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**WORD, TEXT AND MEANINGS: A CRITIQUE ON POST-STRUCTURALISM**



*-Dr. Pramod Ambadasrao Pawar*

*Assistant Professor & Head*

*Dept. of English & Director, IQAC*

*Sant Dnyaneshwar Mahavidyalaya, Soegaon,*

*Dist. Aurangabad MS INDIA*

**ABSTRACT**

*The possibilities of language demand the accessibility of ideas. That is of language and the extension of knowledge is beyond human perception, comprehensibility and cognition. Language is made of the signs. Signs are only symbols embedded with meanings. These signs are simply images with a general sense of objects. These objects are the verbal images in its*

*perception and one can find the free flow of these images in the text and outside the text. To enrich the reality, the centre of a text is slippery. But, it is found nowhere. Every time, the meaning is either being postponed or stabilized.*

**KEYWORDS**

*Text, Word, Meaning, Reading, Knowledge, Signs*

## RESEARCH PAPER

This is quite conspicuous to understand exactly where the reality lies. Is it in the text or outside the text? This is the crux of the matter to know the reality within and without. Most of the times, the reality becomes textual, does it lie within? Or somewhere else! This seems to be quite frightening in a techno-digital world today.

Reading and interpretation, then, are not just reproducing what the writer thought and expressed in the text. This inadequate notion of interpretation Derrida calls a 'doubling commentary', since it tries to reconstruct a pre-existing, non-textual reality (of what the writer did or thought) to lay alongside the text. Instead, critical reading must produce the text, since there is nothing behind it for us to reconstruct. Thus, the reading has to be destructive rather than reconstructive in this sense. (Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory – An introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, p. 67)

The possibilities of language demand the accessibility of ideas. That is of language and the extension of knowledge is beyond human perception, comprehensibility and cognition. Language is made of the signs. Signs are only symbols embedded with meanings. These signs are simply images with a general sense of objects. These objects are the verbal images in its perception and one can find the free flow of these images in the text and outside the text. To enrich the reality, the centre of a text is slippery. But, it is found nowhere. Every time, the meaning is either being postponed or stabilized. It's awesome to distinguish the differences of meanings from the original. This is the reason why the reader is on horns of dilemma due to the slippery nature of meanings. It is constantly getting slipped and speedy in interpretations of the text. This unpredictability and incomprehensibility of the textual reality marks vulnerability of all the textual images imbedded into the signs. The meaning is stationary once it reaches its absolutism where it is singular in the midst of plurality, multiplicity and incessant signification within the text. Here is the example of the seed and the flowering plant to uphold singularity in the text. The flowering plant demonstrates the abundance of meanings in its scattered branches of meanings. So, all these branches offer the seeds in fruits which get unified and merged into the seed the meaning. The singular meaning is egged in the seed which further begets meanings. A plant with multiple branches bearing fruits is seedy again. A single seed in the fruit begets many meanings ending into the abundance of seeds. One can give another example that is of a chemical bond of  $H_2O$  which means water. It means there are two molecules of hydrogen and one molecule of

oxygen and then there is the formation of water. In this context, one can state that the two molecules of hydrogen are unified into one and oxygen gets merged into hydrogen then. Finally, there is the formation of H<sub>2</sub>O with a chemical reaction, that is, water. In Chemistry, there are many different bonds. They are nothing but the emergence of divergence of bonds strengthened from a single point of energy. All these bonds rotate around its axis. Despite their differences, all chemical bonds unite themselves into oneness in the formation of a new structure. One can give another example, that is, in Physics; there is a simple experiment that one can still remember about pendulum. There is a single point of moving pendulum like the centre in a text. There is the centre in a text around its axis. All the meanings rotate like a pendulum in a text without signification. If we keep moving the pendulum from one side to another, it goes in a linear motion in a systematic way. It reaches up to the point in which it cannot return back to its original state again. It then gets rotated in this way till all the oscillations pave way to the multiplicity/ plurality of meanings. All these meanings finally get into one meaning, that is, the absolute meaning, the truth. The crux of the matter is that the centre in a text is fixed and functional.

On the contrary,

Essentially, the deconstructive reading of literary texts tends to make them emblems of the decentred universe we have been discussing. Texts previously regarded as unified artistic artefacts are shown to be fragmented, self-divided, and centreless.

(Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory – An introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*, p. 65)

The textbook is made up of signs which have a systematic grammatical structure with a complete sense of meanings. This linguistic notion leads to the unique structure within the text generating multiplicity of the meanings. The interaction of the meanings generated by words within cannot be guaranteed unless it reaches unto a certain point where the complete meaning is preserved and the meaning becomes non-referential and non-contextual. The relativity is a great hindrance in the interpretation of the text. No knowledge is relative unless it is thoroughly received. Up to some extent, the meaning is a product of difference, relative in the context from person to person. The same object means differently to different words in the context. The words are interdependent and interconnected. The meaning has to be understood on the basis of the meaning of another word. The absence of one word is the presence of another word and presence of the one word refers to the absence of another. The bizarre dichotomy and extreme polarization

of meanings is the essence of the interpretation of words in a text. It's very difficult to understand the presence without understanding the absence. It's difficult to know the day time without the conception of night. Even it's difficult to sense good without understanding evil. The level of meanings is understood on the basis of history, etymology and concept of a text. The senses generate meanings, but no meaning is ultimate till it demands further interpretations ceaselessly in the continuous chain of meanings. The weighing process of signification and fictional debate in the text makes one misinterpret the text. No presence is understood without absence in this context. The different layer of interpretation with the literal sense is the prime concern in its philosophical and literary interpretation of the text. Superficially, meanings have integrity of meanings in the linguistic formulations held in the text. They do not generate the meanings in a real sense. If generated, all is fictional till it reaches the Absolute, the Truth. Yes, it generates meanings in a post-structural perspective. Structuralism unmask the meaning in a text whereas the text masks the structure in a post-structural sense. The meaning is being asked by the structure because everything is being structured and analyzed in a logical interpretation. The categorical distinction is inherent in the text and this categorization problematizes the true comprehensibility of the objects. The word formation is the root cause of multiplicity in the text in a linguistic way. The structure thus generates ideas beyond ideas struggling to cope with the plural meanings.

Derrida is fully aware that his own language, whether spoken or written, is subject to *différance*. He also knows that it cannot escape the centring effects that language, because of its countless connotations, always has. Even radical critiques of language have to make use of the medium they criticize in order to communicate. The critique undermines the language that it uses, but that language, because of its centring effects, simultaneously undermines the critique. (Hans Bertens, *Literary Theory – The Basics*, p. 130.)

Post-structuralism is the most basic way of understanding the true essence of the text despite all multiplicity of meanings. The meaning is circulatory is not the ultimate solution of any textual analysis in the interpretation of the text. There should be the concrete findings of any textual analysis where the meanings got codified in signs and tangible in the text. The meaning is a product of a continual chain of signs leading to final signification within the text.

The ultimate meaning is unpredictable and invalid in its fullest sense in a post-structural world. No meaning is determined without the context, but there may be many ways out of the context to

know the meaning. The meaning is an inherent portion of the text which is often ultimate and stable after long debated discourses in the human sciences. All the discourses finally rest in a motionless way in this context wherein the reason is questioned and the intellectual ability of critics is dishonored and distrusted. In fact, all the human beings are independent entities. Text is a product of human understanding and experience. There is a clear-cut deeper understanding of the essence of things by every individual. The text is endless, based on the meanings generated in the context. All the meanings finally lead to the singular meaning. This skepticism challenges the intellectuals across the world. The intellectuality is broken into pieces once the Western civilization demands for the further interpretations.

The emergence of post-structuralism is found in France in the late 1960s. It's crucial to us for exactly understanding the paradigm shift in the structural to the post-structural point of view. The difference between them plays a crucial role in the interpretation of text despite all efforts is made by critics. The question of meaning has not yet been resolved and satisfied us in its real interpretation and analysis of the text. Every critic is an individual who expresses his old ideas about the text. It doesn't mean that the text never demonstrates the status of the finality in meanings. Is there any finality of meanings in the text? It has been simply stated that the author is dead is not the solution of the problem. In fact, the close study of a text, its understanding through the structural and post-structural mode is not enough and finalized. In a simple way, it requires peeping into the absenteeism, the final meaning is off. All the meanings are necessary to finalize the meaning. Do all the meanings in the text demand further interpretations? The text is not complete; meaning of the text is merely a compilation of coded recollected signs on the page. A page is the text. By and large, the author is studied by the critic, the critic is sensed by the reader and the reader is interpreted by the text. The text is further embedded with the interrelated meanings by the author. The author has engrained with multiple images within the text.

To sum up,

Deconstruction has come in for a good deal of criticism. It has been argued, for instance, that ultimately all deconstructionist interpretations are similar, because they always lead us to *difference*, to the impossibility of final meanings. Although this is true, it disregards the fact that before a deconstructionist reading arrives at the point, it has first uncovered the structures that operate in a text and shown us how these structures can be dismantled

by making use of elements of the text itself. (Hans Bertens, *Literary Theory – The Basics*, pp. 133-134.)

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