

Word, Sense and the Essence: The Talisam of Words

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ABSTRACT

Words are like bricks. They have a racial stock. Like bricks, they are full of racial memories. They radiate meanings. Different at different times, and as different to different people. A word's meaning depends so much on how it is pronounced, and where [in the arrangement of the sentence] it is placed. Bricks may be insensitive, but words are not. They are highly sensitive blocks which build the structures of thought. And when people hold convictions, they are believing in the power of the word. Thus, it can be said that words not only confine themselves to the paper on which they are written, they also affect the mind, and a whole style of living and being of a community. The present study deals with the life of words, and an effort has been made to go into their sense, and then, to inquire how it all turns into an essence. It appears to be a progression as in degrees of comparison. Starting with the word, we move on to its sense, and then, at the third stage lies its essence. This article tries out to find out how words gain their sense, and what brings about their essence. Not without ascertaining the effect of time and the change of personalities on their life.

KEYWORDS: word sense, word essence, Talisam of Words, sensitive blocks

HOW WORDS ARE CHOSEN

In speech, the choice of words may be very conscious, and in writing it is more so, but how these words come into our mind that is the real issue. They are a part of our thought process, but everything is not a conscious affair. Words just appear on the canvas of our mind from where they are picked up and put into the pattern. Speech, however conscious it may be, is in the last analysis, an event involving our reflexes. Speech most of the time is how we naturally feel, think and behave, and words issue forth from our mouth in a natural fashion, leaving very less scope for a conscious supply of words to cause a specific effect. While discussing various topics in debates, people can be very cautious about the statements they make, but in ordinary life, that cautiousness does not stay. People are normal in speech in normal situations. Here, the words that flow into their speech patterns, their nuances etc. are not the stuff of deliberative mindfulness, but a mental situation in which the mind takes a back seat, and the feelings have a free play.

Now, the basic issue is from where the words appear. In speech, and even in writing, the most natural pattern that words follow is the natural one. They appear from nowhere, or it can be said, from the store of our memories, our experiences, our vast living, our interactions, our pains and joys.

Everything is staying back, to supply us the words we need to express present emotions. It certainly shows that words used in speech or prose are not aliens, but words which have been internalized and personalized over the years. *Although words are the common property of mankind, still, in this context, a dividing line can be drawn between personal words and impersonal words. There are words that appear from our inside, and there are words which we import from the consciousness of other people. This may not be apparent to the reader unless he is very discreet, but at least the writer knows that this or that word does not belong to him, or the way it belongs to him is different from the way it has belonged to others.*

UNIFORMITY OF MEANING: A NEAR MYTH

This idea takes us on to the world of SENSE, and to aver that every word is UNIQUE as it has a specific gravity of its own. As stated earlier, a word is not constrained so far its meaning is concerned. If a brick can be used in any construction, and in any way, similarly, words, for their sense, depend on how they are used, and where, and mostly, who is using them. Surprisingly, the sense alters by placing them at different points, pronouncing them in different ways, and different people use them in different ways. The idea of uniformity of meaning appears to be a half-truth here, because the sense of the word is variable and cannot be constrained in fixities. Brick, with which words have been continuously compared here, are certainly in a different situation so far as the finished product is concerned. From bricks, we build walls which are real, not imaginary. From

bricks are built homes, which too are real, not imaginary. Bricks are at the navigating centre of the world. Bricks building civilizations. But words lack that fixity, that certainty, that steadfastness, and that loyalty which the bricks enjoy, on which this world rests. On the other hand, words are fragile, flowing, uncertain, mutable, and may be, undependable to build any argument over them, because they are fools of time too. But all these qualities are more humane. Words have a direct co-relation with human consciousness, they grow in the fragile soil of the heart, and vacillating winds of the mind. A bulb has a certain shape when it is not glowing. But when it is aglow, it is only shine. Amorphousness is the half mark of all life, and therefore, words which emanate from human consciousness, also share those qualities. Their lack of certainty, fixity, and being amorphous in nature, meaning and their sense, is no disqualification. Rather, all these qualities which go to make human life rich in its finer aspects, also take it out of the reach of scientific and physical processes to approach the internal nuances of the mind, its moods, its variations, and its delicate moments.

