

An Analysis Of Roland Barthes's Resurrection Of The Author And Redemption Of Biography

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1-Introduction

Ronald Barthes, the presenter of new conflicting and controversial ideas among the critical circles of his contemporaries. He presented his ideological eclecticism in the form of “The Death of the Author” in 1967. He actually argues against the age old controversies regarding the role of author in a text. He was launching this project against the desires and biographical areas of the author while interpreting a text in a traditional literary criticism. He refuted this concept by pointing that author and text are poles apart.

Being literary critic and theorist his criticism in the subject, provided immortality to this essay in the annals of literary theorizing. He became an exponent of bitter criticism on traditional literary criticism where method of reading and criticism are his focal areas. These are critically interpreted by keeping in view the author’s identity. During this process of criticism, many other aspects are closely monitored like political views, historical perspective, religious norms, ethnic issues, psychological factors and further biographical attributes. In other words, distillation of meaning from the author’s perspective where the text is interpreted by keeping in view the personal traits of the author. In this process, likes and dislikes of the author definitely affects the “explaining methodologies” of the text. Barthes is convinced by the suitability and tidiness of this as faulty and irrational method: “To give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text”.

2. Background

According to Barthes, the reader's task is to keep a literary text away from its creators because this is the only way to provide this text "liberty" from the tyranny of interpreters. The same notion is perceived by Erich Auerbach, while discussing narrative tyranny in the Biblical stories. The literary text (writing) carries multiple layers and meanings. In this way Barthes employs an analogy between text and textiles. He clarifies that a "text is a tissue of quotations, borrowed from " innumerable centers of culture", not from any other individual experience.

The center of meaning lies in the responses of the reader not the likes and dislikes of the writer, as Barthes says, " a text's unity lies not in its origins", or its author, "but in its destination", or its readers or audience. He does not believe in the creative influence of the author in a text but calls him merely a "scripter". In this way, he challenges the power between the terms "author" and "authority". The primary task of the scripter is to produce rather than to explain the present work. Actually, he is person another thesis as "the birth of the reader" in a literary text. Any piece of literature is "eternally written here and now" he further says, "Language itself is the origin" of meaning and creates different impressions on the reader. The traditional critical approach, while analyzing literature confuses the readers, he questions, "How can we detect precisely what the writer intended? (Epigraph to the essay by Honore de Balzac)

While citing this story and questions the readers to finalize who is speaking in the story and about what and "Is it Balzac, the author professing 'literary' ideas on femininity? He further challenges this approach and denies that this is a kind of universal wisdom and intellect. This piece of literature must be presented for free interpretation. The author's presence limitizes the scope for multiple interpretations of the literary text. (Eliot's objective correlative)

By accepting this idea of different interpretations, Barthes quoted Stephane Mallarme who believes in the dictum, "only language which speaks" and Marcel Proust, "concerned with the task inexorably blurring. The relation between the writer and his characters Barthes's concern about the death of the author becomes the most authentic and evaluative recognition in favour of authority and authorship. The readers, instead of accepting single or secluded theological message interpretation, focus on "a multidimensional interpretations. In this way, the readers of the text to liberate "meaning" from the clutches of the author. By acknowledging this notion of "multiple interpretations" they get engaged in anti- theological activities. Barthes impressively sketches the picture of an environment where the reader refuses an ultimate meaning to text and revolutionizes his critical thinking and at the end, he refuses God, reason, political vision; science, which disturbs the challenges the authority between author and reader of a text. In this way, the death of the author" becomes a metaphor of an open challenge and threat against. The tradition unquestionable superamacy of the author. This idea paves the ground for "birth of the reader." and shatters the political hegemony for the multitudes by enthroning the reader.

As for as the influences of Barthes, are concerned, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault are the theorists who worked in a similar fashion. In his essay 1969, "What in an author" he summarizes the same notation propounded by Barthes in 1967.

