



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 3. Issue.2.,2016 (April-June)



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

BARTHES'S DISCOURSE ON SUBJECTIVITY, TEXTUALITY AND INTERTEXTUALITY

NIYATI KABTHIYAL¹, Prof. SUREKHA DANGWAL²

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar, Dept. of English & MEOFL, HNBSGU, Srinagar Garhwal

²Dept. of English & MEOFL, HNBSGU, Srinagar Garhwal



ABSTRACT

Roland Barthes' essay "the Death of the Author" (1968) marks the "transition from structuralism to poststructuralism", in which he "celebrates the demise of the author as ushering in an era of joyous freedom" (Barry 65) granted to the literary text and its reading. The text becomes an open-ended and a polysemic discourse, and as such open to multiple meanings. He favours "the essential verbal condition of literature", in which the role of the reader is that of "something who holds together in a single field all the traces [intertextuality included] by which the written text is constituted" (Leitch 1324-25). His poststructuralist perspective makes him see "a text's unity" lying not in its origin (an author), but its destination (a reader).

In his later essays "From Work to Text" (1971) and "The Pleasure of the Text" (1973), Barthes further develops his theory of text and textuality. Barthes visualises that "Texts are signifying fields into which one enters" and by entering the text, "the reader can activate either the closure of the signifier (the coherence of a meaning) or the 'play' of signifier (the dissemination and disruption of meanings" (Leitch 1318). The high modernist and postmodernist literary works/texts allow in greater degree the latter mode of reading, as, with other things, such texts comprise intertextuality and its various denominations.

Key Words: Polysemic discourse, intertext, intertextuality, intertextual weave, textuality, human subject, *jouissance*, the relativity of the frame of reference.

©KY PUBLICATIONS

In his work *The Genealogy of Morals* (GM III 27) Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) argues, by examining the Hebraic-Christian Tradition, that "Christianity as a dogma was destroyed by its own morality; in the same way Christianity as a morality must now perish too; we stand on the threshold of this event" (Nietzsche cited in Tanner 84). Nietzsche finds that "Christianity has already been in a state of moral identity crisis", and the matter has been complicated by the discrepancies between the Old and New Testaments, and also between Christian faith and Christian morality (Tanner, 37-38). Eventually, Nietzsche "traces God's demise to the inherently contradictory tendencies within Christianity itself" (Tanner 43).

The small men of late and post-Christianity. In his another major work *The Gay Science* Nietzsche recounts the miserable plight of post-Christian man in the post-Christian era and makes baffling

announcement that God is dead (Tanner 42). Moreover, Nietzsche observes that by clinging to Christian-based morality, the slave morality has triumphed; and he postulates a way out of this dilemma: "without Christianity there is the possibility of becoming bigger" (Tanner 87). Not withstanding that "Nietzsche's attitude to Christianity was divided at the deepest level He loathed the smallness of man that is part of Christian doctrine, and . . . he was acutely aware of the achievements that only a Christian culture could have been responsible for" (Tanner 43).

After World War II and onwards, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s Nietzsche remains a recurrent object of study and one of the major sources of inspiration behind post-structuralism and deconstruction. Nietzsche, thus, leaves one in a godless world, following his footsteps, Roland Barthes (1915-1980) leaves one in a corollary author-less world of the text or verbal-world by destabilizing the authority of the author-god, hitherto supposed to reign over the work (or the world) of literature.

In Barthes formulation of literary communication the conventional, individualized human subject identified as author is declared as dead, reduced merely to become "an act of writing". Consequently, Barthes presents modern scriptor as a substitution to fill in the vacuum so created. He conceives of this scriptor in terms of a non-being consisting of different stuff, a non being, no more than "tissue or fabric of quotations". In a sense, he attempts to emancipate the text from its author-dependent dimension. His theory foregrounds 'language' to do the function of writing (*écriture*) that occurs in the co-presence of two factors: the (modern) scriptor and the (modern) text, both, as in the case of author, reduced to the stature of becoming "the tissue or fabric of quotation".

