

Problematics of Language between Critics and Creative Writers

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Abstract: Language as a means of communication has been the target of many investigations in the last century or so. Philosophers, psychologists and critics have tackled this issue such as Saussure, I.A.Richards, Jakobson, Chomsky, Foucault, Barthes, Kristeva, and Derrida...etc. All these names and many others have tackled serious aspects of the language like the hazy relation between the sign and object or, if we borrow linguistic terminology, the signifier and signified as well as the semantic levels and what factors determine these. The present paper is concerned with the different insights and judgments of both critics and creative writers regarding the language and its nature. Although creative writers do not pay exclusive attention to the language as in the case of critics and other linguistic scholars, their contribution is worth mentioning and foregrounding. The study is divided into two main sections. The first is about the views of critics and linguists concerning the language and its particularity. The second exemplifies the contributions of creative writers to this thorny problem which show, in the final analysis, their full awareness of this problem. The method used throughout the whole study is descriptive and analytical in that the linguistic phenomenon is investigated thorough actual examples from different creative writers.

Key words: Discourse; Signification; Symbol; Signifier; Signified; Problematic; Intriguing; Interpretation; Uncontrollability

1. INTRODUCTION

To begin with, it sounds ironic to choose a title for this paper as the present one since, ostensibly, there is nothing problematic about the language if viewed without apriori judgments or presuppositions. What is language, after all, if not the medium of communication and articulating concepts and views in the mind of the writer or speaker? On the face of it, this rings axiomatic and tautological and no further explication or elaboration. *The scriptures*, for example, emphasizes the priority assigned to language as seen in the verses referring to the beginning of the world as lying in the 'word' and all the vast and profound theological implications associated with it.

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Throughout the whole history of western culture and literature, this has been the norm. Creative writers, philosophers, historians, aestheticians and critics have taken the linguistic medium as something indisputable and reliable. Indeed their interest lies elsewhere, outside its borders: the world at large and people or objects associated with it. Its significance and vital role in drawing a demarcation line between human beings and other creatures is highlighted in the arguments of the American linguist, Chomsky.

The faculty of language enters crucially into every aspect of human life, thought and interaction. It is largely responsible for the fact that alone in the biological world humans have a history, cultural evolution, and diversity of any complexity and richness (Chomsky, 2000, p.3).

What Chomsky elaborates here about the interaction between what is linguistic and non-linguistic articulation in human life culminates in his earlier studies which emphasize the view that language is a process of self-investigation, of knowing how the mechanism of human mind functions and its reaction in such situations. As he aptly puts it, " language learning is nothing more than what their minds construct when placed in appropriate conditions: they are designed in anything like the same way to learn physics"(Chomsky, 1979,p. 35).

This process of articulating a particular statement or word and expecting a certain reaction or answer from the listener or reader has been considered as natural or spontaneous. As regards the controversial term " meaning" nowadays, one can only say that it has acquired all these connotations and shades of meaning only recently. Indeed it has been invested with a whole host of implications and debates. As many scholars and linguists have shown, meaning is embedded in the linguistic construct about which there were no heated disputes or disagreements. Meaning was viewed as " the stepchild of linguistics, something better left to lexicographers and anthropologists"(Tyler,1978,p.186).

It is within these lines that John Locke argues about the verbal form and its meaning. There is no rift or rupture between the two constituents of the linguistic discourse. As he suggests, "The use, then, of words is to be sensible marks of ideas; and the ideas they stand for are the proper and immediate signification"(Locke, 1979, p.15). Even some 20th century linguists adopted this view concerning the inseparability between the referent and what it refers to, the word and concept. This is indeed the gist of Hans Aarsleff's argument in this regard when he stresses some absolute connection between words and one of the early names that have drawn the attention of the reader or the auditor to the inconsistent nature of language and its current diversifications is, of course, Dr. Samuel Johnson. Working for nine years in compiling, categorizing and giving etymologies of English words in his seminal work, *Dictionary of english Language* (1755), Dr. Johnson is the first to identify the fact that words and their meanings are not fixed, but always changing" the boundless chaos of human speech"(Johnson, 1978, p.3) as he points out in his preface to that landmark in English language.

