

The Creative Consciousness: The Role of the Text and the Bio-Text

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Abstract

The creative process has a unique universality about it. Nobody can create anything out of nothingness. The great body of literature created till date relates itself not only to man, but to his social movements as well, which underlines the fact that creation is man-centric and man is society-specific. No text can be expected to yield its meaning if it is torn from its reality and interpreted in an arbitrary manner by a proactive reader. The fact is that the creator is as much a by-product of his circumstances as is the reader; and then, the text which passes from generation to generation also develops its own distinct existence independent of the creator or the reader. All this makes a text a complex unyielding entity which poses a formidable challenge to the literary world, on one side of which is the creator, and on the other end, the reader.

Keywords: Creative consciousness, Biotext, critical theory, Deleuze, Bakhtin

1. Need for a Literaria Biographia

S. T. Coleridge's 'Biographia Literaria' records the biographical details of literary personalities, along with their creations. However, it is not irrelevant to take into account the biography of a writer which somehow filters into his writings. Every text is imbued with the bio-text. In fact, it is the contention of the writer of these lines that a 'Literaria Biographia' would not be out of place to every writing. To elucidate the idea further, whether prose, poetry, or fiction, literary creation cannot be an airy construct which has only a remote connection with the reality. If somebody is writing about imaginary things, which have no connection with this world, even that creation can be analysed from the angle of ascertaining its biotextuality. The rationale for such a contention is that, whatever his mental powers, and however high his imagination, after all, a kite has a string, and somebody is flying it. In other words, the writer who is creating such stuff is himself the creation of certain circumstances, and he is rooted in a certain societal reality. He may have the poetic genius to transcend that reality, and create a new world of his wishes, still, it would not be altogether impossible to deconstruct that utopia, and find out its linkages with the temporal world.

2. The Sub-Text

The major question, therefore, is that every creation, fictional or otherwise, has a basis in reality, and the text is imbued with the bio-text. The idea that the experience of the writer becomes the canvas on which he paints his ideas, lends further credence to this idea that there is a subtext under the text, and this subtext is, in fact, the bio-text, which informs the entire body of literature.

3. The Creative Consciousness:

This brings to us the idea of the story and the history. Literary creation transforms the temporal reality, and gives it a new shape. Quoting Coleridge again, ‘imagination is an esemplastic power’ which gives a new shape and a substance to experience. In fact, it can be put in a different set of words. It is history which receives a poetic treatment, after which, the writer’s additions, change it into an aesthetic experience. History, when read, gives us a joy, but when a story is read, it gives a different kind of joy, although both these genres have a plot full of incidents only. One more idea can be incorporated here. History is natural selection, whereas story or a literary creation is a conscious selection of the writer, and this consciousness, in fact, is the real creative or esemplastic power, also christened as imagination, which moves an event from its historical spectacle, to a make-shift encampment [imagination] where genres like poetry, prose and fiction are mass-produced.

The creative process is triggered by events from our ordinary life. Thus, ordinary life is the breeding ground, from which all ideas and ideologies originate, and take a definite shape. Ordinary life, in which the author is participating, is the real workshop where poems and stories are constructed, and get a human interest.

In the very beginning of a film, a declaration is inserted saying that, the characters are imaginary, and there is any coincidence, with an even or a character, it is purely incidental. I think this attempt to disown reality conceals the fact that actually, it is some real character, or some real event, which has propelled the imagination of the creator to build up that creative mass. These lines also point to the fact of the presence of the biotextuality, in the absence of which, that piece of fiction would not have been shaped. Sometimes resemblances are too apparent and this certificate appears to be mocking the reality, while, at the same time, it serves as a protective glass sheet for the author, to fend him against personal reporting.

4. History Versus the Story

My work ‘Confessions of a Coprse’ [short stories] has a story in which the protagonist was known to the author. Both were colleagues, and during their formal and informal discussions, the protagonist had often divulged the details of his personal life. When we say, it is a story, it means everything that has gone into it is fictional, and created. The liquor shop incident in the story is a real happening. The hero goes to a liquor shop, and pokes a twenty rupee note for a quarter of wine. The man on the other side takes the money, pockets it, and then asks for another twenty rupees. The Professor is aghast. The vendor tells him in a cruel voice that three years back, he had taken some flour from his mill, and this bill is pending since then. Now, it was gone, and if he want liquor, he must come out with another currency note of twenty rupees.

I would also like to refer to the ending of this story. In which, the protagonist dies, crushed by

a speeding truck from behind, because, lost in his mental struggle, and at last, under pressure of his wife, having decided to turn a new leaf in life, and go against himself so far as honesty, and integrity were concerned, ... he stops looking at the rear mirror, the rear mirror which connects him with the past... and he is over run by a speeding truck. This is fictional. The man is still alive and kicking. The story relates the story of a man who was somewhat alive, and somewhat dead. The alive died in that accident, and the dead is still living in real life.

Every text has a bio-text and it would be worthwhile to have a mechanism to understand the forces which have created a particular type of literature. It can be called INTRINSIC STUDIES, in an effort to locate the sources of creation and interpretation in real life of the creator as well as the reader.

5. The Other End: The Reader

Biotext further, moves on to have an impact on the understanding of the reader, who is rooted in a social reality and his interpretation of the text is a political statement. More important, bio-text also takes into account the role of time which was a major impacting factor with the writer, and now it becomes a major impacting factor in the case of the reader as well. The interpretation of the text is at the most a protean process in which there is nothing constant except change. In fact, the creation of text is the result of a creative moment, which, once passed, may not be replayed. In the same way, the interpretation of the text is also a by-product of a particular moment, in which, personal, political and social factors are at play, and this moment of interpretative creativity may never repeat itself, rendering the creative and interpretative processes highly endemic to the author or reader's biographical credentials, and cultural setting at the momentous moment of creativity or interpretation.

6. Conclusion

Every text has a bio-text and it would be worthwhile to have a mechanism to understand the forces which have created a particular type of literature. It can be called INTRINSIC STUDIES, in an effort to locate the sources of creation and interpretation in real life of the creator as well as the reader and the most important factor in this exercise appears to be the impact of the moment, or time.

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