Barthes, having subverted and marginalized the traditional notion of a personalized, God-like authoritarian figure, announces the death of the author; and he is quick to compensate such death "at the cost of the birth of the reader". Interestingly, once again he visualizes this new reader as a non-person seen as the 'destination' of the text. The reader becomes a 'site', where multiplicities of writing 'collects', and this is Barthes mainstay.

Barthes' proposition is that writing (the modern / post modern text, in particular) tends to be 'intertextual' in essence imbibing the traces of previous writings. In that kind of literary discourse neither language, nor its product 'writing' can be pure and innocent. Intertextuality seeps into textuality, as language is, borrowing Bakhtinian terminology, inherently dialogic, heteroglossal and offers a carnivalesque multiverse to its readers or users. Consequently, the characteristics, such as indeterminacy, plurality, interconnectedness and multivalence hold sway in textual-discourses, which exist and circulate in social phenomenon.

Again, going by Barthes, language produces writing (in co-presence of the scriptor and the text), and it takes place in the reader. In the process of occurrence of writing, Barthes sees, the reader as experiencing the intensities, the pleasure of the text, the erotics of reading texts that are always coming into being. Barthes equates the reading experience, so often, with a kind of 'orgasmic', thus, giving it hedonistic or say 'inherent sexual connotation'.

In his essays "From Work to Text" and "Theory of the Text" Barthes contrasts "the traditional author-based notion of *The Work* with *The Text*", and state "that while a work can be held in the hand and seen on the shelves of libraries and bookshops, the text only exists when it is produced by the new reader". To him "the Text is experienced only in an activity, in a production" (Barthes cited in Allen 83).

To Barthes, as has been pointed out, the text is a kind of woven or spun fabric seen as made up of "quotations, references, and echoes". Never-the-less, "this intertextual weave is potentially infinite" in the sense that when we come to deal with the text we find it as if it has been something "*already written* and the *already said*". The new reader of the text notices that "the quotations a text is made of are anonymous, irrecoverable, and yet already read: they are quotations without quotation marks" (Barthes cited in Allen 83).

Barthes's theory of the text outlines a mode of textual analysis in which "the text is conceived as a polysemic space where . . . several possible meaning intersect" (Allen 84), and in which signification acquires pluralized status. His textual analysis is obviously distinct from "all those interpretive approaches to text which, seek a final signified [meaning] behind its signifiers" (Allen 84). He doesn't favour the practice of treating the

text “as if it were the repository of an objective signification” (84). He discards such approaches which attempt to “seek a centre, origin and thus final signified behind and below the text” like a Marxist critic who “seeks a socio-historical signified as origin of all texts” (Barthes cited in Allen 84).

In his textual analysis Barthes “seeks to trace the text’s ‘avenues of meaning’, to explore the manner in which meaning ‘explodes and scatters” (84). In other words, intertextuality of the text makes it impossible to sustain a 'univocal' reading. As the language explodes into 'multiplicities of meaning' the reading becomes 'polyvocal' and the reader enjoys the liberty "to see plurality of the text" (Cuddon, 62).

