

# WORD AND DEED: AN ENQUIRY WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON DECONSTRUCTION

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**Abstract:** *We always used to say that in the beginning there was word. It is because we fail to think of a world without words. If we take away all things from our vicinity as Kant advised to do, we fail to keep away words as we are immersed in a world of thought through words. Here we discuss how does word act as deed. Indeed word itself is deed and hence the history of mankind begins with words/deeds.*

**Keywords –** *materiality of language, Difference*

We always used to say that in the beginning there was word. It is because we fail to think of a world without words. If we take away all things from our vicinity as Kant advised to do, we fail to keep away words as we are immersed in a world of thought through words. We can definitely take away objects like table, chair and such objects. Even in such a vacuum we remain entwined with words. However here we discuss how does word act as deed. Indeed word itself is deed and hence the history of mankind begins with words/deeds.

Lacan showed the way a child enters the mirror stage. A child builds up a world of his/her own not from within but from outside. It means from outside with the words which tangle him or her. So anybody begins to caricature himself or herself, firstly based on the language he/she enters. A man/woman constructs his/her self depending on the language which he/she finds to imitate. It was Ferdinand de Saussure who for the first time showed the materiality of language. Levi-Strauss in his anthropological structuralism revealed the roll of language in culture. Finally it was Jacques Derrida who formulated an entirely new logical approach to language.

Language as we know became a topic of serious consideration after Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course De Linguistique Generale* was published in 1916. However one of the other important most influential work 'The Meaning of Meaning' by C.K.Ogden and I.A. Richards also was published in 1922. Both of the texts in their approach follow the western traditional style and hence somehow limited by the 'metaphysics' of presence as later Derrida shows in his *Of Grammatology*.

Saussure compared language with a sheet of paper: Accordingly it is "Comparable to a sheet of paper: thought being the recto and sound the verso; one cannot cut one side without at the same time cutting the other; and in the same way, in language, one can neither isolate *sound* from *thought* nor thought from sound."<sup>1</sup>(Ferdinand de Saussure (1983)P.111)

It is here that Derrida interferes to explicate the 'Metaphysics of presence', Derrida opened up his argument in order to show the materiality of language. Actually Levi Strauss described how the primitives of Nambikwara failed to write here as they could make a speech. Derrida cleverly shows how Levi Strauss fails to identify their scribing as writings while their noises/voices were identified as speech. Derrida did not interpret any text simply for the sake of interpretation. Unlike the American deconstructionists Derrida never played for 'play' sake. He analyzed the 'play' to explain the inherent potential of linguistic signs. It was not even a 'Game' of Wittgenstein. Lacan tried to link words with human desire. Lacanian analysis stems from Freudian dream interpretation. For Lacan words have the power to take on new significance, threats, power and desire for each person as they circulate. At the same time for Derrida the power of language or rather words is not something produced in the realm of individual desires.

The concern of Derridean reading is not actually the indeterminacy of meaning as many of us used to say. The coinage of the term 'Differance' with 'a' instead of 'e' in his first and much celebrated lecture on this theme, (Structure, sign and play in the discourse of the Human Science, 1966) by Derrida brought forth a break in Linguistic Philosophy. Thereby he invented logic of his own different from both Aristotelian and Baconian.

It was actually an event in the history of philosophical intervention because of the cultural dimension it brought along with it. The letter 'a' was not only unheard but also unexpected. So the coinage of the term 'differance' to include both differ and defer as we find in his further explications was not a mere 'game' by himself or for others. On the other hand he wanted to show the role of written word and its power to denote and connote areas which are yet unseen. So Edward Said who later successfully ventured in to the analysis of many of the 'dominative mode of thinking' said about Derrida that he actually produced knowledge by way of making 'Visible what is customarily invisible in a text, namely the various mysteries, rules and play of its textuality. (Edward, Said.(1991)P.184)

The deconstructive turn in philosophy indeed has helped to commence with new approach and thereby reveal the 'invisible' truths; We know the reality as it is explained or rather interpreted. When 'moon' is a heavenly body it becomes so not because its physical existence is heavenly. People worship it as far it is 'heavenly'. And it is 'heavenly' as far as it is interpreted in such a way. So it is the 'Words' which make us worship or not. Galileo, Kant and even Socrates become enemies of the ruling ideology not because they attacked anyone either individually or collectively. They just like Buddha and Carvaka, put forth their views through words which created much puzzle in the situation. Following Derrida Edward said and many others began to re-read canonical texts and produced new knowledge out of them. What makes the wonder is the fact that the same text which existed for the centuries with a different meaning begins to produce a new meaning and new situation. It means that its earlier state had played a different role in the society.

Sree Narayana Guru consecrated a stone which he look from the Aruvippuram river and named it as 'Siva linga' Even though it was done by as non-Brahmin Ezhava reformer saint it became an idol for worship. How did it became such as object of worship. It is the language which made the people around to treat it as godly object for worship. Had it been named something else it would have become so. Hence we come to realize that no word is 'empty' or bereft of meaning. We ascribe certain meaning to serve a purpose. The purpose may be

love, hate, struggle. etc In order to discard or accept something we give certain meaning. The meaning is generated within a particular structure and the deed it fulfils depends upon the structure to which it belongs.

Any word after its birth is like an orphan according to Derrida. An orphan grows in accordance with the parents he/she acquires. Kabir Das became a muslim because he was looked after by the muslim parents. All the ambiguities and right associated with the hagiographic stories of Kabir actually stems from the fact that he was an orphan. The same is the case with linguistic signs as well. The inherent ambiguity of 'words' arise from the very nature of its existence. A word always fulfill a certain function and its existence and meaning depends upon the purpose or deed for which it is employed. In short it depends upon with whom it is and for what it is used.

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