vitality.

- Lytton Strachey

As shown before, Balzac is acknowledged as the forerunner of the French Realistic Movement which was a very productive aesthetic age. But, ironically, we can endorse him as a Romantic writer. This is because like his contemporary Stendhal, he was a Transitional Literary Figure operating between French Romanticism and French Realism, the two major artistic movements of 19<sup>th</sup> Century France. Therefore, in the produced work, on the one hand, there was a resultant, productive blend of some of the main characteristics of these two prominent movements in French literary history. Both Stendhal and Balzac can also be conveniently grouped as Romantic writers but the fact remains that both were bent towards a path of Realism. This is because they took facts and material from real life to work on, in a romantic mould. On the other

hand, he found himself placed, particularly, towards the latter part of his career, within a contemporary scenario whose principal quality was a gliding process from French Realism towards French Naturalism. All this happened in his lifetime within a mere span of fifty-one years. I want to treat this peculiar aesthetic phenomenon as my primary point of departure. The realist's partiality for actual details, was such, that they took material from real life to create their work while conscientiously preserving their inborn romanticism intact. The most obvious side of Balzac's creative talent is this enormous sense of romance that we are able to discover in our readings of what he has produced. He dramatised very realistically, the relationship between all classes of people and their environments but sometimes, he preferred a dependence on melodramatic situations and a kind of flowery language given his inborn romantic disposition. In point of fact, being romantically-addicted, he was influenced by his reading of Scott's historical novels which, to my mind, is a point of immeasurable value and initially, he has written rather unnatural novels. In keeping with his intrinsic, romantic fervour, he has led a life that was not lacking in romance having entered matrimony on three occasions,\* particularly his frequent visits to St. Petersburg to meet the Polish Countess Evelina Hanska bear testimony to this issue, a woman with whom he conducted a correspondence for twenty-two years as well, prior to their eventual brief marriage in 1850 made possible by her own widowhood, but terminated by his unexpected post-marriage death in five months due to overwork and worry, a circumstance that ironically made the coming of her large wealth to him, too late, to solve his financial difficulties. For middle-class Balzac, a son of a civil servant born in Tours, whose family has recently emerged from peasantry, a man who could not complete his law degree, the relationship and the subsequent marital circumstances were all the more significant due to her dignified ancestry. In point of fact, he has had no right to the 'de' appearing in his surname reflecting a nobler parentage, since his actual name was *Balssa*.

\* Balzac was initially inspired by a woman, twenty years older than himself called *Madame de Berny* generally considered his first *Muse* who was replaced subsequently, by a second *Muse* called *Madame de Castries*. Despite, the financial help that the novelist has received from both these women of affluence and the money acquired through his fictional writings, his debts continue to multiply. His third *Muse* was Madame Evelina Hanska, an extremely wealthy Polish Countess with whom he had corresponded for twenty-two years prior to their eventual marriage on her becoming a widow in 1850 when Balzac was fifty-one, five months prior to his death due to over-exertion stemming from a too extensive production of writing.

The actual point of departure for him had been clearly Romanticism but as he proceeded, his creative productions have absorbed elements of objective Realism with its stress on impartiality. It is this valuable transition that makes him so unique in French literary history. I believe that his influence was all the more felt with such profundity by succeeding generations because of this transitional status involving an extraordinary fusion. Today, the Balzacian reputation mainly rests on a great bulk of textual production falling under the collective title of *La Comédie Humaine* divided into six groups or sections comprising ninety-five titles illustrating two thousand types of characters who come alive as an indestructible portrait of the world that surrounded him. The artist's original intention was to make it a scientific effort in line with his predisposition for unbiased creativity in order to catalogue the varied social groups found in his age. My text, *Eugénie Grandet*, coming directly under the collection's sub-category, titled *Scenes from Provincial Life*, is a single work from this Marlovian project generally acknowledged as its masterpiece. It exemplifies the pigeonholing process related to Balzac's involvement with the different artistic periods of the times that I have described above, through which we are now introduced to an extremely analytical display of character of great merit.

Judging by such a vast collection of textual documentation inspired by his sociological inclinations written over a comparatively short working period of twenty years in relation to the quantity produced, I presume that his life, was one of titanic but victorious effort against great odds considering the popularity of most of his ninety-five books. Working for fifteen to eighteen hours a day, to pay his debts, (fortified at intervals, by strong coffee and breaking all the rules of health), the novelist managed to draft a whole novel and rewrite it on the proof-sheets in seventy two hours establishing an untiring energy; however, the undertaking was too great that he completed roughly about two thirds of the project before his death. He was an imbalanced individual at times and even attempted to solve the problem of his debts by a rapider production of novels.

In the Balzacian world, there is a living, breathing quality in each creation. His work on a character shows how the creation goes through a process of degeneration and very often, the character is identified as a sort of a human monster who spreads destruction around. The analysis of the textual evidence of the book that I have chosen to examine, points to an authorial perception that immediately gives the reader a deeper insight into the psychology of the Grandet family; through the means of Monsieur Grandet, in particular, the miserly head of the household. I am

intrigued by the way in which the selected milieu is painted for a sharper projection of the minute details of the lives of his women and men. In fact, the author has confessed that he normally has a genuine interest in crude folk with a base mentality standing for banality and downright foolishness. I quote in French for better effect,

Je les idéalise dans bêtise

More than Gustave Flaubert's hatred of silliness and mediocrity (both Balzac and Flaubert were very representative writers), it is an affinity with the English, satirical dramatist, Ben Jonson that is not difficult to detect in Balzac's voice since the former, almost three centuries ago, has worked closely with similar idiosyncrasies prevalent in Jacobean London through his metaphorical figures representing human vices. As such, these elaborated defects in his male protagonist, Grandet, have provided a profitable province for the novelist to work on. Like Victor Hugo, the most important literary figure during the French Romantic period, whose splendid romanticism he admired, Balzac has the habit of taking himself seriously as a thinker who has a social role and a moral responsibility towards his readers in his prose fiction efforts. In the story of his master miser (having a somewhat circular kind of resemblance to Dickens *Scrooge in The Christmas Carol*), I continue to discover the Balzacian slips into melodrama completed with quantities of exaggeration when he tries to depict the struggle (perhaps, universal) for power, position and affluence in this contemporary society. His biography informs us that he himself had been thirsting for fame having very considerable hardships during his Parisian garret life coming from the middle-class. Confident of his capabilities and sensitivity, he has had to work himself towards achieving a literary status through the means of this only available form of outlet. It is this parallel that extends itself towards the creating of artistic characters with excessive aspiration and the dramatisation of their backdrops, an attempt, an attempt which has had a therapeutic effect on his make up as suggested in his expression quoted below crystallising his workview.