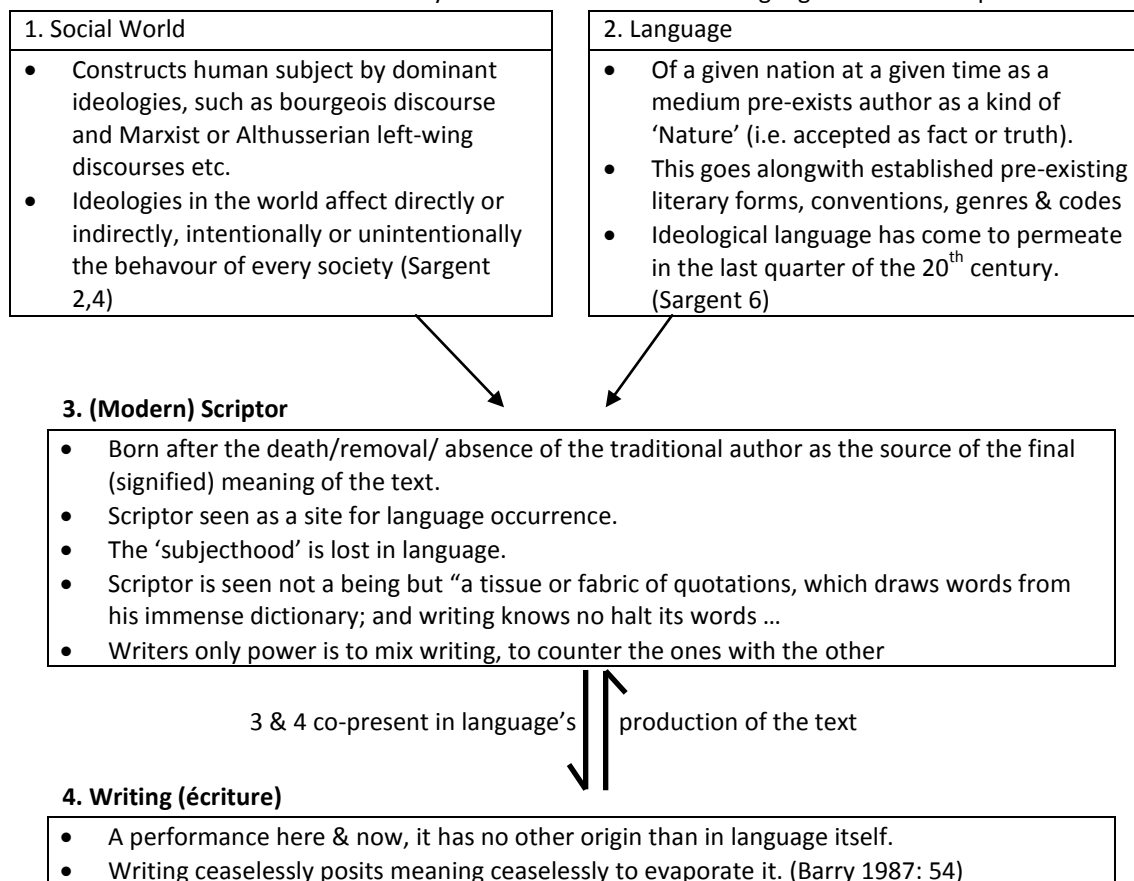
One may find that the predominance of suggestibility and intertextuality has lent modern literature obscurity and complexity. The subtextual and/or intertextual layers of modern literary discourses became so pluralistic that critics began to turn more and more from ‘content’ or ‘theme’ to ‘form’. Roland Barthes suggests that a literary discourse is merely Form without any Content; he says that if until now the text has been looked at a species of fruit with a kernel, the flesh being the form and the pit-being the content,

it would be better to see it [the text] as an onion, a construction of layers or levels, or systems whose body contains, finally, no heart, no kernel, no secret, no irreducible principle, nothing except the infinity of its own envelopes – which envelop noting other than the unity of its own surface (Barthes cited in Chatman 10).

Since the literary discourse does not have a cononic subject, Barthes argues, it is indefinitely open to new interpretations. In other words, a literary discourse is a highly suggestive ‘Form’ capable of generating numerous interpretations. Each interpretation is a subtextual and/or intertextual derivation because it is not ‘stated’ in the text but emanates from the reader’s consciousness.

On the basis of his reading of Barthes and the critics, such as Allen, Sargent, Leitch, and Barry the research has developed the following flow chart in diagrammatic terms, which attempts to present the birds-eye view to have a glimpse of Barthesian line of thinking:

Barthes's Theoretical Model of Literary Communication in which language writes via scriptor & the text -



- It, on the one hand strives to embody a choice & a commitment in the author; on the one hand, it is constantly in danger of becoming something to pigeon hole the author.
- "Writing is the destruction of every voice of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral composite space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing" (Leitch 1322).

