



Emotional Intelligence And Humor In Stephen Leacock'S My Financial Career

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Abstract: This paper deals with emotional Intelligence and humor in Stephen Leacock's story, My Financial Career. It explains a crisis in the life of author. In this story he explores the subtle process of Emotional Intelligence, humor a person's first experience in the bank. When he visits the bank, he feels nervous. The narrator feels horror at the sight of bank employees, money. The story revolves around an imperfect world as a testing ground for the ultimate realization of human nature. Protagonist experience hijack of emotions, emotional imbalance, miscommunication. By embedding subtle nudges to pause, reassess, and act with deliberate intent rather than panic, it proves a simple truth: calm minds resolve challenges faster. This approach is anchored in real-world expertise, steering clear of empty theory.

Key Words : Emotional Intelligence, Humor, human nature, crisis

I. Introduction

Modern short story as a work of art originated in the second quarters of the 19th century in America. Edgar Allan Poe is often referred to as the father of Modern English short story. In Europe Maupassant, Balzac, Tolstoy are the acknowledged masters of graceful and witty short story.

The chief aim of the short story is to entertain. The short story achieves this end by being interesting and absorbing all through. Brevity is another important quality of a short story as short stories are read in a single sitting and hence superfluous details are avoided and absolute economy of means is maintained.

Any subject matter is fit for the short story provided it is effectively developed within the short space allowed for it. The story must give the impression that nothing would have been lost or gained by further elaboration. Concentration on the aim or the motive of the story is highly essential for its success and not the subject matter. So the method chosen to narrate the story is more important than the subject of matter.

There are six basic varieties of short stories.

Love story, Adventure story, Detective story, Psychological story, Scientific story, The Social Story.

A love story is based on the ingredient of human life. A love story may have either a comic ending or a tragic ending.

Adventure stories take the readers to impregnable jungles, desert lands, treasure hunts, queer birds, beasts, and thrilling discoveries at the bottom of the ocean and beyond the world of men.

The detective story deals with crime and the unravelling of the crime.

In Psychological stories focus is laid mainly on the motives of the chief characters and conflicts through which they have to pass in their minds.

The scientific story deals with the facts of science in an interesting and imaginative manner.



Stories written on social problems come under this category. The aim of the social story is to bring into focus the intricate social problems of a particular society. The author questions the validity of the prevailing customs and contentions of the society revealing an intention to reform the society.

Emotions are part of life, those affect our lives. They show impact on our social life, psychologically, especially in the modern era. Modernity brought drastic changes in the human mind and in thinking patterns. It widened as well as suppressed our thought process. It showed impact not only in the social arena, in various fields. Due to fear, some emotions create emotional Hijack in our mind. Most of the brain software is fused with many ideas, lead to clumsiness of emotions, chaotic situations affect our brains.

According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary Emotional Intelligence definition runs thus :

“The ability to understand the way people feel and react and to use the skill to make good judgements and to avoid or solve problems.” (Colin McIntosh 495)

A prominent psychologist E.L. Thorndike popularized IQ in Harper's Magazine article in 1920s and 1930s, asserted “act wisely in human relations.” (Daniel Goleman 42)

Emotional Intelligence is based on five areas :

They are Self-awareness, Managing emotions, Motivating oneself, Recognition of emotions in others, handling relationships

According to Salovey “Recognizing a feeling is keystone of EQ, Handling feelings is appropriate ability that builds on self awareness, emotional self awareness enables best performance of all kinds. Those who have this skill is highly effective, people who are empathetic send positive signals Managing emotions in others.” (Daniel Goleman 43)

Emotional Quotient : Just as I.Q. is a standard for measuring Intelligence Quotient, trainers assess Emotional Quotient through the Eq Test. It is the ability of a person to change his attitude. Emotional Quotient has an impact on many aspects of daily life such as readiness to accept change, developing effective communication, developing positive behavior, controlling stress, accepting difficulties as challenges, resolving conflicts or disputes. In today's competitive and challenging world, each of us should practice this technique and improve the way we respond to others.

Management gurus have repeatedly emphasized that emotional Intelligence is not a natural ability, but an ability that we can learn and strengthen. If a child cries out of fear or expresses any negative emotions, the mother should understand the root cause and what it means.

Stephen Leacock is a writer with unique vision and voice. His vision of life expresses itself in Humor and EQ themes. He is one among the little group of English short story writers. His voice is heard in the total articulation of his themes through the techniques such as point of view, humor, and Emotional Intelligence that he employs creatively and originally.

II. About The Author

1. Stephen Leacock: Life And Legacy

- **Background & Academic Career:** Born in England in 1869, Stephen Leacock moved to Canada as a child. He earned degrees from the University of Toronto and the University of Chicago, eventually leading the economics and political science department at McGill University from 1908 until his retirement in 1936.
- **Literary Success:** Although he published numerous works on political economy and history, Leacock achieved global fame as a humorist, authoring over 30 books of lighthearted essays and sketches.



- Key Works: His reputation is largely built on satirical and comedic masterpieces such as Literary Lapses (1910), Nonsense Novels (1911), Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town (1912), and Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich (1914).
- Style: Leacock's writing focused on human eccentricities, social flaws, and the gap between reality and pretense, brought to life through vibrant comedic scenarios. He also explored the mechanics of comedy in Humour: Its Theory and Technique (1935) and left behind an unfinished autobiography, The Boy I Left Behind Me (1946), prior to his death in 1944.

2. Objectives Of The Study

1. To examine how Stephen Leacock use EQ in My Financial Career story.
Investigate how his EQ narrative reflect on societal norms and human nature.

