



Art of Neighbourliness in Tim Winton's Neighbours

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Abstract

This research paper explores how the idea of friendship and the relationship with the neighbours is presented in 'Neighbours' by Tim Winton. The purpose of this study is to understand how human connections are influenced by barriers, attitudes, and Community interactions. The analysis was carried out through close reading of the text alongside observations of real-life interactions with our neighbours in our living and working places and college environments. The findings reveal that relationship is weakening the people when they focus on faults and create emotional or physical walls in between them while mutual understanding and acceptance help to build positive bonds. This study concludes that living harmoniously with our surroundings requires openness, respect and a willingness to connect with others.

Keywords: neighbourhood, friendship, barriers, community, relationships

Introduction

Neighbourliness is the state of being friendly, helpful behaviour, especially between people who live near each other (Oxford). The short story "Neighbours", written by Tim Winton, is about a young couple who has moved to a new town where a lot of European immigrants live. They were quite uneasy with the new place and the surroundings. Both the young couple and their neighbors are prejudiced. However, as time goes by, they get used to the new atmosphere. The young couple starts to affectionately regard their neighbors and realizes that they are not that bad after all. Even the Polish helped the young couple to rebuild the henhouse. New experiences are really

awful for individuals as well as general public. It captures different aspects of like friendship, truth and respect. The story brings the multicultural as situation where an individual faces different challenges to step forward. The readers have one such couple in this story.

Walls without Barriers

The young couple has shifted to a city in Australia. They are unknown about the new society and its activities. They live in a little home. It has high ceilings and glass windows. The neighbours are the Macedonian family and a polish widower. The Macedonian family live in their left and the widower



in the right. The young couple does not like the activities of the neighbours. They believe them as continuing to disturb their peace.

The story 'Neighbours' proves that linguistic and cultural differences do not pose any kind of obstacle in the way of human relationships. We see that different kinds of people are living in a society that comes from different cultural and religious backgrounds and also from different countries where the language is different from one another. But they are living together as if they were members of the same family. Initially, the young couple does not like their neighbors. This is because of the prejudice of their neighbors. This is because, in the opening of the story, they disturb the young couple by creating different kinds of unwanted noise. But now, they like their neighbors and develop a positive attitude towards their neighbors.

Humanism and Ethical Vision

The people in the neighborhood were astonished at the role of the young man and his wife in their family because in our culture everybody has a plan that men do jobs out of the home and women were made for doing domestic work only. But in the case of a young couple, there is just the differing; the woman is doing work out of the house and the man is doing domestic work and writing his thesis all day.

The young couple cleared refuse from their backyard and turned and matured the soil. They started planting vegetables. The neighbour suggests opinion on a couple of ways of planting vegetables, spacing, hilling, mulching. The neighbours throw their weight and help them with the activities and give an opinion them on planting things. In winter the couple gives cabbage to the neighbours. A big woman with black eyes and a slaughterman arms gave her a full bag of garlic cloves to plant. The young man was busy in writing his thesis on the development of 20th century novel. He pays proper attention to their advice. When neighbours come to know about the pregnancy, people smiled always at them. The people in the neighbourhood were eager and prophesied that it would be a male baby. One man gives him chocolates, someone puts the name of

the coming child, someone forecast the new child is a boy, someone gives the baby a set of clothes, complete with booties and beanie. The young man helped his wife by supplying the needful things. All the neighbours love, care for them during their pregnancy time. The neighbours started to share labors.

During autumn when the couple started planting, the Macedonian family helped out. Later on in winter, the couple helped out the Macedonian family. There was exchange of smile between them. For the couple, it was fruitful as they were taught by the Macedonian family on how to kill during spring. It was during this time that the Macedonian neighbors found out about the pregnancy of the woman without being given any information. They amazed them with gifts and wished. Finally, the couple got their baby and the entire neighborhood celebrated it with full excitement. It was an unbelievable moment for the young couple.