Needless to say, Johnson's casual reference to the unstable relation tying the word to its meaning is necessitated by his keen understanding of the crucial role played by context and the historical evolution. The meaning, no matter how one perceives it, is out of question at least in his own time. However, a passing look at the current scene of literary theory shows that it delves much beneath what Johnson and his faction profess.

2. MAIN DISCUSSION: THE CRITICAL DEBATE

In the first decades of 20th century, Europe witnessed the rise and proliferation of linguistic findings and insights whose impact is totally radical. This coincided with political upheavals which in turn are reflected in ontological and epistemological and ontological phenomena. The perception of the linguistic act and how it is rationalized and analyzed, all these have undergone overwhelming changes. Ferdinand de Saussure led this transition in the concept of the language and fostered a new awareness in how to deal with language from a purely scientific viewpoint. Indeed his *Courses in general linguistics* (1916) published posthumously ushered a landmark in the view and understanding of language and its problematics. Any book on linguistics at present inevitably refers to Saussure's findings, whether in terms of agreement or disagreement. His substantial contributions to the study of the language are common and quotable such as the remarkable differentiation between 'parole' and 'langue'.

“‘Diachronic’ and ‘synchronic’, and above all ‘the signifier’ and ‘signified’. He did not accept the view popular in his time that language and speech were completely instinctive. Instead he asserted that they were a learned experience, not instinctive. In other words, his arguments about the language as a social product bring to mind Dr. Johnson’s insightful view that what is practiced in the language is the outcome of social conventions, rather than natural instincts. This unprecedented differentiation paves the way for future steps aiming to strip the language from any specific, innate meaning that has accumulated in the passage of time. As he puts it, “in language there is only difference without positive terms” (Bradford, 1997, p. 5). Saussure’s argument about ‘the arbitrary’ relation between the signifier and signified is simply a convention argued upon or rejected. It has stirred much controversy and in fact all other adjacent disciplines are affected by it. Critics, scholars and linguists have found in these arguments fertile fields for approving or disapproving Saussure’s breakthrough. For instance, Roman Jakobson, another influential figure in the linguistic field, sees the matter differently. He asserts that “As Benveniste has shown beautifully in *Acta linguistica*, I, from the synchronic point of view of a language community using linguistic signs one must not ascribe to them an arbitrary nature” (Jakobson, 1985, p.29).

Jakobson’s judgment is not the only one as there are those scholars who support and verify the validity of Saussure’s argument. In other words there are many apologists and explicators of his theory. Nearly all Jonathan Culler’s books do not veer from this underlying assumption, since he concentrates in his ‘semiological’ studies on the concept of ‘sign’, structure and meaning as the main points raised by Saussure. Riffaterre’s statement that ‘a poem (and by extension any linguistic construct) says one thing and means another’ (Riffaterre, 1978, p.165) revolves around this issue. The discrepancy between the stated and meant is a very old idea and in fact it constitutes the basis of the literary study. Many new books keep repeating the Saussurean views in one way or another. Thus we read “Words are a different kind of sign called a symbol. Symbols have no actual connection with the things they describe” (Griffen, 1997, p.58). I.A. Richards and C.K. Ogden in their influential book, *The meaning of meaning* (1923) have already pointed out that a specific and fixed meaning of a particular word is superstition since this is the outcome of the false belief that every word has one exact correct meaning. This argument stresses the role and uses of the sign as the springboard for a set of referents. The other side of the formula (object, signified, meaning) is left to speculation and inference. The fact of the matter is that this view represents the foundation of the reception theory as the meaning of a particular statement or paragraph is susceptible to different interpretations and judgments. Umberto Eco, an influential semiologist, refers to the unbridgeable gap between what the author intends and the reader who interacts with the text in a totally different manner, “When the text is produced, not for a single addressee but for a community of readers—the author knows that he or she will be interpreted not according to his or her intentions but according to a complex strategy of intentions” (Eco, 1992, p. 67).

