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# **RESEARCH ARTICLE**





# A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GENERAL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS AT THE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL AT THE ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

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#### ABSTRACT

English language becomes the language of utility andcomfort so progress of modern life is depending on the use of English language. This paper reports on a study that investigated on the prescribed English textbooks which is used to teach English at the senior secondary schools, AMU. The purpose of this study was to determine the overall pedagogical value and suitability of the prescribed textbook towards students' needs. The properties of a good textbook are discussed. Detailed analysis focused specifically on the textbook analysis corresponding to the students language needs. The findings declare that the prescribed textbooks are not completely improving learners' need of language at the end of learning course It is expected that syllabus designers, administers, and teachers effectively match textbooks with the needs of the learners to obtain objectives of the learning program.

Key words: Textbooks, Senior Secondary, Students' Need, Analysis.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The textbook is an almost universal element of teaching. Millions copies of textbooks are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in countries... No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). The aim is to make learners become more confident, fluent, and proficient in their everyday use of English language in different situations and also to enable them transfer the skills learnt into their various fields. Designers are designed textbook for usage of particular groups of learners in a particular context. The important points in the selection of any course book are identifying the aims and objectives of the teaching program and analyzing the learning teaching situation in which teachers use the materials (Harmer, 1991; Cunningsworth, 1995; Roberts, 1996). Each context has a different set of learners, materials, teachers and setting where these elements together have to operate. So in selection of good and appropriate textbook it is very important to design textbooks which meat students need of language.

Marc, V and Kees van Rees (2009) analyze the content of textbooks as well as teachers' usage of them. Results show author representation in textbooks increasingly resembles students' reading preferences at the expense of selections made by literary experts. According to Ansary and Babaii (2002) in Mohammadi, M (2014) as teachers, many of us have had the responsibility of evaluatingtextbooks. Often, we have not been confident about what to base our judgments on, how to qualify our decisions, and how to report the results of our assessment. It seems that to date textbook selection has made in hasteand with a lack of systematically applied criteria. Selection of reliable and appropriate textbooks should base on the students need and this is administer and teachers responsibility.

# 2. The Concepts of ELT materials:

English Language Teaching (ELT) materials are the key factors in many language programs. ELT materials are divided into two different forms: printed such as textbooks and non-printed such as computer-based materials. Tomlinson (1998) defines language learning materials as anything which teachers or learners are used to facilitate learning language. For him language learning materials can be DVD, videos, grammar book, workbooks, photocopied exercises, and so on. As reported by him (1998) "materials can be instructional in that they can inform learner about the language; they can be experiential as they can offer experience of the use of language; they may be elicititative in that they can provoke language learner into using language; and they may be exploratory when they provide opportunities for learners that lead to discoveries about the language". Materials chosen should able to arouse the required level of interest among learners to motivate them and they must help the learners to feel at ease rather than test them.

Allwright (1990) contends that materials should teach students to learn, that there should be resource books for ideas and activities for instruction and learning. Therefore, his view is against constructing materials for teachers to use. He believes that textbooks are so inflexible touse directly as instructional materials. He asserts that an instructional material ties the teacher and may mislead him or become a hindrance rather than a help. But according to O'Neill (1990), materials may be suitable for students' needs, even if they are not design especially for them, that textbooks make it possible for students to review and prepare their lessons. So these textbooks are efficient in terms of time and money, and that textbooks can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation. Hence, his

view confirms the importance of instructional textbooks and the flexibility they should have.

#### 3. The Role of Textbooks in the ELT Classroom

Textbook is the important part of the teaching course and it must be accessible to a variety of students, regardless of their learning goals, as well as being adaptable to the diversity of teachers and teaching methods. In spite of all major technological breakthroughs, the textbook continue to be the major source of knowledge for the students. ordinary Many teachersperceive textbooks, especially course books, as a route map of any ELT program, laying bare its shape, structure, and destination, with progress, and even teacher quality is assessed by learners in terms of sequential, unit-by-unit coverage (Leslie E. Sheldon, 1988). It can function as a core resource, as a source of supplemental material, as an inspiration for classroom activities, or even as the curriculum itself.Cuuingsworth (1995) opines that textbooks are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective resource for presenting materials by the teachers, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus that reflects pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence.

A syllabus states the learning objectives of a learner in the class, and the textbook attempts to achieve these through its content. A syllabus and textbook give direction to a teacher on what to teach. Thus textbooks are the important aspects of the curriculum.