As he considers the literature as “Collective cultural products” not from same individual or singular beings. Barthes followed Foucault’s interpretation of the text, as he interprete the author from his pedestal of authority on the contrary; Barthes hands over the full responsibility of interpreting the text, to the reader. In this way, Barthes collaborated with the mission of the “Yale school” of deconstructionist critics, in the 1970s.

3-Objectives

The research paper seeks to achieve its general objective of comprehending Barthes’ criticism in the subject, provided immortality to this essay in the annals of literary theorizing by focusing on the specific objectives listed below:

- 1-To comprehend the very idea he “advocates” in the text that “Death of the Author” defends traditional motions of authorship.
- 2- . To determine the influence of Barthes’s concern for the reader’s role in the text?
- 3- To assess the concept of past daring affiliation with the authority of the author.

4-Research Questions

- 1- What is the relationship between the author and the text?
- 2- What is the outcome of reading literary texts without taking historical or biographical details?
- 3- What is the significance of the concept named “International Fallacy” (stresses that a poem does not belong to its author)?

International Fallacy

In response to the ideas propounded by Barthes in “The death of the author” were argumentatively challenged by a group of literary critics, by the ideology of the school of New Criticism. These critics like among of them, started reading literary texts without taking historical or biographical details, under consideration. This criticism differs from Barthes theory of critical reading in its treatment by presenting more authority to the text during interpretation. This concept named “International Fallacy” stresses that a poem does not belong to its author, rather “It is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it or control it. The poem belongs to the public”.

Satire on the very idea he “advocates” in the text that “Death of the Author” defends traditional motions of authorship. Some scholars strongly reject Barthes’s thesis, as Camille Paglia says. “Most pernicious of French imports is the notion that there is no person behind a text.” In this context, Seam Bruke emphatically opposed “Death of the Author” called Death and Return of the Author .In other words, it becomes the “Resurrection of the Author”.

Barthes keeps author alongside the text, instead of considering the text like a kind of demigod with the amalgamation of creative and history. He presents, French critic stephane Mallarme, who recognized the significance of language rather an obsession with authorship. In this case the author should not govern literary criticism the death of author opens limitless

interpretation of the text. Barthes's concern for the reader's role in the text brings past daring affiliation with the authority of the author where the author's biography was considered the key to interpret meanings of the text. Secondly, the author's intention, the prime object of the text. He challenged the idea of changing the focal area from the author to the text.

While viewing a piece of writing "the author, his presence his life, his tastes, his passion" (Barthes 383). In his way, the credit of failure or success of the text goes to the author. In this respect, Barthes presents an interesting examples ".....Baudelaire's work, van gogh's his madness, Tchaikovsky's his voice."(383)

In this regard, the burial of the author brings alternative title of a "scriptor" who is not having the pedigree of the expression of the author, on the contrary a title "scripting" only. The above mentioned discussion brings fundamental questions that connects the act of murder and the author's burial. It highlights the issue concerning the act of the (murder) author's murder and conversion with a new phase of a passive scriptor. The root of this issue presents the rationale in the very background of this action, presented by Barthes in his essay. During while pondering over the rationale, basic issues demand for critical consideration as far as this theory is concerned.

For example, the absence of the author on the very plea as Barthes describes "writing is the destruction of every voice of every point of origin....where all identity is lost. During his struggle to snatch liberty of the text, from the conceived dictatorship of the author he presents the fact and figures, by focusing on "ethnographic societies where the author adopts the role of a "mediator" or "reconciliator" for the people without ascribing the genius. The fact is this that in the most ethnographic societies, the mediator cannot be separated from his origin of identity and solidarity this the spirit which connects them all. According to Bakhtinian concept of social evaluation where he takes historical actuality under consideration for the unification between the utterance and the completion of meaning (Siman Denith 1995:148).

