

A Text Has Its Own ‘Samskara’: From Deconstruction To Reconstruction

Dr. Jernail S. Anand

Prof. Emeritus in Indian Literature [Honorary]
The European Institute of Roma Studies and Research, Belgrade
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jernail_Singh_Anand
anandjs55@yahoo.com

=====

“We all know that literature is not truth. Art is a lie which makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to realize.” (Picasso)

Introduction

Tip of the Iceberg is a quite common expression to underscore something which is visible only partially. Most of an iceberg lies concealed within the waters, and we know how fatal it can be if we just remember the tragic fate of Titanic. What is life? If we apply the idea of the tip of the iceberg on life, it will not be difficult to guess that our life is only a tip of the *Lifeberg* which remains concealed in anonymity. There are a thousand things we think, and as many that we want to say, but do we say everything that we think? And if we think of our actions, do we put into action everything that our mind is fermenting with?

Extending this very argument, a little farther, I am tempted to believe that the visible world too is a tip of the iceberg. We see truly little around us, and there is so much that remains away from our perceptions. Whatever men have done, which now we call human history, is also only tip of the *lifeberg*. Just one part out of a hundred which have gone unrecorded. In fact, we have very quick sifting apparatus, and we put forward only that which serves the moment and leave the rest to evaporate into non-existence.

Based on this thesis, I can say with near finality that all the literature of all ages represents only a miniscule portion of what has been thought down the ages, and there is a huge amount of material which remains unrepresented, making me think of another word: *Filterature* which underlines the idea that events and thoughts were filtered through the consciousness of the poets and authors, and what comes up or remains as literature is only that filtered information coming to us. Such under representation is found in history and even in myth too. And I am tempted to call it *Mystory*, a blend of mystery and history.

Keywords: history, literature, samskara, text, deconstruction

Limitations of Literature and History

Language and words do not say everything. Words are like a candle which light only a limited portion of knowledge. Language helps us to communicate and extend the bounds of knowledge. But it is too much to think that with language, everything can be expressed. And that there are words for everything.

What is a poem? A poem is the visible representation of an emotion. It would be height of ignorance to go after the words, or even between the lines, because, in order to understand the whole of the emotion, we may have to go off-line too. Each word that has been selected, has been selected after rejecting so many. In other words, what has been said and what has not been said, which was in the same frame, together make up the whole poem. What we choose to say, and whatever we select, it is like a dam on free flowing waters, and we release words carefully so that they do not destroy but rather can be used to irrigate friendships, or even to fight adversaries. Words are lying like bricks in a kiln, and we pick a few, and those we reject were possible versions of our poem.

Politicians and senior people when speak, weigh their words. Weighing is sifting only, selecting the most appropriate words. When we say most appropriate, it signifies there were less appropriate words also, and those words too which were a part of the rush of feelings at a particular event, which have now served as chaff.

From Deconstruction to Reconstruction

Deconstructionists demolish the poem and then try to locate its possible meaning. Here is a process in reverse - the process of finding the meaning, not by deconstructing the poem, but by reconstructing it anew, and supplying the suppressed feelings, the expressions which were left out, so that a complete picture of the state of mind of the poet could emerge. In this way, we can reach the poem as it originally emerged in the mind of the poet, as it gives a complete picture of what was whirling in his mind. It also goes to indict the poet for being insincere, as he picks up only a few expressions, and words which suit his intentions. We cannot fault a poet for not supplying all the ideas that accumulate in his mind; yet it is our prerogative to look deep within a poem, and look for the hidden meaning, which lies submerged under the general flow of the poem.

A Poem Has Its Own 'Samskara': (Ethos)

The reason for such an approach lies in this analogy. A son is the creation of a father on a mother. Similarly, a poem is the creation of a poet and the social ethos. It is absolutely atrocious to think a poem can exist by itself, and it is a living entity divorced from the author. It can neither be divorced from the author, nor from the milieu whose presence it registers in every word. It is a living entity, and independent too, in the same way as a son or a daughter springs upon from the parents and goes on to lead his/her own life. Can he be looked at in isolation from his parents? Whatever he gets, by way of 'samskara', comes from his parents,

particularly, his mother. Here, I would like to halt you, and interpose that a piece of poetry too has its own 'samskara', its own ethos, which come from those who created it, in interaction with the social conditions. Kamala Harris and her Indian roots speak too loudly for my ideas how a poem can and should be regarded, for her total essence.

