

## USAGE OF LANGUAGE IN RICHARD DE ZOYSA'S POEMS

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### ABSTRACT

*Richard de Zoysa, a Sri Lankan poet is an actor, drama teacher, journalist and broadcaster, human rights activist and political and social thinker. Richard's basic concept of poetry is a form of social criticism. It is mostly apparent in the political commentaries of Richard de Zoysa which were produced between 1981 and 1983 and later in 1988, in different contexts and forms. The first group deals largely with the ethnic violence to burst out with disastrous consequences in 1983. The second category deals with the consequences of violence throughout the country. The sensitivity of Richard is seen through his usage of language. Tamil extremists, Sinhala chauvinists and Government officials are criticized in a sharp manner through the images and symbols. The subject and style of his poems led to the use of what is termed as Standard English as he was brought up with English as the First Language in his family background. But it is desirable to see Richard to blend in particularly with Lankan terms and turns of phrases along with Standard English. The previous poets of a similar background had relied almost exclusively on Standard English forms and images But his own capacity to blend those with Lankan usage marks distinctive breadth. The objective of this research paper is to show the usage of Lankan terms amidst the Standard English to bring out the vivid consequences of violence in Sri Lanka at that period. The choice of diction, rhythmic patterns and the syntactic structure add more strength to his poetic language. I have planned to use analytical and comparative methods. The qualitative methodology of the research will be carried out through texts, journals and articles. Thus, I attempt to analyse, compare and contrast the poems of Richard de Zoysa.*

**Keywords:** *Consequences, Extremists, Lankan, Violence*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The life of Richard is filled with great many dimensions- he was an actor and drama teacher, journalist and broadcaster, human rights activist and political and social thinker. Richard de Zoysa was born into the westernized upper class of Colombo in March 13<sup>th</sup> 1958. His parents belong to that privileged, English-educated elite which has

dominated all areas of life such as politics, commerce, the public service, sports etc. Richard felt a sense of guilt at the superiority conferred on themselves by their knowledge of English, or the 'kaduwa' as it was characterized. Richard had the sense of guilt in his private world. By the early 1980s the conflict between Sinhala and Tamil interests had risen up. It expressed most starkly as