In spite of all above mentioned justification there is very close relationship between the author and the text. According to postmodernist school of thought that "expression" should be vacuated by "inscription" which means to prove the grounds for the exclusion of "history" in the text. It creates an impression that a literary text can be written even without carrying meaning. This brings the concept of anti-language implication which confirms the vernacular of new criticism where Barthes becomes the central figure (Philip Thody 1997:93). It manifests that literature has not the power to transfer ideas and it is without meaning. In this way, the death of the author brings the death of meaning in a literary text. In this context, Barthes is of the view, "this is the fact.....writing can no longer designate an operation of recording, notion, representation, depiction....." (Pg 2). This all justifications propounded by Barthes, is for the sake of free reading, where the reader is at ease and comfort to liberate text from the clutches of the author.

Rot and Champagne' Concept

In this respect famous critic Roland Barthes presents his idea, “a consumer-oriented method of reading”. This concept comes under bitter criticism of Barthes, where the author claims to present in the form of “writing” nothing but, in the words of Barthes “a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable center of culture” (P2). This concept brings the futility and vacuity of the text. But significantly, ALLEN considers the text as a source of “game”, it brings the poststructuralist concept of deferred meaning, allows the Barthesian conception which predicts countless “intertextual constructs” with creating meaning.

This can also be attached with Barthes claim for an amalgamation of “passions, humours, feelings and impressions (P3)”. In this context the mediatory role of the critic can also be challenged. In this perspective, it is not possible for linking anyone of the four areas “History, liberty, society and psyche” to the original text.

After analyzing Barthes argument, the basic contradiction lies at the center of this thesis. The Barthes autobiography cannot keep the readers away from himself and the text. This book is full of contradictions but Barthes theorized a lot on the death of the author. He presents in his autobiography, “I do not say I am going to describe myself, he further elaborates, “I am writing a text and I call it R.B, I shift from imitation and entrust myself to nomination.” (Roland Barthes P56).

Paul Jay' Ideology

He explains further by rejecting the prospect of an actual, self-referent as for the relation between the author and the text, is concerned. Paul Jay (1984) Congratulates Barthes efforts to prevent any affinity between the text based on autobiography and the author, by using Barthes examples to “deflect” and “bait” the topic from the ultimate destination on the contrary, this defence is vanished in the presence of reality. This shows that autobiographical writing violates all the elements of history, passion, origin and other significant areas that describe such creative and artistic work. These key concepts manifest without any effort that the way how the man, RB, is the central to any other subject. In other words, can we say that “scripting” is genuinely produced. The term “scripting” by Barthes is in doubt, but it is clear that the volume shows that an individual considers the reconciliatory or the supportive words used against them. Ultimately, there is no choice for the readers to keep themselves away from creating connections between the “fragments” and the author of the text. Many critics especially Mary Wiseman (1989) presented her verdict as “Barthes plays havoc with the traditionally conceived relation between authors and self-conscious writings of the self by forging the question characteristic of such writings, namely “who am I” and raising instead the pragmatically self-contradictory question “am I”.

Gayatri Spivak's Perceptin

Barthes philosophical interpretation of the subject, was against the voice of his age and in other words, it becomes a catalytic to the creation of cultural studies as for as his concept is concerned

in the context of the postcolonial world of Asia and Africa. In this way “the death of the author” can be discussed under the “colonialism”. Gayatri Spivak (1994) is of the view, the justification of colonial text can definitely face the counter sentiments of the Indians. In this way such claims as Barthes meant that literature is without the canons of meaning. Another interpretation is also that “man” and “meaning” have failed altogether to be at the core of communication, if meaning is attached only before the era 1965, how astonishing changes between the meaning of western and afro-Asian literatures of postcolonial era. Analyzing the spirit of the Barthes argument, one can easily perceive that if literature is not bridging the gap of meaningful societal relevance in the western world, such situation cannot be attached with the third world. The very difference lies in the social hierarchy of the third world. Therefore so that the concept of memory, passion history as well as society, are clarified through “origin” but on the contrary all there is essential ingredients are denied by Barthes these all play very pivotal role in comprehending the literature of third world. It suggests the author of this part of the globe is still alive for transferring meaning, it is further explained by Spivak how to read a culturally different book. He suggests that these authors must be considered as dedicated and committed to present the identity and meaning regarding their postcolonial world. They accept this task of presenting postcolonial world without favoring or disfavoring the personalities. If they defy this compromise, they will be removed from this significant status. For further inquiry one can easily find significant authors who are really blessed with the power of expression and comprehension of the existing world where they are not just compelled to highlight, but also to express in this context, some prominent writers can be presented for criticizing Barthes idea of the role of the author in a literary text. The writers from the west, Sean Ocasey and Asian writers Ahmad Ali, “Twilight in Delhi” the writers have actually employed the “magical-realist mode” and the dedication to implement the historical consciousness by representing the socio-political scenario cannot be ignored by the readers. It means if the readers are inculcated by Barthes concept, and readers consider this narratives as a kind of “games”. In spite of this injunction, they are still understanding the spirit of the infused by author. This magic realist mode is full of many contradictions, actually violates all established cannon with the concept of devocalization (Lois Zamora and Wendy Faris 2000:3). In this way, Bhatti, ZI (2020) pointed out the significance of this phenomenon of the dictatorship of the unipolar realism of the critics of the west has been strongly refuted and bitterly castigated. It challenges Barthes” paradigm by accepting the realities of the age.