Jaime aussi les tres êexceptionnels.

The influence of Sir Walter Scott and the historical novel on Balzac is clearly reflected in this statement yet surprisingly unlike Hugo, he does not feel the beauty of nature. It is believed, perhaps quite accurately, that the professional writer in Balzac, used to live with his creations during his regular eighteen hour writing sessions with a resultant close rapport with their limitations or gullibilities. I see this possible link as a rewarding

intellectual experience; we see such bonds existing between Charles Dickens and his Victorian representatives producing the life-long attitude that he extended towards each character created. The reader's easy identification with his protagonist, Grandet, arises from this kind of predisposition; in spite of his unlovable texture, still, we feel a considerable degree of compassion for him as much as the fondness of Balzac's for him.

I think that it is most appropriate and cogent to treat Balzac as a productive social novelist and it is in this respect that we need to look at his novelistic approach although at times, he comes up short in measures of sophistication in some of his great portraits, a fact which could be easily overlooked considering the depth and insight into the characters demonstrated through the means of an effective process reflecting a rare ramification of their innermost motives.

His novels faithfully render all the significant aspects of the French society under the *Restoration, technically*, a period focused on the re-establishing of the Monarchy in France consequent to the *French Revolution* and the post-revolutionary age, through a very personal vision. He has attempted the *Restoration* period represented by the Bourbons (1815-1830) and was particularly effective in creating a France under the Second Empire (1830-1848) as well, which eventually defeated the Bourbons. It is certain that he always had a lot of moral aim in these efforts at documenting his age as he pictured realistically, the relations between the different classes of people and their environments in spite of the fact that he was given to melodramatic situations and flowery language at a rather regular pace. Thus, Balzac shows a sensitivity to the nuances of economic and social lives of the period, very accurately illustrated in the textuality of *Eugénie Grandet* written in 1833, generally considered his most popular novel, a position partially stemming from its male protagonist, the miserly opportunist, old Grandet who is a characteristic product of his times, a fictional character who is simply comic, at times. In keeping with the aim of documenting his age, the novel opens with a carefully-selected period detail informing the reader of Grandet's purchase of confiscated lands under the revolution of 1789 and the manner in which he has risen to social power. The novelist intelligently shows how men are shaped by their social level or position and very often, he depicts this with a kind of vulgarity as we have seen in this work, in particular. The relationship between man and his environment always inspired him.

The Balzacian novel can also be seen as idealistic and its personal as well as social action, in undoubtedly related to a larger, moral, slightly religious framework. In order to reach this position of value, constantly,

he makes the cruelty of society, more grotesque and slightly terrific. His works include all types of characters such as politicians, lawyers, peasants, harlots, ambitious doctors, civil servants, thieves, aspiring business people and so on, that they collectively represent, the entire French society of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, treated with a somewhat enormous, imaginative potential; in fact, this very great variety of characters represents constructively, one of the most gigantic, imaginative accomplishments of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Novel.

It is worth looking at the writer's political stance in order to understand what has triggered his later ideological preferences. The novelist belonged to a middle-class family that has recently emerged from a peasantry status. From early manhood, Balzac who was fairly well-educated, was a sort of sympathizer for the republicans vehemently opposing the democratic party; this position was partly inspired by his constant links with women of a higher social class or status and influenced intellectually, by certain people who believed in the Roman Catholic Church and the divine right of kings. From these beginnings, he moved over to the right in the early 1830's, believing that any sensible writer was obliged to do so. His faith in Religion and the Monarchy, was favoured by a desire to guide the country. One of the most noticeable features in his make up was a conservatism that seemed to be inherent in him; as an artist too, he was a very conservative man. As a reactionary supporter of the Bourbon dynasty, he provided a profoundly penetrating dramatisation of the French society in all its economic points. His insights into the rise of the bourgeoisie quietly displayed in Grandet's circumstances, forced him to detest his own class and political preferences. There is a lot of conviction behind his articulations in the book.

Balzac was the first novelist to show that bourgeois tragedies were as tragic as classical tragedies. In the narrative, Eugénie's tragic plight is psychologically greater than her father's who can be actually described as a monomaniac with visible quantities of gusto. What we see in the girl, is the growth of her immature character under the pressure of passion. Any study of the text, therefore, requires intense reflection on the nature of love as projected by Balzac. Initially we get an ideal picture of the sweetness and the tenderness of a first love through the innocent love relations between the two cousins, Charles and the twenty-three year old Eugénie despite the slightly criminal nature of their secret meetings and the resultant happy hours. The veteran psychologist in Balzac comes alive in the textuality of my next passage simultaneously reminding us that he was also given to melodramatic situations:

The beginning of love and the beginning of life have a pleasing likeness to one another;.....Love is the soul's second metamorphosis. Childhood and love were the same thing for Eugénie and Charles: it was a first passion with all its childish ways, all the more tender and dear to their hearts because their hearts were surrounded by shadows.

His fantastically romantic style is much in evidence here. We see that both have difficulties. She leads a cloistered existence in her old country house in the provincial back waters of Saumur. Eugénie is often viewed spending time on the little moss-grown bench in her silent courtyard having received a rather narrow upbringing under severe paternal pressure because of his miserly nature; in fact, every morning, he gives out the provisions of the day without consulting his immediate family, his wife, in particular. Eugénie and her sick mother had never known the world. They were obliged to obey his strict rules throughout their lives; a poignant case in point is the fact that they were allowed a fire in the parlour only on certain days with a view to saving the family resources. Charles, on the other hand, has lost his bankrupt father through a suicide implemented due to financial worries leaving him poor and gullible; he was forced by circumstances, to fend for himself at an early age in the city of Paris while living in a garret similar I feel to young Balzac during his early writing career while trying his hand at different kinds of work.