The merit of this argument about the language and the impact it leaves on the recipient or beholder is that there is an unmistakable sense of freedom on the part of the reader or auditor in seeing other things the producer of the text has overlooked or failed to conceptualize. However, a close reading of these views raised by New Critics, structuralists and deconstructionists, reveals that the verbal game or sign becomes the main objective and anything outside is subject to doubt or flat rejection. The drastic consequence of this diachronic/synchronic dichotomy is that it drives a wedge into the very nature of the linguistic discourse and literature itself. As Elvin Kernan suggests in his comments on the phenomenon of the demise of literature, “Its reality, instead, is that of the moment and the relation (synchronic) at the point in time of all the parts of the literary system” (Kernan, 1990, p.71). In fact this dichotomy which has been established between the sign and object or meaning is imbued with various intellectual and epistemological implications. In general, such connotations are gloomy and in fact stem from nihilistic understanding of life and the world. The words ‘presence’ and ‘absence’ have become common in the critical and linguistic jargon. All Derrida’s arguments run in this vein. In fact Derrida is more outspoken and daring in stating his assumptions about the parameters of his philosophical and ontological view. The following is a self-evident account of the Derridean vision where the ‘meaning’ gets blurred and becomes questionable. Its loss is indicative of a wholesale destruction in man’s perception of the world.

It is not only the end of this here but also and first of that there, the end of history, the end of class struggle, the end of the subject, the end of man, the west, the end of Oedipus, the end of literature, the end of painting, the end of the past (Waugh, 1992, p.12).

This long series of deaths, losses and ends is inextricably linked with the loss of meaning and the absurdity of existence as understood by the western mentality. This essentially nihilistic view is the linchpin of the Derridean perception of the presence/absence duality.

This was the moment where language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a centre or origin, everything became discourse ...the central signified, the original, or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of difference (Derrida, 1967, p.345).

Undoubtedly, Derrida's flat rejection of the philosophical signification or meaning as mere 'metaphysics', non-existent and unverifiable objects, draws upon the linguistic paradigm in substantiating his argument. Indeed his attempt has been described as an act of "escaping the fundamental illusion of Western metaphysics--", namely, in our instinctive trust in the substantiability and stability of language"(Girard, 1989, p.234).

3. THE CREATIVE TURN:

The above arguments, culled at random from a huge amount of controversy, show the different critical stands concerning language, its empowering or debilitating impact on the literary process. However, creative writers usually take the initiative in such situations. Through their intuitions and perceptions creative writers have offered their version of the nature of language, its endowments or bafflements, moments of elation or fiasco. For all the differences among writers concerning the problematic nature of the language, they almost have a consensus about what Girard call "the treacherous" feature of the linguistic process(Girard, 1989, p.232). Already there has been a reference to Johnson's recognition of the changeable and ephemeral nature of language in his casual comments on compiling the dictionary. If Derrida has focused on the loss of presence and the subsequent chaos, Yeats in the first decades of the twentieth century mentioned his laconic phrase at the beginning of his 'The Second Coming' "Things fall apart; the centre can not hold; /Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world." However the difference between the two visions is that amidst the mounting darkness, aridity and bloodshed, Yeats perceives a glimpse of hope, redemption for man's sins and follies.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were different writers from the west and east who succeeded in making the linguistic problem part of their own creative writing. Among these is the Polish/English Joseph Conrad whose position reflects the linguistic problem keenly. The reader is aware that Conrad is Polish by birth and knows French as a secondary language. But his naturalization to the English life has added a further layer to his already complex position as far as language is concerned. In his *Under western eyes*, the author speaks of words as the foes or antithesis of reality (Conrad, 1997), i.e., they always tend to exaggerate or mystify the meaning and ultimately keep the individual way from reality or truth.

George Orwell's case runs in line with the former arguments about the inaccuracy and often meaninglessness of the language. Indeed his renowned novel, *Nineteen eighty four* devotes much space to this particular point. He gives a glossary at the end of that novel to show the extent of distortion and deviation of the language practiced for ideological reasons. His articles choose the same line of argument when he shows the essential meaninglessness of the language. Some quotation from this article is necessary in this regard, Meaningless words. In certain kinds of writing, particularly in art criticism and literary criticism, it is normal to come across long passages which are completely lacking in meaning. Words like 'romantic, plastic, values, human, dead, sentimental, normal, variety, as used in art criticism, are strictly meaningless, in the sense that not only do they not point to any discoverable object, but are hardly even expected to do so by the reader(Orwell, 1986, p.2264).

