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### FROM STRUCTURALISM TO TRANS-DECONSTRUCTION : A STUDY OF DESSENSATION



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#### **ABSTRACT**

*The present paper is a detailed study of the disagreement in between the theory of Structuralism and the Movement of Transcendentalism. It also studies dissension among the theories – Structuralism, Post Structuralism, Deconstruction and Trans-Deconstruction. Dr. Pramod Pawar and I have keen interest in the above mentioned theories and their application to a literary text. The study of the theories is the treasure worthy of securing. The formulation of these theories constitutes a separate study and so is their application. They are all fragile introverts trapped in their own skins and souls. Their intellectual traumas*

*sometimes lead to violent death of the author in the text. Same are fragrant minds of the reader in implementation of these theories in a particular situation while reading the text. The present paper is a lucid attempt to perceive the interrelationship among the theories – Structuralism and Post-Structuralism, Deconstruction and Trans-Deconstruction.*

#### **KEY WORDS**

*Dissension, Structuralism, traumas, application, interrelationship, Trans-Deconstruction etc.*

## RESEARCH PAPER

### I. Introduction:

Structuralism refers to a movement of thought that affects a number of influential disciplines comprising anthropology, philosophy, history and literary criticism. It derives its common element from linguistics, and especially the oeuvre of Ferdinand D. Saussure. It studies the synchronic dimension of language [the system of relations within language operating at a given moment] rather than its 'diachrony' [temporal dimension]. This system is used by registering the differences between possible elements within it. For instance, at phonemic level, we distinguish 'zip' and 'sip' on the basis of a difference between a voiced /z/ and a voiceless /s/ sibilant.

Structuralists also have applied the pattern of 'binary oppositions' derived from phonemics, syntax of grammar to human sign-systems of various kinds. Claude Levi-Strauss developed 'phonemic' analyses of kinship relations, myths, rites and so on. Roland Barthes too examined 'haute cuisine', narrative discourse, garments and all kinds of social artefacts. The underlying idea is that all human performances [paroles] presuppose a system [langue] of differential relations. Besides this, Structuralist narratology aimed at identifying the underlying 'grammar' of narrative form. The same is represented by the writings of Tzvetan Todorov, G. Genette and A. J. Greimas. Greimas developed the theories of the Russian Formalist, Vladimir Propp, fitting them more closely to the linguistic model.

John Crowe Ransom considers it as the explicit argument or statement made in a poem opposed to the texture, that is briefly everything else – the phonetic pattern, the sequences of images, the meanings suggested by the connotation of words. The texture and structure, combined together, provide what Ransom calls its 'Ontology', the unique status different from non-poetic discourse. The word, 'texture' is used by Ransom in reference to meter to mean the variations on the basic metrical pattern, or structure. It also means the inherent relationships among the elements of a work of art, or the organization of elements other than words.

Structuralist analysis seeks the underlying system or 'langue' that governs the individual utterances or instances. In formulating the laws by which elements of such system are combined, it dissects between sets of interchangeable units [Paradigms] and sequences of such units in combination [Syntagms], thereby outlining a basic syntax of human culture. In brief, Structuralism, as a movement, became prominent at the hands of Roland Barthes and G. Genette, marked its end in Jacques Derrida's *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences* and at the same time gave birth to 'Deconstruction' – a Post-Structuralist thought.

In 'A Critique on *Trans-Deconstruction : Theory on Monism*', the emergence of Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction has been discussed in brief. Post-Structuralism emerged partly from within French Structuralism in the 1960s, reacting against Structuralist pretensions to scientific objectivity and comprehensiveness. Deconstruction is referred to the practice of reading evolved mainly by Jacques Derrida and taken up by the 'Yale School' of critics comprising Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman and J. Hillis Miller.

### II. Dissention among Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction:

Structuralism is referred no so much what things mean, but how they mean. It is a science designed to show that all elements of human culture, comprising literature, are perceived as parts of a system of signs. This science of signs is called 'Semiotics' or 'Semiology'. The goal is to discover the codes, structures, and processes involved in the

production of meaning. Structuralism claims that human culture itself is fundamentally a language, a complex system of signifieds [concepts] and signifiers. These signifiers can be verbal [like language itself or literature] or nonverbal [like face painting, advertising, or fashion] [Biddle, 80]. Thus, linguistics is to language as structuralism is to literature. Structuralists often would break myths into their smallest units, and realign corresponding ones. Opposite terms modulate until resolved or reconciled by an intermediary third term.