Text as ↓ production

5. (Modern) Text

- A multidimensional space in which variety of writings blend and clash.
- The text is production undecipherable, and hence cannot be tied to a final signified (meaning), it is open ended.

destination ↓↑ response

6. Reader

- A site, where multiplicities of writing 'collects'. Text is experienced as (reading) activity. The reader no more remains the passive consumer, but the active producer of the text (Allen 88)

Allen views Barthes's writing in the 1970s as moving towards the phase of neutral writing, in which he allows the unconventional, unfashionable subjects "like love, sentiment and pleasure into his writing" (113). Moreover, Barthes in this phase pushes his "theory of the text into a more bodily realm, a hedonistic pleasure of the text" (*Ibid.*). The following two diagrams developed after Allen intend to give some idea of Barthes's development of theoretical approaches to writing texts, which always offer resistance to stable meaning and established paradigm.

I. Barthes' Dialectics of first paradigm of discourses:

First term	Second term	Third term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doxa (popular opinion) • The mind of the majority (such as the <i>petit bourgeois</i>) • The mass culture of 1970s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paradoxa (its contradiction). • Doxa counter- pointed with a paradoxical demystification • It offers critique of bourgeois ideology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>le neutre</i> (the Neutral) • The neutral writing comes from the body • Exdoral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the appearance of Nature / the naturalized language • The stereotypes • Fatigue of passive consumption of the text • Barthes doesn't like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freshness of producing the text opening out its avenues • The (in) novation • Barthes likes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "pushes the theory of the text into a more bodily realm" • Also becomes second term of the new paradigm

II. Barthes' Dialectics in the new paradigm of double discourses:

Primary term	Secondary term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence (combat, victory, theatre, arrogance) • It is ideological language which is violent and partakes the Doxa (100); it represses 'plurality' & 'difference' (101) • Encratic language (language of power in guise of doxa as natural • ecrivance (translated as in opposition to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutral opposition • Neutral writing that struggles against ideological language, the Doxa • Arcatic language (involving discourses supposed to be posited 'outside power' • 'écriture (writing), which is free of the

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>writing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language when used for transmitting or conveying 'ideas' or 'information' is <i>écriture</i>, which can be summarized • '<i>écriture</i>' is the authors language, it is also assertive, supposed to function "as a transparent medium for the conveyance of singular and stable meaning" (signified) • This being so "<i>écriture</i> is the language of power; it is which acts on behalf of ideology • It may be also be equated with the above <i>écriture</i> language | <p>stereotype (100)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language is '<i>écriture</i>' when used for its own sake and "considers its own condition as 'language'" (Graham Allen, 97) • It may be equated with the above <i>écriture</i> language |
|--|--|

(Allen 95, 96,100 *et passim*)

Structuralism and poststructuralism, in particular, revolted against the traditional, liberal humanist paradigm, and voiced their differences on various points, such as the conventionally held notion of a unified, conscious and thinking human subject, and so on. They questioned, controverted, subverted and destabilized the established views of hitherto dominant paradigm. The synoptic, point wise views as presented hereinafter intends to provide an adequate context to understand Barthes's position as a literary theorist of poststructuralism.

The traditional notion since Plato up to Liberal Humanism (prior to Formalism).

- The subject (the author as individual human being) in liberal humanist reading is often posited at "the centre and origin of meaning" (Allen 105).
- Such human subject is seen as "a singular, non-linguistic subject operating behind the text" (106). So, the text is supposed to be univocal, voicing 'authorial intention' of the individual, actual person.
- The subject is the source and origin of human action and thought; and gets mirrored in an author's literary discourse.

Structuralist and, particularly, post-structuralist notions.

- This traditional privileging of the unified subject comes under attack in post-structuralism
- Post-structuralist perceives subject "as something constructed either by dominant ideology [such as bourgeois discourse and Marxist/ Althusserian left-wing discourses] or by language" (105).
- The human subject is seen as different from 'the individual', an 'actual person' and hence it is equated with "a site in which language's presence is felt" (105).
- In other words, Barthes holds that the supposed stable 'subject hood' is lost in language. Consequently, "the reader as subject and the author as object dissolve into the realm of textuality" (106).
- The human subject in language dissolves into the grammatical subject. The subject "loses itself in language, is constructed by and through language" (105).
- Freudian psychoanalysis develops an account of the unconscious which shows psychic gap and split within the human subject (105); and Lacan in his re-reading of Freud affirms that "the unconscious is structured like a language" (105). Lacan sees the subject "as the product of language".
- The post-structuralist sees all languages as functioning this way, and hence, "the source of meaning is not the human subject but language working in and through the subject" (105).
- To poststructuralist the meanings of texts are 'polysemic', as "all texts carry with them elements of their previous context(s). This means that texts do not exist in isolation, but always refer or relate to other texts." (Longhurst and Smith *et al.* 40). In such a situation, intertexts figuring in a text acquire relative relevance to the interpretation of the text. (*Ibid.* 41). Moreover, a typical poststructuralist 'reading the text against itself' produces a sense of disunity, of a text engaged in a civil war with itself (Barry 76).

