



The Illusion of Creating a Text

Shaiqur Rahman

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Contents

Introduction

Key Questions and Method

Aspects of Author in Relation to Text and Its Creation

Aspects of Reader in Relation to Text and its Creation

The concepts of Intertextuality and Postmodernism

Regarding the Authenticity of the Text

Context Itself Is the Text

The Illusion of Creating a Text

Conclusion

Works Cited

Introduction

The word or concept 'text' has drawn special attention in modern literary theory. The attention may have reached its peak with the publication of Roland Barthes' essays 'From Work to Text' (1971) and 'The Death of the Author' (1970). Barthes arguably has coined the term 'text,' though critics like Derrida, McGann, Levinson, Leech, Short et al contributed to enhance the concept of text. The main significance of text lies in the contrasts between a work and a text. Talking about text and work, Keith M. Booker gives the following definitions: "In traditional criticism, the actual words of a given work. In poststructuralist criticism, a replacement for the notion of a 'work' to indicate the belief that works are not autonomous, self-contained artifacts, but always engage in extensive relationships with other works, if only because they consist of language, as do the other texts" (488). Barthes writes,

The difference is this: the work is a fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example), the Text is a methodological field. The opposition may recall (without at all reproducing term for term) Lacan's distinction between 'reality' and 'the real': the one is displayed, the other demonstrated; likewise, the work can be seen (in bookshops, in catalogues, in exam syllabuses), the text is a process of demonstration, speaks according to certain rules (or against certain rules); the work can be held in the hand , the text is held in language, only exists in the movement of a discourse (or rather, it is Text for the very reason that it knows itself as text); the Text is not the decomposition of the work, it is the work that is the imaginary tail of the text; or again, *the Text is experienced only in an activity of production*. It follows that the Text cannot stop (for example on a library shelf); its

constitutive movement is that of cutting across (in particular, it can cut across the work, several works). (156-157)

Barthes does not stop here but explains the differences between a text and a work further. Actually Barthes' concept of text versus work is influenced by his belief in the death of the author and giving more freedom to the reader. If the work is controlled by a God-like author who controls the meanings of an art-work, the text is quite free from this patriarchy. Some of the main differences that Barthes identifies between a work and a text are clearly explained by Paisley Livingston:

Works fit nicely within static classificatory schemes, while texts are paradoxical and defy all taxonomies. Works have stable identities and can be located in space and time, whereas texts are open-ended activities and processes. Works have stable meanings, but texts are plural and demotic. "My name is legion, for we are many," says the text, while works are associated with, and belong to, individual human subjects- the authors who created them. Discrete and stable social roles and identities are dissolved in textuality, where there are no judges, teachers, confessors, and analysts, just a depersonalized play of signifiers. In the world of the work, reading and writing are distinct activities of particular agents, but in textuality they are part of a single, symmetrical process. (91)

A quite different concept about the text is promoted by Derrida. His concept of text is more ambiguous. Derrida does not differentiate between the text and the context (world) in which one generally thinks a text is nourished and produced. Derrida's famous saying "there is nothing outside of the text" (158) is probably responsible for creating such a concept. It is probably taken wrongly by most literary critics as language usually creates confusions when defining a concept and as literary

criticism is a different discipline from philosophy. Unfortunately Derrida's concept is taken by many literary critics as an extension of New Criticism, i.e.:

Moreover the formalist emphasis on the text itself is significantly problematized in deconstructive criticism, for which textual boundaries are highly permeable and unstable, thus challenging conventional notions of just what constitutes a "text". Indeed deconstructionists do not distinguish between text and world in New Critical fashion because in their view everything is textual. (Booker 56)

But unlike Derrida's concept of text, New Criticism was not evolved from philosophy rather it was a simple way of literary criticism. So the way 'text itself is everything' to a newcritic can not be compared with Derrida's idea of text. However Derrida's concept of text is also very ambiguous because of its aphorism. It is really difficult to come to a decision on whether Derrida differentiated the text from the context or not. In this essay I do not take Derrida's aphoristic concept of text for granted, but view text and context as different. A text might be independent of context as a physical entity, but as a text is nothing but combinations of linguistic signs one has no alternative but to refer to the context to explicate the meaning of a text. Language itself is socially constructed and thus text and context are by definition interdependent.

