



Authorial Intention Enunciating Through Bakhtin's Heteroglossia

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Abstract

Mikhail Bakhtin, the famous Russian philosopher and critic, explored the term 'dialogism' and found the various dimensions of dialogic communication. Bakhtin says "All words exist in dialogue with other words". Monologism is the one-way traffic of expression from one side only and no communication is monologic in any respect. There is no democracy in monologism and the writer never gives the chance to the audience to express their opinion. The power of opinion should be available to the reader, the narrator, and the writer. In this respect, the interpretation should come from different persons. Dialogic theory has many parts covering polyphony, heteroglossia, carnivalesque, and various forms of language expression. In dialogic culture, there is the expression of individual qualities of characters in a multifaceted way. The paper is an endeavor how an author intends to express his ideas and how these ideas reflect in society in the form of heteroglossia. It is the establishment of two or more viewpoints of a particular idea in a text or other forms of art.

Keywords: Monologism, carnivalesque, heteroglossia, polyphony, dialogism.

Introduction

Mikhail Bakhtin is the most famous Russian Formalist, expresses the idea of dialogism in different forms such as polyphony, heteroglossia, and carnivalesque. Graham Peachey says, "Mikhail Bakhtin is one of the most influential theorists of philosophy as well as literary studies. His work on dialogue and discourse has changed the way, in which we read texts – both literary and cultural – and his practice of philosophy in literary refraction and philological exploration has made him a pioneering figure in the twentieth-century convergence of the two disciplines". Mikhail Bakhtin is known for his famous book on Fyodor Dostoyevsky, 'Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics'. It is regarded as the finest critical book on Dostoyevsky. The main characteristic of Dostoevsky's characters is polyphonic structure, they are not singular, plural in the sense that symbolize multiple, ideas are self-contradictory, speeches, standpoints, and internal scuffles. The concept of multiple aphorisms is deep-rooted in the theory of *polyphony*, it is one of the theories developed by Mikhail Bakhtin. Dostoevsky's characters are not merely the extension of the author's ideas but independent speeches and dashes of realism. Plurality is the sense that a character has a multiplicity of voices within the self. Characters engage in internal dialogues which reflect their multifaceted dispositions and contradictory requirements. For the



case, Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* vacillates between his defense for murder based on utilitarian philosophy and his profound ethical and mystical fault. Fyodor Dostoevsky's works are among the most celebrated examples of heteroglossia, particularly in the way his characters embody distinct, often conflicting ideologies and worldviews. Each character has authority and autonomy in their standpoints and it is away from the control of the author. This results in the multiplicity of structure and unique ideological stances of the respective characters. In this book, Bakhtin expressed his thoughts on the relation between context and the meaning of a word. If the voices of the personae are amalgamated with the voice of the writer only, it does not become dialogic but polyphonic. It is just like the ability of a synthesizer to play many notes at a time. The meaning of the communication affects the author, reader, and narrator and can affect others on different levels. The political and social system influences the interpretation of language at different levels. Bakhtin's theories are influenced by many writers for their further literary and philosophical works. All forms of literary works are dialogic and they can be affected many in different ways. A form of art can affect the reader, narrator, and the author himself or herself. As the writer introduces the idea, there can be different opinions and expressions from many corners like the critics, readers, narrators, and from readers of various natures. Bakhtin says; that the speech of the narrator is always being other's ideas and opinions. The writer himself has his ideas but the narrator introduces them in his way to articulate, adding some spices or deleting certain thoughts or ideas from the original text. When the audience or the reader understands the intention of the author or the narrator or makes their interpretation in their way, it can be heteroglossia. If only the idea of the author is introduced in the art, it is only homoglossia. The signs, the tension, and the conflict associated with the society are interpreted in different ways and have been affected like chalk and cheese. The writer introduces his idea either from his internal wit or from the experiences he receives from the interaction with others in society in different circumstances. Michael Bakhtin thought that a literary work was a manipulated thing and a sum of technical devices. A literary theory is the analysis of various levels of communication between works of literature and other authors. In his 1984, study, "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics", Bakhtin states "The life of the world expands to one mass to another and one context to another, one social context to another and one generation to another. The world is a bridge between me and another". Bakhtin's ideas might have evolved from the 'Russian Formalist Movement' and would have shared the style and narrative techniques with the world. But where the formalists' scientific and historical outlook led them to focus on the technicalities exclusively, and the methods of mystification, of texts, Bakhtin, much like the New Historicists, also acknowledged the social and ideological dimension of language. Literature is never an independent object rather it is a type of expression and it depends on historical and social interactions. "At work when the text is produced and when it is consumed" (Holquist 68-69). Heteroglossia is the situation in the operation of the meaning in a literary text. It is a situation in which the subject is "surrounded by the myriad responses he or she might make at any point, but any of which must be framed in a specific discourse selected from the teeming thousands available" (69). Moreover, "what can be seen as central to the idea of heteroglossia is the notion