The same holds true to Stephen Dardalus's rebellion in Joyce are *A portrait of the artist as a young man*. As Stephen enumerates the nets flung at the soul when it is born in Ireland, he puts 'language' (Joyce, 1991, p.206) as one of those nets he is going to escape by means of cunning, silence and exile. Indeed, 'silence' is what remains at the disposal of so many modern and modernistic writers such as Ionesco, Pinter, Beckett, and Borges...etc. The reason behind all this is the assumption that language is

not reliable or easily accessible. According to this view, language can be a snare or a trap the main character or the author's alter-ego has to eschew or be cautious about.

T.S.Eliot represents a special case here as he is a major figure in criticism, apart from his influential creative works in poetry and drama. However, his 'Four Quartets' celebrates and elaborates some aspects of the language such as its inadequacy, intrigues and falsification of things. Often words are fragmentary and fall short of expressing what is expected of them, i.e., giving a verbal expression to a particular concept or abstract idea. His conclusion is that all his attempts to "purify the dialect of the tribe" are abortive simply because the medium itself suffers from innate weaknesses. In 'Burnt Norton', the narrator states,

Words strain

Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,

Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,

Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place.

Here the negative aspect of the linguistic medium is self-evident and spares us further elaboration.

In 'East Coker', the narrator confesses the failure of the attempt,

Trying to use words, and every attempt

Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure.

Kafka has already pointed out his three or four "impossibilities" regarding the language and its enchanting circle. He tells us that these impossibilities are "the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing German, and the impossibility of writing differently. One might add a fourth impossibility: the impossibility of writing" (Prendergast, 2001, p.109). Kafka shows this predicament of the writer in his parable 'Couriers' where the pitiable situation of the practitioner of the language is highlighted. They were offered the choice between becoming kings or the couriers of kings. The way children would, they all wanted to be couriers. Therefore there are only couriers who hurry about the world; shouting to each other—since there are no kings—messages that have become meaningless. They would like to put an end to this miserable life of their own but they dare not because of their oaths of service (Kafka, 1961, p. 181).

Kafka's emphasis on the gradual loss of meaning and the inability to face the void without having recourse to meaningless utterances finds its equivalent in Beckett's writing in drama or fiction. The dialogue exchanged between Estragon and Valdimir in *Waiting for godot* is memorable and relevant: both realize that they were caught between insoluble dilemmas: the Scylla of meaningless speech and the Charybdis of silence. The following moment in the play typifies Beckett's understanding of this problem when he involves his bewildered characters in a situation where they try desperately to avoid speech,

Vladimir: (Estragon sits on the mound. Vladimir paces agitatedly

To and fro, halting from time to time to gaze into distance off.

Estragon falls asleep. Vladimir halts before Estragon).Gogo...

Gogo . . . GOGO. Estragon wakes with a start).

Estragon :(restored to the horror of the situation) I was asleep.

(Despairingly) Why will you never let me sleep?

Vladimir: I felt lonely! (Beckett, 1998, p.15)

This dilemma will be the central issue in his trilogy (*Molloy, Malone dies, and the unnamable*) where the oscillation between silence and meaningless speech is pivotal,

You must grow, perhaps it's done already, perhaps, they

have said me already... it was by the silence, where I am, I

don't know, I'll never know, I can't go on, I'll go on (Beckett,1998,p.382).

The other problem raised in this trilogy is the attempt to understand the object of the language, the signified which appears to be illusive and evanescent,

But in the end I understand this language. I understand it, I understand it, all wrong perhaps. It told me to write the report. Does this mean I am freer than I was? I don't know. I shall learn. Then I went back into the house and wrote it. It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining (Beckett, 1979, p. 162).

The contemporary British novelist and critic, David Lodge, reminds us that sometimes the writer finds himself under the grip of the language and has to surrender to its irresistible pressure when he suggests the ticklish question, "Does the writer write the novel or does the novel "write" the writer?" (Lodge, 1968, p.126). I find that Lodge is right in stating the helplessness of the writer concerning the problem of the language. As shown in the examples already given by Beckett in his trilogy, the narrator in each section realizes that he is unwilling to do the act though he has to do it since there are no other options in this point. Moreover, he is quite aware that he has no control of anything in this painful process, "Is there a single word of mine in all I say? No, I have no voice; in this matter I have no voice" (Beckett, 1979, p.319).