Key questions, thesis, and method

This treatise is an attempt to explore the question of who/what creates a text. Two of the main agents related to text are author and reader. Most critics have given their attention to these two regarding the creation, or creation of meaning of a text. It is an 'accepted' understanding now that author and reader play the most important roles in the creation of a text. But this understanding is questionable as there are other elements and factors that play important roles in the creation of a text. In this treatise, I would explore the 'contribution' of the author and reader (as it was said by critics) along with the shortcomings that refrain them from fully creating a text. The aim of this treatise is to argue that the real creator of a text, if there is any is the context. What the author and the reader do is make collaboration by the unauthentic texts to explore the context. It also argues that creating a text is an illusion as for creating an authentic text one had to create an authentic context which is impossible.

This discourse is a rationalistic analysis with the goal of reaching a conclusion. As both literature and literary theory have their basis in 'subjective rationalism' rather than 'objective empiricism' it is difficult (or probably impossible) to follow an 'objective empiricist' method that can help to come to a conclusion. Therefore, the treatise analyzes the prevailing ideas of different critics and uses them as evidences (like data) so that its proclamations get validity. First of all emphasis is given to the author and his or her role in creating a text, and the shortcomings of the understanding that the author is responsible for creating a text are examined. In the same way there are discussions taken place of the reader, context and other related topics that might help to prove my argument that is it is neither the author nor the reader who creates a text; but context itself is the text and creating a text is an illusion.

Aspects of author in relation to text and its creation

There is no doubt that the author has long been considered as the creator of a text. It has been thought in two ways. Firstly, it is a human author who creates the text (or work as was thought traditionally) as God creates human beings. Secondly, a text's meaning is created as it was intended by an author. These are crucial decisions about creating a text. Probably this thinking has its roots in Romantic poets cum critics like Wordsworth and Coleridge. In their criticism they found the authors as the centre of meanings of the texts as the author's emotions and personal feelings were the origin of any text. Writing about "expressive theories" Abrams (1953) explains,

In general terms, the central tendency of expressive theory may be summarized in this way: A work of art is essentially the internal made external, resulting from a creative process operating under the impulse of feeling, and embodying the combined product of the poet's perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. The primary source and subject matter of a poem, therefore, are the attributes and actions of the poet's own mind; or if aspects of the external world, then these only as they are converted from fact to poetry by the feelings and operations of the poet's mind. (17)

This concept of the author's role in creating a text's meaning has so much influenced literary criticism that the author has for long been thought as the pivot of a text's meaning and thus the creator of a text.

The concept about the author is not uncomplicated. The complication to define an author begins from the conflict between an author as a human agent and an author who creates the meanings of a text. Foucault differentiates between *author* and living person who writes the work: "The author-function is [...] characteristic of the mode of

existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society” (148).

Thus the ‘author-function’ can create more than just a work.

However, he finds another kind of author besides literary authors and thinks they are different, as:

They are unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts. In this sense, they are very different, for example, from a novelist, who is, in fact, nothing more than the author of his own text. Freud is not just the author of *The Interpretation of Dreams* or *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*; Marx is not just the author of the *Communist Manifesto* or *Capital*: they both have established an endless possibility of discourse. (154)

But these ideas about *author* can also be found true when we refer to a novelist or literary writer. The concept of intertextuality is a proof of it. All the texts are influenced by the previous texts and thus we can say that the previous texts were able to create endless discourse for the future texts. T.S. Eliot was not only the author of *Waste Land* but he has ‘contribution’ in any poem written after *Waste Land*. Any novel or a literary text can also create ‘endless possibility of discourse’ as Foucault thought about the non-fictional writings of Freud, Marx et al.

Barthes’ idea of an author is more related to the argument of my essay since he challenges the author as the source of meanings of a text. He also shows how the author came to be thought of as the source of meanings of the text written by him. He begins saying about the birth of the author,

The author is a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as, emerging from the middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual,

of, as it is more nobly put, the 'human person'. It is thus logical that in literature it should be this positivism, the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology, which has attached the greatest importance to the 'person' of the author (143).

So following Barthes' idea we can say that an author is given the right to *own* a text as one owns his property by capitalism and individualism. But as meaning is the most important part of a text and author has as little control over it as he has over the copyright, it is doubtful to call him the creator of a text.