Concept of Neighbourliness

The young couple before coming to a new home, he used to live in an uptown area where good neighbours were seldom seen and never heard. So, they assumed their new neighbour is the same. Young couples have prejudice about their neighbours. Macedonia family makes a shout and rant at a new married young couple because of the unnecessary noise produced from their room, e.g., washing, spitting, etc. It creates a bad feeling. It took six months for a young couple to understand their neighbour only chatting, not more than that. The old polish man hitting the nails uselessly. He was hammering the nails to woods to put out it again. He only hammering the nail all time but does not make anything. And also, he dislikes a boy next to his gate who urinates on the street. He has also seen him spraying his urine on the cat from the step. The head of the child is always lacking hair. When he suddenly encounters the child, he is afraid and nervous because of his bluish-gray color, his cobalt eyes. He does not feel painful with his eyes for too many months. They feel strange and horrible and frustrating there.



In the autumn, the young couple cleared refuse from their backyard and turned and manures the soil, and start planting vegetables. The neighbor also suggests opinion to a young man, the ways of planting vegetables, the ways of spacing, hilling, and mulching. He pays proper attention to these suggestions. And also, a big woman with black eyes and a butcher's arms gave her a bagful of garlic cloves to plant. After some time, he built a henhouse but downstairs. A polish man who disturbs him at the beginning comes without invitation and rebuilds it. They did not understand the word he spoke after helping him, as they both have different languages. Now, they share their things with their neighbors, like cabbage, fire hood in autumn, etc. And they help each other in the work.

Symbolism of Boundaries

In Tim Winton's *Neighbours*, boundaries function as powerful symbols of emotional and psychological separation rather than mere physical divisions. When the young couple first moves into their multicultural and multilingual community, they are suspicious of their neighbors. They describe the community as being crowded with European migrants and feeling like foreigners in a strange world. These boundaries represent fear of intrusion, cultural difference, and the desire for privacy.

“good neighbours were seldom seen and never heard”.

As the story progresses, these boundaries start to dissolve through normal experiences and human interactions. Hearing neighbors' noises, the smell of food, and responding together to illness start to transcend these invisible boundaries, making the couple more aware of the presence of others. These boundaries that used to cause discomfort start to bring people together. Through this shift, Winton shows that boundaries are not fixed but flexible, capable of being redefined through empathy and understanding (Winton 51).

By the end, boundaries lose their restrictive power and come to symbolize coexistence rather than separation. The couples no longer perceive their neighbours as outsiders but as part of a shared

emotional landscape. The use of boundaries by Winton ultimately shows that while physical boundaries may exist, emotional boundaries can be transcended. A neighbour thus shows that community is created by those individuals who allow their compassion to flow beyond boundaries to recreate a new understanding of personal space (Winton 53).

Tradition Vs. Change

In Tim Winton's *Neighbours*, the concern between tradition and change is delicately explored through the contrast between personal segregation and communal living. The young couple initially clings to a traditional notion of space to yourself, where the neighbours are expected to remain separate and simple in one another's lives. This attitude reflects a modern, peculiar mindset that values self-reliance over shared responsibility. The couple's reluctance to engage highlights how such traditions of emotional detachment can limit human connection within changing social surroundings (Lawler 118).

The neighborhood itself represents change, mainly through its multicultural composition. Colonist neighbours bring with them traditions fixed in collective living, mutual care, and shared spaces. Their everyday practices—communal dread, shared food and attentiveness to others—challenge the couple's inherited ideas about limitations and independence. Without direct argument, these alternative traditions gradually influence the couple, demonstrating how change often occurs through exposure rather than conflict (Winton 52).

By the conclusion of the story, Winton suggests that meaningful change does not need the rejection of all civilization but their transformation. The couple maintains its personal space while accepting a sense of belong and liability to others. *Neighbours*, that present traditions and changes not as opposing forces, but as something that can coexist when individuals adapt their values. Through this balance, Winton affirms that communities evolve when traditional notions of separation give way to more inclusive and compassionate ways of living (Lawler 120).