There are four main common ideas underlying Structuralism as a general movement: firstly, every system has a structure. Secondly, the structure is what determines the position of each element of a whole. Thirdly, structural laws deal with coexistence rather than changes and fourthly, structures are the real things. Thus, the basic characteristics of Structuralism are a holistic interpretation of the text, a focus on the underlying patterns or systems that cause changes in actions, a look at the structure beneath the world that can be seen, and an acknowledgement that societies create structures that repress actions. On the whole, Structuralism was a reaction to modern concepts of alienation and despair. It sought to recover literature from the isolation in which it had been studied, since laws governing it governs all sign systems - clothing, food, body 'language' etc. What quickly became evident, though, was that signs and words do not have meaning in and of themselves, only in relations to other signs and entire systems. Hence is the emergence of post-structuralism.

Post-structuralism is a late-twentieth-century development in philosophy and literary theory, particularly associated with the work of Jacques Derrida and his followers. It originated as a reaction against structuralism, which first emerged in Ferdinand de Saussure's work on linguistics. Post-structuralism contests and subverts Structuralism and Formalism. Structuralists are convinced that systematic knowledge is possible. Post-Structuralists claim to know only the impossibility of this knowledge. They counter the possibility of knowing systematically a text by revealing the 'grammar' behind its form and meaning. Texts contradict not only the structuralist accounts of them, but also themselves. All signifieds are also signifiers [a car symbolizes achievement]. The basic tenets of post-structural theory comprise – anti-essentialism, the celebration of difference, the rejection of meta-narratives, the insistence that everything must be understood as socially constructed, the rejection of any claims of truth or value. Post-structuralism rejects the structuralist notion that the dominant word in a pair is dependent on its subservient counterpart and instead argues that founding knowledge either on pure experience [phenomenology] or on systematic structures [structuralism] is impossible, because history and culture condition the study. Post-Structuralists believe that language is a key when seeking to explain the social world. They argue that there is no reality external to the language we use. A last important characteristic of post-structuralism is the decentered subject. The post-structuralist texts are rejecting the traditional view of a coherent identity and are supporting instead an illogical and decentered self, a self full of contradictions and paradoxes. In brief, Post-structuralism rejects the idea of a literary text having a single purpose, a single meaning or one singular existence. Instead, every individual reader creates a new and individual purpose, meaning, and existence for a given text.

Deconstruction posits an undecidability of meaning for all texts. The text has intertwined and contradictory discourses, gaps, and incoherencies, since language itself is unstable and arbitrary. The critic does not undermine the text. The text already dismantles itself. Its rhetoric subverts or undermines its ostensible meaning.

Jacques Derrida opposed the –

“metaphysics of presence, ..... the claim in literature or philosophy that we can find some full, rich meaning outside of or prior to language itself.” [1997: 98]

The hierarchy of binaries on which this assertion rests is untenable. Privileging speech over writing is equal to logocentrism; spoken or written words have meaning only by ‘difference’ from other words. Deconstructive critics focus on the text like the formalists, but direct attention to the opposite of the New Critical ‘unities’. Instead, they view the ‘decentering’ of texts and point out incompatibilities, rhetorical grain-against-grain contradictions, undecidability within texts. There is often playfulness to deconstruction, but it can be daunting to read too.

Deconstruction is a philosophical movement and theory of literary criticism that questions traditional assumptions about certainty, identity, and truth. It asserts that words can only refer to other words and attempts to demonstrate how statements about any text subvert their own meanings. Deconstruction argues that language, especially in ideal concepts such as truth and justice, is irreducibly complex, unstable, or impossible to determine. Many debates in continental philosophy surrounding ontology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, hermeneutics, and philosophy of language refer to Derrida’s beliefs.

Deconstruction, according to Peter Barry is divided into three parts- verbal, textual and linguistic.

- The verbal stage is very similar to that of more conventional forms of close reading. It involves looking into the text for paradoxes and contradictions, at what might be called the purely verbal level.
- In textual stage, a critic looks for shifts or breaks in the continuity of the poem. These shifts reveal instabilities of attitude, and hence the lack of a fixed and unified position.
- The linguistic stage involves looking for moments in the poem when the adequacy of language itself as a medium of communication. There is implicit or explicit reference to the unreliability or untrustworthiness of language.

In brief, the idea of Deconstruction is therefore concerned with countering the idea of a transcendental origin or natural referent. It refutes the notion that it is possible to transgress the institution in order to discover something beyond - the existence of an independent origin.