Charles learned to think of love as something sacred.....he had found love in purity and truth. And so, day by day, his looks, his words, enchanted the poor girl. and she let herself drift deliciously with the tide of love.

Here, we have an example of love at first sight. Father Grandet opposed this possible union as he obviously believed in a richer son-in-law. One of Balzac's favourite topics was the nature of the economic problems that developed with in the new French society that emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Subsequently, we are presented with the nature of the thirty-year old Eugénie's disappointment when Charles Grandet consequent to a period of love of seven years, irrationally decides to embark on a successful marriage of convenience apparently prompted by his ardent ambition backed by an extensive arrogance. We are also told that after his father's death, he goes to the East Indies in search of gold and makes his fortune prior to returning to Paris. Consequently, as a man with financial ease, he obviously aims at an elevated social position in life and

hence, his need to contract a suitable marriage that could help him further elevate his position to wards a more beneficial status. I quote a portion of the letter addressed to Eugénie from Paris in which the forth coming marriage and its social consequences are described in detail:

A marriage has been proposed to me which is in accordance with all the views I have come to hold about what is required of marriage. Love, in marriage, is just a wild dream.....At present, I have an income of eighty thousand livres (=pounds). This fortune makes it possible for me to marry into the d'Aubrion family. In marrying their only daughter, a girl of nineteen, I should take their name, and would acquire a title, the post of Gentleman of the Bedchamber to His Majesty, and a most brilliant position in society. I will confess to you, my dear cousin, that I don't care in the least for Mlle D'Aubrion; but in marrying her, I secure a social position for my children of incalculable value in the future..... You see, cousin, how frankly I lay bare before you the state of my heart, my hopes, and my fortune. It is possible that after a separation of seven years, you, for your part, have forgotten our childish fancies; but I have never forgotten either your kindness or the promise I made.....When I say that my projected marriage is only a marriage of convenience and that I still remember our childish love-affair, that shows you, doesn't it that I am entirely at your disposal? It makes you mistress of my fate, and assures you that if I must renounce my social ambitions, I will gladly content myself with the simple and pure happiness which the thought of you so touchingly recalls to my mind..... Within the next few days, I shall be the Count of d'Aubrion.

Contrary to Charles' inability to renounce his social ambitions for his first love, we have earlier read of Eugénie's lamentations during his long absence divulged to Mademoiselle Nanon, her loyal retainer;

How can it be Nanon, that he hasn't written to me once in seven years?

It looks as if it is an obsession that feeds on itself. Prior to Charles' departure from Saumur, it was Eugénie, prompted by love and compassion coupled with sympathy, who has given him sufficient quantities of gold coins to begin life afresh in order to make his future easier at the point of Grandet's rejection of the nephew. This financial support entails a stealing incident implemented by Eugénie to acquire the requirement from her father. At this later point in their romantic career, we have this consequent, final, polite rejection of her by Charles whose overaspiring mind has

apparently structured his own future with a wealthier Mathilde d'Aubrion who is a woman of his aspiring class. The reader is now given the details of an emotionally-crushed young woman disenchanted with love whose private misery has a very unusual texture. We see her reading the content of the letter of refusal, in her memory-filled garden, a location deepening her tragic moment. The aura of the garden makes her all the more vulnerable and pathetic and seems to complete her social isolation based on this one-sided love. The writer shows its beginnings and day by day progression, establishing the nature of a first love. At the same time, there is a rather soft independence in her personality that we are compelled to admire given her ability to face reality having no illusions about her single future. Our condemnation of Charles Grandet, apparently, a newer version of a Parisian dandy, augments, as he also has had liaisons in the capital with a noble lady called Annette, retained as *a woman of the world* mistress. Defeat does not crush Eugénie totally since she later becomes a confirmed social worker within her provincial means thus described by Balzac, *the noble use to which she puts her fortune*. Her charitable work involves providing a home for the old, supporting the young with a school to be managed by the church, contributing towards a public library extended to donating clothes and firewood in winter for the poor in Saumur as well as looking into their needs over the Summer months. In addition, her religious fervour inspires her to improve the church segment of the area. Unlike her crafty father with an excessive greed in a role of a scheming miser, she is away from the charge of avarice. Gradually, an admirable soul is being uncovered but we feel that a large part of her tragedy is that the Saumurians are equally scared of her despite the attributes and the grace that she stands for. Yet, she is adequately intelligent to know that the fellow Saumurois merely approach her through motives of self-interest or calculation. Balzac concludes with a lot of perception, *Eugénie's way to heaven is marked by* a succession of deeds of kindness. The realist in him, paints her colourless existence led in a sort of monastic house, technically that of a rich woman, and her actual plight, with tremendous precision. The dramatic intensity of the Balzacian tragedy is thrown into relief by the authorial voice dictating the last portion of the work.

Such is the story of this woman, who is in the world but not of the world, who, made to be a magnificent wife and mother, has no husband, children or family.

(September 1833, Paris)

Balzac's effort was to document his age and henceforth, he wrote the story of his own times in his fiction. His people live in a post-revolutionary age and he is actually trying to convey the working of the ideas and the forces of that period during which everyone was greedy to grab money which was synonymous of power. The Human Comedy (La Comédie Humaine), the collective title under which this particular story is found, can be described as a very productive chronicle of his actual world. Nevertheless, the narrative of Eugénie falls directly under its sub-divisional title of Scenes of Provincial Life (*L' Etudes de Moeurs or Studies of Manners*). It is important to bear in mind that this massive literary project was sub-divided into six, similar sections, each, examining one aspect of his social world. So, I shall be dealing with a single example from one sub-category of the whole project of which my story is an integral part. Balzac's initial translator, Félix Davin thus clarifies the status of the sub-title under which the text of Eugénie falls, in the following terms.

