

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SPHOTA THEORY OF
LANGUAGE AND F.D. SAUSSURÉS THEORY OF SIGN**

Thesis
submitted to the University of Calicut
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in Philosophy

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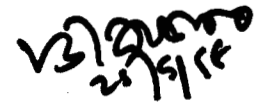
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

September 1998

Declaration

I, Sreekumar, M., hereby declare that this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

Calicut University,
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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the Ph.D. dissertation entitled A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SPHOTA THEORY OF LANGUAGE AND F.D. SAUSSURÉS THEORY OF SIGN, being submitted by **Mr. Sreekumar, M.**, is the result of a bonafide research work carried out by him in this Department under my supervision and that no part thereof has been submitted for a degree in any other University.

Calicut University,
24.09.1998.



Dr. P.V. UNNIKRISHNAN

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to Dr. P.V. Unnikrishnan, Reader, Department of Philosophy, University of Calicut, for his invaluable guidance. At every stage of this work I have benefited immensely from the scholarship, critical acumen and encouragement of my Supervising Teacher. I am grateful to the Teachers, Students, Librarian and Office Staff of the Department for their help and co-operation. As this study has moved from conception to dissertation, many people have helped me. I am indebted to all of them. My thanks due to M/s Bina Photostat, Chenakkal for the neat execution of this dissertation.

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2/19/12

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SPHOTA THEORY OF LANGUAGE AND F.D. SAUSSURE'S THEORY OF SIGN

“.... The aim of Comparative philosophy is the elucidation of the nature of man and his environment in order that a comprehensive philosophy of Life and a plan for thought and action may be obtained. It is with this end in view that the present work has been written”

P.T. Raju, Introduction to Comparative Philosophy.

*Prajna Vivekam labhate bhinnair agamadarsanaih
Kiyad va Sakyam Unnetum Svataarkam anudhavata*

“- The Intellect gains discernment by means of the different perceptions (*darsanas*) of tradition/ How much can be ascertained by someone following their own reason ?”.

Bhartrhari, Vakyapadiya, 2-489

“.... My purpose in making this wonderful journey is not to delude myself but to discover myself in the objects I see....”

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, Italian Journey, P.46.

P R E F A C E

The present thesis is an attempt to analyse and compare the concept of the Sign of Bhartrhari and Saussure in the traditional sense of language philosophy, in terms of the structuralist and Post-structuralist notion of thinking. Most of the theoretical difficulties that beset any attempt to compare the two traditions are generated by their own cultural and methodological frame works. This study attempts to analyse and compare the problem of Sign of Bhartrhari and Saussure against the background of post-structuralist concepts of Language and Reality. In order to avoid ambiguity and confusion about Bhartrhari's concept of Sphota in this work we have developed our own reading on Bhartrhari, using the insights of B.K. Matilal and Kunjunni Raja wherever necessary. To be specific in the arguments and methodology, the general concept of Sign is treated as a meeting point of Saussure's concept of Sign and Bhartrhari's concept of Sphota. The structuralists and the tradition of Russell and Moore are talking about the nature of signification. But the approaches of the two streams are different. While Russell and Moore talk about 'denotation' structuralists stress upon the 'differentiation'. So to avoid categorical mixing and confusion

the 'Analytic tradition' of Russell till early - Wittgenstein have been sidelined. Beginning with the later Wittgenstein, we have started our Post-structuralist area of thought. Taking Nietzches thought, which has been the pivot of western thought in the tweenth century, the Western and Eastern philosophical traditions are analysed and the philosophy of Bhartrhari is placed in the new light of thought. We do not consider Bhartrhari as an *Advaidan* or *Pro-Advaidan* as some scholars argue. Bhartrhari is read in his own terms, range and limitations. Thus in this thesis an attempt has been done to map out the problems of traditional ontology and epistemology of Eastern and Western traditions in the light of 'Sign'.

Traditionally, the word comparison means simply to equate some concepts or categories of one tradition with those of another, ignoring the differences in the racial, cultural, and methodological out look. Instead of trying to make a comparison in the traditional sense, the focus has been on the general issues in the philosophy of language, such as reality, language, and understanding in order to highlight the basic similarities and differences between the two traditions. Showing the similarities and differences, the philosophical foundation of Sphota theory and Saussures concept of Sign is also explained, to evaluate it in our present day post-structuralist scenario.

Tradition and culture of India have often been read either through the eyes of orientalism or Eurocentrism. These two approaches are not capable of providing us any fruitful result in our intellectual sphere. Therefore, we have to evaluate and create a new intellectual horizon. Since the traditional academic reading is not adequate to address this problem, it is necessary to evaluate and create a new dimension in our tradition. The present intellectual climate of India needs critical thinking and constructive comments on our tradition. The objective is to search for some common ground on the basis of which a fruitful philosophical discussion using the works of ancient and the modern philosophers could be generated. Let us quote Nietzsche to show the relation between evaluation and its importance in the Existence, he says,

“..... Only through evaluation is there value :
and without evaluation the nut of existence
would be hollow. Hear it, you creative man ...”

**Nietzsche- Thus Spoke Zarathustra :
of the thousand and one Goals.**

CHAPTER - 1
INTRODUCTION

What await us ?

The problem of Being in the postmodern situation

“..... Unfortunately, I do not feel inspired by any sort of hope which would permit me to presume that my work of Deconstruction has a prophetic function The fact that I declare it “Unfortunate” that I do not personally feel inspired may be a signal that deep down I still hope. It means that I am in fact still looking for something...”

**Jacques Derrida, Dialogues with contemporary
continental thinkers, Richard Kearney - P. 119**

“..... Our way of exhibiting the constitution of Dasein’s Being remains only *oneway* which we may take. Our *aim* is to work out the question of Being in general”

Martin Heidegger, Being and Time.

ONE

The amount of intellectual labour now being used in the area of the relation between ancient Indian philosophical outlooks, especially of the philosophy of Bhartrhari and Nagarjuna and post modern trends shows not only the philosophical importance of our tradition but the revaluation of

western philosophical tradition too. Intellectuals of East and West are now trying to compare and find out the contrast between the two traditions. But most of the comparisons are mere 'equating' techniques. However, during the last two or three decades there has been a renewed interest in this enigmatic problem. In both of these traditions the literature on the subject is also vast for it includes genuine contributions from philosophers, literary critics, linguists and psychologists.

In spite of the great amount of work already done, our knowledge about the relation between the 'Sphota' and 'Sign' theory of Bhartrhari and Saussure has not progressed much beyond what Kunjunni Raja said about it¹. The main reason for this drawback seems to lie, in the 'mechanical' comparison of the concepts of the two thinkers without considering the philosophical implications. Only a few books and articles published in this area are noteworthy. Most of them are mere description of theories and facts.

Scholars in India often try to 'findout' the parallels of their traditional wisdom in the Western Schools. When a new ship of thought of the west anchor our shore, we rush towards it and try to 'findout' some parallels in it. That is why our current debates are not up to date to face the new situation in philosophy. Karl H. Potters remarks about the present condition of Indian

philosophy is apt to illustrate our pathetic condition, he says.

“..... Philosophy in India for the moment has degenerated into mere scholarship, the description; classification, and comparison of Indian or Western Schools of thought. Philosophers no longer talk problems; they talk about problems they find themselves caught in a sort of limbo between the attitudes of the Indian past, of which they have lost hold, and the attitudes of the Western present, in which they are still not at home”²

These sharp, but insightful remarks of Potter will help us to make a break with our old fashioned thinking habits. Today intellectual discourse is not a dead academic issue as in the past. Now a days academical discourse has been a fencing for our own existence in our country. In this 'fencing of thought' we do not expect a new 'fence-master' from the Oriental or Eurocentric camp to teach us. In this historical juncture we have to teach ourselves. Creating our own philosophy we must prepare our selves to be our own 'fence-masters'. In order to make 'constructive-comparison' we have to understand the present condition of global philosophy. Without a clear picture of our own problematic it is impossible for us to enter into the arena of 'fencing of thought'.

TWO

Our time reflects not a revolution of beliefs, but a revolution in beliefs. We are now in the midst of a great, confusing and stressful historical condition, that is known as postmodernism. Postmodernist outlook destroys our old beliefs and promises us a new sky. We are rethinking and trying to construct a new world with the help of postmodernism, which teaches us to disbelieve our old beliefs but does not construct a new belief for us. Philosophers today talk about issues such as language, its working and its power and above all about the nature of language itself. The problem of language plays a crucial role in our every day life and thought.

Modernity believes in progress, reason and power of human consciousness, they claimed that 'man' can understand and change the nature, because reason has enough power to analyse and understand the nature of reality. But postmodern thinkers like Nietzsche and Heidegger viewed the argument with suspect and criticised it. Their insights and vision bring a new crisis in philosophy, that is known as postmodernism. Postmodernism reflects a loss of faith in modernist concept of history and progress.

In the west modern world begins with the renaissance. It is to the people of renaissance that we owe the beginnings of modern science and technology and expansion of trade and commerce. The glorious vision of humanism and mighty challenge to the medieval authority of faith, announced in the name of self-validating rationality. Heidegger writes about the modernity in his work on Nietzsche :

“..... That period we call modern is defined by the fact that man become the centre and measure of all beings.....”³

*allusion to Greek
philosophy*

As Kant remarked self validating rationality was the core of modernity. The spirit of modernity also includes the vision of Descartes. In Descartes humanism assumed a distinctively subjective character. Descartes draws some proofs for the existence of God from the celebrated power of ‘human reason’. According to Descartes as a subject man has the qualities of self determination, independence, and self- affirmation. The modernist vision finally turned away from the heaven and fixed its target upon the man, who has been the centre of the world. Paulous Mar Gregorious illustrates the nature of European Enlightenment in his Enlightenment East and West;

“..... Enlightenment is a word we use in technical senses. The more familiar meaning is that of a cultural-intellectual process that emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century and is now

spreading to the rest of the world. It was not so much a personal experience of individuals as a socio-economic-political process. Many individuals make original contribution to the process. The basic idea was the abandoning of socially held irrational dogmas and beliefs, in order to pursue that which was rational universal and readily demonstrable. The overthrow of the authority of the traditions and the enthronement of critical rationality in its places were perhaps the central movements in this process

....." 4

Thus man has become the centre of the world. The Enlightenment saw the perfection of this subjectivity in the realm of social revolution and progress and this process based upon objective reason. In the nineteenth century, people were captivated by a vision of evolutionary progress. This was derived from an egological and essentially anthropocentric vision; here reason works as instrumental and pragmatical in a practical sense. When the Cartesian and the Kantian subjectivity triumphed, it imposed its will on things and brought into being a world, which is ruled by objectivity. But the Enlightenment project cheat itself. Because in a world of objectivity the 'subject' has no place and space. Thus the triumph of subjectivity has been

self-destructive, now we can see how the 'subject' falls under the spell of its objects; now it becomes 'subject' to the objectivity it set in power. In history subjective reason turned totally instrumental, and in politics it legitimated the construction of a totalitarian state and engineered a holocaust. The history of Humanism is a picture of brutish and its legacy is terror.

Today we can see that the triumph of subjectivity is self-destructive, because it has inflated the human ego without developing self-respect, and the social character of human vision. Now we face the dangers of nuclear devastation, ecological catastrophe etc. The modern world which began in west with the renaissance is now coming to an end. What we call the end of modernity is the starting point of postmodernism, not only in culture but in politics and philosophy too. This sense separates us from modernity and its philosophical outlook. So it is not possible to trust the old vision of reason and its humanism, it is more and more difficult to live in the light of the modern thought. The traditional paradigm of knowledge-truth-and reality is changed today. Now we are living in a time of crisis: this is our present plight. Mapping the exhaustion of modernity Richard Harvey Brown writes:

".....Some have argued that there have been two great events in human history: first, the emergence of horticultural states about six thousand years ago and with this the appearance of

what we call 'civilization'; second, the emergence of 'modern' societies with their industrial economies, territorial states and mass cultures. Perhaps we are on the brink of a third such 'event' - the appearance of an as yet unnamed 'postmodern' social and cultural formation (Boulding, 1966; Kahn and Wiener, 1967). More and more people recognize that late capitalism, post-industrial society or postmodern culture are qualitatively different from what has come before. Whether such changes are conceptualized in terms of a late, consumer, global capitalism bearing a hyper-modern culture, or of a post-industrial information society embodying a postmodern sensibility, it seems clear that things are no longer as once they seemed and that these changes, though only bleakly understood, are of epochal proportions....." 5

With this brief sketch of modernity and Enlightenment in mind, we can analyse the reaction of postmodern thinkers against the attempt of Enlightenment philosophy which tried to make man as a subject of reason and reason based meta-narratives.

Firstly, it is to be noticed that we cannot define postmodernism as we did modernism, Empiricism, and rationalism etc., it is not an 'ism' as we

believe today. It is difficult to give a 'definition' of postmodernism. When we define a school, or system, of thought, knowingly or unknowingly we theorize it and put it in the skeleton of logical set-up. Rationality and objectivity are the two important factors in a definition. But postmodernists deny the rationality and objectivity. They say that we are in a world, a world which can't be defined and that does not know how to define itself. Definition always need centralisation and its logic to make a systematic theorization; that is what the postmodern thinkers hate to do. In one of his article Paulos Mar Gregorious

"..... Today, we shall talk on 'postmodernism'. Unfortunately, everything is called an 'ism' these days. Normally, 'ism' means 'a clear set of ideas' and a programme based on it. If you ask any postmodernist to say what postmodernism is, he is lost. There in no way of defining it. It is a 'movement', it is an 'attitude' or a 'mood', but not a systematic thing where you can develop concepts and relationships, precisely what the postmodernists are against. Any attempt to over systematize thought by being reduced to any kind of system is to reduce thinking as such. So postmodernism is basically a 'mood'....."⁶

Postmodernism does not designate a systematic theory or a comprehensive philosophy, but it is a diverse diagnosis and interpretation of the current culture, a picturing of a multitude of interrelated phenomena. Postmodern thought has involved an expansion of reason, it has analysed the nexus of power and knowledge. More than that it analysed the relation between power and reasoning. So instead of finding a reason for history postmodernism presents a history of reasons.

Postmodernism has been described in different methods and defined in many ways. F. Lyotard, in one of his renowned programmatic statements announced the demise of the great paradigm of scientific rationality and the return of multiple wisdoms, culture, and relativism of knowledge. Richard Rorty another representative of philosophical postmodernism, pointed out the impossibility of scientific models of progress, and he argued for 'edifying conversation among paradigms rather than cumulative development. Habermass, who has been central figure in our postmodern scene, highly critical in his approach. For him postmodernism is a dangerously conservative rejection of the incomplete modern project, a capitulation to the apparent failure of the emancipatory content of that project.

The departure from the hegemonic discourse which occurred has across the whole of the social systems has been inaugurated by the

poststructuralist approach. Postmodernism exists in different disciplines - philosophy, in architecture, music, literature, and so on. In each discipline it appears in different 'moods' with certain special qualities. The term 'postmodernism' was first used in the 1960s by Ihab Hussan and Lesle Fielder who noted the exhaustion of modernist movement and tried to characterise what was coming next. In 1970s the term gained a much wider currency encompassing dance, theatre, art, painting, and then the contemporary culture and society as a whole. In architecture and visual arts we can see the postmodern break from modernism. In late 1970s the term migrated to Europe via Paris and Frank-Furt. In France the term has been widely used by Julia Kristeva and Lyotard. In the United States the critics began to discuss the interface of postmodernism with poststructurlism, and deconstruction. By the early 1980s the term 'postmodernism' has been accepted in the dialogues to demonstrate a particular situation, rather than a definition.

What is the relation of postmodernism to modernism ?. In much of the debates on postmodernism either it is said that postmodernism continuous with modernism or it is claimed that there is a sharp rupture or a break with modernism. Thus the term will be evaluated in either positive or negative terms.

"..... In much of the debate on postmodernism, either it is said that postmodernism is continuous with modernism, in which case the whole 'debate' is specious; or it is claimed that there is a radical rupture, break with modernism, which is then evaluated in either positive or negative terms. The various discussants can be grouped into four major camp. First, those who see postmodernism as a rupture with modernism, and who, like George Bataille, Michel Foucault or Jacques Derrida, characterise it in terms of 'a decentered subjectivity, emancipated from the imperatives of work and usefulness' (Habermas, 1987: 14). Second, those who decry postmodernism because it reinforces 'the logic of consumer capitalism' (Jameson, 1984: 125), or because it parodies the formal resolution of art and social life. 'while remorselessly emptying it of its political content' (Eagleton, 1990: 61). Third, those who see postmodernism as positive, and welcome it as a triumph of heterogeneity over consensus. They envision artists and writers 'working without rules in order to formulate the rules for that *'will have been done'* after the event has happened, and thereby able to resist capture by any form

of ideology (Lyotard, 1984: 81). Finally, Jurgen Habermas (1987) eschews literary Marxism even as he criticises postmodernists for overlooking political economy and thereby drifting unwittingly into the neo-conservative camp....." 7

As seen above scholars have different opinions about the relation between modernism and postmodernism. In this thesis postmodernity has been taken as a reinterpretation and reconstruction of modernism and its philosophical outlook.

Numerous sets of ^{oppositions} have been used to characterise the difference between the modernist and postmodernist outlook. A set of opposition is listed below.

<u>Modernism</u>	<u>Postmodernism</u>
Scientific knowledge	Wisdom (Cultural knowledge)
grand theory	relative cultural corpuses
holism	fragmentation
history	histories
rational ego	libidinal self
universalism	particularism

Here it is important to make a clear line of demarcation between postmodernity and post-modernism - the former is said to refer to a social and cultural condition, where as the latter refers to a state of thinking and

mode of thought.

Language has been one of the main themes of postmodern thought. Language is deeply involved in the social construction of reality. Postmodernism focuses its attention on heterogeneous language games, on the instabilities, and on the breaks and conflicts. An individual who is living in the community of postmodern will be a member of many communities and networks, a participant in many discourses, an audience of everybody. In the postmodern community both the language and knowledge do not copy the reality. Here language constitutes the reality, each language makes a construction of specific aspects of reality, in its own modes of construction. The net result of the postmodernism is the decentralisation of the subjectivity and the subject. In the early philosophical and theological writings the self no longer used language to express itself, rather the 'self', which hides 'behind' the language speaks through the language. In the postmodern condition the unique self loses its prominence and the individual self becomes a medium for the culture and its language.

Through the decentralisation of the subject postmodernism brings a new idea of thought in the philosophical discourse viz., the rejection of Grand-Narratives. Postmodernism is a critical inquiry into the intellectual life, which is not a doctrine, so it viewed the Grand Narratives with suspicion.

Totalizing concepts and Grand Narratives have been deconstructed as the 'subject' deconstructed. While modernist vision is based upon the notion of progress through increasing scientific knowledge, postmodernism rejects such an assumption. So postmodern society consists less of totalitarian, and which is to be ruled by decentralised models.

With this insights of postmodernism in mind we can turn our attention towards Nietzsche's critique of modernity and the post-Nietzschean approaches, which is a necessary step in the postmodern condition to read our tradition.

THREE

"..... It is necessary to say whom we consider our anti thesis: it is the theologians and whatever has theologians blood in its veins, and that include our whole philosophy"

Nietzsche , The AntiChrist.

From where we have to begin ?. In the philosophical juncture of our epoch, beginnings pose a problem. As philosophers we are incapable of getting to the theatre on time. Derridas despairing of a 'legitimate' starting point, reminds us that we must begin from where we are. In the attempt to begin from where we are, we will mark our point of insertion in to the

philosophy of our time by evoking the theme of the completion, exhaustion or the end of the metaphysics.

We have to start our readings of metaphysics from Heidegger and Nietzsche. Metaphysics inaugurated bifurcation between the apparent world and the true world, and setup the latter as the ontological foundation of the former.

Generally it is believed that the project of the philosophers is to ascend from the world of appearance to the world of 'true' which is the foundation. The metaphysicians consider the sensible world as intelligible by subsuming it under the intelligible structure of the super sensible world. They think that this process liberate us and take us in to a realm of 'true' knowledge which is independent of any context. Here by the term metaphysics we mean the philosophical pretension to penetrate appearance and arrive at a knowledge of reality which is believed ontologically superior, and epistemologically more certain than appearance.

In the history of philosophy Kant does not inscribe the attempt to gain a knowledge of 'Metaphysics' or super sensible. According to Kant the relationship between sensibility, understanding and reason give rise to the "natural illusion". The task of critical philosophy is to make us aware of the

working of this illusion. Hegel's philosophy traces the evolution of mind, structurally and philosophically to the point of absolute knowledge.

It is impossible to trace all the major philosophers' concept about metaphysics. In minute details each philosopher differs. However it is to be asserted that till the time of Kant the realm of thought was ruled by 'Metaphysical' true knowledge.

The exhaustion of metaphysics was started by the thoughts of Nietzsche and Heidegger, and by all the thinkers who were influenced by them.

For Nietzsche, Metaphysics is inaugurated by the repression of the tragic vision of existence. 'Life' becomes the product of the theoretical type, he wrote taking Socrates as an example. In his works, Nietzsche gives us a picture of metaphysics. According to Nietzsche what is needed is a profound reconceptualisation. This reconceptualisation is the net result of Nietzsche's thinking.