- Against the right-wing and the left-wing ideological orthodoxies Barthes "defiantly takes post-structuralist theory and directs it at his own body and his own pleasures" (100). Eventually, he desires "to protect writing (*écriture*) from solidifying into doxa, into the Name which represses and covers over plurality and difference" (101).
- Post-structuralist theory, thus, deconstructs and dismantles the traditional notion of the human subject (106). Also, poststructuralists believe that "there may be several alternative (even contradictory) subject positions from which a text may sense, and these are not necessarily built into the text (or intended)" (Chandler, 147).
- The linguistic, pronominal subjects (such as 'I', 'he/she' or the naming words of the sentence) in textual discourse shift their references and thereby create "the kind of decentred meaning, or significance" (106) as we see in Barthes's re-reading of Balzac's *Sarrasine*.

As per Allen in 1970, the year Barthes published *S/Z* (tr. 1974). *Sarrasine* was a relatively less known text in Balzac's canon of work. It recounts a disturbing twenty page story existing somewhere between Gothic intrigue, comic tale of ignorance and psychological study of the illusions of love. As per capsule summary by Allen, the fashionable Lanty family keep a secret; what is or was the source of their considerable wealth? A young female party-goer engages the narrator, another guest at the party at the Lanty dwelling, and enquires about the mysterious old man who forms some kind of relation to the beautiful younger members of the household. An exquisite painting of mythical Adonis 'copied' from the statue of a woman' (*S/Z*: 232) adds to the accumulating mysteries since there seems to be some connection between this painting, the original statue and the old man. This old man is the object of the young woman's curiosity. A deal is struck between the young woman and the narrator: the narrator will reveal the mystery if the young woman will respond positively to the narrator's desire for her.

The mystery involves a sculptor called *Sarrasine* who goes to Rome at a young age. At the opera he falls in love with a beautiful singer named *La Zambinella*. He attends the opera every night. *Sarrasine* eventually meets there with his beloved whom he has used as the model for an incredibly idealized statue. *La Zambinella* is at once encouraging and discouraging to *Sarrasine* teetering between vivacity and immense melancholy. Such mixed signals desperate *Sarrasine*. He decides to kidnap the object of all his emotional and aesthetic desires. He hatches a plan to abduct *La Zambinella* after she has performed at a private function at the French ambassador's residence. In attendance at this function is *La Zambinella*'s chief admire and sponsor Cardinal *Cicognara*. *Sarrasine* enters when *La Zambinella* is in the middle of the performance. He sees his beloved dressed like a man . . . wearing a snood kinky hair and a sword (*S/Z*:250). Previously, *Zambinella* had asked of *Sarrasine* what he would do if he discovered that she was not a woman. Yet, *Sarrasine*'s passion had proved far too strong to entertain such ridiculous ideas. *Sarrasine* even after having entered the ambassador's residence, remains confident of his judgement: he is, after all, an artist, and artists know about beauty. *Sarrasine* cannot avoid reality forever, however: *Zambinella* is a castrato, as indeed are all the 'female' characters on the Roman stage, since the law forbids female performers. Everybody in Rome knows this. It is common knowledge. *Sarrasine* in a rage proceeds to execute his plan of abduction of *Zambinella*. He is still in love but now capable of murder. It is *Sarrasine*, however, who is eventually murdered by assassins hired by Cardinal *Cicognara*.