Geeta Karpur’s Stance

The above mentioned view has further accelerated by the emerging impact of narratology in the domain of literary discourse. It means the very basic quires of postcolonial cannot be settled. In other words ,it can be interpreted in the words of Gerald Prince (2005),the literary discourse of postcolonial era, can keep its own spirit and it emphatically portrays its own image without any ambiguity and confusion in this connection, Geeta Karpur (2004:58) mentions the concept of “structure of feeling” This can be applied to Ahmad Ali’s Twilight in Delhi. By keeping in view, the narrative pattern, it is clear that Twilight in Delhi is full of digression, which creates some

confusions in the course of narration because of the apparently irrelevant issues and episodes .But magical-realist mode can be interpreted as a delightful narration in which Muslim society of Delhi delineated as a metaphor, where the voice of liberty has overcome the colonized India. This novel analyzes the existing scenario where Muslim society is being crushed by the colonializers. The protagonist Mir Nihal becomes really the aesthetic presentation and one can easily acknowledge Ali's contribution to "normally non-western, Indian genre of non-mimetic narration....."

It is very convicting to justify that Ali might have perceived the paradigm of the text in the Great Britain, in this piece of writing ,the overall mode of narration remains Hindustani and one cannot keep the text away from the author and his society. The connectivity between the history and the author along with all other issues are vividly portrayed by the author. The author breathes in the every nook and corner of the text .As Mir Nihal becomes the mouth pieces of his creator, Ahmad Ali. The novel, twilight in Delhi (1940) has been drawn from the sociological soil of India by using his stylistic, realistic and autobiographical techniques. As it has been acknowledge by many critics, Ali "a Muslim Fourth to the Indian big three of the 1930s- Raja Rao, Narayan and Anand, "clarified his intention, my purpose was to depict a phase of our national life and the decay of a whole culture, a particular mode of thought and living, now dead and gone already right before our eyes seldom is one allowed see a pageant of History whirl past and partake in it too (Twilight in Delhi pg 7)

Even the role of religion is very significant; it can be seen in various ways how religion is exploited for getting ulterior motives. The name of Islam is used for accumulating wealth. It means various religions in the subcontinent were manipulated by the ruling political class and religious leaders. They all collectively manipulate the masses through the 'religion' as a weapon and aggravate the situation by instigating them to launch war against each other. They focused on the slogan cast, color and creed". The use of powerful narrative pattern brings affiliation and attachment the author to the critical history of India'. This phenomenon cannot be refuted or ignored by the literary critics.

The connection between the text and the author is vividly described by the writer, as Ahmad Ali mentions the relation between the sociological soil and the people as, "How deadly this fever is, everyone is dying of it. Men become lame with it and go out in doils. The hospitals are gay and bright. But sorry is men's plight."