Nietzsches' first argument is against religions in general and against Christianity in particular; relying on history. Starting with 'Human all to Human' Nietzsche pleaded for a new "historical philosophy" which was to replace the "Metaphysical philosophy". Nietzsche thinks that metaphysics is only a substitute for religion.

In the early 1870's Nietzsche generally appealed to 'culture' which he defined as the unity of artistic style in all the expressions of the life of the people. Culture he continued, needs an unhistorical horizon which hitherto had been provided by the religion. Nietzsche's paradigm was the culture of the fifth century B.C Greece, a culture centred around Tragedy and the vision was in contrast to Socrates's vision of life, which, in Nietzsche's view, had destroyed the Greek tragic attitudes towards the life. Much of the argument is to be found in his 'Birth of tragedy'.

In the 'Twilight of Idols', where Nietzsche's intellectual vigours at its best, he gives us a sketch entitled how the "true world" finally became a fable and subtitled as "The History of an error" he presents, the history of platonism in six stages, and he analysed it. At the first stage the 'True' or the metaphysical world is identical with the world in which men live, and in the second stage 'true being' or reality has been pushed out of this world, to the very edge that man can reach, the sensible world is no longer the meaningful world- meaning is 'beyond'. Nietzsche thinks that it is the starting point of christian morality. The third is the Kantian stage; the fourth stage is very much closer to Nietzsche's own age, which no longer accepts the consolation of religious metaphysics. In this stage Nietzsche unmasked German idealism. The fifth stage may be viewed as a picture of Nietzsche's own age

or the future. In the last and final stage Nietzsche proclaimed what he wished to say in his life time, He says:

“..... We have abolished the true world, what world has remained, the world of appearance perhaps ? But no ! with the true world we have also abolished the world of appearance.....”⁸

As we have seen the refutation of the platonic idea is to be followed by a collapse of the entire terminology of religious and Metaphysical dualisms: in Nietzsche's writings, there is to be neither appearance nor a reality postulated in opposition to appearance. At this highest point in the history of man all the antithesis between the sensuous and the supra sensuous too has been abolished. A terrible ambiguity clings to the formulation of that final stage, and a question arises: “If we abolished the true world, what world has remained ?.” This is the final question of Nietzsche. Threatens the postmodern outlook, which is generally understood as a philosophy of Nihilism, by the influence of Nietzsche. Here Nietzsche leaves us in suspense, evoking both the spectre of nihilism and the redemption of earth through the affirmation of Eternal recurrence.

The two meaning of the last stage do not cancel each other out, they are interlinked in an ambiguity which remains unresolved. What is to be the

future and fate of Mankind ?. will the world be an empty space without hopes, purpose and meaning ? If the reign of nihilism will be an ever lasting one and freed man from the threads of metaphysics what will be the future of ethics and morality ?. Or destroying the metaphysics does man destroy his own horizon and his own world ?.

In the postmodern scenario these questions deserve serious discussions because nobody can make a clear picture of the postmodern area without facing the nihilism of Nietzsche which exists even today in our ontological and epistemological realm.

To read our tradition in a postmodern sense and to level the charges against the postmodern tradition, the aesthetic interpretation of life and being introduced by Nietzsche is to be traced.

As pointed out in the earlier paragraphs Nietzsche's birth of tragedy narrates his aesthetic interpretation of life. The Birth of tragedy contains the epitome of Nietzsche's all works, His acceptance of Schopenhauer's ideas and its revaluation is the core of the book. His famous statement in the birth of tragedy reflects his ideas about the nature of life. He says that only as an aesthetic phenomenon is the world and the existence of man eternally justified, Explaining the nature of the statement J P Stern gives a reply to Bryan Magee

Magee: But it does give readers a serious problem. This fusion of poetry and metaphor on the one hand with intellectual concept on the other means that you never know quite where you have been. You can not make his writings stand up in terms of rigorous intellectual argument, because then they all come apart at the joints, which are the images. But if you take everything as poetic utterance then It's often unclear and highly disputable what it is he is saying. But perhaps this leads us to the forth of our themes. We have talked very briefly about the will to power, about the superman, and about the doctrine of eternal recurrence: the forth theme was Nietzsche's idea that life is to be understood aesthetically. I suppose the point here is that if there is nothing outside this world-no god, and no-transcendent realm of any kind-then life can not have any purpose outside or beyond itself. Whatever meaning of justification it has must come from within itself: it must exist purely for its own sake, and have import on its own terms alone. All this makes it rather gigantic work of art.

Stern: Well, that certainly is a fair way of coming close to what he is after. In a very first of his books, the birth of tragedy he uses this phrase three times: "it is only an aesthetic phenomenon that the being of man and the world are eternally justified." It is a complicated sentence and I don't think I want to go into all the details of it. But what he is saying essentially, is this: the greatness of early Greeks, of the pre-socratics, lay in their tragedy. Their tragedy was a way of facing the worst aspects of human life, its transitoriness, its impermanence, its corruptness, its dependence upon forces greater than ourselves; and their highest achievement was their gift of making of these things a major tale, a story, a wonderful tragedy. This he applies in the largest and most cosmic possible sense. He is asking as indeed Shakespeare did occasionally: is the whole world really to be taken seriously, or is it not a great game, a great play, some kind of drama played out by we do not know whom, as a spectacle for we do not know whom? if there is to be a justification-mind you 'justification' is the word he uses, which is very dicey word to use in this context (it is a judicial phrase, isn't it ?) - if there is

to be a justification for man being here, and being what he is, may be it is simply as part this huge cosmic drama. A great deal of Nietzsche's thought, some of his most interesting and greatest thought, goes into rehearsing and trying to make sense of this aesthetic justification of man. ⁹

The ontological importance of this statement will be discussed in the chapter of comparison to show its relevance in our tradition.

In his 'On truth and falsehood in an extra moral sense', written in 1873 Nietzsche analysed and criticised the nature of language and its working.

The central argument in the book is that language is far from giving us a true picture or account of the world. And language is not based upon relation with the reality. For Nietzsche language is an unreliable set of almost entirely arbitrary signs. He asserts that language is only a creation of man in order to safeguard our life and species. Language is only a human creation but we think that it reflects the truth. According to Nietzsche all statements claiming to be true are mere tautology and we can not make a positive contact with the world.

Between the words and things there is no direct relationship, because the things are not simply the cause of the words. However, the two are not completely unrelated. Words are said to be the distant and distorted echoes

of the nerve impulses. These echoes are rudimentary elements and 'poeticized' and given coherence according to the rules entirely invented by man; the relationship between words and real world exists only in a metaphorical sense. The relationship between the language and the real world is not a causal relationship. Nietzsche observes:

"... by which I mean intimated transference, a sort of halting, stammering translation into an entirely foreign language: for which purpose we need a freely poeticising a freely inventive middle sphere and middle faculty....."¹⁰

This poeticising translation into an entirely foreign language Nietzsche likens to the production of figures, which are obtained by playing a violin against a board of thin plywood which is covered with fine sand. Then the sand grains will be arranged in geometrical position by the vibration of the music. These figures are the metaphorical representation of the music. This is a metaphorical relation because the geometrical patterns will never tell you anything about the nature and meaning of music. Through this example Nietzsche shows the break between the psychic and physical, between mechanical purpose and human meaning. Nietzsche explains the idea clearly

"... What then is truth? a mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms-in short a sum of human

relation which poetically and rhetorically intensified... truths
are illusions which one has forgotten as illusions..."¹¹

Nietzsche's contribution to the 20th Century linguistic thinking and psychology is not a matter of dispute now. Freud was deeply influenced by Nietzsche's writings. And the tradition of deconstruction takes him as the grant father of postmodernism.

Nietzsche's remarks about the language are interesting, but one point is to be noted; he is not interested in language for its own sake but in its relationship with all that seems to lie beyond it. Some times it is doubtful whether he is saying about a non-linguistic, non-metaphorical numinous world or a sphere beyond the language. Nietzsche often complains that language is not an adequate expression but at the same time he likes to say about a world behind the language.

In his life he uses every occasion to attack the platonist-christian-ideal, but at the same time he never finally relinquishes some sort of 'aesthetical' or 'beyond the language' concepts. He postulated a non-metaphorical true order of things to which language does not belong, but to which it is related aesthetically. That is the philosophical foundation of Birth of tragedy and his own philosophical discourse.

Using Nietzsche's insights about the nature of metaphysics today one can analyse and make a constructive approach in philosophy. In the last chapter which shows the comparison and the contrast between Bhartrhari and Saussure the insights will be used to make such an approach.

Lastly in this section we have to examine Heidegger's concept of being and his reading on Nietzsche. If we do not make such a picture the ontological problem of being will be nullified in the 'nihilistic' discourse of postmodernism.

The postmodern epoch brought into being a world where nihilism is spreading. Today nihilism shows its rage against being, in this sense nihilism means the destruction of the being, and the Being of all the beings. So in the postmodern atmosphere we need to achieve a new vision of the being. Without such a vision and dimensionality, which is not in the mode of the old thinking, we can not construct a new vision.

Postmodern discourse is not a discourse which claims the highest authority. That is a discourse without any grounds, without a subject, without an origin and without any centre.

Nietzschean attack against the metaphysics destroy the logical strands of metaphysical tradition. But at the same time Heidegger approaches the problem in a different manner. In the Being and time Heidegger says

"..... The question of being does not achieve its true concreteness until we have carried through the process of destroying the ontological tradition....." ¹²

Here he raises the question about how we destroy the ontological tradition, the discourse of metaphysics without abandoning the question of being. The question of the being is a traditional metaphysical question. But how can we think of being without allowing our selves be controlled by the history of metaphysics?. This question is the point of location where Heideggerian thinking meets with Nietzschean thought and the postmodernist discourse.

Heidegger does not hesitate to approach the problem. His path and enquiry were absolutely different from the old one. He challenged the ontological tradition but at the same time he refused the answers from the history of metaphysics. He placed the question of being in the postmodern condition in a new manner. As a thinker he kept himself open to the question of being.

All questions are historical, all questions arise in the context of a discourse. All questions are to be taken in the historical background. As an answer to this Heidegger says that metaphysics can be deconstructed but can not completely be destroyed. This point of argument is same as in the case of

Neitzsche too, when he says about the sphere where language does not exist. Our break with the tradition is an attempt to place the question of being in a new scenario, not to destroy it. We should make struggle to release the question of being from its metaphysical history- a history of egocentrism and logocentrism. But we must believe that this struggle will never reach in a shore., never final. To question the problem we all maintain the critical spirit of vigilance. David Michael Levin says

"..... Heidegger's 'humanism' is radically open: it places, it situates, it releases us, as human beings, in an openness-to-Being which is radically decentering, radically unsettling. The ego, the *ego cogito* of modern metaphysics, cannot let itself be open to (the question of) Being without being decentered, cast out, in a kind of exile, into the dimensionality of wider, more open filed. Nor can 'Man' remain standing as the sole measure and ground, in a sense which tolerates false pride, intolerance of difference, neglect of the ecology of the earth, and totalitarianism. Heidegger's new version of 'humanism' is therefore in opposition to the tradition of 'humanism', and it is, in this sense, a kind of 'anti-humanism.....'" ¹³

Further he continues:

..... The *Dasen*, the human being, is that being, the only being, for whom to be is an open question. Thus Heidegger sees the 'humanity' of being to consist essentially in being and remaining open to the question of Being.. Humanism must care for our humanity by keeping us open to this questioning; it must care for our humanity as an endowment to be developed in relation to this question. Humanism must always continue to question our interpretations in the light of our historical experience with Being. Humanism must, at the very least, take care that the dimensionality of Being within which we live, the world within which our human being unfolds in its time, is not closed off in ways that even our present experience tells us are destructive.

We need to be able to see how a concealed nihilism has always been at work in the humanism of our tradition, and how its present visibility, its visibility at this time and juncture, challenges the vision of humanity around which many people, communities and nations have for a long time been gathered. For both Nietzsche and Heidegger, the nihilism promoted by

the modern vision of reason makes it necessary for us to begin a radical critique of the history of metaphysics, with special attention, perhaps, to the 'subject' of perception, desire, action, and knowledge....." ¹⁴

Heidegger's readings on Nietzsche also demonstrate the new mode of his thinking. Instead of using the old fashioned modes of thinking he evaluates the problem in a new light which resists the attacks of the opponents of postmodernism from the charge that postmodernism is 'pure nihilism' without any hope and progress.

Nietzsche likes to free the man from guilt and responsibility towards the gods and theology. In his unfinished work named "Philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks" Nietzsche is offering the image of child as an 'aesthetic justification', not only beyond good and evil but beyond all conflicts and all antagonisms. In this article he justified the world in its totality as a child's play. Heidegger interprets it as being which within the world is governed by innocence. ¹⁵

FOUR

Viewing and revaluating the western tradition from modernity to postmodernism, we are very much near to the philosophical positions of

structuralism and poststructuralism. The destruction of metaphysical tradition and the fragmentation of cartation 'subjectivity' in the postmodern era bring a new world picture. Another stream known as structuralism which is as important as the stream of Nietzsche is to be evaluated and placed historically to get the picture of postmodern condition.

Structuralism is an abstract, complex term which puzzles the reader. The writers of postmodernism argue that the contemporary usages of the terms are confusing and lead the reader into a chaos of misunderstanding. Jonathan Culler illustrates the condition of the chaos.

".....An initial source of confusion is the instability of key terms, whose scope varies with the level of specificity of critical discussion and the contrasts or differences at work at that level. The term structuralism is an instructive example. A commentator analysing an essay by Roland Barth might distinguish its specifically structuralist moves from its other procedures, thus drawing upon and contributing to highly restricted notion of structuralism. A critic of broader of ambitions, trying to describe the fundamental procedure of modern thought, might, on the other hand, contrast the "structuralism" of twentieth century thinking with an earlier

"essentialism", making us all structuralist today, whatever our claims. A plausible defence of each use of term could be mounted, since the distinction that are crucial at one level fade away at another; but if the functioning of structuralism aptly illustrate the structural determination of meaning that structuralism purports to describe the results are still confusing for any one who hopes that the term will serve as convenient and reliable label. Vincent Descombes's *Le Meme et Paute*, a powerful account of French philosophy from 1933 to 1978, scrupulously explore distinctions until it makes Michel Serres the only real structuralist (pp. 86-111). For other commentators structuralism includes not just recent French thought but all theoretically inclined criticism: William Philips, in a discussion of contemporary criticism organised for his journal, the *Partisan review*, designates by the term structuralism the panoply of recent critical and theoretical theories that refuse to espouse the traditional project of elucidating and others message and evaluating his achievement....." ¹⁶

Culler illustrates the present situation in the usage of the key terms. Without ignoring these crucial issue we can try to analyse what structuralism is, and its application in the philosophical thinking.

Fundamentally and basically structuralism is a way of thinking about the world. Some thinkers who doubt the validity of structuralism, consider that structuralism is a type of kantianism without the transcendental subject. Christopher Norris argues:

It is not hard to see the parallels between Kantian Thought and structuralist outlook presented by a theorist like Culler. Both have their origins in a sceptical divorce between mind and the 'reality' it seeks to understand. In structuralist terms this divorce was most clearly spelled out by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussur. He argued that our knowledge of the world is inextricably shaped and conditioned by the language that serves to represent it. Saussure's insistence on the 'arbitrary' nature of the sign lead to his undoing of the natural links that common sense assumes to exist between word and thing. Meanings are bound up, according to Saussure in a system of relationship and difference that effectively determines our habits of thought and perception. Far from

providing a 'window' on reality or (to vary the metaphor) a faithfully reflecting mirror, language brings along with it a whole intricate network of established significations. In his view, our knowledge of things is insensibly structured by the systems of code and convention which alone enable us to classify and organise the chaotic flow of experience....." 17

In this work we don't like to move in the direction of this argument. We don't like make an enquiry on whether structuralist have such a Cantian touch of 'subject' or not. However, we discussed the problem here because It shows the ambiguity of the term named as structuralism.

Structuralism is predominantly concerned with the perception and description of structures. Since the time of Vico who inaugurated the vision of structuralism in his 'The new science', structuralism entered in so many spheres of thoughts especially in linguistics, philosophy and maths etc. Terrence Hawakes says about Vico:

"..... Vico's work ranks as one of the first modern attempts to break the anaesthetic grip that such a permanent structuring process has on the human mind. It thus represents one of the first modern recognition of that process as a definitive characteristic of that mind. *The New Science* links directly with

those modern schools of thought whose first premise may be said to be that human beings and human societies are not fashioned after some model or plan which exists before they do. Like the existentialists, Vico seems to argue that there is no pre-existent, 'given' human essence, no predetermined 'human nature'. Like that Marxists, he seems to say that particular forms of humanity are determined by particular social relations and systems of human institutions... " 18

In the new definition of structuralism the structure embodies the following fundamental ideas.

1. The idea of wholeness
2. The idea of transformation
3. The idea of self regulation

In the wholeness of the structure the arrangement of the entities will be complete in itself. It is not a composite formed by the separate independent elements. The constituent parts of the structure and its intrinsic laws determine its nature. In the structure over all properties is always larger than the individual part of it. In this way a structure is always different from 'an aggregate'. In the aggregate the constituent parts have no independent existence. Piaget says:

“..... That wholeness is a defining mark of structures almost goes without saying, since all structuralists- mathematicians, linguists, psychologists, or what have you-are at one in recognising as fundamental the contrast between *structures and aggregates*, the former being wholes, the latter composites formed of elements that are independent of the complexes into which they enter. To insist on this distinction is not to deny that structures have elements, but the elements of a structure are subordinated to laws, and it is in terms of these laws that the structure *qua* whole or system is defined. Moreover, the laws governing a structure’s composition are not reducible to cumulative one-by-one association of its elements: they confer on the whole as such over-all properties distinct from the properties of its elements.....” 19

The structure is not a static form. It is always in transformation. It is structuring in itself. In the process of transformation new materials are constantly processed by the structure. This special nature of structuralism reflects in the working of language. In language, it is capable of transforming various fundamental sentences into a widest variety of new utterance, while retaining these within its own particular structure.

The transformation act to maintain the intrinsic laws is known as self-regulation. For example, in language the words do not point to 'reality' for its formation, but it maintains on the bases of its own internal and self sufficient rules. Every word acquires its meaning from the inherent structural status, not by referring an object.

This new dimension in thinking or the new concept structuralism inaugurated a new world outlook. Its first and the important principle, that the world is made up of relationship rather than the things open as a new way of looking at the world. Terence Hawkes says:

“...At its simplest, it claims that the nature of every elements in any given situation has no significance by itself, and in fact, is determined by its relationship to all the other elements involved in that situation. In short, the full significance of any entity or experience cannot be perceived unless and until it is integrated into the *structure* of which it forms a part..”²⁰

The philosophical backgrounds of Saussure will be discussed in the third chapter. Here it is intended only to show the relation between structuralism and poststructuralism. First, Saussurian ideas will be discussed in brief following by readings of the Derrida. To show the historical

importance of structuralism and poststructuralism in the history of postmodernism, these issues are to be discussed.

Saussure introduced many terms and concepts. The first important concept is the concept of sign. According to him the sign consists of two inseparable components or aspects, the signifier and the signified. A sign in Saussure's argument is always arbitrary. There is no natural or internal or inherent connection between the signifier and the signified. It is noticed that here in this argument Saussure separates himself from the tradition of Russell and G.E. Moore, who talk about the referent as the meaning of a word. The identity of all elements of language, including the words, their components, speech and sounds, etc. are not determined by positive qualities or objective features, but by difference, or by a network of relationship, distinctions and opposition from other speech sounds. In other words signifiers obtain meaning only within a particular linguistic system.

In his theory the most important concept is the relationship between the signifier and the signified and its arbitrary nature. There exists no necessary fitness in the link between sound image and the concept. The word 'tree' in short has no natural or tree like qualities. Terrence Hawkes remarks about the structuralism of Piaget and Saussure's concept of sign is interesting.

"...In fact, the very arbitrariness of the relationship between signifier and signified that makes language conservative in nature also serves to guarantee the 'structural' nature of the system in which it occurs in precisely the terms put forward by Piaget. Language is self-defining, and so whole and complete. It is capable of a process of 'transformation': that is, of generating new aspects of itself (new sentences) in response to new experience. It is self-regulating. It has these capacities precisely because it allows no single, unitary appeal to a 'reality' beyond itself. In the end, it constitutes its own reality....." ²¹

In this remark one point is to be noticed, that is the nature of the language in a structure or a system and its power of the construction of its own reality without the touch of the objective reality. This aspect of structuralism has gained considerable importance in postmodern outlook.

With these preliminary remarks about Saussure we have to turn our eyes towards the post-Nietzschean period, particularly on Derrida, who has been a prominent figure in the area of poststructuralism. A study of Derrida's reading on Saussure will help us to arrive at the present condition of language philosophy.