Barthes gives us some general reasons why the *author* is viewed as the source of creating meanings of a text. He thinks is the history of literature, biographies of writers, interviews, magazines or diaries or memoirs that put more emphasis on the author's life than the text. Scholars also were interested in comparing and contrasting a text with its author. In this process they try to bring out the author's personal life, his taste, passion, his view about the world etc to get the meaning of a text. Barthes writes that this is how the distinction between a text and its author's life is eliminated. As a result a critic finds "Baudelaire's work is the failure of Baudelaire the man, Van Gogh's his madness, Tchaikovsky's his vice" (143). This process surely would make the author as a kind of God who will be at the centre of the text rather than the text itself.

Getting the highest attention thus an author had also been found as the centre of meanings of a text. He was viewed as the source of meanings or creator of a text. This notion was very popular for many years until New Criticism arrived and T. S. Eliot wrote his famous essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919). Actually New Criticism, Derrida's concept of *différance* and Barthes's notion about the death of the author are all permutations and extension of Eliot's authentic ideas. Hirsch writes,

In the earliest and most decisive wave of the attack (launched by Eliot, Pound and their associates) the battleground was literary: the proposition that textual meaning is independent of the author's control was associated with the literary doctrine that the best poetry is impersonal, objective, and autonomous; that it leads an afterlife of its own, totally cut off from the life of its author. (1)

The authority of the author as a source of meanings and creator of the text has many consequences. As the author does not create the meaning it is not possible for a reader to discover his intended meaning. A reader does not get the author when he reads a text. It is only the text that he gets and he is supposed to decode it with the experience he has. His experience is totally different from that of the author. The language that he is provided in a text is, moreover, not concrete like scientific data. Thus a text is able to create polysemy which is different to a reader than the intended meaning of the author. In this respect Barthes asks the following questions when discussing Balzac's story *Sarrasine*:

Who is speaking thus? Is it the hero of the story bent on remaining ignorant of the castrato hidden beneath the woman? Is it Balzac the individual, furnished by his personal experience with a philosophy of woman? Is it Balzac the author professing 'literary' ideas on femininity? Is it universal wisdom? Romantic psychology? We shall never know, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing. (142)

Another very important reason for neglecting the author as a creator of the text is the fact that a text is constituted by language. A reader encounters the language and

not the author while finding meaning out of a text. The role of language instead of the author in creating meanings is given importance by Barthes: “Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I*: language knows a ‘subject’, not a ‘person’, and this subject, empty outside of the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language ‘hold together’, suffices, that is to say, to exhaust it” (145). Hirsch here takes a different position saying, “Meaning is that which is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent” (8). But what Hirsch ignores is that signs can bear different meanings to different readers at different times in different contexts. It is true that the language-signs are compiled by the author but they are not independent. They have only their existence and meanings when a reader with different schemata encounters the text. Hence the reader takes part in creating a text rather than an author. As Gadamer puts it, “The meaning of a text goes beyond its author not just sometimes but always. Understanding is not a reproductive but always a productive activity” (280).

Aspects of reader in relation to text and its creation

So we can see that a reader is as creative as the author in explicating a text. The former has the creative capability as well as moral right to construct meanings. A reader is thus more than a decoder of a text. We will see next how a reader takes part in creating a text. What is to be mentioned here is that readers who have been ignored for so long are now taking part in creating the meaning or the text. The conventional idea that an author is all alone in creating the meaning of a text has declined when the readers were given grounds in creating meanings of texts. Barthes declares “the death of the author” (for us death of the author as a creator of a text) by saying:

Classic criticism has never paid any attention to the reader; for it, the writer is the only person in literature. We are now beginning to let ourselves be fooled no longer by the arrogant antiphrastical recriminations of good society in favour of the very thing it sets aside, ignores, smothers, or destroys; we know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author. (148)

It is not to say that the readers are born not as persons but as the participants in the process of creating a text. And a reader creates a text only when he creates meaning out of a given text. So the author no longer has the tyranny over the meanings of a text and starts sharing his authority with the reader regarding the creation of a text.