As to the role of textbooks in the classroom, Allwright (1981) believes that course books hold a limited role, restricting students to merely "captive learners." Instead he advocates a "whole-person involvement," in which students, through learner training, actively participate in the management of their learning, in such a way that course book-led teaching would find impossible. Textbooks should be comprehensive and cover most or all of what isnecessaryand also correspond closely with the aims of the teaching program and needs of the learners.As well, the purpose of prescribing textbooks in an English class is to enhance language learning of the students by providing authentic

reading material. Grant Commission (1978) declares that there are two main types of textbooks:

#### **I.Traditional textbooks**

Traditional textbook is a type of book that ask the students to learn the language as a system and after that they should be able to use the language. On the one hand, this type of textbook is a great help for teachers because they are teachercentered and they are easy to use. But on the other, there may be a problem at the end of the student's studies when they can manage grammar but cannot communicate. They rather focus on reading and writing activities and are very common at schools. Speaking and listening skills are mostly discard in the traditional textbooks. These books are relaying on accuracy in language while fluency in language is not important. Traditional textbooks focus on form and structure of language.

#### **II.Communicative textbooks**

In comparison with traditional textbooks, communicative textbooks emphasize the communicative functions of language, not only the forms, skills in using language, focuses on pupils" interests, encourage work in groups and furthermore emphasize fluency, not only accuracy. Simply, this type of textbooks prepares learners to use their language knowledge in real life. According to Richards and Rodgers (2006), textbooks should design in such a way that their tables of contents suggest a gradual development of language forms and functions, going from basic to the complex.

According to Richards (2005) there are three main types of language practices found in most English instructional materials such as:

**A. Mechanical practice** refers to controlled activities that involve repetition and substitution drills. They are design to practices the use of particular grammatical items. In many textbooks, this practice demands sentence completion (usually with grammar activities in isolation), but lacks authentic language negotiation.

**B.** Meaningful practice refers to activities in which language is controlled and "students are required to make meaningful choices when carrying out practice".

*C. Communicative practice* embodies those activities in which language "is not totally

predictable." Language production at this level is more spontaneous and authentic, because meaning negotiation takes place "within a real communicative context" and "exchange of real information".

All three are expected to be included in the methodological sequence of the various units that constitute English textbook, mainly because students need to go through a process of controlled-practice, by first working on easy-guided mechanical activities, before eventually reaching a degree of free language practice that embraces communicative interaction (Gómez-Rodríguez 2010). 4.Steps in the Selection of ELT Textbooks

Garinger, D (2002) argues that with a little additional consideration and attention, the selection process can be enhanced and the outcomes be improved for learners who will use the texts. He also suggests some steps in selecting effective textbooks for ETL learners:

- Matching the Textbook to the Program and the Course: Prior to selecting a textbook, educators should thoroughly examine the program curriculum. If the goals and curriculum of the program are clear and well defined, the parallels with certain textbooks may become obvious.
- Reviewing the Skills Presented in the Textbook: Improving learners' language skills is frequently the main purpose of ESL programs. However, which skills are taught and how they are taught differs from course to course and program to program. Therefore, the effectiveness of each textbook in helping learners acquire the necessary skills must be considered.
- Reviewing Exercises and Activities in the Textbook: When evaluating the quality of exercises or activities, four key questions should be answered:
  - Do the exercises and activities in the textbook contribute to learners' language acquisition? Many exercises included in textbooks are convenient for teachers but do not necessarily contribute to students' language development.

- **2.** Are the exercises balanced in their format, containing both controlled and free practice?
- **3.** Are the exercises varied and challenging? Keeping students motivated and interested as they work through a textbook is much easier if the students see something new in each chapter.
- **4.** Are the exercises progressive as the students move through the textbook?
- Weighing Practical Concerns: These issues, which include availability and cost, are often the deciding factor in textbook selection, and they must be acknowledged.

There is essential need for teacher to provide materials and knowledge of how to differentiate mainstream curricula for English Language Learners (ELLs). Despite the increased number of valuable ESL textbooks, it is important to be sure that each area will have some particular needs.Several approaches to textbook selection have been proposed, but unless the key shareholders are involved and understand the particular needs of their constituency, an inappropriate choice may be the result.

#### **5.**Problems with using the Materials

Many applied linguists question the content of mainstream materials in ELT world. Rinvolucri (1999) bitterly opposed to the content of EFL course books where the EFL world stays away from the dark side of the life with no mention of death, poverty or war. He pronounces that EFL course materials are just as the soft, fudgy, sub journalistic and women's delightful world. Crawford (1978) declares that the use of commercially produced textbooks and instructional materials detach the learner from responsibility and opportunity to be creative and active in the language process. Crookes (2010) suggested that the practicality of critical L2 pedagogy would be improved by more accessibility and variety of "fully worked out sample materials" (p. 9). Such materials could help teachers to familiarize with problems of using ELT materials in the classrooms.

6.English Textbooks Exercises

Appropriate exercises and activities promote meaningful communication through the language. Textbook exercises and activities develop the use of the language in meaningful situations and communicative functions. They employ various types of educational aids and learning resources that help learners to understand the material effectively as well as encourage active class interaction. Basically, exercises and activities should provide for the development of learners language skills.