The term poststructuralism designates a variety of critical perspectives. In his paper named 'structure sign and play in the discourse of human science', delivered in 1966, Derrida attacked the quasi-scientific pretension of the strict form of structuralism.²² His attack was mainly against Saussure and Levi-Strauss. He argued that a notion of systematic structure, whether in linguistics or in any another branch of knowledge presupposes a "centre" that organises and regulates the structure itself. In Saussure's theory of language, says Derrida, the centre is assigned the function of controlling the endless differential play of internal relationship, while remaining itself outside of the play. He finds out there is a metaphysical presence in the concept of centre. He says:

"..... Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no centre, that the centre could not be thought in the form of a present - being, that the centre had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign- substitution came into play. This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a centre or origin, every thing became discourse-provided we can agree on this word-that is to say, a system in which central signified,

the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of difference. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely..."²³

The crux of the philosophy of Derrida lies in the fact that he criticised the western tradition of philosophy, beginning from Plato. The traditional metaphysical tendency in the western thought has been deconstructed by Derrida. He takes the logocentric tradition as a tradition which gives importance to the metaphysical presence of a subject. According to the traditional metaphysics there is 'presence' behind the text which determines the meaning of the text. In the writings of Saussure, Derrida says, we can see a metaphysics of presence or a centre. Sundar Raj explains the relation and difference between the philosophical outlooks of Heidegger and Derrida:

"..... The idea of a meaning always postponed, deferred and concealed in the play of signifiers and thus never present in its identity takes us on to Heidegger's sense of difference. For Heidegger, the basic contrast is between Being and particular being in plural and dispersal; it is this which he calls the ontological difference and further, especially in his later works, there is the idea that Being is concealed in beings and

there is therefore the presence of Being in the mode of absence. While these ideas do have a certain affinity with Derrida, there is also a difference for in Heidegger there is also the idea of recovery and possession of truth in the resoluteness of 'thinking of Being'. In this sense, Derrida claims that Heidegger's thought, however radical and critical of metaphysics is yet within the basic logocentrism of the Western tradition. Just as previously we noted that difference is a condition of possibility of all concepts and conceptuality, we can now say that it is also the condition of possibility of the ontological difference. It is precisely in this way that Derrida claims that deconstruction is more radical than Heidegger's fundamental ontology, in the sense that it explains the unexplainable in Heidegger....." ²⁴

In the writings of Saussure Derrida finds the priority of spoken as opposed to the written language. Derrida cites a number of passages from Saussure in which writing is treated as merely a derivative or secondary form of linguistic notations which always depends on the primary reality of speech. Here Derrida sees a 'presence' of a speaker behind the words. This

presupposition of Saussure has been deconstructed by Derrida. Christopher Norris explains:

“...Derrida sees a whole metaphysics at work behind the privilege granted to speech in Saussure’s methodology. *Voice* becomes a metaphor of truth and authenticity, a source of self-present ‘living’ speech as opposed to the secondary lifeless emanations of writing. In speaking one is able to experience (supposedly) an intimate link between sound and sense, an inward and immediate realisation of meaning which yields itself up without reserve to perfect, transparent understanding. Writing, on the contrary, destroys this ideal of pure self-presence. It obtrudes an alien; depersonalized medium, a deceiving shadow which falls between intent and meaning, between utterance and understanding. It occupies a promiscuous public realm where authority is sacrificed to the vagaries and whims of textual ‘dissemination’. Writing, in short, is a threat to the deeply traditional view that associates truth with self-presence and the ‘natural’, language wherein it finds expression.....”²⁵

It is clear how the logocentric tradition tried to deprive the writing; against that tradition Derrida states that, writing is in fact the precondition of language and must be conceived as prior to speech. This is not a reversal process. Here the concept writing is not used as in the ordinary sense of writing. The point has been clarified by Culler as follows

“.....The repression of writing lies deep in Saussure’s proposed methodology. It shows in his refusal to consider any form of linguistic notation outside the phonetic-alphabetical script of Western culture. As opposed, that is, to the non-phonetic varieties which Derrida often discusses: hieroglyphs, algebraic notions, formalized languages of different kinds.....”²⁶

Here Derrida is not talking about the origin of language. He does not consider the problem of the primacy of writing or speech in the origin of language. He simply gives his own narration about the language.

For De. Saussure difference is a constitutive or defining condition for both the signifier and signified. Saussure says that signifier is determined not by what it is, as it were, in itself, or by itself, but in terms of the difference from other signifiers. In Saussure it must be noted that this kind of difference is a synchronic characteristic of sign within a system. But Derrida attaches a temporal signification to Saussure. For Derrida the meaning of any sign is

perpetually deferred, the signified concept can never be fully present to the signifier. In Saussure the meaning is determined by the structure, but in Derrida replaces the concept of structure by the concept of the 'chain of signification', which is not closed as the structure of Saussure, but an open ended one. Derrida makes clear the concept of difference as follows

".....The signified concept is never present in itself, in an adequate presence that would refer only to itself. Every concept is necessarily and essentially inscribed in a chain or a system, within which it refers to another and to other concepts, by the systematic play of differences. Such a play, then-difference-is no longer simply a concept but the possibility of conceptuality, of the conceptual system and process is general...."²⁷

Thus in this process the meaning is always postponed and deferred.

Christopher Norris shows the philosophical importance of structuralism and its relation with post-structuralism, he says:

".....Such is the deconstructive violence to which Derrida subjects the texts of Saussure and his structuralist successors. It is not a question, he repeats, of rejecting the entire Saussurian project or denying its historical significance.

Rather it is a matter of driving that project to its ultimate conclusions and seeing where those conclusion work to challenge the project's conventional premises....." 28

The impact of deconstruction in the structuralist tradition and generally in the realm of ontology and epistemology are to be estimated. This chapter intended to explore such problems at the present condition of postmodern thinking.

This chapter began with a quotation of Derrida, which shows "the unfortunate condition" of ontology in the realm of philosophy today. When we take the postmodern discourse as a whole, not in the partial approach of Derridian reading it must be noted that the problem of the being of Heidegger deserves much attention and discussion today. Because the destiny of our thinking lies in the better interpretation of the being with the help of the new concepts and categories which are obtained by the profound reconceptualisation of our traditional philosophical outlooks.

It is unfortunate that Derrida is not inspired by any hope about the future. Nevertheless, it is hopeful that Derrida, if only for a moment, feels a lack, consider the possibility that he is, we are, still looking for something. We think that it may be an invitation for the search of being in a new mode of philosophising.

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CHAPTER - II
SPHOTA THEORY OF BHARTRHARI

"..... India is the real source of all tongues, the primary source of all ideas"

Friedrich Schlegel

ONE

An introduction to the philosophy of language in Indian thought

Language has been one of the fundamental concern of Indian Philosophical tradition. In the history of Indian Philosophy the study of Language has never been the monopoly of Grammarians. All most all of the schools or *darsanas* in Indian Philosophy developed their own philosophy of Language in order to defend their own metaphysics and attack others. So in order to discuss the *sphota* theory of Bhartrhari we have to make a historical review of Indian Language philosophy beginning from the *Vedas*. Such an attempt will help us to place Bhartrhari in a historical context.

The language and literature of India began with the *Vedas*. We should note, first of all, certain distinctive features of the *Vedas*. The term *Vedas* does not denote any single book. It denotes large segments of Indian literature. It is traditionally believed that the *Vedas* are *apauruseya*; that means, no human

agency was responsible for their creation. The *Vedas* have existed from time immemorial, and will continue to exist for eternity. In the field of knowledge, *Vedas* possess absolute validity, because they were free from all the limitations and deficiencies usually associated with a human agency.

The *Vedas* are also called *Srutis*, because they are recited and heard, not written and read. The word *Sruti*, incidentally is also interpreted as the rhythm of the infinite as it is heard by the soul. The *Vedas* have been transmitted from generation to generation through the oral tradition. So the Indian speculation on language began with the *Vedas* and have continued till recently without any break. *Patanjali*, in his *Mahabhasya*, quotes some of the hymns of *Rg veda* and comments on them. The philosophy of language as cultivated by the school of Grammar and *Mimamsa*, is the outcome of elaboration of the suggestions found in the *Veda*. The divine nature of speech, the creative and illuminative power of the word and the different levels of speech, are the main doctrines, which formed the philosophy of language in Indian thought. All of these stem from the *Vedas*. the ancillary disciplines of the *Vedas*, phonetics (*Siksa*), grammar (*Vyakarana*) and *Nirukta* were directly connected with the *Vedas*. Every system of philosophy in India had to consider language at some stage or other, and each one had given attention to the ultimate question concerning the relation between the word and reality.

Most of the schools have had taken *Vedas* as a *Pramana* (valid means of knowledge). So in the Indian thought, *Sabda Pramana* or *Vedas* has occupied a central role, just as mathematics, is in the case of Greek Philosophy. If the Western, or Greek Philosophy built their science and philosophy on geometry and mathematics, the Indians built their philosophy on language or *Sabda Sastra*. Matilal says. "It has often been claimed in recent times that in the Indian Scientific and philosophical tradition, mathematics plays a less crucial role and its place is taken by grammar or linguistics." ¹

The *Vedas* are the storehouse of ideas, which flourished in the Indian thought and culture through centuries. So *Vedas* have a central role in India or *Vedas* are the pivot of Indian philosophy. In this aspect the position of *Vedas* in India is equal to the position of Mathematics or Geometry in Greek thought.

The approach of Indians to language was never narrow and restrictive. Language was examined in relation to consciousness by most of the Indian philosophers. In Indian philosophy, language had both phenomenal and metaphysical dimensions. The Indians always paid equal attention to the outer or phenomenal aspects and the inner or the metaphysical aspects of language. Grammarians like *Panini* and *Patanjali* were concerned with human speech in the everyday empirical world, but at the same time they

have also given equal importance to the metaphysical aspects of language. Similarly, Bhartrhari begins his *Vakyapadiya* with an account of its metaphysical nature, but then he goes on to explore the technical and grammatical points involved in the everyday use of language. Thus the Indians avoided the reductionist mistake of language speculation. Indians did not reduce language to merely human conventions having factual referents; nor did they fall into the error of metaphysical reductionism.

Language in the Vedas

In the *Vedas*, language or *Vak* has a prominent role. In *RgVeda*, *Vak* is described as the support of Gods such as *Varuna*, *Indra*, *Agni*, and *Asvins*. In the *Brahmanas* and in the *Vedas*, *Vak* identified with *Sarasvati*, who is the goddess of learning, wisdom and inspiration. Some of the passage of the *RgVeda* given below show that the ancient vision of language, as given by the *Risis*.

“..... Where the sages fashioned language with their thought, filtering it like parched grain through a sieve, friends recognised their friendship; their beauty is marked on the language.....”

“.....They traced the course of language through ritual; they found it embodied in the seers; they gained access to it and distributed it widely; the seven chanters cheered them.....”

“.....Many who look do not see language; many who listen do not hear it. It reveals itself like a loving and well-adorned wife to her husband.....”

“.....Though all friends have eyes and ears, their mental intuitions are uneven. Some are like shallow ponds which reach upto the mouth or armpit; others are like ponds, which are fit for bathing....”²

According to the hymns, quoted above, the nature and function of language is to manifest or reveal the meaning of things.

And a person should be able to reveal the inner meaning of language only when he uses the intuitive power or *antarjnana* in language.

Brahman is directly identified with the language in *Vedas*. The Tenth *Mandala* of *RgVeda* states that there are as many words as there are manifestation of *Brahman*. One of the significant things to note in relation to the *Vedas* is that the word, or *Divine Vak* should be considered as the seed of creation, from which all universe bursts forth. Symbols have been used to indicate the divine nature of speech and its evolution to form each cycle of

creation. Aurobindo says about the language of *Vedas* in his *The Secret of the Vedas* :

“.....*Veda* then is the creation of an age anterior to our intellectual philosophies. In that original epoch thought proceeded by other methods than those of our logical reasoning and speech accepted modes of expression which in our modern habits would be inadmissible the wisest then depended on inner experience and suggestions of the intuitive mind for all knowledge that ranged beyond mankind’s ordinary perception and daily activities. Their aim was illumination, not logical conviction, their ideal the inspired seer not the accurate reasoner, the Indian tradition has faithfully preserved this account of the origin of the *Vedas* the *Risi* was not the individual composer of the hymn, but the seer of an eternal truth and the impersonal knowledge. The language of *Veda* itself is *Sruti*, a rhythm not composed by the intellect but heard, a divine word that come vibrating out of the infinite to the inner audience of the man who had previously made himself fit for the impersonal knowledge...”³

The above quote shows the true nature of the *Vak* and the importance of the seer or *Risi*. Here the *Risi* was not the individual composer of the *Vedas*, but rather the seer of an eternal or impersonal truth. Matilal says

“...The Indians do not always talk about “revelation” in the way it is understood in the Judaeo - Christian tradition...”⁴

The *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* equated speech with *Brahman*. In the fourth chapter, *Yan jnavalkya* has given a long passage about the nature of word and its connection with consciousness. The *Upanisads* says :

“...Let me hear what any (of your teachers) may have told you”. *Jitvan Sailini* told me that “speech, verily, is *Brahman*.”

As one who has a mother, father and teacher should say, so did *Sailini* say that speech is *Brahman*, for what can one have cannot speak? ‘But did he tell you the abode and the support (of the *Brahman*)?’ ‘He did not tell me’. ‘This *Brahman* is only one-footed, your majesty’. ‘Verily, *Yajnavalkya*, do tell us’. Its abode is just speech, its support space. One should worship it as intelligence.’ ‘What is the nature of that intelligence, *Ya jnavalkya*?’ ‘Just speech, Your Majesty’ said he (*Ya jnavalkya*). ‘Verily, by speech, Your Majesty, a friend is recognised. By speech alone, Your Majesty, are the *RgVeda*, the *Yajur Veda*,

the *SamaVeda*, the *Atharvanigirasa*, history, ancient lore, arts, the *Upanisads*, verses, aphorisms, explanations, commentaries, (the effects of) sacrifices, oblations, food and drink, this world and the other and all beings are known. The higher *Brahman*, Your Majesty, is the truth, speech. Speech does not desert him who, knowing thus, worships it as such. All beings approach him. Having become a god he goes even to the gods. *Janaka* (King) of *Videha* said, 'I shall give you a thousand cows with a bull as large as an elephant.' *Ya jnavalkya* said, 'My father thought that one should not accept gifts without having instructed....'"⁵

Later in the *Mandukya Upanisad*,⁶ the initial vision of the *Risis* is said to be of the *Vedas* as one, as a whole, the eternity, *Brahman*, which represented by 'AUM'. The *Mantra AUM* includes within itself the three levels of ordinary consciousness. They are waking, dreaming, and deep sleep, the fourth stage of consciousness, or *turiya* where the sound itself comes to an end. *Brahman* which is said to be beyond, is also said to be *AUM*. The first *Mantra* of this *Upanishad*, says.

“.....The letter *OM* is all this; of this clear exposition (is started with): All that is past, present or future is verily *OM*; and whatever is beyond the three periods of time also verily *OM*..”

The sixth *mantra* says:

“....This one is the lord of all, this one is omniscient; this one is the inner director of all, this one is the source of all; this one is verily the place of origin and dissolution of all being.....” 7

The above passage from the *Upanisads* shows the divine nature of the *Vak* or *Daivi Vak*. Later in the hands of Bhartrhari, it became a firm ground for his philosophy of language.

Language in the Darsanas :

Generally in Indian thought, the debate regarding the nature of language, divided the thinkers into two sections; one *Brahmanical* and the second naturalistic tradition. The *Brahmanical* tradition stemming from the *Vedas*, which held that language is divine in origin, whereas the naturalistic traditions of the *Buddhism* and *Carvaka*, which held that language is an arbitrary and conventional tool. Some *Darsanas* like *Jaina* and *Nyaya* seem to occupy an intermediary position between the two traditions.

In the *Brahmanical* tradition *Sankhya* and *Yoga* accept three *Pramanas*, *Pratyaksa*, *Anumana* and *Sabda*; *Mimamsaka* takes *arthapatti* and *abhava* too.

The same six *Pramanas* are also taken by *Vedanta*. All of the Brahmanical schools have taken *Sabda* or *Veda* as a *Pramana*.

In *Sankhya* verbal cognition is regarded as a valid means of knowledge. *Sankhya* describes *Sabda* as authoritative statements (*aptavacana*). If the knowledge of the *risis* of an object cannot be known through perception and inference, *Vedas* has been taken as a *pramana* by the *Sankhya* philosophers. They distinguished two kinds of *Sabda*, *Vaidika* and *Laukika*. *Vaidika Sabda* is the revelation of the *Vedas*. *Laukika* is the testimony of the ordinary trustworthy persons. Although *Sankhya* admits *Sabda* as an independent *pramana* it is inference which is really the chief *Sankhyan* *pramana*.⁸ *Sankhya* philosophers have taken *Sabda* as a *Pramana* only when inference and perception fail. P.T. Raju remarks in his *Structural Depths of Indian Thought* about the *Sankhya* view of *Sabda*. He says :

“.....The *Sankhya* accepts nearly the whole doctrine of the *Nyaya*. But it maintains that *Vedas* was not composed by any one person, (*Apauruseya*), but embodies that insight of many great seers, yet although not composed by God, the *Sankhya* rejects all arguments for the existence of God. The *Vedas* is not eternal as *Mimamsa* contends. No sound, not even the word of

the *Vedas*, is eternal. This part of the view is same as that of the *Nyaya*.....” 9

One point is clear from this passage, namely that *Sankhya*, in its classical form, did not give more importance to the *Vedas* than perception and inference. It seems to be the aim of all *Sankhya* philosophers to achieve discriminative knowledge, so that the real separation of *purusa* from *prakrti* can be realised and liberation from ignorance is achieved. The truth should be directly experienced, and not known through the *Vedas*.

Yoga is a psycho-physical practice for the liberation of *purusa* from *prakrti*. Like *Sankhya*, perception, inference and verbal testimony have been taken by *Yoga* System as *pramanas*. *Veda* is also known as *agama*. The most noticeable difference between the *Yoga* and *Sankhya* school is the high place accorded to *Isvara* by the former. *Yoga* emphasising that in *Isvara*, the seed of omniscience is present in its utmost excellence. The *Isvara* verbalises his omniscience himself and given us as *agama*. The same *Isvara* is the teacher of the ancient *Risis*. There is one word which when spoken connotes *Isvara* with all his power for omniscience, that is, *Pranava* or 'AUM'. In the *Vyasabhasya* of *Yoga Sutra*, *Vyasa* states that the relation between word and the meaning (signified) is inherent and self-manifesting. According to the *Yoga* school, the *Isvara* is the determining factor of the convention of the words. *Patanjali*

describes the *Pranavadhyana*. By this practice, the consciousness of the *Yogi* is more and more coming to approximate the manifestation of the syllable, which is *Isvaras*, pure and omniscient *sattva*. The devotee of 'AUM' achieves not only the grace from *Isvara* but also achieves complete clarity regarding the meaning of all words.

Sabda Pramana is a valid and independent means of knowledge in *Mimamsa* philosophy. *Sabda* is a chief *pramana* for *Mimamsa*, by which we can know the injunctions and prohibitions of *Dharma*. The relation between the word and its meaning is eternal and therefore not subject to creation by any person. Against the view of *Mimamsa*, that the relation between word and meaning are eternal, the opponent says that the relationship between word and its meaning is not eternal but natural or conventional, because when a word is heard for the first time, no such in born relationship as the *Mimamsa* proposes is cognized. We come to know the meaning of a word only when we have heard a word several times. As a reply to this criticism, *Sabara* has given a detailed examination of the nature of *Sabda* in his *Sabarabhasya*. *Sabara* says that every word is made or composed by letters. In the example *gauh* (cow), the word is made up of the letters *g*, *au* and *h*. In our experience or when we hear the word *gauh*, the composite word-unit is never found to be

anything entirely different from the component letters; hence there can be no "word" apart from the component letters.

Sabara has also discussed the problem of universal and particular in his *Sabarabhasya*. The question of universal and particular arises only when we speak the words. When the word cow is spoken, it brings about the idea of the universal or class character which is common to all cows, and at the same time which brings the "Individual" cow too. *Sabara* says that the universal and not the individual that is denoted by the word. According to *Sabara*, the word such as 'cow' primarily denotes classes or universals, yet at the same time secondarily refers by implication, to the individual possessed of the genetic attribute of cowness.

The Comprehension of the Meaning of a sentence in Mimamsa :

In the comprehension of the meaning of a sentence, the *Mimamsa* divided themselves into two classes. *Sabara* argues that the sentences cannot have any separate meaning apart from the meanings of the words composing it. The meaning of a sentence is comprehended only on the comprehension of the meanings of the component words. The sentence can have no independent meaning apart from the meanings of the words composing it. This theory is known as *Abhivitanvaya* theory. Kunjunni Raja makes the

following remarks about the *Abhihitavaya* theory, in his *Indian Theories of Meaning*.