Ahmad Ali's View point

In this way, the mind of the protagonist can be measured by the readers. Actually Mir Nihal's view point reflects the intention of the author, as the jubiliations of coronation of George V changed the city "which was once the greater in Hindustan as" an exhibition ground." The writer claims, ".....but the Frangis came from across the seven seas, and gradually established their rule. By egging on Indian chiefs to fight each other and by giving them secret and open aid, they won concessions for themselves; and established their empire. In this piece of discourse the author even

uses culture bound words for showing his arrogance and disgust for the rulers, as Ahmad Ali says, “The procession passed ...the Tommies and the chiefs,as it seemed to Mir Nihal, that Delhi has been conquered with the force of arms and at the point of guns will she be retained.(Pg.149).

In this way, he further elaborates, “The procession passed by the Jama Masjid...., vulgarly decorated with a garland of golden writing containing slavish greetings from the Indian Muslims to the English King, Playing the treachery of the priestly class to their people and Islam(Pg.150).

The text clearly exhibits the flavour of author’s antagonistic behavior against the Britishers, as the author satirically mentions, “that the British celebrating the death of an Edwardian King by holding a ground durbar on the ashes of Mughal pride in ravished Delhi”. In this text, the author is committed to portray anti-British sentiments because of their hostility against Muslims and Islam.

The reflection of artist’s conception is very much prevalent in the conflict between British and Muslims in Twilight as Habibuddin declares on the death of Muslim youth, “the English frankly say that they fear no one but Muslims in India and that if they crush the Mussalmans they shall rule with a care-free heart.”(262).

During the course of the novel, Nasim expressed the passions for the Balkan War,

“The wish for glory and martyrdom has begun to sway our hearts again

We shall try his skill and see what strength is in the enemy’s hand

Let the time come we will show what courage there is in us still

Why should we tell you now what we have in our hearts? The power of will

But, traveler on the road of love, Tire and weary not in the way

The pleasure of tramping the desert is greater the farther is the goal away (Pg 263)

The pathetic picture of Delhi creates very frustrating situation where no peace at all, Azans and prayers were under dire threat of the masters. The Chandni chowk looked very desolate and deserted where Indian police men were patrolling. Mir Nihal’s tragic thinking is actually the frustration of the author. The background of the novel describes the trials and tribulation of Muslims. This novel has been written by keeping in view the British anti-Muslim discrimination. As W.W Hunter (1866) pointed out, “After the Mustiny, the British turned upon the Mussalmans as their real enemies, so that failure of the revolt was much more disastrous to them than the Hindus.”

By keeping in view, Barthes’ paradigm, his claim can argumentatively be refuted on the grounds, if these incidents have been portrayed by another writer, the text would definitely have been

different. It means there are unbreakable connections between the place of the author in a literary text.

In another example, the author is deeply rooted in the soil of his culture where he observes and analyzes.

While criticizing Barthes paradigm, many authors not from the East but also from the western world can be quoted. They presented their respective works without mixing their personalities in these masterpieces but in spite of all, their affinities with their cultures and societies are vividly reflected. In this context from the west many writers like Seamus Heaney, portrays the pathetic picture by focusing the sociological facts of Irish people. He critically castigates the clergy as well as the political set up of his country. His character Charlie Bentham has become the spokesman of his political philosophy and the captain Boyle becomes another representative of the philosophy of the author, during the course of the play 'Juno and the Paycock'

"The clergy always had too much power over people in this unfortunate country, as in the form of Mrs. Tancred, the author claims, "whether they are up or down- it won't bring me darling boy from the grave". These all should be interpreted the autobiographical elements of the author. No one can snatch this relation between the author and the sociological background. As it is generally observed in literature, as Emerson says "Literary emotions spring from the sociological soil". This further can be explained by keeping in view Gotha's idea about literature "Literature reflects the spirit of the age in which it is written."