Beckett's narrator complains that the language he uses is not his own nor is he in full command of its strategies and devices. That is exactly what the American postmodernistic novelist, John Barth, in his *Lost in the funhouse: Fiction for print, tape, live voice*. The narrator in this novel tells the reader about the same problem, "You who listen, give me life in a manner of speaking. I won't hold you responsible. My first words weren't my first words. I wish I 'd begun differently" (Barth, 1988, p.61). It is not only the problem of the possession of the language that matters here. The uncontrollability of the language is a further point raised by some creative writers. William Gass, another American postmodernist, pinpoints this question in stating "The poet struggles to keep his words from saying something, although, like the carrot, they want to go to seed" (McHale, 1987, p.148).

The stubborn nature of language defies the writer's conscious intentions and deliberate plans. Words often have a life of their own, irrespective of what the author has in mind. Malcolm Bradbury explains the anecdotes of a story "Ghostkeeper" which the British novelist, Malcolm Lowry omitted from his collection, *Hear us o lord from heaven thy dwelling place*. The protagonist, a writer, Tom Goodheart becomes intensely conscious of the endless potential multiplicity of narratives,

No sooner did poor Goodheart come to some sort of decision as to which line his story should take than it was as if a voice said to him, 'But you see, you can't do it like that, that's not the meaning at all or rather it's only one meaning—if you're going to get anywhere near the truth you'll have twenty plots and a story no one will take (Bradbury, 1987, p.169).

The semantic level raised here is only one of the innumerable problematics facing both the practitioner of writing and its recipient. In his customary insightful comments on the craft of writing and the serious limitations standing in its way, Henry James brings home the problem of repetition and familiarization in the language so that at the end nothing remains fresh and meaningful. *The tragic muse* highlights the issue of repetition in speech and words and the concomitant confusion of meaning and import,

He had grown used to Nash—had a sense that he had heard all he had to say. That was one's penalty with persons whose main gift was for talk, however irritating; talk engendered a sense of sameness much sooner than action. The things a man did were necessarily more different from each other than the things he said, even if he went in for surprising you. Nick felt Nash could never surprise him anymore ... (James, 1995, p.317).

What Henry James intuits here about the language or speech and how it loses its freshness and becomes cliché-ridden after much use will have its echoes in many critical circles in the twentieth century. Needless to add, the Russian Formalists have chosen this topic to establish their findings about the necessity of 'defamiliarizing' the language, and making the common sound uncommon. A century ago William Wordsworth in his *Lyrical ballads* (in collaboration with Coleridge) called for the exclusive use of common speech spoken by the ordinary man. The rationale behind this unfrequented call is the

fact that rhetoric and poetic devices could lead to different types of pitfalls, exaggerations, fallacies and distortions.

In Malcolm Lowry's case, which is undoubtedly a strikingly uncommon one, the language shows itself as a merit and demerit simultaneously. In his descriptive passage in *Under the volcano*, the reader has a state of thrill and amazement at the role played the language when it is put for its most convenient use. This is how one of its early reviewers argues when he refers to the novel's charm and mystical elements,

I am so much within its grip, so profoundly affected by the tides of its prose, the faltering arc of its tragic design...that I said to myself: you are this book's fool, it has stolen you and mastered you by some trickery, and you cannot appraise it tranquilly until it leaves you alone. In the street, in the room, where it has set its sorrowful music to the metronome of my clock, in the company of many or only one, it has been with me insistently. I have read it twice, and in the second it has burned me to it more tightly than before (Day, 1973, p. 380).

The irony is that this matchless beauty and charm of the language that can bring about serious troubles and embarrassments for both authors like Lowry himself or his fictional personae. What the author registers in the novel as a fictional account is actually derived from a real experience the author himself has undergone in his visit to Mexico on the Day of the Dead. Such a misunderstanding is expected if we know that Lowry's language is English and the language he has to use is Spanish. In his half-serious and humorous way, Lowry gives the following account of the drastic consequences of the linguistic misunderstanding. In the last chapter, the Consul's declaration that his name is William Blackstone and that he is a writer. This statement is contradicted by one of the chiefs who threatens him, "You say your name is Black. Is no Black!" He shoved him backwards a little "You say you a wrider. You are no wrider, you are de spider and we shoot de spiders in Mexico" (Lowry, 1984, p. 371).