III. Literature Review

Stephen Leacock's contribution to literature brought change in the society. Prominent critics like Duncan Mac Arthur, Ian Gordon's consider My Financial Career is a satire, humorous, emotional intelligence story. It is a satirical work on socio-cultural traditions. This story portray themes of humor, character driven comedy.

IV. Discussion

Stephen Leacock obviously felt that My Financial Career is a significant story. It provided scope for him to go a bit deeper, beyond the superficialities. The story is about a young man , who goes to bank for depositing money. When the story opens , author is found in a mood of perfect happiness., contentment , even ecstatic for he is convinced that he had possessed hike in his salary.

"When I go into a bank I get nervous. The clerks made me nervous; the little windows at the counters make me nervous; the sight of the money makes me nervous; everything makes me nervous." (SP. Dhanvel 23)

The author proceeds to avail the facility in the bank. It is an interpretation of Emotional Hijack.

"The moment I go through the door of a bank and attempt to do business there. I become an irresponsible fool. I knew this before I went in, but my salary had been raised to fifty six dollars a month and I felt that the bank was the only place for it.

So I walked in with dragging feet and looked shyly round at the clerks. I had an idea that a person about to open an account was obliged to consult the manager." (SP. Dhanvel 23)

Stephen Leacock's My Financial Career is an emotional intelligence based one. It portrays the emotions of the author, in the bank. He enters into the bank, to transact with the clerk and manager. It is a humorous situation depicts human follies, repletion of "alone" word at the manager creates humor. Author gets hike in his salary and wishes to save the amount in the bank.

The manager advises author "We are safe from interruption here." The manager is baffled by the words of the author and enquires his identity. The clerk enquires "What are you drawing it all our again?" He withdraws the entire amount and leaves the bank. After the departures of author, Big bang of door sound occurs.

In this story anxiety , emotional hijack dominates the story. Readers experience zero self awareness.

Author considers a normal deposit as a life and death crisis. He misinterprets the bank staff judgement. He mumbles that he wishes to meet manager "alone" , unintentionally , giving way that he is a strange millionaire. His embarrassment force him to leave the bank in a



hurried manner. It highlights sacredness of customers, the bank environment. The author possess internal fear and struggles a lot to stay in the bank. He can not handle the financial matters and mistakenly accosts manager. The manager imagines he is an affluent client. The story depicts un certainty , awkwardness and the fear of the bank. This story depict unsuccessful and meaningless relationship between a customer and bank employees.

In “My Financial Career,” from Literary Lapses, Stephen Leacock humorously tells the story of a young man who visits a bank to deposit his entire savings of fifty dollars. Because this money is very valuable to him, he feels that only the bank manager is important enough to handle it. However, his nervousness makes it difficult for him to complete the transaction, creating a funny situation in which the bank employees laugh at him. Leacock does not intend to make fun of the man's small amount of savings, as fifty dollars is significant for a person with limited financial resources. Instead, he uses the incident to demonstrate how money and social status can influence people's behavior and the way they treat others. The bank employees initially treat the man with respect but begin to mock him after learning that he has very little money. This change in their behavior highlights the absurdity of the situation and reveals the hypocrisy of the clerks, who may themselves have only slightly more wealth than the young man.

The narrator is unaware of the emotions aroused in him when he is at the bank. He can not control his emotions. He has no ability to motivate himself to achieve the objective of opening a bank account. He can not interact with the bank officials in a positive manner. The bank officials do not treat him properly. He is an alienated guy, lacks smart goals.

Stephen Leacock's famous and widely reprinted essay, “My Financial Career” from Literary Lapses, is an excellent example of combining a humorous situation with a memorable character. The essay describes a young man who feels nervous and confused by the formal procedures of a modern bank. After depositing his money, he becomes so uncomfortable that he immediately withdraws the entire amount. In the end, he proudly claims that he is safer keeping his money in an old sock.

At first, the young man gives the impression that he is planning to deposit a large amount of money, which causes the bank staff to treat him with respect. However, when they discover that he has only fifty dollars to deposit, their attitude changes and he becomes an object of amusement. Despite this, Leacock does not mock the character cruelly. Instead, he shows genuine sympathy for the unfortunate man and humorously highlights the difficulties ordinary people face when dealing with impersonal and intimidating systems.

The story, My Financial career , relates about a man , who made a mess of a simple bank transaction because he was nervous and afraid of bank officials. if the man's emotional intelligence skills had been better developed, he would have been able to handle the situation in the bank more effectively.

V. Conclusion :

This story centers on three principles – observation, isolation and correction. It teaches why should we avoid ambiguity, enhancement of confidence, real world illustrations of communication methods. By reading this story readers gain foresight, trouble shooting skills, efficiency and restoration methods.

It is possible to develop emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman , Emotional intelligence is not a natural innate ability. It is a set of skills that can be learned with practice. These skills must be carefully studied and developed in order to achieve outstanding performance. Goleman believes that people are born with a general emotional intelligence that determines their ability to learn emotional skills, and therefore they can increase their emotional intelligence levels through practice. Those who want to abandon the forced emotions (emotional hijacking) that have been ingrained in them by nature, the environment they were born in, the negative perceptions of the environment they work in, and the shortcomings in building relationships are really interested in this matter.



If you practice these one can strengthen emotional intelligence. Listen carefully, positive affirmations, Body language, communicate effectively, speak emotionally, overcome stress, observe your emotions, teach others, teach your friends, Be flexible, possess humor.

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