According to Arnold (1999), the design of exercises in the modern EFL context should show more concern with the needs and abilities of human beings, the exercises may be more "humanistic", the humanistic exercises should have the following characteristics: i) Emphasis on personal experience and group experience, ii) Teachers' genuine intervention in learning, ii) students trying to express meanings which they cannot express, iii) Special protection of learners' curiosity, iv) Teachers are genuinely interested in students' replies and, v) Encouraging students to bring themselves physically to class. Although, some of the exercises may succeed in helping students to pass the exams but fail to develop their abilities to use language in real life. In addition, all exercise and activity types are employed in textbooks are of great significance to learners' communicative competence development (Wei, W.2011).

# 7.Central Board of Secondary Education Board Syllabus

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) board is one of the biggest educational organizations in India and prepares the syllabus for students from lower nursery group to grade 12, for schools affiliated with it. The Syllabus of CBSE is set by National Council of Educational Research and Training. Central Board of Secondary Education syllabus adopts the hierarchical curriculum, where students learn topics built on what was learn the year before last. The syllabus for CBSE board for the yearly based exams conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education is experienced through the Classroom discussions in government as well as in private schools. The intensive CBSE board syllabus mainly consists of objective type questions and problems. This strategy of teaching prepares students for national level competitive exams. It is an autonomous body which is responsible for conducting class 12th exams across India. CBSE board provides finest and education which further excels the career of student.

According to Meena,A(2013) the basic objectives of core courses at this stages based on CBSE board of study are:

- To listen to and comprehend live as well as recorded oral presentations on a variety of topics.
- To develop greater confidence and proficiency in the use of language skills necessary for social and academic purposes.
- To build communicative competence in various registers of English.
- To promote advanced language skills with an aim to develop the skills of reasoning, drawing inferences, etc. through meaningful activities.
- To translate texts from Mother Tongue(s) into English and vice versa.

At the end of the course learners will be able to do the following:

- Read and comprehend extended texts (prescribed and non-prescribed) in the following genres: fiction, science fiction, drama, poetry, biography, autobiography, travel and sports literature, etc.
- Text-based writing (i.e., writing in response to questions or tasks based on prescribed or unseen texts)
- Understand and respond to lectures, speeches, etc.
- Write formal/informal letters and applications for different purposes.

# 8.Objective of the Study

- To study and find out the accuracy of the text book.
- To study the appropriateness of textbook to the students need of language.

# 9. Materials and method

One of the best ways to analyze the textbooks is through a qualitative method. The method allows the developer to gain a deep understanding of the construct under investigation. The materials to be evaluated in this study included the two core course English language textbooks

currently taught at the senior secondary schools at the Aligarh Muslim University.These textbooks are analyzed based on the communicative aspects of textbook.

# 10.Procedure

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the prescribed English language textbooks in use at the Senior Secondary Schools.

# 11.Critical Analysis of the Senior Secondary Textbooks at AMU

Textbook analysis is necessary to arrive at better understanding of the rationale of the book as well as the needs of learners. The ultimate aim of this textbooks are to develop skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking and to extend vocabulary to enable a student to enjoy and foreordain fiction, poetry and drama. The syllabi under this study used for specifying the materials for Senior Secondary Schools at Aligarh Muslim University. The syllabus recommended by Aligarh Muslim University for class XI and XII is taken from C.B.S.E. (Central Board of Secondary Education) which is one of the national boards. These textbooks are designed to be used as materials for ELT purpose and they are include different cultural aspects, historical, geographical, literary, political, religious, social, man- woman relationship, habits, customs and tradition.

There are two core English textbooks which are prescribed for Senior Secondary students: Hornbile for class XI and Flamingo (core book) for class XII which both based on the development of reading comprehension and writing skill besides speaking skill. These textbooks advocate that the children's life at school should be linked to their outside life and motivate students to be away from traditional system of education. In addition, it attempts to improve students' language skills and develop student -centered system of education. The textbooks suggest that teachers should understand students proficiency level of language and based on that given space, time and freedom to them generate new ideas and suggestion out of the information which is passed on to them by adults. Moreover, these textbooks aim to help students to strengthen their communicative skill in English to use it effectively in their daily life.

Additionally, the syllabus designer have aim to make reading enjoyable and motivate students to generate new ideas among the students. Syllabus designers believe that reading comprehension exercises are mostly helpful to increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading.

The analysis of the prescribed textbooks of class XI (Hornbil):

#### I: Hornbile

The existing textbook is divided into two parts. First part includes eight units which have only one prose (comprehension text) and one poem except unit two, five and seven. Second part consists of writing improvement texts. Themes of the syllabus designer are to cover contemporary issues as well as emotional and creative aspects of human life. Aims of teaching pros are: to understand the passage and perceive its meaning, to improve pronunciation, to increase knowledge of vocabulary and develop students' ability to express the ideas of the passage orally or in written form. The texts are literary based and some of these texts are descriptive in nature. Each unit followed by short glossary of difficult words that students infer their meaning from the context. There are many unfamiliar words and very specific concepts.