that the meaning of a word just uttered will be dependent on the circumstantial and unstable conditions of that specific time and place” (70).

Bakhtin revolutionized the idea of novels as a variety of literature which gives the reflection of the multiplicity of voices and variety of languages present in the society. The novel becomes the microcosm of society as it exists several social diversity, which allows the different aspects of the narrative framework, within the same framework allows different dialects. The novel has the nature of democracy and it has a polyphonic nature of language and discourse. In the novel, there is a diversity of characters and their viewpoints. Internet and new media platforms serve as the arena for the expression of countless voices and viewpoints that transcend customary practices of expression. According to Bakhtin, the concept of language is intrinsically varied as it is based on context, which is particularly true in a multi-cultured social system, that has worldwide connections. People steer various social contexts, adapt the new language they learn and their style of speech, and reflect the dynamism of linguistic expression. The students who go to study abroad are customized to the new culture and language where they are being migrated. The migrants assimilate with the language of the migrated country and also protect their mother tongue. Bakhtin's theories continue to provide extensive insights into the relationship between language, social culture, and the complexities of social setup.

It is through this phenomenon that Bakhtin claims, “...this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre”. (The Dialogic Imagination pg. 263). Bakhtin agrees that the language in the novel is multifaceted, the concept of the language of the novel is an "easy alternative of parody" and it subverts the existing narrative conventions. The language and incidents of the novel will open the space for dual voices, where the language used is in the original form and through the lens of parody. All kinds of languages have a nature of different social and cultural dimensions. Communication is not merely a tool of expression but it is entrenched with social dynamism and language is a strong tool for re-enforcing principal doctrines. Bakhtin's peasant addressing the priest exemplifies the different ideological forms inherent within the language. Mathew Chovanec, writes in his critical article on Discourse in Novel-Bakhtin, “As a result of the work done by all these stratifying forces in language, there are no “neutral” words and forms-words and forms that can belong to no one; language has been completely taken over, shot through with intentions and accents. For any individual consciousness living in it, language is not an abstract system of normative forms but rather a concrete heteroglot conception of the world”. The multiplicity of using language in culture is heteroglossia, in which the minting and experiencing manifold personal self. Each of them has multiple thoughts, variations in emotions, preferences, individual reactions to a particular problem, and different behavioral approaches and sensibility. We use language differently in different circumstances like the language in a different tone in our office, in our home with our parents, children, and wives. Heteroglossia is the use of a wide variety of languages in various circumstances, and the meanings and interpretations are different



on different occasions. When a large number of people use languages there can be a chance of an increase in heteroglossia. Thus, heteroglossia is an intra-language social variation. Social and regional dialectics have different interpretations in different circumstances. The regional slang of an illiterate person is different from an educated person, when both of them express the same matter, it can be in different manners. Also, even when we talk about the same matter with our parents, children, and our friends, the way of interpretation and expression is in different variance. Bakhtin says this variation of expression is heteroglossia. The interaction with different people of different culture and language has differences in effects on its audiences. The humor in the original texts is more effective on the readers than its translation in other languages. Notwithstanding the humor and wit in the famous Malayan movie, 'Dhrishyam' played by the actor, 'Mohanlal', has a deep-rooted impact on the audience, but its re-makes have no such crashes on the audience because of the dialectic and cultural changes. Bakhtin says that "words are not neutral but they are forced to diversification of meanings. The intention of the author and imbibed meaning of the readers might be different in different circumstances. Due to the social interactions and associations, there might be deviations in its interpretations. Social tensions can work nonetheless the intention of the author is not conscious and can go through social criticism. "Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and dis-unification, intersect in the utterance" (Bakhtin 1981: 272). Language is not neutral but a strong medium of thought and it gives a chance for discussion, interpretation, and criticism. The words are used by others, acquiring social associations and sometimes adding and muting the meanings. Language is an abstract medium of thought and reference system. Linguistic thoughts have situational meanings when it has an association with a particular matter.