The reader as the creator of meaning of a text becomes stronger as it has been discovered that a text can never have a single meaning but is always polysemous. This idea is put forward both by Barthes and Derrida. According to Barthes giving a text an author means limiting the layers of the meanings and making the signifieds fixed. And this can happen when there is no reader who can take part in determining the meanings. Barthes writes, “Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text

becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing” (147). And when the author is removed it is none but the reader who invades the position of the author. A text can not be decoded by itself but needs an agent who/that can activate the process of creating the (unfinished) text. A reader is that agent who/that creates the multiple meanings out of a text.

Derrida also takes away the authority of the author regarding creating meanings by putting emphasis on language. What a text holds is no more than language. And being an arbitrary entity in its origin and means of communication language does not provide a single meaning of a text but always creates paradoxes. Derrida’s concept of *diffe´rance* makes us aware that a text in no way can have only one meaning. Keith Booker describes the concepts as follows:

Derrida, however, proposes a fundamentally different conception of the process of signification in which meaning is dynamically generated on the fly in the process of writing. One of his key terms is *diffe´rance*, a neologism combining the French verbs for “to differ” and “to defer” to show how language depends on differential systems to produce meaning while at the same time endlessly postponing a final end to this production. There is, then, a fundamental difference between traditional authorship and what Derrida calls “writing”: The theological notion of authorship points backward (and inward) to a prior point of origin; writing is radically contemporary, pointing forward and outward, irreducibly caught up in the flow of history and in an explosive dissemination of multiple meanings. (63)

For all the reasons mentioned above have weakened the position of the author as the creator of the text (or the meaning of the text) and brings the reader in the limelight.

Reaching these phenomena we can say that the author is no longer the sole proprietor of the meanings of a text. In the subsequent discussion we will examine the role of reader as a creator of the text.

After going through a long history of oppression the reader finally obtains the position of creator of the meaning of a text. He is no longer seen as a passive agent who decodes a text, rather he is viewed as a part and parcel in creating the meaning of a text. This privilege is given to the reader with the rise of reader-response theory to which individual critics like Fish, Eco, Barthes et al contributed enormously.

As soon as the reader is given the position of creator of the text the concept 'reader' gradually becomes difficult to define. Different critics define the reader differently regarding their function, identity and relation to the text. Concepts like implied reader, inscribed reader, model reader, intended reader, optimal or ideal reader, and empirical reader has entered in the reader-response criticism. Following Hawthorn (2000) the short definitions of these terms can be:

Implied reader: It is used to describe the reader which the text (or the author through the text) suggests that it expects.

Model reader: The Reader is a textually established set of felicity conditions... to be met in order to have a macro-speech act (such as a text is) fully actualized.

Optimal/ideal reader: It is a term used to refer to that collection of abilities, attitudes, experience, and knowledge which will allow a reader to extract the maximum value from a reading of a particular text.

Empirical reader: An empirical reader reads a text in many ways and finds different interpretations out of it. (290-291)

From these definitions one thing is clear, that a reader is always linked with the text. Another general function of a reader that we get from here is that a reader is

assigned to explicate a text. In this essay we will view reader as an agent who takes part in decoding a text using his schemata.

A reader has always got a different experience from the author. His experience (that would create the meaning of the text) includes language and schemata. These play an important role when a reader decodes a text. First of all the language experience that a reader has is quite different from that of the author. Both of their languages have similarities regarding structure but conceptually they may not. Language is only a medium to reach the concepts and it is dependant on the schemata to create meanings. The schemata of the reader and the author are not the same. As a result a reader always creates meanings out of a text which are different from the intended meanings of the author. That is why Eagleton writes “The literary work itself exists merely as what the Polish theorist Roman Ingarden calls a set of ‘schemata’ or general directions, which the reader must actualize. To do this, the reader will bring to the work certain ‘pre-understandings’, a dim context of beliefs and expectations within which the work’s various features will be assessed” (67). Thus a reader creates the meanings of a text himself which is different from the meanings the author intended.

Readers are also considered as “writers” by Fish. He gives the reader this position as the grammar, words or meanings in the text are not objective but very much subjective in terms of the reader’s feeling and understanding. He gives importance to how a reader interprets a text. The interpretations that a reader has formed text are not same as the author intended but very much creative. Fish writes, “Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions” (171). So readers are not just passive agents

who decode the intended meaning created by the author; his activity is more creative than that. His creativity regarding creating meaning is as vital as the author of a text.