Individualism Vs. Community

In the opening, the young couple doesn't like their neighbours. It was due to the discrimination of their neighbours. Because in the beginning, neighbours troubled the young couple by produce different types of surplus noise. But now, they like their neighbours and industrial a positive attitude toward their neighbours. A young couple didn't plan for a child but after at times a young woman gets with child. All the neighbours love, care for them throughout their pregnancy time. The young woman feels happy, thankful.

“assaulting some unseen barrier, until suddenly it was smashed and she (I) was through”.

Neighbours would assist the young women in a rigid time of pregnancy. After the baby birth, whole neighbours celebrate it and welcome the new guest (child) in the world. After seeing his baby and the help nature and positive approach of neighbours the young man weeping. And he realizes that twentieth-century novel had not arranged him for this. Tim Winton desires to prove that people help is very essential in a society. He highlights the meaning of the co-operation and family. Variation of language, culture and race can't stop group of people to spread the message of love, unity and unselfish help. They didn't converse one other's languages and share a parallel culture, thus language and culture didn't seem to play a role in their statement, yet the young couple appear to have learnt to shout like their neighbours. After a period of change, the couple figure out how to mix together in.

Indeed, the text prove that the linguistic and cultural barrier do not create any problem in human relationships. The story explain that when the young couple begin to grow a backyard, it encouraged their neighbours to approach the enclosure and offer tips on spacing, hilling, and mulching. The couple determined to build a hen house, which they accomplished with the assistance of one of their neighbours. They were finally equal to everyone else.

Cultural Contexts and Social Realities

The couple learns a lot of things from Macedonian family-like slaughter (kill an animal for food), how

to dress etc. Now, the couple feels relaxed with them. They get pleasure from telling stories etc. with each other. They find themselves commotion along with neighbours and feel under the influence towards neighbours. Now, they are closer to their neighbours in spite of their cultural difference language differences, etc.

At the end the couple realizes the power of multicultural society who offered unselfish help. They learned the communication that discrimination and prejudice are the result of human lack of knowledge. It is important to accept our societies multicultural to assume ourselves in it.

Endings and Ethical Implications

The ending of Tim Winton's *Neighbours* is intentionally quiet and underrate, reflecting the story's focus on subtle changes rather than dramatic intention. The young couples do not experience a sudden change; rather, they come to a peaceful awareness of the stability of their neighbours. Such a subdued ending underlines the notion of moral development as a gradual process. Winton does not offer a clear judgment; rather, he lets the change in the perception of the characters speak for itself (Lawler 122).

Decently, accountability to others in a shared social space is emphasized. The neighbour's collective worry during the couple's moments of susceptibility points to a good framework based on sympathy and common care. The couple's acceptance of the support points to a principled shift from self-centred self-determination. It is a shift from the couple being the sole subjects of action to relational wakefulness. Winton implies that ignore those around us is not a unbiased choice but one with honorable cost, as isolation can weaken both human being and public well-being (Winton 54).

Eventually, the ending affirms a moral vision stranded in human connection and coexistence. Without crossing corporeal limitations, the characters cross touching ones, recognize their place within a broader human network. *Neighbours* concludes by signifying that ethical living involves attentiveness to others and openness to shared life, making



community not merely a social arrangement but a moral responsibility (Lawler 123).

Conclusion

The story “Neighbours” ends with an understanding of the man who had been having prejudice towards his neighbours. They turned out to be very caring. He felt that the real surroundings taught more than his thesis writing. They bring specific facial appearance of helping others in need, which can be regard as role models for everyone. The polite behaviors of the neighbours and willingness to help make the story are ending remarkable. The humans have to deal with and conquer a diversity of changeable and startling situation during their lives. Everything does not go as well in real life as it does in the novel, hence the title “Neighbours”.

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