It is this specific gravity of the words which makes them unique when they come from a writer's pen. In them, they carry the impact of the time, as well as the mental set up of the writer when they flew into his pen. What he wanted to say and how he wanted to say, each word is chiseled with care. For the most part, this care is unintentional, unconscious, because the words are the tools to create a sense, and the sense is already created in the mind of the master. Therefore, there is no struggle with words and their unique sense when it comes to the masters of the art, whereas lesser

poets are seen creating **wordshed** on the sheets of paper where the words are either overloaded with sense, or the sense overflows the words. In fact, the thought and the word are simultaneous. Words do not follow thoughts, nor do thoughts follow words. Wherever it is out of sync, there is wordshed. Wordshed takes place where conscious effort is made to create sense; words who are grazing in the pastures of the mind, are herded to a certain point, and slaughtered there.

ESSENCE: THE RAINBOW REALITY OF WORDS

Every word has a soul. When a word is placed in a pattern of thought, it acquires an extended existence, without a being of its own. To this being are party not only the word, nor time alone, but the person of the creator. The word 'fire' when used by an ordinary person may not go beyond the physical entity, of a burning fire, but when the same word comes from a person like T.S. Eliot, it acquires a whole aura of symbols and suggestions. Thus the essence of the word 'fire', lies not in the letters that come together to form it, but in the imagination of the creator, who finds a flare up, and the visions of the reader before whose eye, a red flame starts up. Then, to this 'fire' what adds further value and signification are where it is burning. Is it burning in the hearth, where it is used to cook food, and becomes a symbol of growth? Or is it burning in the cremation ground, where it turns into a symbol of extinction. 'Fire' is sacred when it burns in the presence of the saints, who are chanting spells to invoke gods. These social contexts provide a distinct, a unique personality to these words.

The stamp of the creator can be also seen on these words. 'Love' invokes a whole range of emotions. Name it, and a long film starts unreeling in the mind. The idea behind this word has been enriched by so many instances in which lovers were killed, separated, united, and tortured over the ages. Shakespeare, Keats, Donne, Wordsworth how many poets have expressed in how many ways this idea of love and for every poet, it has a distinct reality. In a certain way, it can be called personality specific. Or, this can be said that words gain a special orientation depending upon the light which throws upon them. This light is the light of the vision of the poet. The creator is inside the words, and outside them at the same time. It is his personal pain and joy which adds a distinct spell to the words, so that they start radiating in the glow of his personality. It is this essence of the word which distinguishes it from other essences. Furthermore, how this essence hereafter reacts with the personality of the reader causes another spectrum of nuances on the same word so that the word which is visible like a bulb starts glowing in innumerable colour combinations when it is on with the current of imagination of the creator and the reader.

This 'essence' is the final product in a literary work which far transcends the word in its physical identity. Diversity is at the heart of every essence, flexibility its soul, and a moving spectrum its reality, ever under transformation. No one can catch a falling star. It is light and flash and speed and glory. This is what a word is in its essence, a shooting star, which pierces the darkness, and brings to life a momentary piece of existence, turns it into a glowing reality, and then is no more. No more

because this is a passing glory, created by pressing moments which are working on human mind, our memories, our aspirations, our moods, and our racial memories buried deep into our insides. This distinctness comes to these moments of time because of several factors, major of them being the fact that individual perceptions are unique, and cannot be patternized. Mind is always in a flux. Consciousness is always a flow. Fixity is a myth. And whatever meaning we grab at in this passing show, is like clicking a snap of the outside through our mobile camera while passing at fast speed in a car. If at all it is reality, it comes to us broken into pieces. And it is not easy putting these pieces together. More so, because they are scratches of human consciousness which can be felt, seen, touched, and cannot be constrained in any set formulae.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, it can be averred that words which appear to be innocent, are actually a highly radiant entity. They are living objects with multiple identities which are always in the process of changefulness. In the world of ideas, words are like bricks with which we build thought patterns. But, unlike the brick structures, these are highly illusory, because they are more like a miasma, a talisman, or even 'maya', something unreal which projects at a given time and evaporates the next moment. At the most they can be described with the expression; rainbow reality. Rainbow is a vision, so are words, with changing patterns of their meanings as the time changes, and the writer or the interpreter changes. It has been argued that words have a unique

personality within a thought pattern, and therefore, in that pattern, they acquire a specific gravity. The article also argues that words and thoughts are simultaneous. And wherever, the thoughts precede words, there can be wordshed, where thoughts are forced upon words, and words are forced upon ideas with violence.

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