Quixote Go: Digital Reorientation of Literature

in 21st Century

Bhautik Limbani

Marwadi University, Rajkot

Quixote Go: Digital Reorientation of Literature

in 21st Century

"Sir, may I go out for a while?" one of my students asked. Since, it was ten minutes break, I allowed him. He thanked me and ran out. Came back after fifteen minutes, exhausted and perspired but a smile of satisfaction, perhaps that of Agamemnon, when he came back to Argos after destroying the Trojans. I asked justification of extra five minutes. He smiled and said, "I went to 'A' wing," for our college premises has three buildings interconnected, A, B and C Wing. He intuited the next question and replied, "I needed only one Pokemon to break the record of the largest Pokemon army. I had 150 and needed one, and my GPS showed it on the first floor of the 'A' wing. So I had to go there immediately." I found Don Quixote resurrected. His face was glittering with Quixotean satisfaction. Cervantes was mocking at me from the unknown corner of my classroom.

Later, I came to know that my student was playing a mobile game called *Pokemon Go*. Google says "It is a free-to-play location-based augmented reality game wherein players use a mobile device's GPS capability to locate, capture, battle and train virtual creature called Pokemon, who appears on the screen as if they were in the same real-world location as the player." (Wikipedia) "Augmented-reality game" which means one can play it on the mobile screen with the feel of "real-world location". To play it one needs active data pack, not real companion-in-flesh. It does not need further introduction for in only fifteen days 75 million people have installed it in their device.

The player (real human), with his virtual army of "trained" and "tested" Pokemons, goes on the quest to fight with and kill, "the virtual monster hidden in the real world." (Wikipedia) The game has evoked the sense of chivalry in us. The heroism that had long been subsided in us stretched itself! However, the gain, of the 'quest' in the virtual world, is 'nothing' tangible. On the contrary it severely affects and eventually damages our senses to perceive the physical world, which is unfortunately real one.

People play it 'just for the refreshment' which sometimes prolonged one. It lasts, especially among the college students, for days. Such engrossment causes two implications: 1) misapprehension of virtual world

An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

---

as a real world and 2) it leads living human being to live in isolation who is otherwise social. A parallel between the game, *Pokemon Go* and Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* will help us to understand these implications. *Don Quixote* is 17th century Spanish novel, which shows, what happens when man fails to perceive real world as real. Alonso Quixona, the hero of the novel, is man of fifty, living with his niece in La Mancha, Spain. He is fond of reading old romances, "book of chivalry". His habit of reading became his addiction. It sounds studious! However, his addiction compelled him to sell his land to buy more books of romance. Eventually, his mind was preoccupied by the world of "knight" and plight of "abducted princess" that he started believing it as real. One day, along with his page Sancho Panza, harnessed his hoarse, armored himself and started his quest. After three days he 'encountered' a group of travelers. He demanded to hand him over Dulcinea (a fictional character), they denied her possession, like knight, he attacked on them, but was severely wounded and sent back to his home on a donkey.

This experience, which is otherwise accident, strengthened his madness of chivalry. He recovered and once again left for Dulcinea. On the way he misunderstood windmill as 'winged-monster' and fought with. Defeated, returned back. However the strong rooted sense of chivalry did not let him to live as a normal human being. In a way he could not differentiate between "augmented reality" and physical world. His sense of believing fictional as a real boiled everything down to a question, question on of the identity of the world: real or fictional. Christopher Nolan, director of *Inception,* a Hollywood film, has addressed this question of the real world perception in mature visuals. Milan Kundera, 20th century Czech-born French writer, also perceived such question in *Don Quixote,* says "When Don Quixote went out into the world, that world turned into a mystery before his eyes. That is the legacy of the first European novel to the entire subsequent history of them novel. The novel teaches us to comprehend the world as a question." The novel also warns the reader against the galvanizing of the real world with that of the fictional one; it is the first fiction that warns the reader against 'fiction'.

Undoubtedly, *Pokemon Go* does the same. In fact it affects faster. It has Mephistophelean clutch (Mephistopheles, a devil who lured Dr. Faustus to death): inexorably plausible promises, one can neither accept nor reject. At some stage the player decides to play it, eventually the table turns. He feels that he is on the mission of 'collecting and expanding army". He thinks investing (sounds like wasting) time. But his mind is controlled by Pokemon (a virtual Mephistopheles). It surely anticipates Faustusean end (in fact he deserves it). Here he justifies the first implication and consciously proves that he is misapprehending the virtual with the actual.

An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal

The relevance of the second implication, that it leads living human being to live in isolation who is otherwise social, is prevalent in the statement "the hit game *Pokemon Go* is drawing youngster in the India to visit temples as many 'Pokestops' or locations where you can find Pokemon are located inside these places of worship." Is it acceptable or not? is yet another question darkened by the 'inexorably plausible promises of Mephistopheles'. They enter temple for their virtual 'military purpose' to kill "virtual monster hidden in the real world". What a fake, sorry, 'Pokemonian chivalry!' They, 'isolated in group', gathered at any place, accidentally sometime religious places, historical places, natural places, just to train and increase their Pokemon army for they are "General-in-chief". Is it right way of "promoting physical activity" or "incentive to be more active in the real world?" is a question, perhaps, Cervantes had asked in 17th century, unanswered. Such questions, strongly needs our attention, in age of, what F.R. Leavis called "technologico-benthamite" and Arnold "anarchy".   (Selden)

Works Cited

<http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/don-quixote>.

Selden, Raman. A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory. New Delhi: Pearson, 2011.

Wikipedia. Pokemon Go. US: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Go, July 6, 2016.

http://indianexpress.com/article/technology/pokemon-go-craze-and-what-it-means-for-advertising-and-app-revenue-models-2935146/

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pok%C3%A9mon_Go

http://qz.com/730973/pokemon-go-is-getting-indian-youth-to-do-what-their-parents-never-could/