The poetry section of the book aims at developing students' speech habits. It is related to universal sentiments and appeal to contemporary sensibility. The rhythm of poetry motivates and helps students to acquire natural speech rhythm. This will be useful to improve their pronunciation. The purpose of poetry is to teach idiomatic expressions while in present textbook it is taught for the sake of providing enjoyment not for purpose of mastering students in language skills. The materials provided for self study through many exercises given at the end of almost each unit such as word and usage, talking about the text, and thinking about the language. These exercises have value in improving students' vocabulary, speaking skills and involving students in the learning process. The second part of the present book is writing based units which aim at improving students' writing skill and enable them to write various types of letters and find out the main ideas of text. Many exercises are introduced which are focused on writing skills such as note- making, summarizing, and abstracting.

The following analysis is of a lesson of Hornbile textbook (see Appendix A):

We're Not Afraid to Die...

If We can All Be Together (Gordon Cook and Alan East)

At the beginning, unit is started with the glossary of some important expressions so that students infer their meaning from the context. The purpose of this section is to familiarize the students with the new vocabulary in the text. This is a lengthy short story and cannot be taught in one sectionIt has no support and illustrative materials like color pictures and map which could help in making the lesson more attractive and appealing.

Activities are reading comprehension based. They draw upon the students' multilingual experiences and capacities. Comprehension is addressed at two levels: one of the texts itself and the other of how text relates to the learners' experiences. Grammar rules are introduced inductively. Activities focus on improving students' thinking ability. The textbook also engages activities for identifying words and understanding their meanings and grammatical functions. Reading and speaking are the strong points of the present lesson. Listening activities are not covered and improving the listening skill is integrated with the reading of the text. As for speaking practice, students are supposed to discuss the theme either with a partner or in the group, write down any comment to the unit, and make their list of finding and understanding from the text. In terms of vocabulary improvement there also some activities which ask students to find similar words from their own language. As far as writing is concerned, there is not any activity on writing in this unit.

The analysis of the prescribed textbook of class XII (Flamingo):

### III: Flamingo

This textbook is divided into two sections: prose and poetry. The prose section includes eight prose (comprehension) texts. It contains three short stories, two non-fiction pieces, and autobiographies. The poetry section has six poems. The textbook aims to link learners' life at school to the outside world of school. The texts are literary and some of these texts are descriptive in nature. Therefore, selection of prose from different parts of the world seeks to exposes learners to a wide variety of genres, themes and texts. Syllabus designers consider the interest of learners while making them aware of the sociopolitical issues that they will face in the outside world.

Units begin by a brief biography of the author and are followed by the short glossary of difficult words so that students infer their meaning from the context. Nevertheless, there are some other words or expressions which are not in the glossary and learners must find their meaning from the context. Each units contains some text question "think as you read" to check learners' comprehension ability while reading the text and hence, motivating and engaging learners better.

The text focuses on the reading comprehension and to certain on writing skill. In comprehension section they want to be sure that learners understand the lesson, and the intention and experience of writer. "Things to do" section aims to enable learners to find out the facts and problems of the outside world. These exercises help in improving students' vocabulary, speaking skills and involving students in the learning process. Almost all skills are included in this text book. This textbook provides opportunities for students to use English while reading, writing, and speaking. There is, however, no exercise on developing the listening skill.

The following analysis is of a lesson of Vista textbook (see Appendix B):

Deep Water (William Douglas)

It is a story of disadvantages and overcoming of fear. The purpose of the writer of this short story is to teach learners that the effort and confidence can help to overcome fear. This short story is very helpful for students to take steps and effort in overcoming their fear.

The unit is started with the brief biography of the author and glossary of some important expressions so that students infer their meaning from the context. The purpose of this section is to familiarize the students with the new vocabulary in the text. However, this is not implemented in this unit because the number of new words in the texts is more than the number of words in the glossary. But the simple language of story helps learners understand the author's concept. It is not a lengthy story and there is no illustrative materials like color pictures which could help in making the lesson more attractive and appealing.

Activities are based on language skills (reading, writing and speaking) except listening skill. Listening activities are not covered and improving the listening skill is integrated with the reading of the text. They draw upon the students' multilingual experiences and capacities. Comprehension is addressed at two levels: one of the texts itself by in text activities and the other how the text relates to the learners' experiences at the end of the unit. Grammar rules are introduced inductively. Activities focus on improving students' thinking and imaginative abilities. As for speaking practice, students are supposed to discuss the theme either with a partner or in the group, they can write down any comment on the unit. In terms of vocabulary improvement there are no activities. As far as writing is concerned, there are activities on writing in this unit such as writing about their own experiencing fear and how they overcame it.