Even when a writer like David Lodge chooses his heroine to be fully steeped in the problematics of language and meaning (his heroine, Robyn Penrose, the academic and feminist in *Nice work*), the challenges posed by the language remain essentially unmitigated. Actually it turns out at the end of the book that the linguistic realm which she has taken pains to master is not enough. She used to say proudly that what she produces is "meaning" and that is the nice work she practices. However, her relationship with the engineer and industry opens her mind to the necessity of finding a lingua franca between these two incompatible worlds: the artistic and the pragmatic one. The following excerpt shows the ever-present chasm separating them from each other,

'Why aren't they studying something useful, then?'

'Because they are more interested in ideas, in feelings than in the way machines work.'

'Won't pay the rent, though, will they—ideas, feelings?'

'Is money the only criterion?'

'I don't know better one' (Lodge, 1988, p.115).

Despite her sturdy faith in her job as a teacher and practitioner of language and cultural studies, lodge arranges a sort of compromise as a convenient resolution for his novel and its heroine: she will persist in her linguistic games and at the same time she has to acclimatize herself to the discourse of practical people where language is only single-dimensional, i.e., the traditional communicative task that has been assigned to language ever since the dawn of history. She is going to be involved in financial business and investments. Such enterprises will keep Penrose away from the contesting powers of signifiers and signifieds, and the free play of linguistic games.

I would like to round off this account of the contribution of creative writers to the problematics of language by referring to the works of two laureates. Hemingway is widely known for coining his code-hero as well as the technique of understatement. What matters for the purposes of the current study is his skillful manipulation of this technique of understatement and making it one of the potent devices to intensify the linguistic, thematic and technical sides of his work. Indeed the understatement endows Hemingway's work with a host of interpretations and counter-interpretations that eventually render his work resourceful with meanings. His two African stories, 'The snows of kilimanjaro' and 'The short and happy life of francis macomber' capitalize on the use of the understatement to a great extent. The result is

a series of inferences and judgments which will always remain inconclusive and even incompatible. In fact 'The short and happy life of Francis Macomber' typifies all the linguistic tricks and stratagems Hemingway's art is famous for. As any one that has read this short story knows, the main point of course is Francis's cowardice and his wife's blunt adultery with the guide, Wilson, in their African safari. If Francis flees disgracefully before the lion, his beautiful wife escapes from his tent stealthily to practice adultery with Wilson. The language here is used to represent the game of hide and seek practiced by the couple. Indeed there is no single reference to the obnoxious act,

'There wasn't going to be any of that. You promised there wouldn't be.' 'Well, there is now', she said sweetly.

'You said if we made this trip there would be none of that. You promised.'

'Yes, darling. That's the way I meant to be. But the trip was spoiled yesterday'(Hemingway, 1938, p.146).

Thus the climactic moment (Francis's grappling with the buffalo, this time asserting his virility for a while) has something to do with a linguistic game the author has been intent on not clarifying and leaving the reader in a state of uncertainty regarding which possibility is the right one. The bullet Margot fires at that moment might be taken as a sincere and redemptive gesture to save her husband from impending death. At another, it could be the expression of her fear that Francis is no longer unmanned by her and therefore he could be from now on a danger, subverting her lascivious acts. Hemingway himself gives an equivocal explanation of this murky situation due to the skilful use of the language. He puts the matter this way,

I don't know whether she shot him on purpose anymore than you so. I could find out if I asked myself because I invented it and I could right on inventing. The only hint I could give you is that it is my belief that the incidence of husbands shot occasionally by wives who are bitches and really work at it is very low (Mellow,1992,p.448).