The Scenes of Provincial life are intended to represent that phase of human life in which passions, calculations, and ideas take the place of sensations, of unreflecting emotions, of images accepted as realities. At twenty years of age feelings are generous; at thirty all is estimated, man becomes selfish. Many writers would have been contented to end their task here, but this author, loving difficulties to conquer, has given this phase a frame; he has chosen the simplest apparently, the most neglected until now, but the most harmonious and the richest in half-tints, namely; provincial life. There, in pictures narrow in limits, but the canvas of which presents subjects which touch all the great general interests of society, the author has striven to show under a thousand aspects the great transition by which men pass from emotion without mental guile to the most calculating ideas. Life becomes serious; practical interests conflict at every moment with violent passions as well as with candid hopes. Disillusion begins; here the jarring of the social mechanism reveals it self; there the daily shock of moral or pecuniary interests strike out a drama.

**Translator's Note in the Introduction to L'Études de Moeurs.**  
(pp.215-6)

In the story, the novelist shows the modern concept of finance at the point of its emergence and the competitive nature of the perspective of his fellowmen which was a central characteristic of the contemporary life of

his day. This is the reason which helps me believe that Balzac was the first writer to have examined the multiple aspects of the modern world, with a definite interest. At the same time, it is clear that a moral intention is expounded in the work.

There are so many cases in point of which there is one that I would particularly like to look at: Mlle Eugénie's father; lover and husband, all struggle in pursuit of money and it certainly has a romantic fascination for them. The uncle's frailties are congenitally transferred to Charles being a grandet himself, and he displays these in a slightly more elegant manner. Balzac refers to the evils of hoarding wealth with its inherent reductive capacity in respect of the moral well-being of the person involved. He goes on to reveal this attribute in the distinguished Saumur families like the Cruchots and des Grassins. Bringing back to memory, the search of the ardent first *Economic Man* in early Capitalism, Grandet shares elements of the mental make up of Robinson Crusoe when he realises that by investing money, profits could be made unlike the uncertain gains that his crops could produce due to the vagaries of the provincial weather; he is quite right in feeling that monetary fluctuations that determine his profits and consequently his fate, are unequal to those stemming from his agrarian efforts. Therefore, he is a typical product of the new age of which Balzac was also part and parcel. I think that this is a crucial point of relevance in gauging the author's comprehension of the likes of Grandet. We also see the productive aspect of all these operations given the character's understanding of trade and related transactions, all integral parts of the business world, as a beautiful, useful adventure, a concept initially focused on by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century English political-economist Adam Smith, During the heyday of Industrial Capitalism in Victorian England.

To me, the most important issue is quite different; the novelist implies with quantities of empathy that simple people like the servant Nanon and her husband, who are not affected by money, can be really affectionate, loyal humans and we detect a certain nobility in Balzac's compassionate pictures of such people and his provincial towns from which they emerge (at which no other writer would look with so much penetration), their accuracy and the authenticity, in particular. The reader is specifically allured by the fund of sympathy that he displays towards big Nanon, the old family retainer raised to a position of family adviser cum confidante, from a long-standing status of the household nanny to the daughter of the house, a sort of an *ayah* in a post-colonial Sri Lankan context. His descriptive talent compels us to pause in admiration especially because of its rarity value, for instance, have a closer look at the attic bedroom of Charles, the worm-eaten staircase leading to the

master miser's strong room where his gold is carefully tucked in, the Saumur streets at the outset of the novel and so forth. Simultaneously, the Balzacian comic vein which is always there, as a very visible quality in his writing, strengthens the provincial tragedies that he illustrates. The most appropriate example that I can quote is the heroine's twenty-third birthday celebratory moments during which the neighbouring families bring her numerous gifts in the hope of marrying their sons into this family; wanting the girl's hand for themselves, each family is found jealous of the other. Here, hilarity throws her vulnerability into sharper focus. We should perhaps, examine the Saumur families like the Cruchots and des Grassins, in this interesting perspective. Eugénie, as we find her, is the focus of intrigue, all the time, due to her millions and gold deposits. Similarly, Balzac's ability to produce poignancy in a portrait is very suitably illustrated in that of Madame Maria Grandet for whom religious consolation helps mitigate the related difficulties of her marital life and lead the available life with some dignity. She is a genuine reflection of human misfortune and there is obviously a depth of irony and cruelty as well, in her destiny woven round Grandet. We can see her deep religious fervour against the strictly mercenary backdrop of her husband's calculated doing. At the same time, we view a position within which human contacts visibly deteriorate due to the financial aspirations of one partner in a domestic relationship. The fate of the three principal women in Balzac's story, the mother, her daughter and family maid provide some grounds for the belief that destiny, is at its very bottom, unpredictably smeared with substantial irony.

In the preface to the First Edition of *Eugénie Grandet*, which appeared in September 1833, Balzac shared his predisposition towards his chosen writing territory and subject, with his eventual readers, in very accurately lucid terms;

### EUGÉNIE GRANDET

September, 1833

In the depths of the provinces we meet with many heads worthy of serious study, characters full of originality, existences tranquil on the surface, but secretly torn by tumultuous passions; nevertheless the most salient asperities of such natures, the most passionate of their enthusiasms, end by being blunted in the constant monotony of habits and manners. No poet has yet attempted to depict the phenomena of that life which flows along, growing ever milder. Why not? If there is poetry in the atmosphere of Paris, where a

simoon whirls which sweeps away fortunes and crushes hearts, is there none in the slow action of the sirocco of the provincial atmosphere, which unnerves the boldest courage, relaxes the fibres, and blunts the acuteness of passion? If all things rush on in Paris, all things take place in the provinces. There, neither vividness nor saliency, but there, dramas in silence: there, mysteries adroitly concealed; there, unravellings of a plot in a single word; there, enormous value given by calculation and analysis to the most indifferent actions.

If literary painters have neglected these admirable scenes of provincial life, it is not from contempt, nor yet for want of observations; perhaps it has been from inability.

I want to see how he demonstrates the process fictionally and I have selected a passage related to the availability of food in his home and their preparatory options.

Monsieur Grandet n'achetait jamais ni viande ni pain. Ses fermiers lui apportaient par semaine une provision suffisante de chapons, de poulets, d'oeufs, du beurre et de blé.....La grande Nanon, son unique servante boulangeait elle-même, tous les samedis, le pain de la maison..... depuis cette acquisition seulement, il mangeait du gibier.