Finding: These textbooks aim to enable students to express idea of prose passage orally, to develop listening and reading comprehension by reading and post-reading activities, and to improve imaginative power of students. All the units contain various types of exercises with the remarkable emphasis on reading comprehension and writing skill. As well, appropriate visual materials available can be defined as the facilities that can be employed by teachers and learners to enhance language learning in classrooms. They may range from simple hand-made realia, charts and pictures, to electronic and digital materials. The main problem to these textbooks is that little emphasis was placed on speaking and listening skills. In addition, teaching of pronunciation is missing in these textbooks and also there is no practice of functional use of language.

# Conclusion

Textbooks will not address all the needs of every English language learners. There will always be a need for teacher created materials and knowledge of how different instructional materials are uses in the ELT classroom. This study aimed at reviewing qualitatively textbooks on the clarity and inclusiveness. As mentioned before the main focuses of texts are on reading so the learners' main use of English language will be limited to reading texts and passages hence their knowledge of English will be limited to other instances of language used in catalogues, manuals or magazines. It has worth to integrate all language skill exercise to obtain better results. Due to lengthy passages often a great proportion of class time was spent on reading.Taking into account the significant role of textbook in teaching and learning process therefore it is very important to select an appropriate textbook based on students' language proficiency. In order to be ensured that careful selection is made so ELT textbooks can effectively facilitate the attainment of teaching objectives.

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(Appendix A)

2. "We're Not Afraid to Die... if We Can All Be Together" Gordon Cook and Alan East Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context. pinpricks in the vast ocean honing our seafaring skills a tousled head ominous silence · Mayday calls IN July 1976, my wife Mary, son Jonathan. 6, daughter Suzanne. 7, and 1 set sail from Plymouth, England, to duplicate the roundthe-world voyage made 200 years earlier by Captain James Cook. For the longest time, Mary and I — a 37-year-old businessman had dreamt of sailing in the wake of the famous explorer, and for the past 16 years we had spent all our leisure time honing our seafaring skills in British waters. Our boat Wavewalker, a 23 metre, 30 ton wooden-hulled beauty, had been professionally built, and we had spent months litting it out and testing it in the roughest weather we could find. The first leg of our planned three-year, 105,000 kilometre journey passed pleasantly as we sailed down the west coast of Africa to Cape Town. There, before heading east, we took on two - American Larry Vigil and Swiss Herb Seigler help us tackle one of the world's roughest seas, the southern Indian Ocean.

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On our second day out of Cape Town, we began to encounter strong gales. For the next few weeks, they blew continuously. Gales did not worry me; but the size of the waves was alarming up to 15 metres, as high as our main mast. December 25 found us 3,500 kilometres east of Cape Town.

Despite atrocious weather, we had a wonderful holiday complete with a Christmas tree. New Year's Day saw no improvement in the weather, but we reasoned that it had to change soon. And it did change - for the worse

At dawn on January 2, the waves were gigantic. We were sailing with only a small storm jib and were still making eight knots. As the ship rose to the top of each wave we could see endless enormous seas rolling towards us, and the screaming of the wind and spray was painful to the ears. To slow the boat down, we dropped the storm jib and lashed a heavy mooring rope in a loop across the stern. Then we double-lashed everything, went through our life-raft drill, attached lifelines, donned oilskins and life jackets - and waited.

The first indication of impending disaster came at about 6 p.m., with an ominous silence. The wind dropped, and the sky immediately grew dark. Then came a growing roar, and an enormous cloud towered aft of the ship. With horror, I realised that it was not a cloud, but a wave like no other I had ever seen. It appeared perfectly vertical and almost twice the height of the other waves, with a frightful breaking crest.

The roar increased to a thunder as the stern moved up the face of the wave, and for a moment I thought we might ride over it. But then a tremendous explosion shook the deck. A torrent of green and white water broke over the ship, my head smashed into the wheel and I was aware of flying overboard and sinking below the waves. I accepted my approaching death, and as I was losing consciousness. I felt quite peaceful.

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Unexpectedly, my head popped out of the water. A few metres away, Wavewalker was near capsizing, her masts almost horizontal. Then a wave hurled her upright, my lifeline jerked taut, I grabbed the guard rails and saied through the air into Wavewalker's main boom. Subsequent waves tossed me around the deck like a rag doll. My left ribs cracked; my mouth filled with blood and broken teeth. Somehow, I found the wheel, lined up the stern for the next wave and hung on.

Water, Water, Everywhere, I could feel that the ship had water below, but I dared not abandon the wheelto investigate. Suddenly, WE'RE NOT AFRAID TO DIE

the front hatch was thrown open and Mary appeared. "We're sinking!" she screamed. "The decks are smashed; we're full of water." "Take the wheel", I shouted as I scrambled for the hatch

Larry and Herb were pumping like madmen. Broken timbers hung at crazy angles, the whole starboard side bulged inwards; clothes, crockery, charts, tins and toys sloshed about in deep water. I half-swam, half-crawled into the children's cabin. "Are you

all right?" I asked. "Yes," they answered from an upper bunk. "But my head hurts a bit," said Sue, pointing to a big bump above her eyes. I had no time to worry about bumped heads.