".....According to the *Abhihitavaya* theory of verbal comprehension upheld by the *Mimamsakas* of the *Bhatta* school and by some of the *Naiyayikas*, the meaning of a sentence is a concatenation of the individual words have in them self-meanings which can be comprehended separately on hearing a sentence, we have first an understanding of the separate meanings of the words one after other, then we put together this meaning according to the three factors of *Akanksa*, *Yogyata*, and *Samnidhi* and we arrive at the meaning of the sentence, *Kumarila bhatta* says that the meaning of a sentence is always conveyed by the meanings of words obtained from the word itself. Unlike the words, the sentence does not have a meaning of its own independently...."¹⁰

Anvitabhidhana Theory of Prabhakara:

Against the *Bhatta* and *Sabara*, *Prabhakara* and his followers formulated the *Anvitabhidhana* theory; this is primarily derived from the linguistic behaviour of man, in normal linguistic behaviour, people use sentences for the purpose of communication of ideas. The isolated words are not helpful to

the communication of ideas. According to *Prabhakara* the meaning of words can be known only when they occur in a sentence; *Prabhakara* denied that the words convey meaning except in the context of a sentence, but *Prabhakara* regards the words as real and actual constituents of the language. In language, each word has definite meaning, but the purpose of the word is to serve as the part of a sentence. The *Anvitabhidhana* theory does not deny the importance of the meaning of the words; but they say that both the individual word meanings and their mutual relation are conveyed by the words themselves. According to *Prabhakara*, on hearing the words of a sentence, we get a unitary sense which arises directly from the collection of words.

Vedanta also accepts the *Sabda Pramana*. According to the *Vedanta* School, the word, its meaning and the relationship between the two are eternal and therefore not subject to creation by any person. In his commentary of the *Brahmasutra*, *Sankara* says that at the beginning of each creation (*kalpa*), God who is self illumined, creates *Brahma* and delivers the *Veda*. Then the *Risis* realise the *Vedamantra*. *Vedanta* also argues that the *Sabda Pramana* enables one to realise *Brahman*, but at the same time, *Sankara* says that once the Revelation of Absolute Oneness is achieved, *Sabda* and *Vedas* will have been superseded since *Sabda Pramana* is meaningful only ✓

where one is in the bondage of *Avidya*. Generally, this is the view of *Vedanta* towards the *Sabda Pramana*.

Carvakas and the Buddhist Approaches towards Language

Against the *Brahmanic* view of language as a revelation or Divine *vak* stemming from *Veda*, naturalistic school considers language as an arbitrary and conventional tool. *Carvaka* and *Buddhist* denied the validity of *sabda* as separate *Pramana*.

Carvaka accepts perception as the only correct way of *Pramana* for obtaining the *Prama* or correct knowledge. They reject *Sabdapramana* or *Veda*. They considered sacred scriptures, religious injunctions etc. as useless. *Sabda Pramana* is rejected by the *Carvaka* on the ground that, it must first be established other verbal testimony resulting in an *infinite regress*. Unless at some point there is an appeal to direct sensory experience, it is not valid. *Carvaka* also holds that *Sabda* is unacceptable on epistemological grounds, because a man knows only what he perceives, and not what someone else says that he has perceived. In this view, the direct sensory perception is the only valid knowledge of reality.

In case of *Buddhists*, intuition is the highest source of knowledge. This intuition is defined as knowledge of things as they are in themselves as distinguished from what they appear to us. Such knowledge is only means to

freedom or salvation. *Buddha* rejects the *Vedas* because he claimed that *Vedic Risis* have no direct personal knowledge of the truth of the *vedas*. *Buddha* stressed one thing in the case of *prajna* or intuition. That is his own teaching and the path of freedom contained therein were only to be accepted provisionally by the disciples until it is found to be true in his won direct experience. This advice of *Buddha* is highly different from the *Brahmanical* view point of *Sabda* or *veda*, which is taken as an absolute authority without any questioning by the disciples.

Buddhist Theory of Apoha :

Apoha theory is an important contribution of Buddhism to Indian thought. *Buddhist* logicians say that the words have no direct reference to objective realities as the *Mimamsaka* believes. Kunjunni Raja says :

“...The Buddhist logicians maintain that the essence of meaning is negative in character and that words have no direct reference to objective realities. According to the *Buddhists*, words deal directly with conceptual image which are purely subjective construction of the mind (*vikalpas*), and therefore there can be no real connection between words and the external objects. The meaning of a word is a conceptual image (*vikalpa*) whose essence is the negation of all its counter

correlates, (*anyapoha*). The word 'cow' doesn't actually mean the animal with dewlap, horns etc. It means only the exclusion of all objects that are now cow....."¹¹

The Buddhists reject the theory of universal put forward by *Mimamsaka* and *Naiyayakas*. To them particular is the only real.

According to *Jaina*, *Sabda* is considered as a *Pramana* but it is classified along with inference, as only immediate or non-perceptual knowledge. *Sabda* or verbal testimony is the knowledge produced by the word of a reliable person and which is not inconsistent with the evidence of perception. A person who knows the object as it is known as a reliable person. *Jaina* classifies the *Sabda* into two kinds, one is secular testimony (*laukika*) and the other is scriptural testimony (*Sruta jnana*). When the words come from an ordinary reliable person of the world, this is known as secular testimony. If the words proceed from a self-liberated one, it is known as scriptural testimony.

According to the *Nyaya* school, *Sabda* is the teaching of reliable person and that it is a *Pramana*. They classify all knowledge from *Sabda* under two headings *drstartha* or that relating to sensuous object and *adrstartha* or that relating to supersensuous objects. *Drastartha Sabdas* are the trustworthy assertion of ordinary person. The evidence given by witness in law courts,

the knowledge about plants that we get from a farmer, etc. are the examples of *drstartha sabda*. The prophets instruction about virtue and vice, the scriptural texts on God, heaven, future life etc. are the illustrations of *Adrstartha Sabda*.

Sanskrit Grammar

The origin of Sankrit Grammar is shrouded in mystery. In Indian thought, in contrast to Greek thought, mathematics plays a less crucial role and its place is taken by Grammar or linguistics. The traditional name for this discipline is *Vyakarana*. *Panini*, *Katyayana*, and *Patanjali* are said to be the masters of Sankrit Grammar.

The earliest systematic treatment of Grammar is *paninis Astadhyayi*. It has been divided into eight chapters, of there four are *padas*; each of which contain 3, 995 *Sutras* (formulas). In his *Astadhyayi*, *Panini* not only deals with both *Sanskrit* and *Vedic Grammar* and mainly *Vedic* accent but also he deals more fully with *Sanskrit Grammar*. According to Indian tradition, *Panini* lived in fifth century B.C. and his native place was *Salatroa*, which is now in *Pakistan*.

In his *Astadhyayi*, *Panini* has given reference of an early Grammarian by name of *Sphotayana*" (in rule 6-1-123) (*Avan Sphotayanasya*), *Matilal* makes the following remarks about *Panini* in his *word and the world*.

"It is by no means clear whether *Panini* knew about the theory *Sphota* in an admissible form *Haradatta*, one of the *paniniyas* belonging probably to the 10th Century A.D. speculated that this *Sphotayana* was the propounder of *Sphota* doctrine".¹²

Katyayana was a post- *Paninian* Grammarian. He had written *Varttikas* on *Panini's Astadhyayi*.

Traditionally, *Patanjali* is believed to be an incarnation of serpent *Sesa*, who is *Vishnus* resting place. He has written a *Bhasya* on the *Panini's* sutra. It is known as *Patanjala Mahabhasya*. *Mahabhasya* is one the most important treaties on *Sanskrit* Grammar; the later grammatical works have been influenced by it. Before the time of *Bhartrhari*, *Patanjali* has said about the *Sphota* theory. *Matilal* says "*Patanjali*, at one place, says that *Sphota* is the speech or language (*Sabda*) while the noise or sound (*dhvani*) is a quality or (a feature) of the speech (language)..... for *Patanjali*, a single letter of sound (*varna*) such as R, P, or fixed sound series or letter series, can be *Sphota*".¹³ According to *Patanjali*, the *Sphota* is thus a unit of sound, a single letter or a letter series. A sound series can be analysed as a succession of sound-units. But this notion of *Patanjali* about *Sphota* is different from the later grammarians concept of *Sphota*, especially *Bhartrhari*; for whom *Sphota* is a whole entity and hence unanalysable.

Conditions of knowing the Meaning of a Sentence :

Before we are going to discuss the problem of words and their meaning, it is important to understand the conditions of knowing the meaning of a sentence.

The most important contribution of ancient India to general linguistics is the concept of *Akanksa*.

Akanksa is derived from the Sanskrit root '*Kank*' which means to desire. *Mimamsaka* promulgated the theory of *Akanksa*, *Yogyata* and *Samnidhi*. The knowledge of the synthetic units of a sentence is mainly on the basis of the '*Akanksa*' or the mutual expectancy of the words. "*Akanksa* consists in a word not being able to convey a complete sense in the absence of another word. Literally, it is the desire on the part of the listeners to know the other words or their meaning to complete the sense. A word is said to have *Akanksa* for another, if it cannot, without the latter produces knowledge of its inter-connection in an utterance".¹⁴ In a sentence, every word necessarily requires another word to complete the sense. To convey the meaning of noun in a sentence, a verb is always needed. For example the words men, elephant etc. do not convey a complete sense in a sentence, if it is not combined with a verb like come, walking etc.

Yogyata is defined as the logical compatibilities of consistency of the words in a sentence for mutual association. *Yogyata* is a judgement upon a sentence's sense, whether it has a sense or non-sense. When we utter a sentence, if the meaning of a sentence is not contradicted by experience, there is a *Yogyata* or consistency between the words. The competence of a sentence is to be known from experience. For example, in the sentence 'He wets it with water', there is *Yogyata* or consistency of meaning but a sentence like, "He wets it with fire" has no *Yogyata* or compatibility, because we can't wet anything with fire.

If the words in a sentence should be contiguous in time, it is known as *Samnidhi* or *asatti* of a sentence. Words uttered at long intervals cannot produce the knowledge of any interrelation among them even if *akanksa* and *Yogyata* are present there. If a man utters a word a long interval after the first word, then the connection of the meaning cannot be understood.

In all cases of verbal comprehension, a general knowledge of the meaning intended by the speaker is an essential factor. The importance of knowing the speakers' intention in the understanding of speech is an important factor in communication. For example, if a man says "Bring *saindhava*" when he eats, the listener understands that the man who eats want 'Salt'. He can never bring a horse instead of salt, because horse is another

meaning of *saindhava*. Here the listener understands the "Tatparya" or intention of the man when he utters the word in a particular context. *Naiyayakas* have given great importance to the speaker's intention in fixing the meaning of an utterance.

Words and their meaning

In all natural languages, a word has two other meanings than the primary meaning or *abhida*. In language, any word apart from having one or several primary meanings, could be used to convey meanings or denote objects which, though distinct from the ordinary meaning, are nevertheless connected in some way or other with the same primary meaning. The phenomena is usually seen in Rhetoricians term as metaphor or metaphorical use. Matilal says:

"...Indian philosophers give an account of this phenomena by identifying two different powers in a word. One is that of saying (*abhidhana*) and the other is that of pointing or indicating (*laksana*). The first is called the primary meaning-giving power, while the second is called the secondary or indicatory meaning-giving power. By the first the word speaks, as it were, while by the second it only indicates and a metaphor is born..."¹⁵

As pointed out earlier, sometimes a word is used to denote a referent other than its normal one. When a word is used as a metaphor in a sentence but we take the word as denoting its normal primary meaning, the sentence may become nonsensical in the context. Here the actual referent of the word has to be taken as different from its normal one, but in some way connected with it either through similarity or through some other relation. In Sanskrit, other term like *gauni vrtti* is also used to refer the secondary significative function of words.

The sentence *Gangayam Ghosah* ('The village is on the Ganges') is a well known example of *laksana*. In this sentence, the primary meaning of the word *gangayam* is on the river *gangas*, but this is not suitable in the context, because the village cannot actually be on the stream itself. So the actual meaning of the word *ganga* is taken to be 'gangatata' or the bank of the river *Gangas*. It is the normal meaning that occurs to our mind immediately on hearing a word. When this is found to be incompatible with the context we resort to *laksana* and get the actual sense which is related to the normal one and that removes the incompatibility.

Besides the primary and indicatory power, the word has another power known as *vyanjana* or suggestion. The suggestive power is sometimes relevant in poetry and rhetorical speech.

Anandavardhana postulated the theory of *vyanjanai* at first. High class poetry, says Anandavardhana, is that where the suggested meaning of the word excels. Poetry would become more beautiful and more charming if it has the power of *Vyanjana*. It should be noted that the secondary meaning or *laksana* arises when, and only when the primary meaning does not fit to the context, but the suggested meaning is appeared to the sentence only after the sentence meaning has been fully comprehended with the help of both normal and metaphorical meaning. In poetry, this has appeal only to the sensitive reader.

Before the time of *Anandavardhana* centuries earlier, Bhartrhari had exposed the *Sphota* theory, in which he emphasized the importance of taking the whole utterance as a significant unitary symbol. Anandavardhana took the clue from Bhartrhari and developed the theory of language on the lines suggested by him. In his famous work *Dhavanyaloka*, he openly declares his indebtedness to the *Sphota* doctrine.¹⁶ In this text, he does not refer to the *Sphota* doctrine as such but refers to the term *Vyanjana* used by the grammarians.

When a person says "*Gangayam Ghosh*" or village is on the bank of Ganga, from this utterance, the hearer comprehends that the speaker here

intends to emphasize the natural beauty and simplicity of the place. This is an example of Vyanjana in language.

In classical Indian tradition Philosophy, Linguistics and literary criticism these three disciplines were intimately connected. All these disciplines were considered an integral part of the *Sastra*. So a study on this area reveals and brings new dimensions in our present day literary criticism and linguistics philosophy.

As we have seen, in the above paragraph, the literary criticism has been influenced by the language philosophy. The *Dhvani* theory of Anandavardhana shows its philosophical indebtedness to the *Sphota* theory of Bhartrhari. In Western thought too we can see such a philosophical touch. In literary criticism, structuralism and post structuralism, especially that of Derrida, as well as Barth owed much to Saussure's theory signs. ¹⁷

TWO

In India, grammar is traditionally known as *Sabdanusasana*. As the derivation of the word suggests, the grammar is a science which indicates the correct words by separating them from corrupt words. The correct word means the words which are used by *sistas* or the cultured people. Sanskrit Grammar not only works as an school for making rules for language but also

it gives a spiritual discipline to the students. *Patanjali* has suggested that the ultimate aim of grammar is to teach *Dharma* through which one will get liberation. ¹⁸ The basic text of Sanskrit Grammar, *Panini's Astadhyayi* shows the philosophical base of Sanskrit Grammar.

Bhartrhari has also pointed out the philosophical nature of *Vyakarana* in his *Vakyapadiya*. ¹⁹ In ancient India, no enquiry was ever made that did not directly or indirectly aim at a higher realisation of truth and a greater fulfilment of life. After the time of *Patanjali*, *Bhartrhari* appeared on the stage of Sanskrit Grammar. He synthesised Grammar with Philosophy on a purely idealistic outlook.

Vakyapadiya : Kandas and Karikas

Vakyapadiya is the major work of *Bhartrhari*. *Vakya* or sentence and *pada* or word and its grammatical as well as philosophical problems are discussed in this work, and so it is known as *Vakyapadiya*. The text has three *Kandas* or Chapters. That's why it is also known as *Thrikandhi*. These three *Kandas* altogether contain one thousand eight hundred and sixty *Karikas*. The three *Kandas* are usually called *Brahmakanda*, *Vakyakanda* and *Padakanda*. The philosophical problems of word and sentence are discussed in the first two chapters, and the last chapter deals in detail with the meaning of individual words and the problems of *Karaka* and parts of speech.

Brahmakanda concentrates a great deal on *Brahman*, the undifferentiated ultimate reality. Second *Kanda* deals the *Vakya sphota* with its paradox of containing both the differentiation of the sentence, words and the unitary meaning at the same time. Bhartrhari has written *Tika* or description on the first two *Kandas* to explain his ideas related with *Sabda Brahman* and *Sphota* theory.

Sabda Brahman :

Like the philosophy of *Sankara*, Bhartrhari's philosophy of language is also ultimately grounded in a monistic and idealistic metaphysical theory. He says that transcendental word-essence or *Sabdatattova* is the first principle of the Universe. The *Sabdatattova* is eternal and unchanging. This ultimate reality is known as *Sabda Brahman*. From this beginningless and endless *sabdatattova*, the whole Universe evolved. The *Sabdatattova* creates the phenomenal world by the power of *Kalasakti*. At first, the *Akasa* evolved from the *sabdatattova* and then the five *bhutas* evolved out from the *Akasa*. In the case of *sabda brahman*, it creates the whole Universe by the power of *maya*, but here it is important to note the difference between *Sankara's* idealism and Bhartrhari's "Word Idealism".

Pramanas :

Bhartrhari takes *Sabda* or *Veda* as the highest *pramana* among the

pramanas. He also admits that the perception, the inference, *Abhyasa* (Practice) and *Adrasta* are other *pramanas*. Perception that depends on the contact of the sense organs, is valid, but it can be full of mistakes and error cognised by the people who have not experienced the truth. So the vision of the *Risis* should be taken as the *pramana* more than the perception of the common man. Inference is the other valid means of knowledge, *abhyasa* or practice is another *pramana*. It is acquired by practice and thus we can attain true knowledge. For example, if a person wants to know the value of diamond, he must practice to value it. *Adrastha* is the knowledge of *Siddhas* or *Risis* and *Devas*. The knowledge of *Siddhas* are beyond the sense perception. But we must take the *Adrasta* as a *Pramana*.

Phenomenalization of the Absolute (*Vivarta* and *Parinama*)

As pointed out earlier the Absolute *Sabdatattova* is the material cause of the entire Universe. It creates the whole world by the power of *maya*. Bhartrhari describes the world as the *vivarta* or *parinama* of the *Vaktattova*.²⁰

In this context a question might well be raised by the student of Bhartrhari as to how the Grammarian's view of the Phenomenalization of the absolute compares with the *Advaita Vedanta* theory of *mayavada*. There are apparent parallels on the surface of these two theories. Both *Vedantin* and Grammarian take this world as phenomenal differentiation of the absolute,

yet the absolute is in no way diminished by the Phenomenalization. But from Bhartrhari's standpoint, in phenomenalization a case of *vivarta*, (an unreal appearance) in the *Vedantin* sense or is it a *parinama* in the *Sankhyan* sense? In the works of Bhartrhari, especially in *Vakyapadiya*, we cannot see definite answer to this question, but from a general viewpoint, it can be said that Grammarians did not consider the world as *mithya* or *maya* as the *Advaita Vedantins* do.

Some scholars ²¹ pointed out that instead of either *parinama* or *vivarta* doctrinal viewpoint, Bhartrhari's position is much closer to the notion of reflection (*Abhasa*) formulated by the *Trika* writers of Kashmir. In this viewpoint, the *saktis* and their phenomenal manifestation as words are identical with the absolute. The relationship between the two is described on the analogy of the mirror and its reflection, that is, the latter can have no independent existence without the former. Yet the latter also has a reality which is somehow identical with the former.

But as a strong opposition to the above viewpoint, K.A.S. Iyer gives us strong evidence for interpreting Bhartrhari's thought along the line of traditional *vedanta* doctrine. Iyer bases his interpretation on the assumption that Bhartrhari also says something about *Brahman* and *Maya* and hence he points out the importance of *Upadhi* or limitation of *brahman* in an empirical

world. The problems of universal (*Jati*) and individual (*dravya*) have been read by Iyer from the viewpoint of *Advaita Vedanta*. Further, Iyer says that the individual is the limited self of the Absolute or it is limited by *Upadhis*. Bhartrhari also points out the indivisible *brahman* and all the limitation of *Brahman*.

But this has been taken by him only as *Asatya* or false. So man, cow, horse and such things, are unreal from real viewpoint, but as *Vedantin* says, it has also empirical reality. Iyer argues that in this philosophical problem (Universal and Individual) the standpoint of Bhartrhari has no difference from the *Advaita Vedanta's Vivartavada*. It is the unreal limiting factors which words first denote before pointing beyond themselves to the ultimate reality. The real is thus cognized only through the unreal word-forms. Iyer concludes his remark upon Bhartrhari's metaphysical position as follows :

".....He definitely use the word *asatya* to describe the phenomenal world as cognized by the mind and as expressed by words, and declares, that alone to be *Satya* which though free from all differentiation, assumes differentiation. This point is very relevant in any consideration of the question whether Bhartrhari propound the doctrine of *Vivarta* or not...."²²

In concluding this observation on the question of whether Bhartrhari was a *Vivarta Vadin* or *Parinamavadin*, it must be noted that as yet there seems to be no definite answer to this question, but when we compare the *vedanta* doctrine of *Mithya* to Bhartrhari's concept of false and real, we should note that in the hands of Bhartrhari, error means a case of progressive perceptual approximation to the real, (for example, the tree and its vision) but in *Advaita Vedanta* view there can be only "True" or "False" cognition with no gradation in between.

We shall now proceed to discuss the several stages of Phenomenalization of the Absolute.