I would also insist that while reading a poem, we must go, not for its meaning, but for its essence. Essence is the juice of existence, while meanings is just like a physical buildup of words, phrases, and syntactical formations. To know the essence, compare the house with the home, the civilization with culture, and existence with being.

The Incomplete Text

There is a solid reason behind the favourite expression: *This world is too complex for human understanding*. How can you understand when things come to you in parts? Moreover, words are supplemented with gestures and intonations; if we get the words, we miss on the gestures which complete the expression. Ours is a crude way of looking at reality. Men who have been so wise, have sorely faulted in a simple test. Whatever they do, and whatever they say, is incomplete, and like a phrase, makes only a limited sense. The tragedy is whatever they say, they consider it complete, whereas facts are otherwise. It seems to them complete because their situation knowledge is flawed. Based on this flawed knowledge, they make faulty calculations and reach undesired destinations. Animals know what they feel and even while conveying it, no civilization comes in their way. To understand the human text, we need not go for deconstruction. The truth lies elsewhere.

The Missing Text

Literature is the unedited history of an epoch. Reason: history records actions and literature supplements that **actionary** truth with the contemplation of why all that happened. Action is like a tree which grows on the earth sucking its life blood from several sources. History has its sources in the mysterious ideas of the people of those times, which only Literature can document. But then literature too has the problem of selection. This selection goes on rendering both literature and history an incomplete text, and therefore, not completely dependable for understand a people.

The willful straying from the truth has led humanity into the quagmire of insecurity, and this insecurity then gives rise to all the maladies of the earth, like injustice, inequality, suppression, and deprivation. It is a tragic irony that we are most read, most alert, wisest of all civilizations, yet simple truths elude us. There is only one good thing that I find about this civilization. It is that it thinks its knowledge is limited, and it has frontiers beyond all human calculations. And they are pressing on into all directions. Yet, it must be acknowledged that human powers stand nowhere in comparison with the vast settlement of time and space, and millions of species, and who knows what is happening all around. We know so little, yet we

make claims which defy all logic. Gods really laugh at us, and they find great pleasure to pinprick us and even when they kill us for their joy.

The Keen In-look

The idea that humanity has missed is: without our two eyes, how much can we see? With our two ears, how much can we hear? With our two hands, how much can we accomplish and with two legs, how much can we traverse? Man, in his around sixty years, hardly makes any more difference than a pebble to a vast ocean. Yet, we are too obsessed with the destiny of the pebble. Words are poor flashes of knowledge in the pervading darkness of ignorance and the impenetrable. History can record a few events, and what challenges us is neither *filterature* nor history, but *mystory*.

Conclusion

Mystory is a blend of mystery and history in the pursuit of absolute truth. We live beyond our knowledge. We feel beyond the machines can capture. We have a mind whose processors put every processor of the world in shade. But it is man's attempt to confront and assimilate the absolute truth. All his scientific forays into the nature of reality have brought him to alarming disclosures. Yet, he is nowhere near a complete understanding of the phenomenon. This article has shown that he will never reach the complete truth because the two major vehicles available to him, History and Literature have inbuilt inadequacies and faults which are beyond repair.

We shall understand the texture of humanity only when we are capable of supplying the suppressed iceberg of knowledge. We make a mess of poetry when in what we say, it suppresses more and says less. And, based on what is said, we try to learn the truth. Truth cannot be contained in any text. Truth lives in your minds, and what we share in poems is partial truth, which waits for being supplemented with the residuary truth. Which we never do, and hence, the world is in disarray.

Literature and History, both are part truths, and therefore, they have failed to uplift humanity. Both are not true records of human action and reflection, rather both are human manipulations. History is like the physical structure of civilization, while literature deals with the culture of an era. Both represent their times, although this representation is only approximate. Truth is a great casualty, be it literature, be it history.

=====