After finding a hammer, screws and canvas, I struggled back on deck. With the starboard side bashed open, we were taking water with each wave that broke over us. If I couldn't make some repairs, we would surely sink.

Somehow I managed to stretch canvas and secure waterproof hatch covers across the gaping holes. Some water continued to stream below, but most of it was now being deflected over the side.

More problems arose when our hand pumps started to block up with the debris floating around the cabins and the electric mp short-circuited. The water level rose threateningly. Back on deck I found that our two spare hand pumps had been wrenched overboard - along with the forestay sail, the jib, the dinghies and the main anchor.

Then I remembered we had another electric pump under the chartroom floor. I connected it to an out-pipe, and was thankful to find that it worked.

The night dragged on with an endless, bitterly cold routine of pumping, steering and working the radio. We were getting no replies to our Mayday calls - which was not surprising in this remote corner of the world.

Sue's head had swollen alarmingly; she had two enormous black eyes, and now she showed us a deep cut on her arm. When I asked why she hadn't made more of her injuries before this, she replied, "I didn't want to worry you when you were trying to save us all.

By morning on January 3, the pumps had the water level sufficiently under control for us to take two hours' rest in rotation. But we still had a tremendous leak somewhere below the waterline and, on checking, I found that nearly all the boat's

HORNBELL

changes of course, drift and current in an effort to calculate aur position. The best I could determine was that we were somewhere in 150,000 kilometres of ocean looking for a 65

somewhere in 150,000 kilometres of ocean looking for a 65 bilometre-wide island. While I was thinking. Sue, moving painfully, joined me. The left side of her head was now very swollen and her blackened of the front she had drawn caricatures of Mary and me with the words: "Here are some funny people. Did they make mol laugh? I laughed a lot as well." Inside was a message: "Oh, how I love you both. So this card is to say thank you and let's hope for the best." Somehow we had to make it.

tchecked and rechecked my calculations. We had lost our main compass and I was using a spare which had not been corrected in magnetic variation. I made an allowance for this and another sutmate of the influence of the westerly currents which flow through this part of the Indian Ocean. About 2 p.m., I went on deck and asked Larry to steer a course of 185 degrees. If we were lucky, I told him with a competition I did not feel be could expect to see the ialand at

nviction I did not feel, he could expect to see the island at about 5 p.m.

Then with a heavy heart, I went below, climbed on my bunk and amazingly, dozed off. When I woke it was 6 p.m., and growing dark. I knew we must have missed the island, and with the sail we had left, we couldn't hope to beat back into the westerly winds. At that moment, **a tousled head** appeared by my bunk. "Can I have a hug?" Jonathan asked. Sue was right behind him. "Why an I getting a hug now?" I asked. "Because you are the best daddy in the whole world — and the best captain." my son replied. "Not codar, Jon, I'm afraid." "Why, you must be," said Sue in a matter-of-fact voice. "You found the island." "What' I shouted. Then with a heavy heart, I went below, climbed on my bunk

"What!" I shouted.

"It's out there in front of us," they chorused, "as big as a hattleship. I rushed on deck and gazed with relief at the stark outline of

the Amsterdam. It was only a bleak piece of volcanic rock, with http://www.amsterdam.org/amsterdam.org

main rib frames were smashed down to the keel. In fact, there

main rib frames were smashed down to the keel. In fact, there was nothing holding up a whole section of the starboard hull except a few cupboard partitions. We had survived for 15 hours since the wave hit, but *Wacewalker* wouldn't hold together long enough for us to reach Australia. I checked our charts and calculated that there were two small islands a few hundred kilometres to the east. One of them, lie Amsterdam, was a French scientific base. Our only hope was to reach these **pippricks in the vast ocean**. But unless the wind and seas abated so we could hoist sail, our chances would be slim indeed. The great wave had put our auxiliary engine out of action.

would be slim indeed. The great wave had put our auxilliary engine out of action. On January 4, after 36 hours of continuous pumping, we reached the last few centimetres of water. Now, we had only to keep pace with the water still coming in. We could not set any sail on the main mast. Pressure on the rigging would simply pull the damaged section of the hull apart, so we hoisted the storm jib and headed for where I thought the two islands were. Mary found some corned beef and cracker biscuits, and we ate our first meal in almost two days. But our respite was short-lived. At 4 p.m. black clouds began building up behind us; within the hour the wind was back to 40

building up behind us; within the hour the wind was back to 40 knots and the seas were getting higher. The weather continued to deteriorate throughout the night, and by dawn on January 5, our situation was again desperate. When I went in to comfort the children, Jon asked, "Daddy,