Pasyanti :

Bhartrhari takes *Sabda* or word as the base of his metaphysical viewpoint of language. As pointed out in the above section, the universe is the manifestation of this *Sabda* in three stages. The first stage is known as *Pasyanti*. In this stage, the *Sabda* and *Artha* are fused together without any differentiation, and this is an undifferentiated state of language and meaning. It is a pre-verbal or potential stage. Here Bhartrhari uses the simile of the yolk of the peachen's egg. Before the manifestation of the egg as a peacock all variegated colours of the peacock lie dormant in potential state in the yolk of the egg. Matilal says :

“... Similarly in the self of the language speaker or hearer or whoever, is gifted with linguistic capability, all the variety and differentiation of the linguistic items and their meaning exist as potentialities; and language and thought are identical at that stage. Bhartrhari even believes that the nature of the self is nothing but identical with the nature of language - thought....”²³

And also there is no temporal sequence in this stage of *pasyanti*. *Pasyanti* is the direct experience of the *vakya sphota*, and it is a unitary word-consciousness.

Madhyama :

After the first stage of complete identity between word and meaning, comes the second stage or *madyama*. This stage is known as *madhyama* because this stage is in between the *pasyanti* and *vaikhari*. *Vaikhari* is the proper articulation of the sound sequence or utterance. Before the stage of *vaikhari*, *madhyama* works as an intermediate stage. Like *pasyanti*, here also the language and thought are still undifferentiated, but the speaker sees them as differentiable, “In other words, he recognises the verbal parts, which he is about to verbalise either to himself or to another as distant and separable from the *artha* or thought.” The *Madhyama* level of *Vak* is mainly associated

with the mind or intellect (*buddhi*). From the hearer's point of view which is words or sentence conceived by the mind.

Vaikhari :

Vaikhari is the most external and differentiated level in which *Vak* or word is commonly uttered by the speaker and heard by the hearer. It is the *prana* or breath that enables the organs of articulation to produce the sounds in a temporal sequence. *Prana* may therefore be taken as an instrumental cause of *Vaikhari Vak*. The chief characteristic of *Vaikhari Vak* is that it has a fully developed temporal sequence. At this level, the individual peculiarities of the speakers are present along with the linguistically relevant parts of speech. But in the above two stages, there are no individual peculiarities and no temporal sequence. When a person utters a word it may contain the idiosyncrasy of the speaker.

Here in these three stages of word, it is interesting to note a similarity between the structure of *Vakyapadiya* and its contents and the levels of *Vak*. The first *Kanda* (*Brahmakanda*) concentrates a great deal on *Brahman*, the undifferentiated ultimate reality to which the *pasyanti vak* is very near. In the second *Kanda* or in *vakya kanda*, *vakya-sphota* is the subject matter. This *kanda* describes the differentiation of the sentence and its unitary meaning at the same time. These ideas are running parallel to the *madhyamavak* level. The

third *Kanda* or *padakanda* concentrates almost totally on the analysis or parts of speech and their differentiation, which is identical with the area of *Vaikhari vak*.

As in the case of *vivarta* and *parinama* or the *Sabdatattva*, scholars have different opinion about the fourth stage of the *Sabda brahman* which is known as *paravak*. K.A.S. Iyer accepts such a stage. According to his opinion *paravak* may be taken as the fourth stage of the *Vak*.²⁵ But Kunjunni Raja suggests that although the later grammarians have been influenced by the *pratiyabhijna* School which interprets *sbda* *brahman* as having a fourth of *paravak* stage of manifestation, in Bhartrhari's work, there is no such stage higher than *pasyanti vak* is found.²⁶ Gaurinath Sastri has made a detailed comparison between the classification of *Vak*, as found in *Vakyapadiya* and *Kashmir Trika* writers and reached the conclusion that the two systems do not differ significantly.²⁷ Matilal thinks that Tantra Philosophers mixed *para* with *kundalini* or *muladhara cakra*. His observation on this point is interesting. He says :

"....The language (*Sabda*) at the *para* stage is identified with the Ultimate *Brahman*. Those who used this concept of *Sphota* in Tantra correlated this stage with the *kundalini* or *muladhara cakra*. It is also called *nada* here (not to be confused with *nada*

in the sense of audible sound). The *pasyanti* stage is also said to be the subtle *sphota*. The 'intermediate stage is described as the voice of silence. The fourth stage is the External-*sphota*, which is ordinarily called language by all concerned. It is rather intriguing to see how the metaphysical aspect of the doctrine of *sphota*, first enunciated by the grammarians, was elevated to the altar of the 'worship of *nada*', which brought together the grammarians, musicians, artists, poets, and mantra-practitioners under the common mystical umbrella of the *NADA-SPHOTA* reality. But perhaps this is *sphota* in a completely different sense..."²⁸

The question as to whether or not Bhartrhari intends a fourth or *paravak* level is a question which has more metaphysical importance than semantical and pragmatic significance. But we cannot avoid it because in Bhartrhari, language has also a metaphysical side.

Sabdam-Dhvani,

Bhartrhari considers *sabdatattoa* or *sabda brahman* as the base of this empirical Universe. *Sabda* has an eternal nature. Bhartrhari takes *sabda* and *sphota* are synonymous in nature. In *pasyanti*, *sphota* or *Sabda* is in a unmanifested state with *prathibha*, by the power of *kalasakti*, the unlimited

sabdatattva appears as limited universe. Here he pointed out the unlimited and understructable nature of the *sabdam*.

The opening chapter of *Vakyapadiya* known as *Brahmakanda*, discusses the nature of the word (*Sadba-sphota*) and its relation to sound (*dhvani, nada*). According to grammarians these are the two elements in each significant word, that is the element of sound and element of *logs*, which possesses meaning. Sound reveals the real word. The *logos* or real word is ever present in the mind and it can be apprehended by another mind by appropriate sound. Sounds are used to reveal the real word and once this is done, the meaning is automatically expressed. But generally people mix these two technical terms and believe that it is sound that expresses meaning.

Bhartrhari describes word, the ever-present principle, as a self-luminous identity (*Svaprasachaitanya*), *sphota* or word reveals itself as well as the object that comes into contact with it, when the *sphota* reveals itself, it reveals the sound (*Dhvani*) also, but we confuse word with sound. T.R.V. Murti says that is a confusion like the confusion of the soul with body. He says in his article on "Some Thoughts". "The word like the soul, has a physical embodiment in the sound and is made manifest through the latter, but the conveyance or meaning is the function of the word, the sound only invokes the word." ²⁹ We by our ignorance of *sabdatattva*, and by the

limitations of *maya*, do not understand the *sabda* and hence we think that the sounds or (*dhvani*) is the soul of the body of language. According to Bhartrhari, *sphota* is a unitary principle that transcends the division, but the sound has division like *Dirga*, *Hrvasa*, *pluta* etc, as pointed out in the earlier section, in *Madhyama Vak*. When we utter a word, according to the nature of pronunciation of the speaker, the sound may be long, short or palatal or nasal, but the *sphota* or word is unaffected by the spatial and temporal order and it is always same, but it is we who confuse the *sphota* with sounds. This is because we cannot obtain the vision of *sphota* without sounds. Bhartrhari explains the nature of word and sound with apt illustration. He says that the moon shining above in the blue canopy of the sky is one and fixed, but when she is reflected in the ripples of the lake down below, we can see a thousand and one moons all moving in the water, what is one appears to be many in the water ripples. From an empirical standpoint, all these moons in the water are true and not false, but in actual sense, there only one moon and the dancing moons are the unreal reflections of the moon, in the sky. Likewise *sphota* or *Sabdatattova* is one and eternal and the character of plurality is only by superimposition on it. As in the example of the peahen's egg, all potentialities are laying hidden inside. At the stage of *pasyanti*, *sphota* is one and indivisible it is a homogeneous entity. But as soon as one feels the urge

of conveying one's thought to others, *sphota* finds its expression through the sound in the shape of letters, words and sentences.

Prakrta dhvani and Vaikrta dhvani :

(Primary sounds and Derived or transformed sounds)

Bhartrhari draws a line of demarcation between two classes of sounds: *prakrta* (original sound) and *vaikrta* sound (derivative transformation). Without the former, the unmanifested *sphota* cannot be comprehended. The latter enables the manifested *sphota* to be comprehended for longer and longer moments of time without any cessation.

In the levels of Phenomenalization of the *sabda*, the first stage is called *sphota* in *pasyanthi* stage and the second and third stages are collectively called *nada* or *dhvani*. *Sphota* is the underlying cause of the *dhvani*. The *dhvani* in the second stage gets the distinction of short (*hroasa*) long (*dirga*) and extra-long (*pluta*) and it is called *prakrta dhvani*. The same *dhvani* in the third stage gets the differentiation of rapidity (*druta*) medium (*madhyamam*) and slowness (*vilambita*) and it is called *vaikrta dhvani*. These two levels of *dhvani* correspond to the *madhyama* and *vaikhari*. In the first two levels of the *sabda*, the *dhvani* is known as *madhyamavak* and in the last step or in the state of pronunciation or utterance of the word, it is known as *vaikrtavak* the *vaikrta*

dhvani. *Vaikrta vak* is transitory in contradistinction to the *prakrtavak*. Matilal

says :

“...Bhartrhari draws another interesting distinction between two types of sounds in this connection. They are called the ‘primary’ sounds (*prakta*) and the ‘derived’ or ‘transformed’ sounds (*vaikrta*). The usual way to take the ‘primary’ sounds is to refer to the linguistically relevant sound-sequences which the speaker intends to produce and the hearer expects to hear. It is the shared ‘speech’ which manifests *sphota* (where the *sphota* can be called *prakrti*, the ‘original’, and hence the *prakrta* is the manifestor of the ‘original’). These primary sounds are not abstractions, but *ideal* particular which have sequences, duration and other qualities-all specified by the particular language system. The long sounds should be long, of required length, the short vowels should be short and so on. But this must be conceived as divested of all personal idiosyncrasies or ‘mannerisms’ of the speaker who utters them. It is the norm. The non-linguistic concomitants of any utterance are to be separated from this notion of ‘primary’ sound. This type of sound is also said to be identified with the *sphota* though of

course wrongly, for the *sphota* is conceived as a sequenceless, durationless and partless whole. In other words, one (wrongly) cognizes the *sphota* as united with this 'primary' sound-series. (See also ch.7, section III.)

The 'secondary' or 'transformed' sounds may therefore be taken to be the individual instances of utterance that either reverberate or continue to show the individual peculiarities of the speakers, various differences in intonation, tempo, pitch, etc. The description here is a bit obscure, for it is also said that the manifestation of the *sphota* still continues to happen or take place (after the first manifestation by the 'primary' sounds) with the help of the 'transformed' or 'secondary' sounds. 'Difference in the speed of utterance' (*vrttibheda*) is also a factor in the 'transformed' sounds....."³⁰

Language in the Sphota approach:

In the earlier paragraphs we have discussed the viewpoints of *Brahmnical* and Naturalistic traditions about language. Now let us outline the viewpoint of grammarians and the particular merits claimed for it.

As an opposition to the naturalistic schools like *Nyaya*, the grammarians say that the words and their relation with meaning is eternal,

underived and impersonal. But *Nyaya* philosophers argue that the meaning of the word derive from convention and where even human conventions are not available, divine convention of God may be invoked. Here the viewpoint of *Mimamsaka* is same as that of the grammarians. The theory of eternity of meaning and words leads to the idea of universals, and eternity of the idea, like St. John's statement in the Bible "In the beginning was the word and word was God", the Idea of Universals is similar to the idea of platonic concept of Universals. Whereas in the platonic doctrine, the relation of the Ideas to the copies is described as the relation of the immutable to its several manifestations, here in the *Vakyapadiya*, the word is immutable which is first perceived through its several physical manifestations. For example, take the word 'Go' (cow). Everywhere it is same but its physical manifestation may differ with regard to accent, speed of speaking, place and time of utterance etc. But the grammarians go further than just establishing the eternity of *sabda*. They identify *sabda* with *brahman*. *Brahman* is the one object denoted by all words and this one object has various differences imposed upon it according to each particular form. But the conventional variety of the difference is due to ignorance. Non-duality is the true state but by the conventional variety of the difference in due to ignorance. Non-duality in the

true state but by the conventional use of the words, manifold expansions have taken place.

On the problem of universals, Indian Philosophy of language contains a vast variety of views ranging from extreme nominalism of the *Buddhist* to the realism of *Mimamsa* and *Nyaya*. In *Vakyapadiya*, Bhartrhari first makes clear that the real unit of language is the sentence and that for the pedagogical purposes, words are abstracted from the sentence and ascribed a meaning. Here the idea is that words are divided into syllables and sentences into words, but this is only a "conventional fiction".

Different approaches of philosophers in the case of language and understanding the *sphota* theory give a clear cut answer. "What constitutes the meaning Unit of language?" is the basic question of philosophers. Criticising the position of *Mimamsa* and *Nyaya* that the individual letters or words of a sentence generate meaning, the grammarians point out that the letters of a word or words in a sentence die away as soon as they are pronounced so that when we arrive at the last letter of a word or the last word of a sentence, the previous elements have all vanished. How can then the meaning of a sentence can hold the trace of the letters and words, this still does not help, because as only one thing can be cognized at a time in our mind, the memory trace will only replay the serial presentation of the original

parts and no whole meaning will be generated. Bhartrhari has made his *sphota* theory as an answer to this view of *Nyaya* philosophers. He says that meaning is a single unitary whole; so also its generating condition must likewise be a whole. On this assumption, the *sphota* theory is a more advanced theory than any other previous theories.

Definition of Sphota :

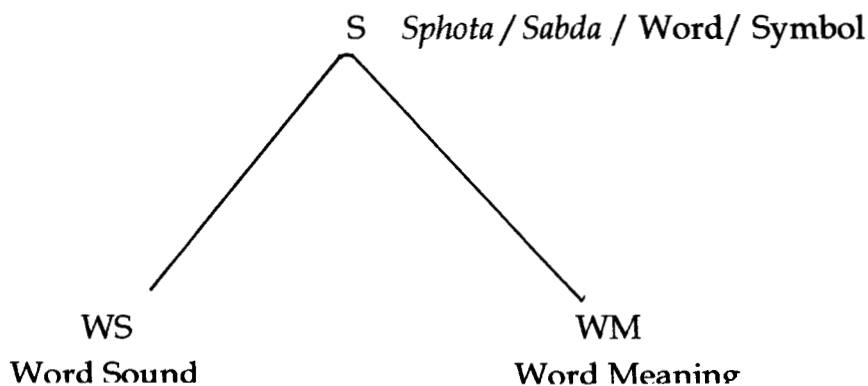
The word *sphota* is quite famous among the grammarians. There was a grammarian by name *sphotanya* known to *Panini*. (M:B -6 -1 -121 - *Avan sphotanyanasya*). The technical term *sphota* is difficult to translate into English. Sometimes, the word 'symbol' is used for *sphota* in the sense of its function as a linguistic sign. G. Sastri argues that "the fact that *logos* stands for an *Idea* as well as word wonderfully approximates to the concept of *sphota*"³¹ The Greek concept of *logos* best conveys the meaning of *sphota*. The spoken sounds or the printed letters or ordinary language are distinguished from *sphota* in that the former are nearly the means by which the latter is revealed.

The *sphota* is derived from the Sanskrit root "*Sphut*"³² which means to burst forth or disclosure, means the idea burst or flashes on the mind when a sound is uttered. *Negesa Bhatta* describes *sphota* in two ways : "as that from which meaning burst or shine forth and as an entity which is manifested by spoken letters or sounds."³³ The *sphota* may thus be thought of as a kind of

two-sided coin. On the one side, it is manifested by the word sound and on the other side, it simultaneously reveals the word meaning.

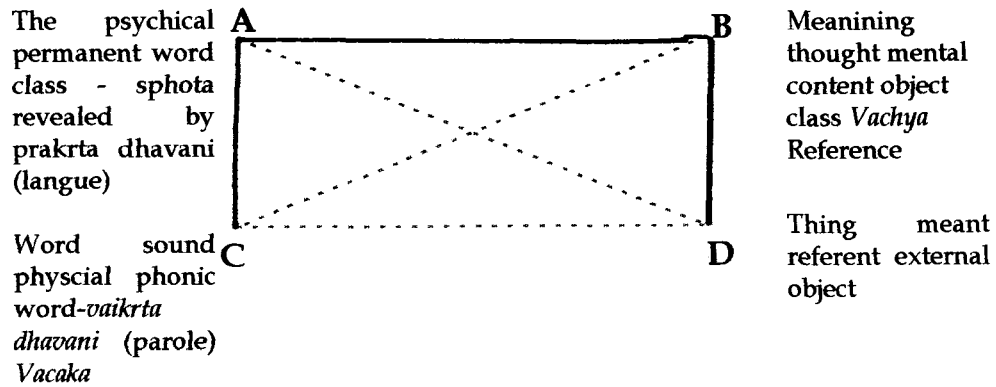
Here it is important to note the nature of *dhvani* or *sound* and *sphota*. As we pointed out earlier, *sphota* is inherent word-meaning and *dhvani* is the conveyer-belt of meaning. These two aspects, although they may appear to be different, are really identical. The various differences are due to the externalisation. The process is explained as follows : at first the word exists in the mind of the speaker as a unity or *sphota*; when he utters it, he produces a sequence of different sounds so that it appears to have differentiation to the listener, although at first hearing, a series of sounds, ultimately perceives the utterance as a unity, the same *sphota* with which the speaker began. Thus the meaning is conveyed.

To describe the *sphota* concept clearly, let us now briefly restate its definition in a simple diagram :



It must be emphasised that, in case of Bhartrhari the *sphota* is an indivisible and changeless unity. But in the communication process, it is represented as in the diagram with two aspects. The external aspect is sound or written word, which is perceived by our sense organs but it serves only to manifest the *sphotas* inner aspect. The inner aspect is the expressive word-meaning which resides in all being. When a person wants to communicate an idea, he begins with the *sphota* and then he utters it and produces different sounds by the movement of his articulatory organs. The listener hears the *vaikrta dhvani* and ultimately perceives its unity (*Sphota*) and the word meaning, which is inherently present in the self of the listener which reveals the meaning.

In the case of Ogden-and-Richard triangle, the meaning and thing meant are distinguished. It is also necessary to distinguish between the permanent word-(Word-Universal) on the one hand, and the ephemeral or actualised word as it is uttered in speech, (*prakrta dhvani* and *vaikrta dhvani*). According to Indian grammarians, the speech situation can be represented as a rectangle rather than a triangle.³⁴



We can see that the direct relation is only between A and B in the diagram. The relation C and D, A and D C and B are all indirect and imputed.

In this diagram, the upper portion gives de Saussure's analysis and the portion ABD refers to the Ogden and Richards's Triangle.

In the next section, we shall discuss the problem of comprehension of the meaning by *sphota*.

How sphota comprehends the Meaning :

The sphota or the word located in the mind of the speaker and listener be taken as an integral symbol. It is revealed by the sounds produced by the throat in a fixed order, but sounds are only manifesting agencies and they have no function other than that of revealing the symbol. The first *varna* or letter manifests the *sphota* vaguely and the next one more clearly than the first one and the next one much more clearly and so on, the last *varna* reveals the

sphota completely. It is one and the same *sphota* that is revealed by each one of these letters. The process of revelation of the word by the sounds starts from the indeterminate stage and moves to the determinate stage. It begins from complete ignorance, passes through partial knowledge and ends up in a complete knowledge.

The nature and process of comprehension of the *sphota* is illustrated by the grammarians by various analogies. A jeweller, examining a jewel or precious stone, has to look it steadily for some time, to enable him to determine the real value. At first, his perception gives him a general knowledge of the gem. Each subsequent perception helps him to reveal the true nature of the gem, and the last perception aided by the impression of previous ones will help him to grasp the real value of the gem completely and clearly. A student, trying to study one *anuvaka* or the section of *vedas*, each step as in the case of Jeweller, the *sphota* manifests. At last, he should study the *vedas* analogous to the case of the Jeweller and his perception. This is another example of Bhartrhari.³⁵ So in the visual perception, things are cognized as wholes in the *sphota* theory. Kunjunni Raja compares the "Whole Nature" of *sphota* with modern psychological trend, namely *Gestalt* psychology. He says :

"...The *sphota* theory is quite in keeping with modern gestalt psychology which believes in the primacy of *Gestalten*. The earlier method proceeded from the elements to the whole from the elements to the whole from the sounds to the words, from words to sentence and finally to the meaning of the discourse as a whole but the present tendency among psychologists is the exact opposite, namely from meaning as a *Gestalt* to the sentence and the word as elements the *sphota* is the sentence of word considered as a linguistic sign and perceived as a *Gestalt*.³⁶ He adds : "the theory has to accept that the intellect has the power to interpret a series of sense-data as a finished *Gestalt*."³⁷

In the *sphota* theory, even though each letter causes a vague cognition of the Indivisible *sphota*, the letter also figures in the cognition. It is the cognition of the whole that is significant and therefore important. The whole is taken as an integral symbol, which is something different from the parts that constitute it. Bhartrhari considers that the parts are only illusionary appearance of the *sphota* or *sabdatattova*, but the existence of the parts are not denied by Bhartrhari. He says that *sphota* is the object of cognition takes place, even though each letter in the word or a sentence has the capacity of

revealing the *sphota*. Everyone of them is necessary because the complete and distinct manifestation of the word is effected only with the perception of last letter. *Sesakrsna* gives an example in this case. He says that when a man utter a sound *ka* with the intention of saying *Kamalam* (a lotus), we know that he is trying to utter a word beginning with *Ka* , when he utters the next syllable *Ma*, we have another clue and word can more clearly be guessed , so it narrows the field all the words that do not begin with *Kama* are excluded, still the word is not quite clear. We do not know whether he is going to say *Kamanam* or *Kamalam*. When the last sound *Iam* is also uttered, the word is known fully and clearly. Thus the function of the letters in a word is to build up the higher unit.