In this passage, the writer discloses the psychological verity of the character with an extreme sense of subtlety. The characters of *Eugénie Grandet* are drawn larger than life, the miser Grandet, in particular, whose obsession with money, while dominating the text, consequently, gives rise to its tragedy. Balzac is intensely interested in a psychological study in all his aesthetic productions. Each of his principal characters, is capable of development in the face of circumstances as people alter in real life and their stories have an epic quality as exemplified in the much-quoted Balzacian statement that compared *Grandet* to Molière's *Harpagon*:

Molière created the Miser, but I have created Avarice.

-Balzac

His miser Grandet is more terrifying than Molière's Harpagon. He treats his characters with a fund of admiration that triggers a reflection of both the positive as well as the negative qualities that they possess which provide equal enjoyment. We cannot fail to notice that in the text, each of his created beings, lives by some forceful, inner dream; gold inspires his Grandet, God holds a very deep sense of adoration for Madame Grandet,

for Eugénie, it is the strength of her love for Charles whereas for him, it is his social position and in old Nanon, it is an exorbitant devotion to her master's family; she is, in point of fact, one of the most memorable portraits created by Balzac especially of the house retainer, whose closest counterpart, I think, is probably, old *Anoushka*, nanny-confidante to *Anna Karenina*, the title figure in Tolstoy's socio-psychological novel of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russia

The only god in whom Grandet has faith, is cash in a modern sense, as well as his deposits of gold coins that ensure a trouble-free future. Greed remained a predominant vice of the Post-French Revolution Age when there was a natural tendency in people to imitate or follow Napoleon's example in the hope of realising their own *structured* longings. Honoré de Balzac is acknowledged as the first to systematically study the varied aspects of this modern, resultant world and its requirements; the struggle to accumulate wealth and achieve power is a centrally important theme of immense value repeated throughout *The Human Comedy (La Comédie Humaine)*. In fact, the enormous popularity of this collection of works, rests mainly on the perfection of these recurrent portraits of ambition. The author was the first to divulge this emotional need, a sort of mania for social climbing and fortune hunting. Consciously explaining his moral aim, he pointed out by the means of his textuality, the damage that people with such partialities, do to themselves as well as society.

Eugénie's narrative is set in the remote provincial town of Saumur and this fictional location is very suitable to unfold her drama. Rooted in their past, both the wife and daughter of Grandet remain lonely and their vulnerable social isolation is made all the more frail by the life that they lead in their gloomy, old house full of dullness, although by no means, lacking in dignity. Their social isolation is intercepted by visits rendered by neighbouring families with some outwardly positive admiration for the daughter of the house extended for their own advancement in society pursued by self-interest alone. The sadness of the narrative textuality deepens because they are devoid of any faithful friends. Balzac has a perfect sense of place in that his Paris as well as his country towns have a kind of authenticity that is normally not found easily elsewhere. Vitality is given to his fictional figures through an extensive kind of creativity and elastic imagination. The enormous period of time covered in the novel is manipulated for the purposes of plot and accomplished with beneficial skill and I feel that the author's most cogent attributes are fully apparent in this very dramatic, tragic tale which can be aptly thus described. It is tragic since his virtuous portraits are the victims of gullibility in their

confrontations with the less virtuous. Eugénie like Thomas Hardy's Tess is an aimable person who reaches disaster following a life of intense misfortune. In this case, Balzac underlines the irony of destiny and our inability to lessen it in specific circumstances. His focus is on a single, uncomplicated drama simultaneously preserving the stir of the world outside while incorporating its nature into his textual pattern. He uses extreme precision in his treatment of character as exemplified in the painting of Nanon which oozes with clear compassion. Balzac worked very hard to make an experience more meaningful and this effort, I believe, renders a great sociological value to what he wrote and much more significantly, a sense of verity and subtlety arising from his painstaking insights into human nature. We deal with a study of a virtuous woman in Eugénie, a daughter who sacrifices herself and her private happiness in order to cope with the pressures of an aspiring world.

The psychologist in Balzac reads her emotions and presents the different shades of her poignancy in the most accurate manner possible and in the rendering, there is positive evidence of the surfacing of the noble Romantic in him, a presence that he could never supplement by his artistic realism of which he was a clear veteran. It is the ability to marshal these two very rich aesthetic attributes opposed to one another, that created space for him to explore other more worthwhile options like social documentation and psychological engagement. I want to look at a passage which exemplifies this view;

Other women bow their heads and suffer in silence. They go on living mortally wounded but resigned, weeping often but with no desire to strike back against the person who has injured them, praying for him and cherishing their memories until their last breath. That is love, true love, the love the angels know. The love sustained by pride that feeds on its own grief and dies of it at last. This was the emotion that Eugénie felt when she had read that horrible letter.

Her response is partially sophisticated for her age and speaks of quiet resignations:

I hope you will be happy according to the social convention to which you are sacrificing our early love.

Eugénie's inability to ignore her first and early love is most beautifully and precisely conveyed here in an extensively lucid style. The girl's tragedy broadens (despite her work as a great social worker) from this period and it is all the more grave from the point of her entering a



legal marriage contract with no physical contact; in fact, the curious villagers begin to wonder why she does not conceive and grow towards a fuller motherhood as the wife of the townlet's magistrate who marries her for her heiress status with a definite eye for her acquisitions. The man as well as the village community see her *as a figure mounted on a pedestal made of bags of gold*. Encouraged by the village priest, she enters wedlock for protection, to take his name and above all, to please God, being an intensely religious 19<sup>th</sup> Century female. It is rather interesting to see her first contemplations and confessions of entering a convent geared towards a totally different vocation triggered by passionate dreams of God, only to be dissuaded by her priest on whose worldliness, the Balzacian focus apparently lies:

But you have great obligations towards society to fulfill, Mademoiselle.....To bury yourself in a convent would be selfish; and you ought not to live alone all your life. For one thing, how could you manage your vast fortune alone? You might easily lose it..... A husband can be of use to you you must preserve what God has given into your hands..... You love God too sincerely not to achieve your salvation in the world, in spite of the world. You are one of its finest or naments and provide it with a saintly example. Marriage means life. Your great fortune is a loan which has to be paid back and you have always accepted it as a sacred trust.