Perceptions of 21st Century Men of Letters (Drabble, Scott, Foster, Conrad)

In this context Margaret Drabble's Ice Age, hives more insight in this direction where Barthes has strictly raised objections especially the role the author in a literary text. She presents the horrifying picture of London in these words, "London is in turmoil, everyone is blaming everyone (ice age). She further elaborates in her book, "The English society was full of sexually perverted and morally inverted people". Margaret further elaborates the pathetic picture of England in these words, "England was a safe, Shabby, mangy oil lion now; anyone could tweak her tail." In this novel, Alison Murry the image of the author herself, Gareth says, "Britain will recover, but not Alison Murry"

These lines depict the autobiographical aspects with close connectivity between the author and the literary text. Another worthy example can be quoted in the form of Paul Scott's The Jewel in the Crown. Although the author is an English but his bitter criticism is clearly reflected in his writings. As he portrays the cruelty of the English masters in colonial India, as he narrates, "Dogs and Indians were not allowed' was the banner displayed outside the Gymkhana club" In this description, he further pins point the critical issue of the time, the rape of Daphne manners. He sarcastically claims, "although a white man could, make love to a black girl, the black man and white girl association was still taboo" (pg445). He further goes beyond by pointing out, "what

happens when you unsex nation, treat it like a nation of eunuchs?" His ideas are really drastic and emotional, even at the cost of his own "Great" Britain. Scott further elaborates, "The rape of Indian nation by the Britishers is more grievous and heinous act than the rape of an English girl." In this context, the Scott claims, "In India, Indian and Englishman could never meet an equal demands".

This textual reinforcement fortifies the claim that Scott's bitter criticism is not only the objective issue but also his personal antagonism against British imperialism is very clear in the every nook and corner of the text. Barthes's claim cannot break and isolate Scott's personality from his masterpiece, "The Jewel in the crown,"

In this context, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* can be represented for justifying the role of the author in the text. As the author speaks against the imperialistic designs of the European, "Unhappy Europe thou shalt perish by hands of thy insane children". In this novel Marlow, an alter ego, of Conrad critically castigates the European imperialistic designs on the name of civilizing the brutes (Africans and Asians). This so-called movement of civilization and enlightenment by the Europeans is bitterly criticized by the writers like Scott; Conrad etc. the character "Marlow" actually a voice against this imperialism and colonialism, throughout the novel he presents the current scenario critically. After going through this piece of writing, no one can deny the utility of Marlow, who is actual, the spokesman of the author.

Even a layman cannot ignore this fact that Conrad's philosophy of anti-imperialism is reflected throughout the novel, in the form of Marlow.

For further enquiry Jane Austin's "Pride and Prejudice" can also be presented for justifying and analyzing the role of author in the text. In this piece of writing, Elizabeth, the mouthpiece of Austin, philosophizes many worldly matters. In this novel, at many places, autobiographical elements support this idea of significant role and place of the author in a text. In other words, the import of critical ideas is due to the author who is in the words of ST Coleridge, "the creator and creature of his age". In this context, Samuel Butler is of the view, "everyman's work...is always a portrait of himself."

In this respect, not only novelists and dramatis but also poets have same connotations as already mentioned above.

Browning describes this process in a poetic style, as in his poem *Anders Delsarto*,

"Incentives come from the soul's self". The other poets especially Shelly discloses his personality in his poem, stanzas written in *Dejection near Naples*,

"To me that cup has been dealt in another measure"

By keeping in view, all these aspects no one can deny the significant role of the author in a literary text. As observed earlier, just an act of artificiality cannot produce an everlasting impression on

the mind of the readers. The personality of the author affects the text to any extent. It is very logical as far as the place of the author in a literary text is concerned.

Conclusion

In all these textual instances, the readers are restricted to identify the historical connectivity between the narrative episodes and the Indian and Irish backgrounds. The structural analysis as well as the historical awareness of these master pieces clearly demonstrate an unbroken relation between the author to his respective history and the other aspects like origin, religion, politics and sociological phenomenon. Therefore Barthes analogy and the ultimate removal of the author from the text becomes not very convincing argument. So that, the position of the author will remain consistent and everlasting just as the historical aspects. At the end, it may be concluded that there is unbreakable connections between the author and the literary text. In other words, the abovementioned arguments fortify the birth of the author in the literary text.

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