Pratibha :

Another relevant question in this context is how the *sphotasabda* produces meaning in the mind of the listener. We have to know about *Pratibha* to understand *Bhartrhari's* theory of sentence meaning and its working in the mind of hearer.

Bhartrhari says that there is another kind of knowledge in us apart from *Sphota*. It is a type of flash of understanding. *Bhartrhari* says that all living beings have such a *pratibha* in their mind or in soul. Birds and animals make their nest in spring, and spiders weave their webs. Who teaches cuckoo

and spider these activities? The answer is that this is nothing but *pratibha* or instinct. In the same way, language competence and performance is also a type of *pratibha* in man, Chakravarti describes the *pratibha* as follows:

“To the grammarian, *pratibha* is in born intelligence; It is innate and not post natal. *Pratibha* is neither an acquisition, that is sense born nor does it result from common experience. It is called *samskara* or *Bhavana* , firmly seated in our mind and linked together with the continuous currents or knowledge following from previous stage of existence. Here we find the justification why *pratibha* is sometimes denominated as *purva vasana*. The mind has, truly, says kalidasa, the power of recalling the deep-rooted impression of previous births.”³⁸

The passage shows the spiritual and metaphysical outlook and the roots of Bhartrhari’s study of language. Like so many other Indian philosophers, he also accepts the doctrine of reincarnation and previous births. Without such a metaphysical standpoint his theory should not be able to solve the basic problem like language competence and performance and the origin of language.

As noted in the first section of this chapter the outlook of Indian grammarians was always in harmony with their spiritual outlook. Let us now examine *sabda yoga* of Bhartrhari.

Grammar and Salvation (Sabdayoga):

In the philosophy of Bhartrhari, we can see the different levels of language and they are rooted in the doctrine of absolutism. In the *sphota* theory, a monistic hierarchy is present, the *Varna* Phonemes are unreal abstractions of the word. The words are unreal abstractions of the sentence and the sentences are unreal abstractions of the paragraph, but the paragraph is not an ultimate reality. It is an unreal division of the chapter of the book. Thus at the top of the language hierarchy, there is only one indivisible reality present. But by human ignorance or by the limitation of the *Avidya* it manifests as books and paragraphs and the word, the whole universe, is a manifestation of one central, eternal and indivisible principle. *sabda brahman* or *paravak*, or generally *pranava* or the *OM* is mixed with this *paravak*. Matilal observes the importance of *Sabda Yoga* in semantics. He says:

“To have a clear perception of a tree, for example, we must proceed from a distance step by step when the vague and indistinct blur gradually gives way to a distinct shape and identity. Similarly the *sphota*, through steps or sequences, is

distinctly understood and identified. Bhartrhari claims that a man who has mastered the '*sabdayoga*' or obtained the light of the Eternal Verbum (some sages have apparently succeeded in this) can perceive or understand the *sphota* clearly when the first sound is heard, just as a man with a perfect vision or unlimited power of sight (if such a man exists) can see the tree distinctly even from a distance. Comprehension of the *sphota* is equivalent to such a distinct vision of reality...." ³⁹

In the hands of Bhartrhari grammar was not an intellectual curiosity but an earnest and sustained spiritual approach to identify oneself with *Brahman* or *Pranava*. Bhartrhari elaborates this approach as *sabda-yoga* or *sabdapurvaka yoga*. In *Vakyapadiya* (1:14), we read the practical application of this Yoga. "It (grammar) is the door way of salvation, the remedy for all the impurities of speech, the purifier of all the science and shines in every branch of knowledge" the *Vrtti* following makes clear that the use of corrupt forms of *vak* is a cause of Sin and by the correct use of the *vak* not only reveal knowledge but at the same time it purifies oneself and one may become united with *sabda brahman* and the Union, *moksa*, is finally achieved.

Thus in Bhartrhari grammar is a straight pathway to freedom.

NOTES

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4. Matilal, WAW, p. 4.
5. *Brahadaranyaka Upanisad*, chap. 4, Sec. 1, Sutra. 2 (Translated by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan) *The principal Upanisads* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 246.
6. *Mandukya Upanisads*, 1 (Trans: Swami Gambhirananda; Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 1986), p. 179.
7. *Ibid*, Sloka, 6 p. 190.
8. Sankhya Aphorism, 1. 60.
9. P.T. Raju, *Structrual Depths of Indian Thought* (South Asian publishers; New Delhi, 1983), p. 307.
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12. Matilal, WAW, p. 78.
13. Matilal, WAW, p. 79.
14. K. Raja, ITM, p. 157.
15. Matilal, WAW, p. 22.
16. Ananda Vardhana, *Dhyanyaloka*,
Prathame hi Vidvamso Vaiyakaranah, Vyakarana amulatoat Sarva Vidianam -
Grammarians occupy the primary place in Scholars - Grammar is the
root of all knowledge. This quotation is taken from K. Raja, ITM, p. 283.
17. Jefferson Anne and David Robby, *Modern Literary Theory* (Newjericy;
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19. *Vakyapadiya*, 1 - 16.
20. *Vakyapadiya*, 1 - 120.
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22. K.A.S. Iyer, *Bhartrhari* (Poona; Deccan College, 1969), p. 134.
23. Matilal, WAW, p. 86.

24. Matilal, WAW, p. 86.
 25. K.A.S. Iyer, *Bhartrhari* (Poona; Deccan College, 1969), p. 67-68.
 26. K. Raja ITM, p. 147.
 27. Gaurinath Sastri, *The philosophy of word and meaning*, p. 68-82.
 28. Matilal, WAW, p. 105.
 29. T.R.V. Murti, *Some Thoughts on the Indian Philosophy of Language*, p. 10.
 30. Matilal, WAW, p. 93-94.
 31. G. Sastri, *The philosophy of Word and Meaning*, p. 102-103.
 32. Matilal, WAW, p. 78.
 33. Nagesa Bhatta, *Sphota Vada*, p. 5.
 34. K. Raja, ITM, p. 14.
- In this diagram the upper portion gives de-Saussure's analysis and the lower portion ABD Refs to Ogden Richards triangle.
35. *Vakyapadiya*, p. 1-83.
 36. K. Raja, ITM, p. 134.
 37. K. Raja, ITM, p. 134.
 38. P.K. Chakravarti, *The Linguistic Speculation of the Hindus*, p. 113-114.
 39. Matilal, WAW, p. 92.

CHAPTER - III

SAUSSURE'S THEORY OF SIGN

"....I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar..."

Nietzsche - Twilight of Idols - 483.

"..... The concept is real without being actual, ideal without being abstract. The concept is defined by its consistency, its endo consistency and exo consistency, but it has no reference: it is self-referential; it posits itself and its objects at the same time as it is created. Constructivism unites the relative and the absolute"

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari - What is Philosophy - p.22.

ONE

In his life Ferdinand de Saussure led an uneventful life but his uneventful life bring so much 'destructive effects' in the modern thought. In language philosophy as a rule, Saussure is held responsible for all the extravagances of the poststructuralist theories that came after him. The famous poststructuralist concepts such as "the fundamental undecidability inherent in language" or the claim that "there is nothing outside of the text" are often traced back to Saussure. Saussure's concept of the Sign or to be

specific, his principle of the arbitrary nature of the Sign is considered to be the perpetual source of all poststructuralist thinking.

Saussure is acknowledged to be the father of modern linguistics. He recognised the language philosophy along the scientific lines. Major work of Saussure, named *Course in General Linguistics* had a major impact not only on linguistics but on cultural studies too. 'Course' is the basis of structuralism and semiology. Saussure published only one book during his life time, which is named as *Memoire* (1878). *Memoire* was a work in comparative philology which investigated the vowel system of early Indo-European languages. His famous work 'Course' was published posthumously by his students, the book is based upon the students notes, which was given by him to his students on 1907-11 at University of Geneva. The primary object of Saussure in the course is to outline a methodology for linguistics. In his 'course' he was searching for the underlying structure of language. The linguistic model developed by Saussure has been adopted and refined by Levi-Strauss and Barthes.

TWO

In the beginning 'course' offers us a compressed vision of Saussure's remarks on the history of linguistics. Comparative philology or comparative

grammar which dates from Franz Bopps work of 1816 has been taken as the first stage of linguistic investigation by Saussure. And the second period began in 1870, and in this period comparative philology became more properly historical and some linguists began asking important questions, about the nature of language and linguistic method. Saussure is interested in the method of linguistic analysis and the definition of linguistic units. So he did not give too much importance to general problems of linguistics.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, linguists assume that linguistics would cast light on the nature of human thought and of the mind itself. At that time it is believed that by studying language one sought to understand thought itself. In 18th century thought the origin of language became a central problem in linguistics. It is essential to note that the origin of language was investigated as a philosophical problem rather than historical problem. Thus 18th century thinking about language came to focus up on philosophic - etymology, the attempts to explain signs and abstract ideas by imagining their origin in gesture, action, etc. The desire to study the mechanism of mind in language led to a search for primitive roots. A root is a rudimentary name, a basic representation of the word. The etymological project assumes that the words of our language are not arbitrary signs but have a rational basis and

are motivated by resemblance to a primitive sign. In the approach the relationship between language and mind conceived atomistically.

The 19th century linguists would reject the 'atomic' picture, they divorced the study of language from the study of mind. According to the 19th century linguistics the word became a form, which was to be compared with other forms so as to establish the relation between the language. In other words the historical evolution of the word is to be traced. In short the object of study of 19th century linguistics was the study of 'sign' as a form whose resemblance and historical links with forms must be demonstrated.

Linguistics generally consider the 19th century development as a great advance, and undoubtedly this was a great leap from the 17th century. But something was lost in this shift, that was the proper use of a methodology in linguistics. Saussure once again returned to the problem of sign. He saw that unless one treats linguistic forms as signs one can't define them. He placed the problem of sign in the context of his methodological enquiry, thus he avoided the atomism of 18th century linguistics. Saussure re-establishes, the study of the relationship between the study of language and the study of mind at another level and in a different methodological context. In Saussure's view the study of language reveals that mind is not a set of primitive conceptions or natural ideas but the general structuring and diffracting

operations by which things are made to signify. When Saussure argues that 'meaning' is differential, based on the difference between terms, his claim concerns not only language but the general human process too. In every human process he sees the creation of meaning by differentiation.

The comparative grammarians had also been criticised by Saussure. He says that the comparative grammarians never succeeded in their attempt to find out a true 'linguistics' because they did not try to determine the nature of the object they were studying. And Saussure accuses them that, they do not try to find out the significance of the relationship in a system, their method was exclusively comparative rather than historical,

"...But the comparative school, which had the indisputable merit of opening up a new and fruitful field, didn't succeed in setting up the true science of linguistics. It failed to seek out the nature of its object of study. Obviously, without this elementary step, no science can develop a method.

The first mistake of the comparative philologists was also the source of all their other mistakes. In their investigations (which embraced only the Indo-European languages), they never asked themselves the meaning of their comparisons or

the significance of the relations that they discovered. Their method was exclusively comparative , not historical...." ¹

As Saussure rightly observes, it was only towards 1870, that linguistics began to lay the base stone for a proper study and analysis of language. Two important developments happened at that time. The first one was, a group of linguistics known as neo-grammarians, demonstrated that sound laws, which previously had been treated as correspondence that held in large number of cases but not in others, operated without exception. The second important development was after 1870. In the words of Saussure that was 'the result of comparative study were brought into historical sequences'. In his works in 1878 Saussure himself made a major contribution to historical linguistics. These works showed Saussure's result of thinking of language as a system of relational items, even when working at the task of historical reconstruction. We can take Saussure certainly as an accomplished Neo-Grammarian.

Saussure's contemporaries' fault lie in the point that, they failed to ask themselves the fundamental questions about what they were studying: those questions about the nature of language itself and its individual forms and important questions in methodology, such as the relation between synchronic and diachronic in a system. The Neo-Grammarians could not take the problem in the seriousness it deserved; because they were not thinking about

the signs. The Neo-Grammarians were concerned not with 'signs' but with forms, it was the failure of that school.

The contribution of William Dwight Whitney, who was one of the Neo-Grammarians, had been praised by Saussure, because he raised the question of Sign. In his work 'Language and the study of language, and life and growth of language Whitney argued that- 'Language is in fact, an institution founded on social convention; a treasure of words and forms' each of which is an 'arbitrary and conventional sign'. The conventional and institutional nature of language has been stressed by Whitney. Saussure's remarks about Whitney shows the importance of Whitney's theory:

"...To emphasise the fact that language is a genuine institution, Whitney quite justly insisted upon the arbitrary nature of signs; and by so doing, he placed linguistics on its true axis. But he did not follow through and see that the arbitrariness of language radically separates it from all other institutions. This is apparent from the way in which language evolves..."²

Unfortunately Whitney did not realize the consequences and implications of his new perspective. He still specified that the linguistics must be a historical science. He underestimated the task of synchronic

linguistics. His awareness about the problems of definition and identity of the relational nature of linguistic units was too little. However the insights of Whitney prompted Saussure to think about the problem of sign in a new perception.

We have to place Saussure with Freud and Durkheim in order to understand Saussure's importance in the areas of social science. Sigmund Freud and Emil Durkheim, the founders of Modern Psychology and Modern Sociology respectively, were two exact contemporaries of Saussure. In social science these three thinkers created a new revolution. And they placed social science in a new epistemological context, which even today offers us a new mode of explanation in social science.

The nature and status of the 'facts' in a society is the initial problem for social science. This was a central problem in the 19th century. The two main streams in philosophy, namely German Idealism and empiricist positivism discussed this issue very broadly. The two schools thought that society is a derivated secondary phenomena rather than something primary.

The positivist tradition of Hume distinguished between an objective physical reality of objects and events and an individual subjective perception of reality. According to this school society is to be taken as the outcome of the action of the individuals. Thus the society is a fictitious body, the sum of

several members who compose it. Definitely this is a utilitarian stand point; they think that society is the result of individuals and each person in the society acting in accordance with self interest. On the other hand, for Hegel, who has been the prominent figure in German idealism, laws, manner, customs, and state itself are expressions of a mind. Hegel studied the Human history as the manifestation of primary; the primary phenomena, the spirit.

These views have been strongly and vehemently attacked by Saussure, Durkheim and Freud. Their methods were based upon the 'objective reality of social facts'. According to the methodology of these three thinkers, the individual society is a primary reality, not just the sum of individual activities, nor the manifestation of mind. And if one wishes to study human behaviour one must understand that there is a social reality. These thinkers did not dismiss the social significance of personal action, but they insisted on the point that, meaning of the society cannot be treated as the sum of subjective perceptions.

Saussure, Freud, and Durkheim asked some important questions: what makes individual experience possible? what enables man to operate with meaningful objects and actions? What enables them to communicate and act meaningfully ?. The answer postulated by them was that the social institution, formed by human activities is the condition of experience. Their

methodology suggests that to understand an individual experience one must study the social norms which make it possible. The social phenomenon is made possible by a system of interpersonal conventions, that is a language.

Freud analysed and interpreted the human mind in terms of this new methodology. In his view the individual in a society assimilates, consciously or unconsciously the collective social system, and the behaviour of an individual is made possible only in a social system or network. Values are the products of this social system. Freud made apparent to us how the culture suffuses the remotest parts of the individual mind. The suffusion of culture makes an individual's sense of identity. In the formation of an individual self, unconscious defence occasioned by social taboos leads a person to repression and displacement. Here what Freud tries to point-out is the importance of a social system, which produces 'culture' just language, which produces 'meaning' in a system. As Durkheim argued the reality which is crucial to the individual, is not the physical environment but a 'social value', a system of rules and norms, collective representation, which makes possible social behaviour.

In his works on suicide, Durkheim gave us a causal explanation. He study the cause of high suicide rate in a society. Suicides in a society in the view of Durkheim are the manifestation of the weakening in social bonds,

which result from particular configuration of social norms. Freud's psychological analysis are also causal explanations; his attempt is to relate actions to an underlying psyche economy. But the linguists do not try to explain the cause of an utterance by a particular person in a society at a given moment. They try to show why the sequence has the form and meaning. Linguists do it by relating it to the system of language.

Farewell to the historical explanation was the significant aspect in the works of Freud, Durkheim and Saussure. They marked move from historical to structural analysis. To them explanation of the social phenomena is not to discover temporal antecedents and link them in a causal chain but to specify the place and function of the phenomena in a system. Instead of conceiving the causation in a historical model, which has been explained by them in a state, in a condition or in structure.

The decisive steps of Durkheim, Freud and Saussure seem responsible for the development of the science of man. Removing the 'origins' from a temporal history and by internalising the 'origin' they create a new space of explanation which has come to be called unconscious. Structural explanation relates action to a system of norms - the rules of language, the collective representation of a society, the mechanism of a physical economy - and thus

the concept of unconscious is a way of explaining how these systems have explanatory force.

The concept unconsciousness arises in the work of Freud, but it is in linguistics that the concept emerges in its clearest and most irrefutable form. Unconscious is the concept which enables one to explain an indubitable fact. In linguistics' for example, we say that we know a language, yet we need a linguist to explain to us what it is that we know. The concept of the unconscious connects these two facts and opens a space of explanation as well as exploration. Linguistics, like psychology and sociology, will explain our actions by setting out in detail the implicit knowledge, which we have not brought to consciousness.

In the discussion of the concept unconscious and conscious, another problem, which is highly polemical in nature, will arise: the problem of 'subject'. Here the subject means the subject of experience, or the 'I' or the self which thinks, perceives, speaks etc. Saussure puts the subject at the centre of his analytical project. Then the 'notion' of the subject becomes central to the analysis of language.

In language we always identify the linguist unit with reference to the subject. In a language, we know that [b] and [d] are different phonemes because for the subject 'bag' and 'day' are different sings. For the speaking

'subject' the bag and day are different signs, the opposition between [b] and [d] differentiates signs for the speaking subject. In the process of 'value' formation in a system the 'subject' takes a crucial role. In the writings of Saussure we can see such a provision to the 'presence' of subject.

In the introduction we have discussed the methodology of structuralism in a general manner and discussed its philosophical implications. The problem of subject is also explained, as we have seen after the structuralism the concept 'subject' have been analysed and deconstructed by Derrida. Before Derrida's attempt to deconstruct the subject, Nietzsche and Heidegger attacked the concept 'subject' which existed in the western metaphysical tradition.

What distinguishes Saussure from the traditional metaphysicians who claimed absolute authority of the 'subject', is that he was highly radical in his approach towards the subject. He does not take the subject as a 'reflection' of the absolute in the traditional sense. In his courses he simply gives us a provision of a 'subject' as a 'knower' of what one does. So we have to draw a sharp line of demarcation between Saussure's concept of subject and traditional concept. We will discuss this issue in the last chapter of comparison.

Today deconstruction of the subject becomes the central theme in philosophy, psychology and in linguistics. The 'subject' is broken down into its constituents. Now the disciplines inaugurated by Saussure, Freud and Durkheim have been chipped away by the poststructuralist thought. Subject has lost its place as a 'centre' or source of meaning. The 'self' or 'subject' comes to appear more and more as a construct. When a man speaks 'he' does not speak through the language, but language speaks through him. As Lacan says, 'I' is not a given thing; it comes to exist, in a mirror stage which starts in infancy, as that which is seen and addressed by others. The problem of the subject and its effects in the 20th century thought will be discussed in the last chapter.

We can sum up this introduction with a question. Did Saussure know anything about the themes of Freud and Durkheim? There is no evidence that Durkheim Saussure and Freud knew anything of each other's work. We are not sure whether Saussure knew anything about the other two or not. We are not sure the methodology in social science brings a new epistemological shift in our life which influences our thought and helps us to bring new dimensions in our philosophical enquiries.

THREE

Saussure's theory of language and Sign

As Saussure rightly pointed out in his 'courses', linguists are often baffled by the nature of the object about which they are studying. So Saussure, who was very unhappy with the linguistics that existed at that time, wrote "Linguistics never attempted to determine the nature of the object it was studying, and without this elementary operation a science can't develop an appropriate method."


Human language is an extremely complex phenomenon, so it needs a careful examination and explanation. A word, which may be uttered by a person, may involve an extraordinary range of factors, which should be considered from many angles. Generally the work of a linguist involves the study of sound, phonemes, hearing mechanism, the intention of the speaker and listener etc. But the linguist confronts another problem, that is, what is he trying to describe, what is he looking for, or in short what is language?