### III. Emergence of Trans-Deconstruction:

However, Dr. Pramod Pawar’s new coinage ‘Trans-Deconstruction’ is completely a novel contribution to the field of Literary Criticism. It is about the centered, stable, singular meaning-oriented reading practice beyond the theories of interpretation and analysis of the text. It makes the reader think about the word, text and meanings beyond its territory. Life itself is a text. The text has body like that of an individual. Every individual bears a soul like that of a text. The center of the body is mind. Text is like a body and the center of that Text is mind. The textual super-consciousness is the soul which is the truth, singularity of all discourses in human sciences. To attain God, there is a spiritual union of mind and soul. In a critical term, there is an amalgamation of body [text] and soul [center] to attain the transcendental signified [Absolutism, Truth]. The reader acquires plural or multiple meanings out of the text and these plural meanings are illusions prior to the attainment of spiritual union i.e. Absolutism, Truth. Unlike the theoretical differences with Structuralism, Post-structuralism and Deconstruction, **Trans-deconstruction posits the emergence of Monism.**

To Pawar, the centre in the text is like a centre in the human body. Like the centre in the text, the centre in the body exists in an invisible lotus form, in which someone dwells, that is, the Soul, the truth, beauty. Trans-deconstruction is the critical reading of the textual super-consciousness hidden in the text. The text demands no further interpretations as the center underlines its singularity, stability and uniformity in the process of interpretations. Transdeconstruction is not merely a philosophical or transcendental analysis of the text, but a ubiquitous analysis of the textual super-consciousness undermining the multiplicity and open-endedness of the text. Its reading process is like breathing in what the text is truly said. It is the critical reading against the text itself along with deeper consideration of textual conscious, unconscious and super-conscious nature centering on the singularity for all the diversified discourses at the end.

Trans-deconstruction emerges as a literary theory, especially when the author in the interpretation of text is declared as dead:

- *The plurality is considered to be the end of every textual analysis.*
- *There is the absence of the centre in the text.*
- *The centre in the text is variable but functional.*
- *The idea of nothingness prevails outside the text.*
- *There is a debate on the one term supremacy of binary oppositions held in the text.*
- *The textual consciousness within is an asset to the textual analysis.*

#### **IV. Assumptions and Tenets of Trans-Deconstruction:**

Trans-deconstruction theory asserts that –

- *The author is alive forever in his Points of View in the interpretation of the text.*
- *Monism, singularity, absolutism, truth, the transcendental signified are presented as an output in the form of ultimate conclusion for every textual analysis.*
- *There is the presence of the centre in the text, fixed but functional like a pendulum.*
- *There are two centers like two Brahmandas – one is within and another is without.*
- *The Absolute Truth prevails outside the text.*
- *One weaker term in binary oppositions is privileged in the text to bring it to the equality and treat equity as a key factor for textual analysis.*
- *The focus of reading is on the textual super-consciousness for the finalization of meanings.*

Thus, Trans-deconstruction affirms that the center in the text is fixed and functional. Besides, there is another world outside of the text. No author is dead in the interpretation of the text. He / she is alive through the absorbed points of view in the text. In brief, Trans-deconstruction theory believes in the following formulations –

- *It is a critical reading practice to reach the singular, stable, transcendently signified meaning in the text.*
- *The theory believes in the presence of the fixed centre in the text like a pendulum and the absences are like the ornaments in the interpretation of the text.*
- *The focus of the trans-deconstruction theory is on the singularity rather than multiplicity, complexities or plurality of meanings in the text like the unity in all its diversity.*

- *The theory believes in the presence of the author in the text and refuses the assumption that the author is dead in the interpretation of the text.*
- *Trans-deconstructionist states that there is the centre in the text, the unmoved mover.*
- *The centre in the text is within and without. It means the centre in the text is fixed and functional.*
- *The theory practices the fact that there are two centers in the text, one is in the text and another is in the universe like two Brahmandas – within and without!*
- *The trans-deconstruction theory believes in the textual superconsciousness, absolutism, monism, Truth.*
- *The trans-deconstruction theory believes in the oneness or the uniformity of binary oppositions held in the text. The marginal, suppressed or the subjugated term is privileged over the superior, dominated or the prime term to strengthen the vulnerabilities and bring them to the current flow of equality or equity in the interpretation of the text.*
- *The trans-deconstruction theory stresses on the finalization of all the plural meanings in the form of conclusion about the text.*

## V. Conclusion:

In a nutshell, Dr. Pramod Ambadasrao Pawar has made a beautiful deliberation in support of his proposition of Trans-deconstruction theory. He has given so many examples in view of his stances. It brings out the reader's attention to the reemergence of Monism. The focus of the theory is primarily on a meaning rather meanings for all the discourses, that is singularity of the discourse amidst the labyrinth of multiplicity or plurality of meanings. The theory is completely opposite to the theory of Deconstruction which involves the close reading of texts in order to demonstrate that any given text has irreconcilably contradictory meanings, rather than being a unified, logical whole. Thus, Dr. Pramod Pawar has perfectly dealt with the theme of dissension between Structuralism and Post-structuralism and Deconstruction and Trans-deconstruction in the cascade of literary criticism.

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