But is it really the reader who creates the meaning of a text? The reader is not an isolated entity. He is born and brought up in society which influences his thoughts. So the ways a reader interprets a text is not completely his own interpretations but are affected by the society in which he lives. Umberto Eco also puts emphasis on this matter that readers are always influenced by the culture in which they live in. He writes,

[...] when a text is produced not for a single addressee but for a community of readers- the author knows that he or she will be interpreted not according to his or her intentions but according to a complex strategy of interactions which also involves the readers, along with their competence in language as a social treasury not only a given language as a set of grammatical rules, but also the whole encyclopedia that the performances of that language have implemented, namely, the cultural conventions that that language has produced and the very history of the previous interpretations of many texts, comprehending the text that the reader is in the course of reading. (67-68)

The shortcomings of the reader to be the creator of the text will be discussed later on along with the shortcomings of the author.

The Concepts of Intertextuality and Postmodernism Regarding the Authenticity of the Text

Any text can be questioned regarding its originality and inter-dependency on other texts. It is impossible to find any text which does not have any similarity with other texts. The similarity can be found not only with subject matters but also with language, theme and other areas. The mind of any author is formed by the tradition that he inherits. This inheritance is not only a cultural inheritance but also the literary tradition which have been formed by many authors of the same or even exotic literature. T.S. Eliot was probably one of the first to address this matter. He said no artist or poet had the meaning of his work in itself but his work is very much dependent on the works of other artist and poets. He writes, “No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead” (72). Thus the authenticity of a text no longer remains valid. When we would refer to a text to other texts (we can extend Eliot’s idea saying both living and dead authors’ texts) to explicate meanings, there will be an exchange of meanings. And this exchange would involve both intertextual *import* and *export*. At the end of this exchanging process the text that we were reading will lose its authenticity in giving us meaning. Instead it would be an amalgam made of other texts with which it interacted to produce meaning.

The linguistic aspect of a text is also evidence of its intertextuality. Julia Kristeva views text as a ‘trans-linguistic apparatus’ that finds its meanings when linguistic features like speech etc are distributed in a subtle way. So it is not solely the creativity of an author or a reader that plays a role in creating a text. The very nature

of language is creative itself. Authors and readers can be given acknowledgment only for the exploration that they make into the language. This is more an exterior acknowledgement than interior that actually forms a text. Even if an author and a reader would not explore the language (i.e. create a text); language (which is the authentic text) will always be there. Kristeva also finds a text not to be independent but a combination of several elements that have been taken from other texts. So the very nature of text shows that it is unable to be created as authentic or original.

Kristeva writes,

[...] the *text* is defined as a trans-linguistic apparatus that redistributes the order of language by relating communicative speech, which aims to inform directly to different kinds of anterior or synchronic utterances. The text is therefore a *productivity*, and this means: first, that its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive-constructive), and hence can be better approached through logical categories rather than linguistic ones; and second that it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another. (36)

So we can come to a conclusion that the very nature of language which is the basis of a text and the crucial feature of a text that is its intertextuality are two obstacles that refrain a text from being conceived as original.

Postmodernism also refuses to accept a literary text as something authentic. Postmodernists believe that there is nothing new to write and what an 'author' can do is to repeat the previous works. According to them present works are not beyond the accusation of reworking, translation, plagiarism and pastiche. About contemporary fiction Steven Connor writes, "[...] telling has become compulsorily belated,

inextricably bound up with retelling, in all its idioms: reworking, translation, adaptation, displacement, imitation, forgery, plagiarism, parody, pastiche” (123).

This is true not only of present fiction but this statement can be found true about all other texts written in any age. Maybe it has become more overt a feature and more extravagant now than during previous literary eras, but the truth is it was always there. When Shakespeare or Marlow borrowed their plots from myth or folktales, they can also be accused of “reworking, translation, adaptation, displacement, imitation, forgery, plagiarism, parody, pastiche”. So it is probably the nature of all texts that they cannot be totally original.