The identity of the old man at the Lanty's party is that he is *Zambinella* in his old age, who amassed wealth as a star on the Italian operatic scene. This is the source of the Lanty family's wealth. The old man was, in youth, the model for the statue upon which painting of *Adonis* was based. At the heart or centre of the mystery, which the young woman asked the narrator to unveil, lies emptiness, nothingness, and a tale of castration. Castration is a phenomenon which replaces the patriarchal sign of fullness (the phallus) with an absence. The resultant emptiness appals the young woman and the implicit contract between her and the narrator is broken. She decides, in horror, that the world has no meaning and leaves the narrator unfulfilled and 'pensive' (Allen 84-87).

Barthes's textual analysis consists of a painstaking piece-by-piece structuration of the story. His interpretation is interspersed with compelling theoretical meditations on narrative, realism, literature, textuality, language and other characteristic Barthesian themes. Barthes's method of structuration consists of cutting the text up into small units of meaning/ sense or *lexias*. To Barthes a *lexia* is an arbitrary unit of reading rather than a necessary one. Other readers are free to discover alternative *lexias*. *Lexias* are simply units in which the reader who is actively producing the text discovers the *explosion* and *scattering* of meaning. They comprise units of reading in which a group of connotations are discovered within the signifier (S/Z 13-14). Barthes divides the story into 561 *lexias*, which he reads in sequence through the grid of five does: Hermeneutic, Semic, Symbolic, proairetic and cultural. He also refers figuratively to 'the starred text', the *lexias* functioning as stars that break up the narrative. In Barthes's deconstructive reading, Zambinella as a name is a *lexia*; a very significant one, in fact, since the alternation in the text between the feminine La Zambinella (with 'La') and the masculine Zambinella (without 'La') plays a crucial role in the disguises and blind-spots which fuel much of the drama. Likewise, Sarrasine's name, with its feminine ending (e), is another *lexia*. Eventually, as the title of Barthes's study demonstrates, the strange mirror relationship between S and Z will come to possess great symbolic resonances (*Ibid.*). In his textual analysis Barthes attempts to demonstrate as to how Texts "carry many different meaning simultaneously on different levels or in different codes".

Going through Barthes, one may see that his essay "From Work to Text" constitutes one of the significant articulations about his theory of the Text; although in a logical sense he denies it to be so, and rather prefers his view to be read just as enunciations or metaphorical propositions on various aspects; and under these heads he endeavours to trace differences between the work and the text. Never-the-less, he takes recourse to seven points, namely (i) method (of existence), (ii) genres, (iii) signs (iv) plurality, (v) filiations, (vi) reading and (vii) pleasure to mark out the differences between the two methods, and thereon he builds his propositions (Barthes cited in Leitch 1327).

As a matter of fact, as per Barthes, it would be a futile attempt to separate a work from a text, yet, theoretically one may conceptualise the difference between the two terms. To Barthes the work as material entity is displayed as occupying a book-space in a library shelf. It can be seen in bookshops, displayed in catalogues and syllabuses and hence "held in the hand" as physical object; while the text "is a methodological field", it is demonstrated, or is "a process of demonstration" (Leitch 1327). The text "speaks according to certain rules or against certain rules". Moreover, text "only exists in the movements of a discourse . . . or again, *the Text is experienced only in an activity of production*" (*Ibid.*). The text is a dynamic entity, cannot remain static there on a library shelf. To Barthes the text's "constitutive movement is that of cutting across (in particular, it can cut across the work, several works)" (*Ibid.*).

Genres. As against the work, Barthes perceives the Text as "subversive force" controverting the "old classifications", therefore, "it cannot be contained in a hierarchy . . . of genres" and graded as literature, good or otherwise. Further the 'text' is that entity which goes to the limit of the rules of enunciation (rationality, readability, etc.)" (Leitch 1327). To Barthes, the Text endeavour to posit itself behind the limit of the doxa (Gk. received opinion), consequently, speaking literally "the Text is always paradoxical" (1328).