Saussure's analysis and explanations of language are based up on this 'crucial problem'. His approach and method was different from the traditional style. In his analysis of language the concept 'sign' plays an important role. Saussure defined the language as a system of signs. Noises

count as language only when they serve to express or communicate ideas; otherwise they are just noises. For the communication of the idea the words must be a part of system of conventions or part of a system of signs. According to Saussure sign is the union of signifier and signified. Signifier or the 'significant' signify an idea. 'Signifie' or the signified is the idea signified by the signifier. Signifier and signified are the components of the 'sign'.

The nature of the concept 'sign' is illustrated by Saussure is highly different from the signifier, signified relation, propounded by Russel and Moore. In the opinion of Russell and Moore a word signifies a particular thing as its meaning but Saussure's concept of sign is basically different from the analytic tradition. He points out the arbitrary nature of the 'sign'. He criticises the naive approach.

"....Some people regard language, when reduced to its elements, as a naming process only -- a list of words, each corresponding to the thing that it names. For example:

ARBOR → 

This conception is open to criticism at several points, It assumes that ready-made ideas exist before words (on this point, see below , p.111); it does not tell us whether a name is

vocal or psychological in nature (*arbor*, for instance, can be considered from either view point); finally, it lets us assume that the linking of a name and a thing is a very simple operation-- an assumption that is anything but true. But this rather naive approach can bring us near the truth by showing us that the linguistic unit is a double entity, one formed by the associating of two terms..."³

According to Saussure the linguistic sign is arbitrary. This is the first principle of Saussure's theory of language. The 'sign' can be taken as an arbitrary relation between signifier and the signified - what is the meaning of the term 'arbitrary' in Saussure's writing ? In one sense the answer is quite simple - there is no inevitable or natural link between the signifier and the signified.

In part one of the 'course', he describes the nature of the linguistic sign. He says,

"...The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. Since I mean by sign the whole that results from the associating of the signifier with the signified, I can simply say: *the linguistic sign is arbitrary....*"⁴

Then he rectifies the nature of the arbitrary nature of the sign, and tries to spell out a confusion that the choice of the signifier is left entirely to the speaker, he continues:

“..The word *arbitrary* also calls for comment. The term should not imply that the choice of the signifier is left entirely to the speaker (we shall see below that the individual does not have the power to change a sign in any way once it has become established in the linguistic community); I mean that is unmotivated, i.e. arbitrary in that it actually has no natural connection with signified...”⁵

Here Saussure crystallised the concept very clearly. But it needs an explanation. Since I speak English I may use the signifier represented by dog to talk about an animal of a particular species. Iodtet, or bloop would serve equally well if they were accepted by the members of my speech community. Here the point is, there is no intrinsic value or reason why one of the signifier rather than the another should be linked with the concept of dog.

Saussure points out some exceptions to this basic principle, in some cases we can see the sound of the signifier seems in some way mimetic or imitative. “bow-wow” can be taken as an example in English. This particular nature of some sign is known as ‘Onomatopoeia’. But in a language we can

see only few such cases, we can separate them as special cases, except this class, almost all of the 'signs' in a language are arbitrary in their nature.

"...1) *onomatopoeia* might be used to prove that the choice of the signifier is not always arbitrary. But *onomatopoeia* formations are never organic elements of a linguistic system. Besides, their number is much smaller than is generally supposed. Words like French *fouet* 'whip' or *glas* 'knell' may strike certain ears with suggestive sonority, but to see that they have not always had this property we need only examine their Latin forms (*fouet* is derived from *fagus* 'beech-tree', *glas* from *classicum* 'sound of a trumpet'). The quality of their present sounds, or rather the quality that is attributed to them is a fortuitous result of phonetic evolution..."⁶

Saussure then examines the nature of the interjection, which is closely related to *onomatopoeia*, and conclude that '-*onomatopoeic* formations and interjections are of secondary importance, and their symbolic origin is in part open to dispute'⁷

The linguistic sign, in Saussure's view unites not a thing and a name but a concept and sound image. The linguistic sign is a two-sided psychological entity that can be represented by the drawing.

Concept

Sound Image

The two elements, the concepts and sound image are intimately united, and each recalls the other. To avoid the ambiguity related to the word 'sound image' Saussure has given separate names to the concept and to the sound image. He says ;

"...I propose to retain the word sign (signe) to designate the whole and to replace concept and *sound-image* respectively by *signified (singnifie)* and *signifier (significant)*; the last two terms have the advantage of indicating the opposition that separates them from each other and from the whole of which they are parts. As regards *sign*, if I am satisfied with it, this is simply because I do not know of any word to replace it, the ordinary language suggesting no other..."⁸

Thus we can represent it in another model,

Signified

Signifier

In a picture it may be sketched as



Tree

What are the philosophical implications, and significance of this new theory of Saussure, we can summarise them as shown below: language is not a nomenclature and therefore its signifieds are not pre-existing concepts. The concepts are changeable and which vary from one state of language to another. And since there is no necessary reason for one concept rather than another to be attached to a given signifier, there is no essential core of meaning that it must retain in order to count as the proper signified for that signifier. The relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary, which means there are no fixed universal concepts or fixed universal signifiers. Both signifier and signified are purely relational or differential entities. Because they are arbitrary they are relational.

Saussure attaches great importance to the fact that language is not a nomenclature. We can not understand the full ramification of this theory, unless we grasp the importance of arbitrary nature of the sign. A language doesn't simply assign arbitrary names to a set of independently existing concepts. The language set-up an arbitrary relation between signifiers of its own choosing on the one hand, and signifieds of its own choosing on the other hand. Each language produces a different set of signifiers and different set of signifieds. This choosing of a signifier for a signified in a language is an arbitrary way of organising the world into concepts and categories.

We can clarify the above point with the help of some examples; which already exist in a language system. In French language the sound sequence of *Fleuve* and *Riviere* are two signifiers. River and stream are two English signifiers. The organisation of the conceptual plane is different in English and French. In English the signified River is opposed to stream solely in terms of size whereas a *Fleuve* differs from a river not because it is larger, but because it flows in to the sea. *Fleuve* and *riviere* are not signifieds or concepts of English.

These two languages operate and work perfectly well with different conceptual articulation or distinction. This fact indicates that these divisions are not natural, or necessary, but arbitrary. It is important to note that a language has ways of talking about the flowing bodies of water, but language can make its conceptual distinction in this area in any way or a wide variety of ways; the ways depend upon the size of the flowing bodies, or swiftness of flow, straightness, direction of the flow, depth etc. Language not only chooses the signifiers in an arbitrary manner but it also divides the conceptual possibilities in any manner it likes. This shows that the concepts or signifieds are not autonomous entities, each of which is defined by some kind of essence. The concepts are members of a system and they are defined by their relation to other members of the system. If I like to explain to someone the

meaning of stream, I must tell him about the difference between a stream and a river, a rivulet and a stream etc., I can't explain the term without showing the difference between the concepts, thus the concept shows the 'difference' between the concepts, not the meaning in itself.

The value of the concepts depends on their relation with one another.

Saussure says:

"...But it is quite clear that initially the concept is nothing, that is only a value determined by its relations with other similar values, and that without them the signification would not exist. If I state simply that a word signifies something when I have in mind the associating of a sound-image with a concept, I am making a statement that may suggest what actually happens, but by no means am I expressing the linguistic fact in its essence and fullness.." ⁹

As he says each of the signified makes the meaning not by the 'value' that lies in it; but by the difference which makes in a system with other concepts.

Saussure in his writings uses some analogies to show the relational identity of the concepts in a language system. The relational identity of the linguistic units is not easy to grasp. The first analogy of Saussure is the

analogy of a Train, which is named as the '8:25 Geneva - to - Paris Express'. Each day the 8:25 Geneva -to - Paris Express starts from Geneva at 8:25. We consider the 8:25 Geneva -to - Paris Express is same train each day, even though the coaches, locomotive and personnel change from one day to the next. The train gets its 'identity' only by placing it in a system of trains, as indicated by the time table. The relational identity in the determining factors; the 8:25 Geneva -to - Paris Express remains the same train even if it leaves half an hour late.

Comparison between language and chess is an another analogy which is used by Saussure to illustrate the notion of relational identity of the concepts in language. The basic units of chess are obviously king, queen, rook, bishop and knight etc. The actual physical shape of the pieces and colour etc. are not important. The king may be of any size and shape as long as there are ways of distinguishing it from other pieces. The two rooks need not be of identical size and shape, so long as they can distinguished from other pieces. If a piece is lost from a chess set we can replace it with any other sort of object; on the condition that this object will not be confused with the objects representing piece of a different value. Saussure makes the point clear.

"...Take a knight, for instance. By itself is it an element in the game? Certainly not, for by its material make up—outside its square and the other conditions of the game—it means nothing to the player; it becomes a real, concrete element only when endowed with value and wedded to it. Suppose that the piece happens to be destroyed or lost during a game. Can it be replaced by an equivalent price? Certainly. Not only another knight but even a figure shown of any resemblance to a knight can be declared identical provided the same value is attributed to it. We see then that in semiological systems like language, where elements hold each other in equilibrium in accordance with fixed rules, the notion of identity blends with that of value and *vice versa*..."¹⁰

From this above quoted paragraph one point is quite clear. The units of the game of chess have no material identity - there are no physical properties necessary to a king; rook, etc. Identity is wholly a function of difference within a system. We can understand Saussure's concept of 'difference' well, when we apply the analogy to language. Saussure says:

"...Everything that has been said up to this point boils down to this: in language there are only differences. Even more

important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences *without positive terms*. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sound that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system...."¹¹

We can conclude this study of 'sign' with the following observations: Signifier and Signified must be defined in terms of their relation with other signifiers and signifieds. To define the units of language we must distinguish between these purely relational and abstract units and their physical realisations. In language the actual sounds we produce in speaking are not in themselves units of the linguistic system. Linguistic unit is a form rather than a substance defined by the relations which set it off from other units.

Saussure introduced some dichotomies to study the language in general and sign in particular. 'Langue' and 'Parole' in the first dichotomy. La Langue is the system of a language, the language as a system of forms. Parole is actual speech, or in other words the speech acts which are made possible by the language.

When a person lives in a language community, he assimilates some set of forms in a language, that is known as "langue". It is defined as 'hoard deposited by the practice of speech in speakers who belongs to the same community, a grammatical system, which, to all intent and purpose, exist in the mind of each speaker'. In other words it is defined as a social product whose existence permits the individual to exercise his linguistic faculty.

Parole is the executive side of the language. Saussure says:

"....Speaking, on the contrary, is an individual act. It is wilful and intellectual. Within the act, we should distinguish between: (1) the combination by which the speaker uses the language code for expressing his own thought; and (2) the psychological mechanism that allows him to exteriorize those combination..."¹²

In the stage of parole the speaker of a language selects and combines elements of the linguistic system. And then he gives to these forms a concrete phonic and psychological manifestation. These manifestations are sound and meaning.

The primary concern of the linguistics is 'langue'. When a linguist analyses a language, he tries to find out units and rules of combination which make up the linguistic system. 'Langue' or the linguistic system is a coherent

analysable object. As Saussure says langue is a system of signs in which the only essential thing is the union of meanings and acoustic image. When a person studies language as a system of signs he is trying to identify its essential features. Primarily he tries to find out those elements which are crucial to the signifying function of language. Saussure writes about importance of langue in his 'course':

“...In separating language from speaking we are at the same time separating: (1) what is social from what is individual; and (2) what is essential from what is accessory and more or less accidental...”¹³

In the realm of speech relevance and irrelevance is difficult to determine. So we have to concentrate upon langue to study the nature of language. When we concentrate upon langue, various aspects of language and speech fall into place with in or around it.

The distinction between langue and parole leads to the creation of two distant disciplines, one of the branch named phonetics studies the speech act from a physical point of view. Phonology the other branch at the same time concentrates its attention up on the distinction between the abstract units of the signifier, which are functional with in the linguistic system. Phonetics

would describe the actual sounds produced when one utters a form, but phonology is the study of functional distinctions in a system.

In language two different utterances may be the manifestation of the same sentence, here we encounter the central notion of identity in linguistics. For example if at some time Mohan says 'I am tired', 'I' refer to Mohan and understanding this reference is an important part of understanding the utterance. However that reference is not part of the meaning of the sentence - For George also may utter the same sentence, in his sentence 'I' will refer to George. The important point is, within the linguistic system 'I' does not refer to anyone. Its meaning in the system is the result of the distinction between 'I' and 'You', he, she and they; a meaning which can sum up by saying that 'I' means the speaker as opposed to anyone else. In language pronouns are the best examples of the difference between meanings which are properties of utterance only and meanings which are properties of elements of the linguistic system.

To clarify the above point, we can take an example when a French man says 'J'ai vu un mouton' and an English man says 'I saw a sheep' their utterance are likely to have the same signification. About a state of affair they are making the same claim. But, as units of their respective linguistic systems, the meaning of 'mouton' and 'sheep' are different, they do not have

the same meaning or value. For sheep is defined by an opposition with 'mutton', where as 'mouton' is bounded by no such distinction, but it is used both for the animal and for meat. Saussure's point is, he tries to show, that there is one kind of meaning, a relational meaning or value, in language. And signification, which is another kind of meaning, involves the use of linguistic elements in actual situation of utterance in the language.

In linguistics the study of a langue involves an invention of the distinctions, which create signs and rules of combination, where as the study of 'parole' leads us to an account of language use. By separating the langue from parole, Saussure gave us a clear sense of the language. And linguist have got a much clear sense of what he was doing in language.

Synchronic and diachronic perspective

Saussure introduced another dichotomy in language studies, that is the distinction between synchronic and diachronic perspective. Study of the linguistic system in a particular state without reference to time is known as synchronic study of language. In diachronic study language will be studied with reference to its evolution in time.

Saussure gave more importance to the synchronic study of language, so he was accused of ignoring the historical nature of language; which is an entity in constant evolution. But Saussure had recognised the radical

historicity of language. He asserted the importance of distinguishing between facts about the linguistic system and facts about the linguistic evolution. Some times, in some cases the two kinds of facts seem intertwined.

As we have seen in the section on arbitrary nature of the sign, the relation between the signifier and signified is arbitrary. Saussure connects the arbitrary nature of the sign, and historical nature of language. There is no essential or natural connection between signifier and the signified. If there is some essential connection between signifier and signified, the sign would have an essential core, which would be unaffected by time, and which would resist the change in meaning. This 'unchanging essence' does not exist in language. So the meaning will alter from one period to another by the 'accidental features' of the time. Any aspect of sound or meaning can change. The history of language shows radical evolutionary alteration of both sound and meaning. Neither signifier nor signified contains any essential core which time cannot touch. The sign is totally subject to history. And the combination of signifier with a signified is a contingent result of the historical process.

The above mentioned arbitrary nature of the sign and its connection with time require a historical analysis. Since the sign has no necessary core, it must be defined as a relational entity in its relation to other signs.

The language is a wholly historical entity. It is always open to change. A person must focus on the relations which exist in a particular synchronic state if one is to define its elements.

Saussure shows the irrelevance of historical or diachronic facts to the analysis of *la langue*. Some examples in the English language shows the irrelevance of diachronic information. In modern English the second person pronoun 'you' is used to refer both to one person and to many -you may be either the subject or the object in a sentence. But in earlier stage of the English language, 'you' was defined by its opposition to 'ye' on the one hand and to thee and thou on the other- 'ye' in a subject pronoun, you an object pronoun, thee and thou singular forms and you a plural form. At a later stage of English 'you' comes to serve as a respectful way to addressing one person. Now in modern English 'you' is no longer defined by its opposition to 'ye' three and thou. Today one can speak modern English perfectly without knowing that 'you' was once used as a plural and objective form. In modern English 'you' is defined by its role in a synchronic state of language. We can take another example for Om the French language. In French the noun *par* (step) and the negative adverb *par* (not) derive historically from a single sign. But this is not relevant to a description of modern French, where the words function is totally different ways and must be treated as different signs.

Saussure gave importance to the synchronic method, but that does not mean he had taken language only in a synchronic way.

The Diachronic identity depends upon a series of synchronic identities. Diachronic statements relate a single element from one state of a linguistic system to element from a later state of the system. The linguistic units are defined by relations within their own states of the system. Saussure argues that diachronic statements are derived from synchronic statement. Taking an example Saussure asks, what allows us, to state that Latin *mare* become French *mer* (sea). Saussure says that 'we are using the correspondence between '*mare*' and '*mer*' to decide that '*a*' became '*e*' and that final '*e*' fell.¹⁴ At each period in the history, we can see that a change occurred, when there was an old form and a new form which were phonetically different but phonologically or functionally identical. In the example of '*mare*' and '*mer*', we connect the two forms with the help of intermediate forms, which constitute an unbroken chain of synchronic identities. The forms may ofcourse have had different associations. However they could be used interchangeably by speakers. Some persons stick to the old form and others prefer the new. But the move from one to other would not produce a difference in actual meaning. From the view point of linguistic system there would a synchronic identity between the two forms.

Saussure's remark about the relation between synchronic and diachronic nature of linguistic form is interesting.

"...In any event, we cannot accurately define the unit until we have studied it from both viewpoints, the static and the evolutionary. Until we solve the problem of the diachronic unit, we cannot penetrate the outer guise of evolution and reach its essence. Understanding units is just as important here as in synchrony if we are separate illusion from reality (see p. 110)...."¹⁵

As we have seen above language has synchronic and diachronic aspects. These two aspects are important in the study of language. Saussure is aware of the intertwining of synchronic and diachronic facts. For him the difficulty lies only in the separation of these two elements, when they are mixed. When a linguist studies the language he has to separate the two aspects, but the two aspects are mixed. However these two aspects are to be separated because they are facts of a different order with different conditions of existence.

Some linguists offer a panchronic synthesis, or perspective, to study the nature of language. But Saussure rejects that offer. He says that, the arbitrary

nature of the language signs does not allow us to give a place to panchronic approach in linguistics.

A synchronic fact is a relationship or opposition between two forms existing simultaneously. In order to understand the synchronic and diachronic aspects of language and its difference we can take an example from English. In English language some nouns have unusual plural forms like feet, geese, and teeth.

In the Early Anglo- Saxon the singular and plural forms of these nouns seem, as shown below.

Stage I

		Singular	Plural
Foot	:	fot	foti
Goose	:	gos	gosi
Tooth	:	top	topi

(Where b =th, pronounced roughly foat, foati)

Stage II

Foot	:	fot	feti
Goose	:	gos	gesi
Tooth	:	top	topi

Stage III

Foot	:	fot	fet
Goose	:	gos	ges
Tooth	:	tof	tef

In the first stage plural forms were affected by a phonetic change known as "I" mutation. When 'I' is followed by a stressed syllable, the vowel of the stressed syllable was affected and back vowels were fronted, so that *o* became *e* in the second stage. In the third stage the final 'I' was dropped.

Saussure says that these forms are by the English vowel shift, in which *o* became *u* and *e* became *I* and then it became the modern forms. At the stage one plural was made by the presence of a final *i*. This is a synchronic fact, because the opposition between presence and absence of 'I' marked the opposition between singular and plural. In the second stage too certain number of plural forms were affected which is due to *e*, which produces a new synchronic fact in stage two. In the third stage too we can see a synchronic change, the whole process shows that the linguistic system was able to use the difference in the synchronic state as a meaning-bearing opposition.

According to Saussure, diachronic facts are of a different order from the Synchronic. In the history of language we can see the historical evolution of

individual elements throw up forms which the system uses, and study of those systematic uses is the central task. Historical explanation is not required here. Explanation is linguistic in structural: one explains the forms and rules of combination by sketching out the underlying system of relation, in a particular synchronic state, which defines the elements of that synchronic system.

In the view of Saussure as we have seen above language is a form not a substance. A language is a system of mutually related values. Analysis of language means setting out the system of values which constitute a state of the language. Langue is a system of oppositions or difference, it is not positive phonic and signifying elements of speech act or the parole. Nothing is given in linguistics as positive self-defined elements with which we can start. In order to identify two instances of the same unit we must construct a formal and relational entity by distinguishing between differences which are non functional and differences which are functional. Once we have identified the relations and oppositions in a system, we will get the linguistic 'sign' which emerges from the net work of differences.

When Saussure talks about 'signs' or the linguistic units, it may sound, as though he was referring to speaking of words only. The language consists of grammatical relations and distinctions. But according to Saussure, there is

no fundamental difference between a linguistic unit and a grammatical fact. Their common nature is a result of the fact that signs are entirely differential objects and they constitute a linguistic sign.

For example, consider the word 'took'. What is the sign of the past tense here? It is nothing positive in the world itself, but it is only a relational element. The opposition between take and took carries the distinction between present and past. Thus in the study of the language, the linguist is concerned with relationships, identities and differences. There are two major types of relationship - the first one is - opposition which produces distinct and alternative terms (b as opposed to p) the next one is, there are relations between units which combine to form sequence. The former relation is known as *paradigmatic* relation and the latter '*syntagmatic*'. *Paradigmatic* relations are the oppositions between elements which can replace one another. *Syntagmatic* relations define combinatory possibilities: the relation between elements which combine in a sequence.