Eugénie Grandet eventually enters holy matrimony with a view to fulfilling an obligation prescribed by the Church; prompted by a religious point of view *as a Christian should*, she becomes a part of the Cruchot family whose members were genuinely interested in her wealth. Balzac emphasizes the fact that the delighted, calculating, new husband though a man of honour, willingly agrees to the bride's plan of a union devoid of physical contact having arranged to live in two places, in most part, for which a fortune of millions, is offered. Cruchot is a symbol of greed, a loyal part of the age of Balzac. The vulnerability of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, affluent, provincial female, particularly, the reflective, Feeling example, is demonstrated in Eugénie particularly as evidenced by her ardent statement to the prospective partner,

I must tell you frankly that I Cherish memories which time will never efface.

The reader is intrigued by Balzac's description of such human misfortune through which he reflects on the irony of fate or one's destiny. I quote below an apt textual example found towards the close of the narrative.

Have Philosophers who meet with such women as Nanon, Madame Grandet, and Eugénie, not some grounds for their conclusion that fate is, at bottom, ironical?

In the text, in most part, the author is repressing his natural enthusiasm and levels of gusto in order to look at this single drama of Eugénie Grandet at close quarters. Her revelations to the parish priest in respect of Cruchot, the old family friend who eventually becomes her husband, consequently illustrate, Balzac's structured focus on the human condition which I believe is the principal thematic focus of his discourse. I quote below the newly-wedded old maid bride's passions and frustrations for further clarity.

All I have to offer my husband is friendship; and I am anxious neither to offend him nor to be disloyal to my own heart.

We have, in return, the man's self-acknowledgement incorporating victorious feelings since his rise in life is not only ensured with the marriage but certainly entails a greater raoidity;

We will bear with one another. We have known each other so long that we are almost relatives, and you would not wish to make me unhappy, I am sure.

Cruchot feels victorious because his rise in status is now assured with the expected rapidity. At the same time, we have to remember that he is a humble man whose willingness to be her protector, has brought about this happiness as suggested in the utterance,

I will be your slave

In any case, he reaches the top of his profession with the title of *Deputy President of Saumur*. On a purely human scale, Cruchot does not wish for a reconciliation between the lovers, Eugénie and Charles, comprehending that she has accepted him due to her gigantic disappointment in love. I like the way in which the Balzacian ideology extends itself, in his portrayal of a n absence of avarice in his age. in the character of his heroine, Eugénie, whose pure-hearted generosity is reflected in her prompt decision to settle her former lover's dead father's collection of debts so it may not affect his projected d' Aubrion marriage, in its unpaid state supplemented by Grandet's tricks with the creditors which could also be terminated in the process. This is a quality in her character that strikes the reader quite forcibly in that it also emphasises a capacity for quick initiatives apart from acute compassion. In addition to this re-

establishing of his good name for marriage purposes, Balzac has taken us to her church as well, to allow us glimpses of her constant praying in his name. He shows the existence of exceptionalism in respect of piety, lack of greed, good-heartedness even under circumstances full of injustice in a contemporary world that revolves round coins. Charles' realisation of her tremendous value is belated: this is why he decides to acquaint himself with the future husband of his wealthy cousin. What he achieves is an empty triumph and a marriage equivalent to a farce. The attacks of irony never cease to follow Eugénie despite all the goodness that she actually possesses; following the deaths of the senior Grandets, we see that her husband too dies immediately after his appointment as *Deputy of Saumur*. Madame Eugénie de Bonfons position is thus explained by an ironic Balzac who instantly reminds us of Hardyian fatalism;

Solitary people acquire a clear insight in their endless meditations, and an exquisite sensibility to the few things that touch them, and Eugénie had been taught by loneliness and sorrow and the sad lessons of the last few years to see and feel..... Madame de Bonfons was left a widow at thirty three years of age, with an income of Eight hundred thousand livres (=pounds) She is beautiful still, but the beauty now of a woman of nearly forty.

Misery deepens her perception and allows her to achieve independence in thought, Hence, the resultant, visible growth towards a richer maturity in the Balzacian portrait.

Balzac's analysis of character is of extreme importance in a study of his texts. He had a steady interest in the scientific discoveries of his age as expounded by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century English Naturalist, Charles Darwin, in his doctrine of the evolution of the species. Considering man as a kind of strange creation of which there were many types, the novelist proceeded to study these zoologically. Balzac's thinking and his vastly vibrant potential to create, are succinctly reflected in his comment.

Give me the glove and I'll build you the man from it.

In keeping with the scientific theorice that he cherished (of which I have already mentioned one). Balzac considered his function as a novelist, to be that of a scientist, but not an artist; a scientist studying this curious animal called man. In the work of his two contemporaries, Stendhal and Flaubert, we find the same disposition and aim. This is why he puts down every detail that he notices about a character without any artistic selection as a scientist might. This method is illustrated in his celebrated portrait of Grandet about whom he spares us no detail however

insignificant; in his appearance as well as surroundings. In fact, we have the sense that the miser in Grandet, is being fully investigated to produce a complete study. This is the reason why description plays such an important part in his textuality; I feel that he treats each segment as scientific data since a scientist does not depend on a selection criteria for what he records in his determination to include everything to put forward a comprehensive whole. It is possible to think that for the writer in Balzac, each detail has served the purpose of a fact or a specific piece of data. In the process, his fictional output has become a scientific document for the study of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century French Society. Herein lies the massive contribution that the work lends, to French Literary History; any researcher writing about the period cannot ignore what he has written because there is no richer source of material to be found anywhere in the literature of the age. I think that this is a very proud moment for a student of Balzac, who looks at him as a writer or social documentator. As evidenced by Eugénie's story, it is the behaviour of his characters, that interests the author rather than their motives; it is their behaviour patterns that he studies at great length. We get this sense in Stendhal's work in his own contemplations into Julien Sorel in *Scarlet and Black* in particular. In Eugénie's discourse, Balzac shows the reader, his faith in what can be gathered or deduced from the outward appearance of his men and women. This is because he believed that all internal characteristics are revealed outwardly, a conviction that is responsible for having made him a remarkable portrait painter, for instance, what is best retained in our memory of our readings of his work is the unforgettable nature of his diverse portraits. He has had a photographic memory for details, a fact which partially establishes his links with the later Naturalists like Emile Zola or his principal Russian counterpart, Anton Chekhov. It is noteworthy that Balzac has influenced Flaubert, Maupassant, Zola as well as Henry James. This tremendous attention being paid even to minute details in any specific description of a person or an object is prompted by Balzac's desire to create the illusion of reality; though these appear unconnected, at times, he does this, with the stringently planned objective of bringing about a primary effect or impression, an aesthetic quality akin to a prominent French Symbolist like Charles Baudelaire of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. We find that his use of places and things, does help him explain his characters to us. The method has however, the disadvantage of being restricted as there are many inner qualities in his carefully constructed men and women that remain concealed as these fail to reach surface expression at all. In spite of the fact that his mature portraits appear more productive like Père Grandet, the big, old Nanon and Mrs. Maria Grandet, there are,