It has become evident by now that the majority of views presented in the second part of this paper concentrates on the misleading and intriguing side of the language: the writer's cul-de-sac in establishing an exact correlation between the sign or symbol and the thing it denotes, i.e., the thing outside the linguistic construct. Also it has shown how the language always abides by its own traditions and the conventions it has established throughout the ages, and, as such, the creative writer will inevitably encounter a serious problem in initiating a line of speaking or writing that does not conform to the common one. This certainly veers from the author's original intention and brings him/her once again to the cliché-ridden and stereotyped linguistic discourse. However, there are many attempts exerted by exceptionally-gifted writers to update and radicalize the language of the tribe. James Joyce is one of those who tried to revolutionize the English language and its syntax. Any passing glance at *A portrait of the artist as a young man* or *Ulysses* shows that Joyce has made many experiments with the language in order to make it pliable enough to accommodate the ontological, spiritual and epistemological levels of his fiction. This is manifested through the endless acts of coining new phrases, terms, and deliberate breaching of the grammatical formulas and punctuation. The intertextuality, the fragmentary aspects of his language and the heavy emphasis on the parody and pastiche – all these linguistic and literary devices are employed for suggesting further philosophical and intellectual insights. Many books and articles have shed light on this linguistic revolution and its formidable effect on literature and the linguistic discourse. The present paper is content with showing some of these linguistic endeavors practiced with the highest and noblest intentions, not merely as exhibitionistic acts intended to amaze the reader. Rather the whole thing is entailed by the very material of the writing itself. William Golding's *The inheritors* poses a real challenge to the writer since he undertakes the task of showing an extinct mode of life and thinking: the Neanderthal man and what has befallen him and the eventual replacement by the inheritors or the new men. The novel shows the end of the Glacial Age and the replacement of the Neanderthal by Cro-Magnon. The problem or challenge facing the author is the dire need for giving a plausible diction matching the mentality of those people who have lived, according to the author, a kind of prelapsal innocence. Lok, the last Neanderthal, appears to be a preman, unable to grasp what is going on around him or rationalize things inflicting him and his tribe. This aspect has been identified as

the "anthropomorphic" quality of the people's thinking and how everything invests "the whole environment with humanity" (Kinkead-Weeks, 2002, p.72).

Lok can only visualize and guess the agony his mate (Fa) must have undergone before she gets killed. In a situation like this, the linguistic medium has to be handled with utmost care if the principle of verisimilitude is to be maintained. The images are pictorial and evoke a train of terrors and fears which Lok is unable to withstand,

Lok let himself down on the ground; found Fa's tracks once more sand ran along them. Her steps were full of terror so that his own hair rose in sympathy. He came to a place where the hunters had stopped and he could see how one of them had stood sideways till his toeless feet made deep marls in the earth. He saw the gap between steps where Fa had leapt in the air and then her blood, dropping thickly, leading in an even curve back from the forest to the swamp where the trunk had been. He saw when her feet like his own had plunged terribly in the mud...The steps and the blood came thus far, there was the scent of Fa and her terror; and after that, nothing (Golding, 1955,pp.187-8).

The above lengthy excerpt discloses Golding's careful handling of language as the only means of reflecting the main character's mind. Here one can easily perceive the author's great effort in evoking the character's deep pain although it is not adequately verbalized for reasons related to the character's situation. He is unable to rise beyond the concrete and the immediate. Language in this case plays a vital role in dramatizing and showing how the character responds to the outside world through sensation rather than linguistic constructions. He is mentally not fit for the abstract and linguistic constructions and their inevitable innuendos.

4. CONCLUSION

The critical and creative arguments and representations raised in this paper show some aspects of the deep problematics of the language in its merits and demerits. It seems that language tends to be intriguing, deceptive and at time baffling, if the writer is really honest and serious about his/her work and the original conceptualizations before turning to the blank sheet. What complicates this topic is that language always has something to with other adjacent disciplines such as psychology, sociology, logic, philosophy, anthropology...etc.

The theoretical background in the first part of this study and the practices and testimonies of the creative writers in their poems, novels and plays in the second all testify to the problematic nature of language and how it remains essentially fleeting, evanescent and hard to control fully. Many inadequacies of the language have been pointed out. Among these are the distortion of meaning, exaggeration and falsification. Also there is this ever-present chasm between intention and final fulfillment. There is much emphasis on the disparity between the individual utterance and the general language and the inevitable incompatibility between the two. Above all, and due to long use and habitualization, the language loses its freshness and uniqueness.

Despite all these shortcomings and glaring pit falls, the fact remains that creative writers cannot dispense with this tool in their verbal constructions. Hence their recurrent complaints and investigations of the bitter-sweet task and its endless demands. Accordingly, creative writers have to make do with what is feasible in this mystifying maze. This is because of the essential role played by the language in reinforcing, debilitating or subverting the text. Also these views indicate that there is no possibility of any foreseeable consent regarding the controllability and mastery of language, its potentiality, success or failure in providing a verbal construct for the ideas swarming in the writer's mind. It is not expected that this dispute will terminate in the future nor will the gaps ,absences' or 'deaths' suggested by contemporary philosophy have the final say in this intricate and challenging problem.

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