Heteroglossia

Heteroglossia represents the philosophical outlook on language and the process of communication. It is a practice and approach of 'multilingualism' in every sphere of the communicative process. Mikhail Bakhtin illustrates 'Heteroglossia' to deliver the plurality of independent, autonomous, merged voices in literary texts, be it novel, drama, or any other narrative texts. Dialogic criticism refers to a type of criticism that is based on the unique concepts introduced by Bakhtin in his literary studies. Writers or speakers are social persons and they establish their ideas through interactions. Language in heteroglossia is well established in Virginia Woolf's 'Mrs. Dalloway'; Clarissa Dalloway is the female protagonist and illusory upper-class woman in 'Post-World War England'. Mrs. Dalloway said that she would buy the flowers herself; it seems a very trivial act but that single line provokes the readers to keep the multiple thought. Clarissa Dalloway expresses her willingness to buy the flower herself for the party that she is hosting. For a common man, this is not a Herculean task but for a society lady like Clarissa Dalloway; it is an act of prestige. The attitude and interpretation of readers might have multiple effects and have different ways of criticism. Nonetheless, the same reader is concerned; he has a different opinion on the same matter in a particular context. It is due to the



expression of the reader on a particular communication is different in occasion various context regarding the same topic.

Heteroglossia is the convergence of different varieties of linguistics, including a variety of styles of discourse or outlooks in a solitary language and the existence of a variety of viewpoints or outlooks in a particular context. There can be specific worldviews but each one is characterized in different meanings and variations in values. Bakhtin says this diversity can be brought in a single language but on system-based linguistics. The words uttered in every circumstance or a particular place, are the union of a multifaceted brain. Heteroglossia can be “the base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance”, and it has a guarantee of “the primacy of context over text”. In heteroglossia, there is always tension between central and decentralized forces. Bakhtin opines that language is a system in linguistics where the convergence of different experiences of human beings from their day-to-day realities of life. Language is the main way of expressing viewpoints in various circumstances, especially professional expressions, and passes from generation to generation. Social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargon, common languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, language of the authorities, of various circles, and of passing fashions. When heteroglossia is integrated into the novel, it is “another’s speech in another’s language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way”. Bakhtin says this hierarchy of languages brings distinct viewpoints and different meanings in language. Language is “shot through with intentions and accents” and therefore there are seldom neutral words. Words have no importance until it is spoken and when it comes out; the imprint of the speaker is borne out. Bakhtin says that when a literary performance whether it is speech, written work, or a verbal performance, it requires a particular dialect that is spoken generally; and in certain. For writing prose, the writer has to integrate many languages into the art thereby he can bring different cultural metaphors to make the work so impressive.

Bakhtin never supported the use of stylistics, linguistics, and poetics to misunderstand people as it is an ongoing process. Bakhtin thinks that there is spontaneity and multiplicity in language, it has a diversity of speaking, and language is the reflection of the diversified cultural system. Language is the way of evaluating the culture of a sect in society, but multiplicity of language is rarely found in linguistics. Language is variable, where there is an overlapping of culture, the cultural diversification occurs in small social groups and it spreads to large extents. The diversified groups have differences of language within their cultural boundaries. Nonetheless tribal lives among the other cultural bounds, he keeps his own culture and the way of expressing the idea to the other tribal is distinct from the cultured ones. The tribal language in Kerala is not up to the reach of sophisticated people. They use certain words like ‘enthen chankathiyo’ and ‘kuraku mando’ (what is the matter and where are you going?) yet they speak the refined language to communicate with the others. Diaspora has multiple languages, one their mother tongue and the cultural bond they live. Each individual engages in multiple languages and with one’s evaluations and outlook and has interaction with many languages in different