in fact very few memorably-rich evaluations of the younger group in Balzac; Eugénie and Charles are apt cases in point.

It seems to me that by way of a limitation, we can identify his difficulty in projecting character growth or transformation of character through events. Yet, in his method of characterization, the writer made an extensively beneficial use of realistic conversation and dialogue in bringing a character to life; speech was one of the most revealing qualities of the person portrayed. He goes to great lengths in producing verbal twists to render the expressions accurately and it has all the crudity and muddled inconsistencies of real speech. As a very conscious artist, he gives the impression of having studied and analysed his group at the point of creating them. From a stylistic perspective, despite having displayed a single-minded dedication to his working project like Flaubert whose reclusive urge was directed by an extreme sense of devotion to art, the Balzacian style has many glaring defects side with the favourable points; at times, in Grandet's narrative, we come across clumsy scenes as well as too lengthy passages lacking in elasticity which are not ill-suited after all to the unusual character of his work. There is this studied, well-planned effect involving a sense of profusion; this copiousness of solid descriptive detail makes his backdrop not only complete but credible as well, and goes on to supplement the whole thing by a pictorial sense. Because of this, Mademoiselle Grandet's life-story, in spite of its fullness and richness (in a prajorative sense), tends to be a bit weighty at times; our normal expectations from artistic discourse certainly remains a little unfulfilled despite its ability to emanate some kind of psychological depth that is acceptable. This type of monotony stemming from too much external details of life however pictorial, is inappropriate. I also discover a tendency in him to be too meticulous in his conviction to be faithful to what is being described there is the effect that nothing escapes him resulting in over-emphasis. We read too elaborate phrases and are compelled to notice stereotyped images all the time through which means, he somehow manages to sustain our textual interest. This *somehow* is his victory point representative of his stylistic dexterity. His aesthetic power is such that we are not in a position to turn a blind eye to what he has specifically produced.

It is often argued that Honoré de Balzac is, in a way, the greatest of French Novelists, not merely of 19th France but more significantly, of French Artistic History, purely because of his entirely singular, unparalleled exceptionality. He has drawn a whole world of characters, especially in the text that I examine, who are never fully human and the atmosphere in which they are placed, has something of the same unreality though it is for

the most part, tragically and not comically unreal, as some of the Dickensian creations such as Miss Havisham, Copperfield, Magwitch or Estella. Balzac sees everything through a kind of distorting lens yet the actual vision, is subsequently defined with the most unusual precision and in the most vivid colours possible. Notwithstanding, humour is, very often, a part of the author's realism. One of his most noticeable drawbacks, is that his virtuous people usually possess worthy attributes only in a theatrical sense. While his habitual presentation of human character remains cloistered as low or perhaps, mean; in fact, his assessment of vice is full of exceptional vigour and the artist is almost unmatched in his ability to grant apparent reality upon what we nevertheless feel to be imaginary or ideal. This is why I have the feeling that an actually fulfilled Balzac, only surfaces, when his subject has a strong touch of the fantastic. Therefore, in his treatment of style in art, certain limitations have given rise to literary attributes, for example, throughout my text, there is a technical richness stemming from the variety of styles employed, a sense of deliberateness incorporating underlined intention and a too exact quality that is wearisome. Pedantry, a touch of absurdity and verbosity are present as well. At times, what he wishes to express is discordant and there are visible digressions from realistic material towards the fanciful or the whimsical; this is a useful merging in terms of the Balzacian style. There is a peculiar preference in his make up for the nasty and the unhappy elements found around. His background is founded on factuality and hence, plausibility is lent on substantial terms. As I said before, constant fullness of detail can be tedious to the reader unless it is lined to a moral of perhaps, a lyrical significance. I begin to wonder whether such proclivities in Balzac, stem from his sense of duty to the subject demonstrated. In spite of these varied drawbacks, I feel that he writes a good story, has an ability to create unusual characters and provide an actual background rooted in reality all of which undoubtedly determine the progress of his semblance of actuality, incorporating his rich collection of impressions; this air of being true is what he would eventually achieve. The portraits about whom we read, have a freshness but these do not provide us with a sustained, imaginative experience like the way, for instance, a Dickensian character would. This, I think does not necessarily come from the fact that they have roots in real life or his penchant for overemphasis.

His primary intention as a writer was to subject his society, in its entirety, to a crystallising process, which even included such a neglected aspect of life as the portrait of country peoples where he describes the calm, rural scenes in contrast to the turmoils of city life, regarded as a section of France which was fairly remote from Paris. He shows this

group as a type or category of which the representatives figure in *Eugénie Grandet*. Although his creative range is enormous, the individuality of the character drawings, draws the reader's attention. When we look at his originality, which undoubtedly lies in his brand of authentic realism, it is, however, devoid of the gloominess and the detachment of the Realist School. There is obviously a difference in that we are enticed by the poignancy and the romance despite its banality. A spirit of adventure is also an integral part of his dramatically-sustained fictional vision. He seems to attach himself to the shocking, the mysterious and the heroic sides of a given situation as exemplified by the pieces studied from the novel. Furthermore, there is a very pessimistic quality in his psychology as the emotions that he selects to work on, are basically simple but his meticulousness leads him to treat these as extremely rare and intricate. No traces of proven superficiality is there in these instances. We come across the unloading of the inner minds of his human group and in the process, such statements endorse Balzac's position as an analyst of immeasurable worth, who has produced a comprehensive, full picture of contemporary French life; depicting every sort of person in the programme. Because French Romanticism and Realism overlapped, it is somewhat difficult to separate the two movements chronologically, progressively or perhaps consecutively. Though chiefly realistic, the artistic texture of his work contains multiple romantic features or components such as elements of melodrama, sentimentality, grotesque people, passionate imagination, exaggeration and so forth.

