



## Reading Digitally: A Study of Donna Pierce's *Scottish Blood Bond*

\*C. Harishree

II M.A. English Literature

Pondicherry University

Email id: [hshree20@gmail.com](mailto:hshree20@gmail.com)

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Habit of reading can be traced back with the beginning of writing. It is said that reading develops one's perception of understanding. Reading methodology is a wide area to be studied. The reading practice changes from one person to another. There are some people who read from dusk till dawn and few others read from dawn to dusk. The main aim of reading is to communicate and for pleasure of reading. Mode of reading also has some influence on reader. Now we are living in digital era. What we read in printed form is slowly getting digitalized. Literature transformed itself into e-literature. Now-a-days we come across e-magazines, e-articles, e-mails, e-publications etc. E-literature is created especially for digital devices like computer, mobile phones and tablets. Such text can't be carried out for print.

American fiction is different from traditional method of writing. Americans propagated the genre of fiction throughout the world. Virginia woolf, in her essay *Modern Fiction*, elaborately discussed about the genre of fiction taking the Russian masters as example. America not only propagated the genre of fiction but also the technologies. Slowly the literature also entered in technical world. Text became digitalized and the written format is disappearing fast. We can get everything we want in e-literature.

*Scottish Blood Bond* is an e-book published in 2014 by Donna Pierce. She is an American writer. The book gives the experience of digital reading. The book is based on Vampire myth. The story revolves around the protagonist Maggie who falls in love with a vampire named Kendrick Sullivan without knowing the true identity of him. He is the protector of Maggie's family for many generations from a wicked vampire named Xavier. Maggie's close friends are also happened to be vampires who are actually protecting her along with Kendrick. When she finds the truth, the story takes an interesting twist. Kendrick returns to his Chateau in Scotland leaving Michigan. He is broken and felt guilty of hiding the truth from Maggie. Maggie's friends give her some time to accept the truth of her life. Sophia says "This story was the love child of the Twilight and shades of Grey series... some parts were a tad familiar but it was still original

enough to be interesting”(Sophia 2014:). The emotional part of the novel keeps the reading interesting and touching. There was a suspense in the novel where the reader yet to find out whether the re-union of Maggie and Kendrick will happen. At the crisis of situation Maggie happens to stay in Kendrick’s place where the lovers cleared their misunderstandings.

The three weeks outdoor trip of Kendrick and Maggie took us a tour to some important monuments of Europe. The chapters looked more like a travelogue. Erin Sands says “The author really puts you in the scenes and makes you long for a trip to Scotland to view its beauty in person”(Sands 2014) The digital reading of the novel gives us more pleasure of such experience. In internet we can see any places of the world. This e-book gives us the knowledge of the places we would be interested and also we can figure the places in Google or other search engines while reading the book. This helps in similar way of illusions drawn on those days. But the difference is there are multiple pictures in internet which may attract us more than what we really needed. This is a kind of distractions for reading. This liberty we cannot enjoy it in printed form. The places mentioned in this story are real and the pictures can be easily drawn from web in fraction of seconds.

The plot is similar to the print text plot but the experience of reading is different. The novel can be placed under the genres of suspense, romance, action, thrillers, and travelogue and so on. American modern fiction follows no particular pattern. Hence in this novel we can see the story travels from ordinary Michigan pub maid’s life to thriller, suspense and finally ends with vampire love life. The myth of vampire is very common among the western people and there are many novels based upon them. A few of such books were cited as *Vampires speak Out*, *Vampire Anatomy* and *The Vampire Legend* in the novel. The popularity of such myths is because of people’s desire to live youthful and long life. We can find plenty of articles about vampires in internet which could support the better understanding of vampires of the text. Since e-books are meant only for pleasure of the reader, the author did not follow any moral diction in her novel. But she gives much importance to the love bonding between Kendrick and Maggie. Even Kellan who have fallen in love with Maggie is treated with respect. The respect for love is seen throughout the text.