When I went in to comfort the children. Jon asked, "Daddy, are we going to die?" I tried to assure him that we could make it. "But, Daddy," he went on, "we aren't afraid of dying if we can all be together — you and Mummy, Sue and I." I could find no words with which to respond, but I left the children's cabin determined to fight the sea with everything I had. To protect the weakened starboard side, I decided to heave-to — with the undamaged port hull facing the oncoming waves, using an improvised sea anchor of heavy nylon rope and two 22 litre plastic barrels of parafilin. That evening, Mary and I sat together holding hands, as the motion of the ship brought more and more water in through the

Inat evening, Mary and I sat together holding hands, as the motion of the ship brought more and more water in through the broken planks. We both feit the end was very near. But *Wavevalker* rode out the storm and by the morning of January 6, with the wind easing. I tried to get a reading on the sextant. Back in the chartroom, I worked on wind speeds,

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(Appendix B)





but water - water that had a dirty yellow tinge to it. I grew panicky. I reached up as if to grab a rope and my hands clutched only at water. I was suffocating. I tried to yell but no sound came out. Then my eyes and nose came out of the water - but notamy mouth.

out of the water — but notury mouth. I flatled at the surface of the water, swallowed and choked. I tried to bring my legs up, but they hung as dead weights, paralysed and rigid. A great force was pulling me under. I screamed, but only the water heard me. I had started on the long journey back to the bottom of the pool. I struck at the water as I went down, expending my strength as one in a nightmare fights an irresistible force. I had lost all my breath. My lungs ached, my head throbbed. I would spring from the bottom of the pool and come like a cork to the surface. I would lie flat on the water, strike out with my arms, and thrash with my legs. Then I would get with my arms, and thrash with my legs. Then I would get to the edge of the pool and be safe.

I went down, down, endlessly. I opened my eyes. Nothing but water with a yellow glow — dark water that one could

not see through. And then sheer, stark terror seized me, terror that knows no understanding, terror that knows no control. terror that no one can understand who has not experienced it. I was shrieking under water. I was paralysed under water — stiff, rigid with fear. Even the screams in my throat were frozen. Only my heart, and the pounding in my head, said

that I was still alive. And then in the midst of the terror came a touch of reason. I must remember to jump when I hit the bottom. At last I felt the tiles under me. My toes reached out as if to

grab them. I jumped with everything I had. But the jump made no difference. The water was still around me. I looked for ropes, ladders, water wings. Nothing but water. A mass of yellow water held me. Stark terror took an even deeper hold on me, like a great charge of electricity. I shook and trembled with fright. My arms wouldn't move. My legs wouldn't move. I tried to call for help, to call for mother. Nothing happened.

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naked into it and show my skinny legs. But I subdued my pride and did it.

From the beginning, however, I had an aversion to the water when I was in it. This started when I was three or four years old and father took me to the beach in California. He and I stood together in the surf. I hung on to him, yet the waves knocked me down and swept over me. I was buried in water. My breath was gone. I was frightened. Father laughed, but there was terror in my heart at the

overpowering force of the waves. My introduction to the Y.M.CA. swimming pool revived unpleasant memories and stirred childish fears. But in a unpleasant memories and stirred childish fears. But in a little while I gathered confidence. I paddled with my new water wings, watching the other boys and trying to learn by aping them. I did this two or three times on different days and was just beginning to feel at ease in the water when the misadventure happened. I went to the pool when no one else was there. The place was quiet. The water was still, and the tiled bottom was as

white and clean as a bathtub. I was timid about going in alone, so I sat on the side of the pool to wait for others.

I had not been there long when in came a big bruiser of a boy, probably eighteen years old. He had thick hair on his chest. He was a beautiful physical specimen, with legs and arms that showed rippling muscles. He yelled, "Hi, Skinny! How'd you like to be ducked?"

With that you had to be utexed? With that you had to be up and tossed me into the deep end. I landed in a sitting position, swallowed water, and went at once to the bottom. I was frightened, but not yet frightened out of my wits. On the way down I planned: When my feet hit the bottom, I would make a big jump. come to the surface, lie flat on it, and paddle to the edge of the pool.

It seemed a long way down. Those nine feet were more like ninety, and before I touched bottom my lungs were ready to burst. But when my feet hit bottom I summoned all my strength and made what I thought was a great spring upwards. I imagined I would bob to the surface like a cork. Instead, I came up slowly. I opened my eyes and saw nothing

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And then, strangely, there was light. I was coming out of the awful yellow water. At least my eyes were. My nose was almost out too

Then I started down a third time. I sucked for air and got water. The yellowish light was going out. Then all effort ceased. I relaxed. Even my legs felt limp;

Then all efforts ceased. I related, been by legs left map, and a blackness swept over my brain. It wiped out fear, it wiped out terror. There was no more panic. It was quiet and peaceful. Nothing to be afraid of. This is nice... to be drowsy... to go to sleep... no need to jump... too thred to jump... It's nice to be carried gently... to float along in space... tender arms around me ... tender arms like Mother's ... now

I must go to sleep... I crossed to oblivion, and the curtain of life fell.