Reaching in the postmodern era authors’ ‘creativity’ is also under question. His action is suspected to be devalued. His imagination can not create something new and as a result he has chosen the work of assembling elements taken from language and culture. Taking his idea from Alvin Kernan (1982) Jenaro Talens in this respect writes, “The notion of author, whose creative imagination was considered at the origin of literature, has given way to the idea of a simple assembling of several languages and cultural elements, placed in relation to each other within determined writings that no longer enjoy the status of ‘work of art’ but the simpler one of ‘texts’ or ‘collages’” (326). It is true that an author mainly assembles a text rather than creates it. But Kernan’s idea can be questioned in other ways: it was never the imagination of an author that created a text, and secondly, an author does not assemble languages and cultural elements (language and culture are already assembled by themselves). Moreover his imagination itself is assembled in the phenomenon of language and culture. An author is not independent of language and culture, but is born and brought up in them. Thus not only the postmodernist writers but also all the authors or their ‘imagination’ fail to create a text.

Context Itself Is the Text

It is surprising that the author and the reader have been discussed in isolation rather than in relation to the context. Author and reader are not independent entities but they are constructed in the context. They are highly influenced by the context they are produced in. The language they use is also not independent but only a part of the context. By context I mean the world in which both the author and the reader are born and brought up. Here I do agree with Derrida that “there is nothing outside of the text” if he does not differentiate between the text and the world. The context itself is the text or in another way it is neither the author nor the reader who creates the text or the meaning of the text. The text is created or finds its meaning in the context.

Maybe the context is not a human being but at the same time it is unnecessary to define the creator as a human being. Neither the author nor the reader need to be humans as long as they can create the meaning of the text. And they really can. When Barthes announces the death of the author he does not mean the death of the human being author. Here we can think of Barthes: “Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I*: language knows a subject, not a person, and this subject, empty outside of the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language hold together, suffices, that is to say, to exhaust it” (145). Importantly, author, reader and context are interrelated and interdependent. A text is never created but is always there as no one can create a context but only can be a part of it. The author or the reader is unable to create a context but can only explore it. Creating a text is only an attempt both by the author and the reader to explore the context.

This concept can also be viewed in terms of language. Texts are combinations of language signs. These signs are the basis both for the reader and the author when

creating a text. But can these signs bear any significance, i.e. create meaning if they are not compared or brought into the context? The author and the reader do not seek the meaningless signs but look for the meaningful concepts. Signs are only the medium to reach the concepts. Both the author and the reader want to reach the meaningful concepts; they want to communicate. And the communication is only possible when the context is referred to the (written) text. Otherwise the text would merely be a display of meaningless signs.

We find more evidence about the notion that context creates the text if we take into account the concept of intertextuality. The meanings that are innovated (it is probably the better term to use) by the author and the reader jointly are not something authentic but a sort of patchwork. It is possible as language can be arranged in numerable structures which produce innumerable meanings. Noam Chomsky's notion about language is like the following:

From now on I will consider a *language* to be a set (finite or infinite) of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements. All natural languages in their spoken or written form are languages in this sense, since each natural language has a finite number of phonemes (or letters in its alphabet) and each sentence is representable as a finite sequence of these phonemes (or letters), though there are infinitely many sentences. (13)

But the meanings that are produced are not authentic. If they were authentic and context-free it would never be possible to comprehend them. We can comprehend the meanings only when the decoded meanings resemble our schematic knowledge which is constructed by and in the context. We can not find the meaning of “*axy swiy qoyrf esux*” as these “words” are beyond our schematic knowledge and thus beyond our context. It might be an authentic “sentence,” but it does not bear a meaning to us. The

text is created only when it bears meanings. On the other hand, the meanings that we (as author and reader) obtain from a text are not authentic.

What the author and reader do is make a collaboration to create meaning through an artificial context that we have been calling a text. Both the author and the reader's efforts are involved only in assembling the prevailing meanings and not in creating new meanings. A text provides the prevailing meanings of the context taking the language as its medium.

The Illusion of Creating a Text

The creation of a truly authentic text is an illusion. To create such a text one would need a context that was previously unknown; a context involving language, culture and all the experiences that a human can have. It is impossible to create such an authentic context on the basis of which an author could write a text which a reader could decode. This might sound more philosophical than practical, but as literary criticism has its basis in rational analysis rather than empirical evidence we can hold this view. And one of the aims of philosophy is to problematize common notions. Now we have problematized the common notion that an author or a reader creates a text.