In spite of the fact that *Eugénie Grandet* focussing on provincial life is basically concerned with innocent love, hopes, nature of aspiration and the resultant country tragedies, Balzac is trying to affirm that human nature, interests and daily struggles are identical everywhere. Often with a view to achieving reality, he begins his works with prosaic, dull but genuine accounts using the technique of the first person narration.

His work is topographical, socio-historical, biographical  
or generally descriptive

-W.A.Nitze & E.P. Dargam

Whenever he works on a certain social milieu or group, he selects a complicated plot or theme and if the stress is on character, he makes his plot as uncomplicated as possible and gradually, the details of characterization are gathered or assembled in such a way so that the consequent productive effort is a satire or burlesque. In Balzac, usually, there is one particular trait governing a person leading him towards his

own degeneration; a case in point is old Grandet's excessive adoration for gold, a substance which has transformed him towards the status of the maniac. Here what is more important is the fact that he tries to ascertain the circumstances, that have shaped the contemporary provincial French society of his day, the major being materialism. These issues throw the writer's realistic qualities into greater relief augmenting his scientific points of view methodical documentation and gathering of data for creative work, a pursuit of truth, more centrally, a democratic projection of life and the scope of his textuality. All these contribute collectively towards the increasing sense of a sociological concern and a weight in this writings. I think that this is the important achievement of the writer in Balzac, his most valuable acquisition.

He simply transformed fiction and made the modern novel the most comprehensive literary vehicle.

-W.A.Nitze & E.P.Dargan

The social documentation found in this piece of 19th Century writing is all the more sharper because it is clearly backed by the stylistic ideology that Balzac believed in.

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### ධ්වනි සිද්ධාන්ත - පාරිභාෂික විචාර වාද තුලනය

ජ්‍යෙෂ්ඨ මහාචාර්ය ආනන්ද පුබ්බිසේ

ධ්වනි සිද්ධාන්තයේ මෙන්ම පාරිභාෂික විචාර වාදයේ ද අභිප්‍රේතාර්ථය එකක් ම බව සැලකිය හැකිය. කාව්‍යාර්ථ ගවේෂණය මගින් වමන්කාරය ප්‍රකට කරලීම මේ සංකල්ප ද්විත්වයේ ම ලක්ෂණය වෙයි. වෙනස වූකලී මේ එකම පරමාර්ථය සාධනයෙහි ලා ගත් මාර්ගද්වයෙහිය. එද විශාල වශයෙන් දැකිය හැකි වෙනසක් නො වේ. මෙම විචාර මාර්ගද්වය තුලනය කිරීමෙන් ඒ පිළිබඳ සදාශතා හා විසදාශතා සලකා බැලීම මේ කරුණ පසක් කොට ගැනීමෙහි ලා වැදගත් වේ.

තවද නූතන සිංහල කාව්‍ය විචාරය පිළිබඳව පොහොසතා කරුණු කිහිපයක් මතුකර ගැනීමට ද මේ තුලනය වැදගත් වන හෙයින් විචාර මාර්ගද්වයෙහි මූලධර්ම සැසඳීම මැනවයි සිතේ. ධ්වනි සිද්ධාන්තයේ කේන්ද්‍රීය අරමුණ වනුයේ කාව්‍යයේ භාවිත වන ශබ්ද තුළ අර්ථ ජනිත කිරීමෙහි ශක්තීන් හෙවත් ව්‍යාපාර ක්‍රිත්වයක් පවත්නා බවය. එම ව්‍යාපාර අභිධා, ලක්ෂණා සහ ව්‍යංග්‍ය යනුවෙන් දැක්වේ. මේ ව්‍යාපාරයන්ගේ ක්‍රියාකාරිත්වය නිසා ශබ්දවලින් තෙවැදැරුම් අර්ථයක් ජනිත වේ. වාච්‍ය, ලක්ෂණ සහ ව්‍යංග්‍ය යනුවෙන් හැඳින්වෙනුයේ මේ අර්ථයයි. එමෙන් ම ශාස්ත්‍රීය ව්‍යවහාරයෙහි පහසුව සඳහා මේ අර්ථය උපදවන්නා වූ ශබ්ද ද මාර්ග තුනකට බෙදා දක්වනු ලැබේ. ඒ බව කාව්‍යප්‍රකාශයෙහි දැක්වෙන්නේ මෙසේය.

“සායද් වාවකො ලාක්ෂණිකා ශබ්දො”ත්‍ර ව්‍යංග්‍යකස් ක්‍රිධා”<sup>1</sup>

එනම් වාවක, ලාක්ෂණික සහ ව්‍යංග්‍ය වශයෙන් ශබ්ද කොටස් තුනකි. මේ කොටස් තුන (ව්‍යාපාර ක්‍රිත්වය) මෙසේ දැක්විය හැකිය.

ශබ්ද	අර්ථ	ව්‍යාපාර
වාචක	වාච්‍ය	අභිධා
ලාක්ෂණික	ලක්ෂණ	ලක්ෂණා
ව්‍යංග්‍ය	ව්‍යංග්‍ය	ව්‍යංග්‍යක

කිසියම් ශබ්දයක් සතු වාච්‍යාර්ථය යනු ලෝක සම්මත ව්‍යවහාරය කියා සම්මුති වශයෙන් එයට ආරෝපණය කෙරෙන අර්ථයයි. එනම් සම්මුති අර්ථයයි. කිසියම් නියමිත ප්‍රකරණයක දී ශ්‍රාවකයාගේ මනසට සෘජුව වැටහෙන අර්ථය නම් මෙයයි. ‘ගස’ යන ශබ්දය ගත්විට සිංහල