circumstances. Bakhtin has given many examples such as in the work site an individual speaks one language but within his family, he uses his mother tongue and with his priest, he speaks with a different tongue and tone. It means that an individual has a multiplicity of languages on different occasions, and at an appropriate time the toning changes according to needs. People in the general sense; never learn their native language from any outside coaching, unlike they learn from their parents and nears, they learn from a series of social interactions and encounters. The language used in the hamlets and bureaucratic genres have no basic similarities even though the same matter is furnished in an artistic form. Bakhtin in his argument establishes that the comic works of Charles Dickens cloaked the language to generate humor. The humor generated in his works has the nature of exaggeration and factual clash. Bakhtin tries to bring the connections of heteroglossia in common conversation, people try to bring people use quotations “everyone says” or “I heard that”. People generally quote others and try to make it their own to maneuver the audience. Even citations and quotations are the nature of heteroglossia as the words are borrowed to establish one’s idea strongly. In the authoritative discourse also, there might be a commingling of different ideas of the listener or reader for its narration. Therefore, Bakhtin in his interpretation of the novel clarifies that there is less importance of authoritative discourse, as it is open for discussion. Bakhtin in his argument establishes that the author’s authority is questioned as it is open for discussion. Undoubtedly novel functions through heteroglossia, and it promotes the importance for the readers for their continuous discussions.

Reader Response Theory

The French literary scholar Roland Barthes, in his book “The Death of the Author,” challenges the traditional beliefs of authorship and expresses the idea about the notion of authors. This theory mainly focuses on the importance of the reader and the involvement of the literary works. ‘Reader Response Theory’ makes a space for the reader rather than the author and the reader’s interpretation of the text is much more important and central to the consideration in literature. When we try to observe the text, the author’s idea is less represented, and the ethereal hand. “The Death of the Author,” argues that the reader has a great role in determining the meaning of a text. Roland Barthes neglects the role of the author as if it specifies the feelings, thoughts, and beliefs of the reader in the creation of the meaning of the texts. Nonetheless, there are several meeting points and clashes that can be in a text, yet the discovery of the meaning has not evolved from the author. Reader Response Theory shifts its nature from personal to dynamism of reading. Barthes says that we never access the depth of the text by its author but by the interpretation of various readers and the responses multifaceted meanings of the readers. As each reader is unique and can be a valid interpretation of the same text can evolve from each corner. Louise



Rosenblatt, 'Reading is a process of a transaction between the reader and the text'. To create the meaning of a text, needs the contribution of the text and the reader. Different readers from diverse backgrounds can have different outlooks on the text as their cultural, social, and historical backgrounds are dissimilar. Barthes opines those different responses cropped up from the same piece of work as the reader mixes the emotions and relates his personal life and experiences. In literary studies and pedagogical suggestions, 'Reader Response Theory' becomes more reader-centric, and readers' clarifications and personal influences on the texts are valued more and discovered. Barthes stresses that the text is more important than the author as the examination of many readers and creation of many meanings. "The good of a book lies in its being read. A book is made up of signs that speak of other signs, which in their turn speak of things. Without an eye to read them, a book contains signs that produce no concepts; therefore, it is dumb." (89)

Findings

Mikhail Bakhtin used the term 'heteroglossia' in the context of the novel, but it is experienced by many writers in different forms of literature, especially plays. Also, wit and humor in the original texts are more effective on the readers than its translation in other languages. Many playwrights like William Shakespeare used 'heteroglossia' in most of his plays. "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Harotio than are in your philosophy." Hamlet, (Act 1, Scene 5). Both Hamlet and Harotio had the same interpretation of the world before Hamlet saw the Ghost, but now Hamlet changes his elucidation on the topic of the world and interprets it in a different tone. And also "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" Hamlet, (Act 1, Scene 4). Hamlet feels certain bad things are going on in the country of Denmark and also talks about the problems with Norway. These lines have multiple meanings, as the ghost is a menacing omen for Denmark and in the other way it shows the moral decay of a ruler. When the morality of the ruler is questioned, it means the entire system is in putrefaction.

Conclusion

In every form of art, whether it is novel, play, or other forms, the author speaks through characters, but the options of multiplicity of thoughts, and variations in their interpretations are open. Deviations of thoughts and ideas are exponential and more variant. When art comes to light, review is also there in different ways and it is open for multiple moods of discussion. The interpretation and the outcome of the level might be a little different. ie; there can be a variety of expressions from different corners. The authorial intention might be different from the narrator, reader, and peers, and one can expect various comments in different contexts for a particular communication.



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