To create an authentic context one would have to remove the entire schema that one has perceived from the prevailing context. This removal includes not only the cultural elements but also the linguistic features that one has adopted. At the end of this process one would reach an Original Position from where things start anew. This fresh experience is the one and only suitable element to create an authentic context and thus an authentic text. This process reminds us about Husserl's idea of bracketing off the worldly experience; the process that he called epoché. About Husserl's idea of 'phenomenology' Eagleton writes,

My consciousness is not just a passive registration of the world, but actively constitutes or 'intends' it. To establish certainty, then, we must first of all ignore, or 'put in brackets', anything which is beyond our immediate experience; we must reduce the external world to the contents of our consciousness alone. This, the so-called 'phenomenological reduction', is Husserl's first important move. Everything not 'immanent' to consciousness must be rigorously excluded; all realities must be treated as pure 'phenomena',

in terms of their appearances in our mind, and this is the only absolute data from which we can begin. (48)

So the same way the process of creating a text should begin by excluding the present schemata (cultural knowledge, language, previous texts etc) and create new ones. This process would involve not only the author but also the reader as they are the human agents whom we conventionally find responsible for creating a text. As we have shown earlier that context itself is the text, and the creation of an authentic text is thus impossible without creating an authentic context by excluding all the present schemata.

The process of excluding the present schemata might sound impractical, but there is no other way to create an authentic text. Another problem is that even if an author or a reader were to go through this process it would be impossible to understand the text. In this case both the author and the reader will have different schemata which are entirely private. The linguistic and cultural features that would be included in the text by the author would surely fail to communicate with those of the reader. As a result there would be no reading found of the text. The purpose of a text is to be read as it is not a concrete object like a brick or a piece of wood; rather it is some unfinished abstract concepts which find their success when they are decoded. The question "Can we hope to understand works which are culturally and historically alien to us?" (58) asked by Eagleton can be found relevant here. If it were possible to create a text by the private schemata of an author it would surely be alien to the reader.

Conclusion

In this treatise I have tried to show that it is neither the author nor the reader who creates a text. I have examined the conventional idea that the author is the creator of a text. I have also examined why the author lost his position as the creator of meaning of the text. Following Fish at all we found that the reader is also responsible for creating meanings out of a text and he does not come with a blank mind. He always comes with schemata which are different from that of the author and thus the meanings which he produces are always different from the intended meanings of the author.

Later on we examined whether it really is the reader who creates the meaning of a text. It is true that he does not come with a blank mind, but how is his mind created? The knowledge or schemata with which he decodes a text are not his own. A reader is born and brought up in culture and society. The knowledge including the linguistic knowledge that he has is also an inheritance from society, which we call context. It is impossible for a reader to go out of this context and produce authentic meanings. The same thing is true about the author. An author is also only one part of the context. The text with which his name is concerned is only an attempt to explore the context along with the reader. The meanings that a text can give us are not something authentic but very much dependent on the context. That is why we can explicate a text. If the texts were totally new i.e. omitting the resemblances to the context it would be impossible for us to read a text. The context itself is the text. And the text is an attempt to explore it.

A consequence of the above conclusion is that all the texts have similarities with other texts. There is no text which is beyond the concept of intertextuality. Following Kristeva I have already argued that it is the very nature of a text that it takes elements

from other texts. As a result it is impossible to achieve total originality for a text. Postmodernism also support this view that all texts are full of repetition of other texts. The imagination authors fail to create something new and as a result the texts that we find are a kind of patchwork or collage. Although postmodernism says this about the contemporary texts, I have argued that it is true for texts written in any age. Following Chomsky we can say that the very nature of language is that it can produce innumerable sentences depending on numerable structures is responsible for creating innumerable texts.

To create an authentic text we need an exotic experience. As with Husserl's phenomenological reduction, we should follow a similar process to create an authentic text. If context itself is the text then we will need to create a context that is unfamiliar both to the author and the reader. (I am taking it granted that it sounds more philosophical than practical.) However, even if an author could follow this process to create a text and a reader to read a text it would be impossible to explicate the text. In this case, the experience of the author would be totally different from that of the reader. As a result, it would not be possible for a reader to decode the text. In this way we might have authentic texts though there would be no reader apart from the author himself. Consequently, we can say that creating a fully authentic text is only an illusion.

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