The next I remember I was lying on my stomach beside the pool, vomiting. The chap that threw me in was saying, "But I was only fooling." Someone said, "The kid nearly died. Be all right now. Let's carry him to the locker room.

ake to come to the surface? Several hours later, I walked home. I was weak and trembling. 3. How did this experi

1. What is the "misadventure" that

William Douglas speaks about?

What were the series of emotions and fears that Douglas experienced when he was thrown

into the pool? What plans did he

I shook and cried when I lay on my bed. I couldn't eat that night. For days a haunting fear was in my heart. The slightest exertion upset me, making me wobbly in the knees and sick to my stomach.

I never went back to the pool. I feared water. I avoided it whenever I could.

If whenever I could. A few years later when I came to know the waters of the Cascades, I wanted to get into them. And whenever I did — whether I was wading the Tieton or Bumping River or bathing in Warm Lake of the Goat Rocks — the terror that had seized me in the pool would come back. It would take possession of me completely. My legs would become paralysed. Icy horror would grab my heart.

This handicap stayed with me as the years rolled by. In cances on Maine lakes fishing for landlocked salmon,

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bass fishing in New Hampshire, trout fishing on the bass using an Avew Hampshire, trout (ishing on the Deschutes and Metolius in Oregon, fishing for salmon on the Columbia, at Bumping Lake in the Cascades — wherever I went, the haunting fear of the water followed me. It ruined my fishing trips: deprived me of the joy of canoeling heating and environments canoeing, boating, and swimming. I used every way I knew to overcome this fear, but if

I used every way I knew to overcome this lear, but if held me firmly in its grip. Finally, one October, I decided to get an instructor and learn to swin. I went to a pool and practiced five days a week, an hour each day. The instructor put a belt around me. A rope attached to the belt went through a pulley that ran on an overhead cable. He held on to the end of the rope, and we went back and forth, back to the end of the rope, and we went back and forth, back and forth across the pool, hour after hour, day after day, week after week. On each trip across the pool a bit of the panie seized me. Each time the instructor relaxed his hold on the rope and I went under, some of the old terror returned and my legs froze. It was three months before the tension began to slack. Then he taught me to put my face under water and exhale, and to raise my nose and inhale. I repeated the exercise hundreds of times. Bit by bit I shed part of the panic that seized me when my head went under water.

The exercise infinites of times. Bit by bit I shed part of the panic that setzed me when my head went under water. Next he held me at the side of the pool and had me kick with my legs. For weeks I did just that. At first my legs refused to work, But they gradually relaxed; and finally I could command them.

Thus, piece by piece, he built a swimmer. And when he had perfected each piece, he put them together into an integrated whole. In April he said, "Now you can swim. Dive off and swim the length of the pool, crawl stroke." I did. The instructor was finished. But I was not finished. I still wondered if I would be

but I was not missited. I still wondered it I would be terror-stricken when I was alone in the pool. I tried it. I swam the length up and down. Tiny vestiges of the old terror would return. But now I could frown and say to that terror, "Trying to scare me, eh? Well, here's to you! Look!" And off I'd go for another length of the pool. This went on until July. But I was still not satisfied, I

was not sure that all the terror had left. So I went to Lake

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Wentworth in New Hampshire, dived off a dock at Triggs Island, and swam two miles across the lake to Stamp Act Island. I swam the crawl, breast stroke, side stroke, and Islandi, I swam the crawl, breast stroke, and back stroke, Only once did the terror return. When I was in the middle of the lake, I put my face under and saw nothing but bottomless water. The old sensation returned in miniature. I laughed and said, Well, Mr Terror, what do

you think you can do to me?' It fied and I swam on. Yet I had residual doubts. At my first opportunity I hurried west, went up the Tieton to Conrad Meadows, up the Conrad Creek Trail to Meade Glacier, and camped in the high meadow by the side of Warm Lake. The next morning I stripped, dived into the lake, and swam across to the other shore and back — just as Doug Corpron used to do. I should with joy, and Gilbert Peak returned the echo. I had conquered my fear of water. The experience had a deep meaning for me, as only

those who have known stark terror and conquered it can appreciate. In death there is peace. There is terror only in the fear of death, as Roosevelt knew when he said, "All we have to fear is fear itself." Because

I had experienced both the ensation of dying and the terror that fear of it can produce, the will to live somehow grew in intensity.

At last I felt released - free to walk the trails and climb the peaks and to brush aside fear.

#### **Understanding** the text

- 1. How does Douglas make clear to the reader the sense of panic that gripped him as he almost drowned? Describe the details that have made the description vivid. 2. How did Douglas overcome his fear of water?
- 3. Why does Douglas as an adult recount a childhood experience of terror and his conquering of ii? What larger meaning does he draw from this experience?

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1. Why was Douglas determined to

get over his fear of water? 2. How did the instructor "build a swimmer" out of Douglas?

3. How did Douglas make sure that he conquered the old terror?