Signs. At this juncture, we may recall Saussure's dyadic model of sign as consisting of two elements: *signifier* (the sound-image that conveys the meaning) and *signified* (the concept or the meaning conveyed). Accordingly, Barthes perceives the text to be "approached, experienced, in reaction to the sign, the work closes on a signified" (1328). He, therefore, attributes to the signified two different modes of signification: one for the work and other for the text. To Barthes the work "falls under the scope of a hermeneutics, of an interpretation (Marxist, psychoanalytic, thematic, etc.)" (1328). In such a situation "the work itself functions as a general sign and it is normal that it should represent an institutional category of the civilization of the Sign" (1328).

As opposed to the work, Barthes perceives the text as dilatory, which "practices the infinite deferment of the signified". The text's field is "that of the signifier and the signifier must not be conceived of as 'the first stage of meaning' . . . but, in complete opposition to this, as its *deferred action*" (1328). Similarly, to

Barthes the infinity of the signifiers refers to "the generation of the perpetual signifier (after the fashion of a perpetual calendar) in the field of the text" (1328). In other words, the signifier does not refer to some final signified (meaning) "but to that of a playing", and hence, the text is realized "according to a serial movement of disconnections overlappings variations" (1328). The text is, thus, restored to languages; like language, it is structured but off-centred, without closure" (1328).

Plurality. To Barthes the Text offers an irreducible plural because "it accomplishes the very plural of meaning", which means more than simply saying that the text, is plural because "it has several meanings". A text is liable to interpretation where there is a co-existence of meanings. But textual plurality in Barthesian sense means a passage and an overcrossing of meanings thus, that type of Text answers to an explosion, dissemination". Consequently, the "plural of the Text depends . . . on what might be called the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers (etymologically, the text is a tissue, a woven fabric)" (1328). In other words, Barthes underscores the inherent intertextuality of the text as he perceives the Text as

Woven entirely with citations, references, echoes cultural languages what language is not?), antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The intertextual in which the text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text . . . the citation which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read: they are quotations without inverted commas. (Barthes cited in Leitch 1329).

Thus, Barthes propositions favour a 'pluralizing' reading strategy which makes fundamental changes in the reading that conforms to the traditional assumptions of monologism, as we encounter in the theological monism of the 'texts' of Holy Scripture and Marxist monistic, ideological materialist reading of literary or non-literary works (1329).

Filiation. By the term 'filiation' Barthes mean "a *determination* of the work by the world (by race, then by History), a *consecution* of works amongst themselves, and a conformity of the work to the author" (1329) and, accordingly he perceives the "work as caught up in a process of filiation" (1329). Barthes equates author and text relationship in terms of father and son, something like a 'before' and an 'after' situation. He separates the "metaphor of the Text" from "that of the work". Thus, freed of author's subjection and declared intensions" Barthes sees the Text as read "without the inscription of the Father" (1329).

What's more, Barthes describes the Text in terms of (vast website) network, hence underscoring its capability to extend itself "as a result of a combinatory systematic", which allows the Text to "be read without the guarantee of its father", because "the restitution of the inter-text paradoxically abolishing and legacy" (1329). The author may 'come back' in the Text only as a 'guest'. If the author happens to be a novelist, then he gets "inscribed in the novel like one of his characters . . . his inscription is ludic" (1330). The novelist becomes a fiction, a paper author because "his life is no longer the origin of his fictions but a fiction contributing to his work . . . The / which writes the text . . . is never more than a paper -/ (1330).

Reading of the Text. To Barthes the "work is normally the object of a consumption", whereas the "Text . . . decants the work . . . from its consumption and gathers it up as play, activity, production, practice." For Barthes this means that the "Text requires that one try to abolish (or . . . diminish) the distance between writing and reading, in no way by intensifying the projection of the reader into the work but by joining them in a single signifying practice" (1330).

To take reading in the sense of a passive consuming "is far from playing with the text." Barthes employs the term 'playing' with "all its polysemy" and accordingly, he comes up with the proposition: "the text itself plays . . . and the reader plays twice over, playing the Text as one plays a game, looking for a practice which re-produces it . . ." (1330). Thus, Barthes doesn't favour the "reduction of reading to a consumption [which] is clearly responsible for the 'boredom' experienced by many in the face of the modern ('unreadable') text, the *avant-grade* film or painting." To "be bored", for Barthes, "means" that one cannot produce the text, open it out, set it going" (1331).