It also gives importance to friendship. The main plot of the story is a revenge for murder. The author includes fragments of other aspects like friendship, family, relationships etc. It cannot be fixed with particular genre. The novel gives an experience of living. Life includes ups and downs and the author replicates it through the life of Maggie in the novel. Samantha Mergel says “It can make you cry in the middle of it. It took my breath away. It made me smile and cry”(Mergel 2015). Thus the e-book reproduces such experience. We live with electronic devices now and it became a part of our life. The digital reading of the story is very much lively and interactive with us.

Life and death go hand in hand. Throughout the story there is suspense and secret of Maggie's true identity. When the novel reveals the secret it leads to the suspense of Xavier's whereabouts and his plans. When Xavier is seen in the story the reader has to undergo the thrilling suspense of who will win. Hence the author wants the reader's mind to be busy with the questions and in the process of finding the answers he/she should travel with the novel. The novel gives a break with romantic scenario and outdoor trip to reduce the pressure. Hence the novel can be viewed as a cinematic projection of a love story with fantasy.

The technology is much improved and it gets reflected on the writings too. The author sets the background in Michigan, America and Scotland. The landscape of both the places is explained in detail and its beauty is well depicted in the novel. The novel is different in the sense that it is not only in the form of e-literature but also the difference it undergone to suit to digital reading. Sarah says "I loved how the author brought to life the wonderful places Kendrick travelled. I couldn't put my kindle down" (Sarah 2014). The digital reading thus gives new excitement and fasts the reading. Reading is an inherent habit of every individual. But what we read and how we read matters. The novel certainly reflects the influence of digital era on the author. The Youtube is one of the major blogs for watching and uploading videos through internet to get instant fame. Author used this as a drawback for the protagonist as the villain finds her whereabouts through the video uploaded in internet.

The novel is comprised to fit to the online reading. It can be enjoyed through electronic devices. The experience of reading a novel in phone is very different. The usual reading of the novel takes our time and it is like forgetting ourselves in the world of book. But in e-literature it is very crisp and it serves its purpose. We get what we want, nothing more than that. What we seek in e-literature is fast reading and we acquire limited knowledge. In printed form of the book, we can keep it for reference and it can be passed from generation to generation as a memory. But digital book is very different. The positive side of the digital reading is, it will not get faded over the time. The original printed text will not last longer. The paper will decay in the long term. But e-book is not so. It can be kept as long as the last device of the world exists. Even the human can die but the knowledge of the human can be stored in electronic devices. Analyzing the text and finding the meaning of the certain words are difficult in printed text. The digital reading will give first hand information about the text and its form. There will be lots of reviews and comments and even live conversational text also can be read through internet.

The *Scottish Blood Bond* is an example of digital reading. The book can be referred with number of times. We can highlight the points which interest us. We re-read the highlighted lines alone in future. We can modify our markings. Our intervention and usage of the text will never affect the original text. The original text can always be kept as original. In our mechanic life it is difficult to get time for reading. Hence people are slowly changing their method of reading. Cost of buying a printed book is higher than the e-book. And also carrying the book is much heavier than e-book. We can carry number of e-books in one device but not the printed text. The time it

takes to read a novel in e-literature is much lesser than the printed text; because e-literature comprises the text according to reader's convenience of reading.

### **Conclusion:**

Digital reading has its own demerits. The concentration of the reader gets distracted often while reading digitally. The advertisements, new incoming messages, battery life of the device used the lighting of the screen etc. affect the concentration of the reader. When we read a printed text, we observe the words and imagine the situation in our mind. But in digital reading everything is readily available. There is no much work for the brain. The interpretation power of the mind is reduced with the already available information. Digital reading gives easy understanding but at the same time the creativity is gone. E-reading is becoming a new trend of education. Our next generation may not experience the book reading which we have now. Digitalized text will be the only form of education of our future generation. Electronics plays a big role in everyone's life. With or without our knowledge, the learning will become completely digitalized. As we look at the e-book mentioned above, the novel reading experience is changing. The genre of the novel itself gets stumble to fit in particular genre. The mode of reading also changes the experience of reading. Without the knowledge of e-reading, any one will become odd man out at this particular digital era. Hence the importance of digital reading is inevitable.

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