Work as pleasure and the Text as *jouissance*. In this final proposition Barthes argues that there certainly exists "a pleasure of the work (of certain works)" such as he has in the delight of reading and re-

reading authors like Proust, Flaubert, Balzac, and even Alexandre Dumas; in them one has a pleasure of consumption, and one wonders that one cannot re-write them. These works provide aesthetic *plaisir* (pleasure); which one can distinguish from another French term, "*jouissance* (the surprise of orgasm, bliss, ecstasy)" (footnote 1331) which involves sexual connotation.

As against the pleasure of the work as consumption, Barthes sets the Text as "bound to *jouissance*, that is to a pleasure without separation." To him "the Text is that space where no language has a hold over any other, where languages circulate (keeping the circular sense of the term)" (Barthes cited in Leitch 1331). Barthes, concludes the essay "from work to Text" with the proposition that any "discourse on the Text should itself be nothing other than text, research, textual activity, since the Text is that *social* space which leaves no language safe outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder." Eventually, the "theory of the Text can coincide only with a practice of writing" (Barthes cited in Leitch 1331).

In his essay "From Work to Text" (tr. Stephen Heath) Roland Barthes observes that in the past era of Newtonian mechanical worldview of categorization the disciplinarian solidarity of knowledge was rather intact. That worldview overturns and breaks down with the onset of Einsteinian science with its theory of relativity, which postulates that "*the relativity of the frames of reference* be included in the object studied, so the combined action of Marxism, Freudianism and structuralism demands, in literature, the realization of the relations of writer, reader and observer (critic)" (Leitch 1326). Consequently, 'interdisciplinarity' [and incidentally 'intertextuality', which researcher would like to add to it] comes to gain a prime value in research, and it begins substantially to effect former conceptions of language and literature. Obviously, a work of literature owes "its phenomenal existence in this same language" (Barthes cited in Leitch 1326). In the changed scenario, Barthes marks that the 'text, comes to be seen with renewed interest as a new object of study and a new conception of language.

To sum up, Roland Barthes debunks and destabilizes, "the text-oriented theories associated with New Criticism and Formalism" (Selden, Widdowson *et al.* 69). Notably, being an erstwhile structuralist turned in to poststructuralist he hits upon the idea of "the death of the author" as "already inherent in structuralism", as in an structuralist, approach "individual utterances (paroles)" are treated "as the products of impersonal systems (langues)" (*Ibid.*). Not with standing that, Barthes is unique in the sense that he foregrounds:

the idea that readers are free to open and close the text's signifying process without respect for the signified. They are free to take their pleasure of the text Readers are also sites of language's empire, but they are free to connect the text with systems of meaning and ignore the author's 'intention'. (*Ibid.* 160)

Work cited

Allen, Graham. *Roland Barthes*. London; New York: Routledge, n.d.

Barry, Peter (ed.). *Issues in Contemporary Literary Theory: A Case Book*.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: Viva Bks. Pvt. Ltd., 2008.

Chandler, Daniel. *Semiotics for Beginners*. n.p., n.d.

Chatman, Seymour (ed.). *Literary styles: A symposium*. London; New York: OUP, 1971.

(This collection of essays includes Barthes's essay "style and its Image". The citation is drawn from this source.)

Cuddon, J.A. (ed.). *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. New Delhi: Penguin Bks., 2010.

Leitch, Vincent B. (Gen. ed.). *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. (2nd ed.). New York, London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001. (Textual references of Roland Barthes's essays "the death of the author" and "From work to text" are mainly drawn from this source).

Longhurst, Brian, Greg Smith *et al* (ed.). *Introducing Cultural Studies*. (2nd ed., 1st Impr.). New Delhi: Pearson/Dorling Kindersley, India Pvt. Ltd., 2011.

- Macey, David. *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*. (Indian ed.). New Delhi: Penguin/Pearson Bks., 2001.
- Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson et al. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. (5th ed., 1st impr.). NOIDA: Pearson Education Ltd., 2006.
- Tanner, Michael. *Nietzsche: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: OUP, 2000.
-