We can see the paradigmatic syntegmatic relationship at the level of morphology or word structure. A noun is partly defined by the combination into which it can enter with suffixes and prefixes. We can make friendless, friendly, friendliness, unfriendly, befriend. The combinatory possibilities represent syntagmatic relationships. The paradigmatic relationships are to be

found in the contrast between a given morpheme and those which could replace it in a given environment. In this way we will get paradigmatic contrast between -ly-less, and -ship, in that they can all occur after friend and replacement of one by another brings a change in meaning. And at the level of syntax too we can see the same type of relationship. For example take the sentence *he frightened*. We can replace he by, George, Raman, the man standing on the corner etc. But not by 'stone' 'colour', 'tree', etc. Our knowledge of syntagmatic relations enables us to define for *he frightened* a paradigmatic class of items which can follow it. These items are in paradigmatic contrast with one another and to choose one is to produce the meaning by excluding others.

Saussure, as a structuralist, claims that the entire linguistic system can be reduced to and explained in terms of a theory of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations. In the view of a structuralist, the linguistic system consists of different levels of structure, at each level one can identify the elements, which contrast with one another and combine with other elements to form higher level units. At each level the principle structure is same. Saussure says that language is a form and not a substance; so its elements have only contrastive and combinational properties. The units of elements have been identified at each level of the structure. This identification is done

by the capacity of differentiation. At the level of phoneme, we identify the phonological distinctive features as the relational features which differentiate the phonemes. The same thing happens at the level of morphemes, and at last the words are defined by the fact that they play different roles in the higher level units of phrase and sentence.

In linguistics nothing is given in advance, we cannot start from a word assuming that a meaning is given to that word before the set up of the system. The elements with which one tries to start are defined by both syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation. In the structure the items are defined by their contrast with other items and their ability to combine to form higher level items.

Semiology is another concern for Saussure, but in 'course', Saussure devotes very few paragraphs about it. According to Saussure semiological perspective is central to any study of language.

As Saussure pointed out in his course language is a social institution, but it is different from political, legal, institutions. Saussure says,

"...Language is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. But it is the most important of all these systems.

A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it *semiology* (from Greek *semeion* 'Sign'). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance. Linguistics is only a part of the general science of semiology; the laws discovered by semiology will be applicable to linguistics, and the latter will circumscribe a well-defined area within the mass of anthropological facts..."¹⁶

Human beings always make noises, gestures etc. to convey meaning, but every gesture and noise is always in a system, where there are signs there is a system. An underlying system of convention makes the meaning of the utterance. So to understand the 'meaning' one has to understand the semiological system, and should not treat the 'utterance' in isolation. In this analysis meaning is derived from the system. Saussure says,

"...But to me the language problem is mainly semiological, and all developments derive their significance from that important fact. If we are to discover the true nature of language we must

lean what is has in common with all other semiological systems; linguistic forces that seem very important at first glance..."¹⁷

Saussure's remarks about semiology is very brief in 'course', but his proposals concerning semiology were taken up seriously only at the middle of this century. The other disciplines realised the importance of his suggestions only after many years the publication of 'course'. What is now called 'structuralism' is a product of Saussure's insight. Anthropologists, literary critics and the scholars in many other disciplines saw that the 'example' of linguistics could help them to justify what they sought to do in their own areas of study. And then they began to take linguistic as a model of their methodology. Claud levi strauss defined anthropology as a branch of semiology, and paid homage to Saussure.

Simiology is a vast field of enquiry. In semiology every sign has a meaning because every sign is in a network of culture. Semilogy would come to include most of the disciplines of the humanities and the social science. Most of the domain of human activity, be it, cooking, architecture, advertising fashion, literature or music can be approached in semiological terms.

In semiological studies we should remember that the signifying phenomena which one encounters in the various domain are not alike. All

signs are not of the same type. So various typologies of signs have been proposed, but three fundamental classes of signs are important. The icon, index, and the sign proper. In these three types the relation between signifier and the signified are different. An icon involves actual resemblance between signifier and the signified. Portrait is an example. In an index the relation between the signifier and the signified is causal: Smoke and fire is the best example of it. In the sign the relation between signifier and the signified is arbitrary and conventional. Mannerisms in community can be taken as the example of this type.

The above division is important however signs proper, where the relation between signifier and signified is arbitrary or conventional, are thus the central domain of semiology. The signs require semiological investigation to understand the mechanism of their working. To understand the 'meaning' of a signifier one must reconstruct the semiotic system, because one can't understand the meaning in isolation. The reconstruction of a semiotic system alone help us to do the explanation of the 'system and meaning' in a system.

In the domain of social and natural science, we can't see the 'sign' as in the languages that they are not semiological in themselves does not mean that those disciplines are not in the area of 'semiotics'. The objects which these discipline study are not signs proper, but they may be studied as semiotic

systems. Astrology is an example of it. We do not believe in the prediction of an astrologist, who establishes a relation between movement of the planet and the events of the people's lives. But in astrology they use a system of conventions, which are not an 'essential' character of the planets. In the same way semiology can study the conventions which govern the discourses and interpretation of any discipline. Semiologists do not bother about the truth and falsity of any discipline. To them that is irrelevant. They simply analyse a system and find out the relation between the concepts.

FOUR

The rise of the new science of linguistics is the most fascinating chapter in the history of human race. Linguistics and the semiotics changed the views of philosophers and thinkers. Nobody today argues that he can create a 'new system' without the help of linguistics. The position of the study of 'signs' in the domain of knowledge is not a matter of dispute now. After the Saussurean period our whole concept of language and reality has changed. So nobody can move forward without the influence of Saussure.

NOTES

1. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*; Edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye in Collaboration with Albert Riedlinger, translated by Wade Baskin (Mc Graw - Hill Book Company, 1966), p. 3-4.
 2. Ibid, p. 76.
 3. Ibid, p. 65.
 4. Ibid, p. 67.
 5. Ibid, p. 68.
 6. Ibid, p. 69.
 7. Ibid, p. 70.
 8. Ibid, p. 67.
 9. Ibid, p. 117.
 10. Ibid, p. 110.
 11. Ibid, p. 120.
 12. Ibid, p. 14.
 13. Ibid, p. 14.
 14. Ibid, p. 182.
 15. Ibid, p. 181.
 16. Ibid, p. 16.
- Ibid, p. 17.

CHAPTER - IV

A COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT OF BHARTRHARI'S SPHOTA THEORY AND F.D SAUSSURE'S THEORY OF SIGN

“...It is no longer sufficient merely to go back over the christian and European cultural traditions. The horizons of the world are no longer confined to Europe and America. We have to gain new perspectives, and on this our spiritual and even our physical survival depends...”

T.Merton, Mystics and Zen Masters.

ONE

Before discussing the comparisons and the contrasts between Bhartrhari and Saussure, it is important to arrive at a clear meaning of the term comparison in this chapter. Instead of making a traditional account of comparative study, it is necessary to place the philosophies of Bhartrhari and Saussure against the central question of philosophy; the question of 'Being'. And then the response of these thinkers will be discussed in the light of the postmodern approach.

In our time, we have witnessed a radical growth of writings in comparative philosophy. Studies in this area tend to concentrate more and more on specific concepts and ideas. The concepts of 'self' 'causality' and the issues connected with epistemology, philosophy of mind and ethics have also been the main target of comparative philosophy. Philosophy has to explain man and his universe so the scope of the comparative philosophy is universal history and cosmos. That means the study of the nature of man expressed in history is the aim of comparative philosophy.

In different cultures and in races man has expressed himself in several ways. And a true comprehensive philosophy will be one which is based on a comparative estimate of the many ways of his expression. Most of the civilizations in this world has its own philosophy. Every philosopher in each tradition knows others in the same tradition. It is true that no culture has had only a single system of philosophy.

On this globe human life is same every where. The different traditions in philosophy aim at and uphold the same values or similar values irrespective of their spacio-temporal limitations. Dr. Radhakrishnan says,

"...The fundamentals of human experience, which are the data of philosophical reflection, are the same every where. The transitoriness of all things, the play chance, the emotion of

love and hate, fear and jealousy, The continued presence of death, the anxiety to overcome the corruptibility of things, to enjoy the fleeting moment - These have determined for each man his life's meaning and value ..."¹

In different cultures the approaches towards the fundamental issues are different. But the basic issue is same everywhere. The difference between the problems that life presented to man of different cultures and the various ways in which men sought to solve the problems were not because the men of East were a species of animal distinct from the man of West. But it may be due to natural, social, and political differences. Due to the different types of influences the solutions to the same problems in East and West seem different.

Basically man is same everywhere, but it does not mean that the difference between East and West will be completely annihilated. As Rudyard Kipling says East is East and West is West in their approaches towards life. They do not meet, though in comparative philosophy we focus our attention not on the differences only, but the similarities of the approaches will be taken as important.

With the comparative studies we will be benefited by observing how the different traditions face and try to overcome a problematic situation. We

can find out the significance of both similarities and difference in results, as well as in methods of the traditions.

The primary aim of the comparative study is the synthesis between the different cultures in the world, which is not meant for the dominance of one culture over another. Narrowness in the outlook of different cultures will be eliminated by the comparative study. Expansion and broadening of our views and visions are the results of comparative methods.

Today, in India philosophy, it is necessary for the Indian thinkers to reflect and reformulate our philosophies. Our concepts and categories of thinking are to be reread in the light of the global change in the philosophical discourse. When we compare our traditional system with it enables us to know which aspects of life and which values are considered to be important by each system and how each formulated and solved the problems relevant to those values. In the same tradition the same problem may not have been solved in the same way by all schools of thought. So a detailed comparison of the concepts and categories of the different schools is needed to show the different attitudes towards the same issue. Comparative study often recognises the complementary nature of each tradition with another one, and there is much that is common to all. A comparative philosopher always believes that each can learn much from the others and widen their scopes.

Such an approach will help us to mould our future in our life and also in our philosophy.

One meaning of comparative philosophy refers to the comparison which is made about the views of philosophers or philosophical movements which originated in two different civilizations. Comparing two philosophers from different civilizations has already become a main part of philosophy. Such comparative pairs are Jesus and Gandhi, Bradley and Sankara, Greek atomists and the Hindu Carvakas etc. In this type of comparisons the author simply prefers the similarities and differences between the thinkers.

The above mentioned type of comparison are usually taken as the model for comparison. Another geographical model of comparison is also used in philosophy. That is the model of Eastern and Western approach. But the philosophers who prefers the Eastern and Western approach in comparative philosophy often ignore the conceptual background of thought. And they simply jump towards the sameness of conclusion in these two systems.

In this thesis the term comparative philosophy is used to compare the different solutions to the same problem by different philosophers at different times. In a broad sense the term Eastern and Western is used to show not the

geographical boundaries exist in thought but to clarify different approaches by different systems on the same point.

TWO

In philosophy generally Eastern is taken as an intuitive approach and western proclaims the reason. Western civilization has a double heritage of ideals. The Greek, philosophers idealized reason but hebraic has idealized the will. St. Augustine synthesized these ideals in Christian theology. According to him will and reason are identical in God who is a perfect being. The history of Western philosophy often shows the controversies over the relative ultimacy of reason and will. If the Western, or Greek philosophy built their science and philosophy on geometry and mathematics, the Indians built their philosophy on language or Sabda Sastra. Matilal says.

“...It has often been claimed in recent times that in Indian scientific and philosophical tradition, mathematic plays a less crucial role and its place is taken by Grammar or linguistics...”²

But as a contrast to Western tradition the Indian thought tended to idealize intuition as ultimate *Pramana* in the philosophical discourse. Quoting

Radhakrishnan's Gilbert lecture, J.N. Mohanty explains the nature of intuition in Indian thought. He says,

"...I will briefly comment on this last point, as well as on the much abused contrast between intellect and intuition, and finally revert to the question, has Indian thought developed a standard of critical rationality ?

Let me begin with the concept of intuition. As illustrations of contemporary Hindu self-understanding, let me quote a couple of passages from Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. In his Hibbert Lectures he writes:

The Western mind lays great stress on science, logic and humanism. For the Hindus a system of philosophy is an insight, a darsana. It is the vision of truth and not a matter of logical argument and proof.

A little later, in the same context, he continues :

The acceptance of the authority of the *Vedas* by the different systems of Hindu thought is an admission that intuitive insight is a greater light in the abstruse problems of philosophy than logical understanding.

It is indeed interesting that in pressing this point about intuition Radhakrishnan discusses a whole list of intuitionists from the West: Bradley, Bergson, Croce, not to speak of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, and Pascal. The only Indian philosopher he discuss, in this context, is Sankara.

Radhakrishnan, however, saw more correctly that distinction is not be pressed beyond point: the distinction was one of degree. There are Indian *tarkikas*, Just as there are Western intuitionists. Thus Radhakrishnan writes much later:

Logical method knows no frontiers. The law of contradiction obtains in both East and West. Even in the East no one can hold at the same time the two principles of the reality of God and His unreality. The acceptance of one requires the rejection of the other..."³

The Western tradition, especially the Greek one idealized the 'rational' aspect of man. From the time of Plato and Aristotle, every philosopher tried to emphasize reason as forms, order, regularity and law. According to the Greek faith man can know nature because man is a rational animal. Thus in Greek tradition the reason, broadly conceived to include both rational structures (forms, patterns) and process (inference, deduction, proof) has

become the ultimate. Both nature and man are inherently rational. In this sense reason constitutes the ultimate reality. The Apollonian tradition, which began from Socrates was the foundation of rational method. Although the Greek thought proclaimed the reason, thinkers before the time of Socrates, emphasized the nature of Dionysian element in thought. The Greek thinkers, often grappled with issues involved in reason and will, which are the conflicting tendencies in human nature. When the preSocratic philosophers idealised the Dionysian nature, postSocratic thought emphasized the Appolonian element. The supremacy of the rational method governed the Western philosophical tradition till the time of Nietzsche. Nietzsche revalued the rational methods of Western thought and gave a twist to Western thought towards the Dionysian approach. So we can not say that the entire Western tradition is governed by the rational method. After the time of Nietzsche Western philosophy departed from the rational method of inquiry and turned towards the language. The supremacy of mathematics and rational approach has been replaced by the language studies in the West now. (We have discussed this issue in the first chapter.)

Now in the domain of philosophy a confusion arises. The supermacy of reason failed in the Western culture and its place is taken by the language studies. Structuralist and poststructuralistics theories have given more

importance to the language and its relation to consciousness and understanding. In the postNietzschean time almost all of the metaphysical foundations of religion and the foundations of metaphysics have demolished. As we have seen in the first chapter the 'Modernist Enlightenment' programme has been challenged, its emancipatory practice failed. In the hands of Derrida who is a successor in the Nietzschean tradition not only Metaphysics but the term and concepts of philosophy themselves were deconstructed. Deconstruction was a shocking incident in philosophy. Which nullified our hopes in the emancipatory project and gave us a bleak vision.

The present scenario of our philosophical discourse confronts a crucial situation. Both the traditions of East and West face the same challenge. Religion, which once held the 'being' in its realm has lost its power and the metaphysical foundation of the theology is destroyed by Nietzsche. The picture of theology, as a grand narrative of our hope has vanquished. And at the same time people lost faith in politics too. Because almost all of the programmes of the political parties were in accordance with the Kantian and rational enlightenment programme. The destructive effects of religion on one hand and the blind theorization of the politics on the other hand tended man to give up the two projects.

Neitzsche and later Heidegger deconstructed the metaphysics of Western civilization. But what is the position of 'Being' now ? Is it a bleak one or a hopeless one, one which without any centre and destiny? Does the post modernism give us a nihilistic picture of the future ? These questions occupy the central part of todays thinking. So that the 'destiny of the Being' in the post modern situation has to be discussed. We will discuss the question of being at the end of this chapter. Before that it is necessary to compare the similarities and differences between the philosophies of Bhartrhari and Saussure in a traditional manner, and the emerging from the comparison will be used to discuss the question of being in the postmodern situation.

In the postmodern situation the culture of both East and West have come to realize that their traditional life and thought patterns are not adequate to face the postmodern atmosphere, and each has to learn from the other. So many thinkers in East and West try to build bridges between East and West. In the postmodern situation, the thinkers realize that it is no longer sufficient to go back over the European and Christian cultural tradition because the horizon of the world is no longer confined to Europe and America. In order to make a new perspective scholars try to find out a new methodology in the postmodern condition. J.J. Clarke writes:

"...Though the idea of making comparison between Eastern and Western thought has been a powerful driving force behind orientalist studies since the seventeenth century, it was not until the 1920s that the discipline of comparative philosophy came to be explicitly formulated by the French philosopher Paul Masson-Oursel (1882-1956). In his book *Comparative Philosophy*, which became an influential text in France between the wars, he followed closely the aim of Comte's positivism, claiming that the comparative method would become the indispensable prerequisite for the development of a truly scientific philosophy. This meant in the first place treating the philosophical traditions of the world's civilizations as on a par with each other; for, as he put it, 'No one philosophy has the right to put itself forward as co-extensive with the human mind', and hence 'philosophy cannot achieve positivity so long as its investigations are restricted to the thought of our own civilisation' (Masson-Oursel 1926: 35 and 33). It also meant recognising that the philosophies of different civilisations expressed different mentalities which could not be understood purely in terms of

European categories, a view which he derived from his teacher Lucien Levy-Bruhl, and which led him to believe that comparisons are more worthwhile the greater the differences amongst the traditions in question. By drawing analogies, and by comparing and contrasting the philosophical insights and techniques characteristic of the great traditions of Europe, China, and India, he hoped to show that comparative philosophy must ultimately lead to an understanding of 'the unity of the human mind under a multiplicity of aspects', an enterprise which, Masson-Oursel claimed, is 'capable of unlimited progress' (ibid. :200 and 203)..."⁴

THREE

Chapter two and three are mainly devoted for the expository study of the philosophies of Bhartrhari and Saussure. In this section let us compare the philosophies of the two thinkers in a traditional manner.

To begin the comparison, we have to place some concepts against the philosophies of these two thinkers. In philosophy, issues are often discussed under the titles of Ontology, Epistemology and Theory of liberation. For the

convenience of comparison the philosophical outlooks of Bhartrhari and Saussure are brought under these titles.

In ontology the relation between the man and cosmos is explained. The nature of the cosmos and the nature of the man are also explained in Ontology.

In the *Vakyapadiya*, Bhartrhari does not give us a clear cut picture of Ontology. But from his writings we can trace his attitudes. According to Bhartrhari *Sabda Brahman* is the ultimate ground of all existence, he says that the *Sabda tattva* is the first principle of the universe. The *Sabda tattva* is an eternal and unchanging reality. *Sabda tattva* is the cause of all things in this universe. *Kala Shakti* plays an important role in the creation of this universe. Precisely this is the ontological standpoint of Bhartrhari. But from this it is not clear what he means by the concept *Sabda tattva*. He does not explain it in a satisfactory way. So we are not sure what he means when he says *Sabda tattva* is eternal. Does he mean that it is an entity such as Brahman in the *Advaita Vedanta* ? or some sort of 'Being' as in the case of the *Saivasiddhanta*. Unfortunately we are not sure about what he says. But he is not a follower of *Advaitavedanta*. Because use in the theory of phenomenalization of the absolute Bhartrhari did not give us a definite answer on the question whether he received the *Vedantic* stand point or not. However it must be stated that as

yet there seems to be no definite answer to this question. When we compare the *Vedanta* concept of 'mithya' and Bhartrhari's concept of false and real, we should note that the concepts of *Sabda* need more examination and critical study.

In Saussure we cannot see such an ontological explanation. Bhartrhari was a real philosopher in every sense. He discussed the problem of ontology and epistemology with a philosophical outlook. But Saussure had no interest in this problem and he explained the nature of language and its relation to our consciousness only.

Bhartrhari explains the phenomenalization of the absolute at three levels. *Pasyanti*, *Madhyama* and *Vaikhari* are the three levels of phenomenalization. He introduced the phenomenalization in the microcosm and macrocosm. The process in the macrocosm is same as of the microcosm. Definitely, here his position is a metaphysical one. We cannot find out any parallels between Bhartrhari and Saussure here too. As in the case of the *Sabdabrahman*, in this phenomenalization of the absolute too Bhartrhari's position is ambiguous.

Bhartrhari says that *Sabda* and *Artha* co-exist at the level of *Pasyanti*. There is no difference between *Sabda* and *artha* at this stage. The *Pasyanti* state is taken by Bhartrhari as a pre-verbal or potential stage. To illustrate

this pre-verbal state he uses the simile of the yolk of the peachens egg. We can assume that, this stage is not only pre-verbal but, 'beyond verbal too, which represents the picture of a state which is 'beyond our ordinary language'. Bhartrhari here tries to explain the nature of the microcosm and macrocosm and its relation.

On the above point of phenomenalization of the absolute and its relation with the microcosm we can never draw a parallel with Saussure.

In the domain of ontology we cannot see any similarities between Bhartrhari and Saussure. There are several reasons for it. The first one is Bhartrhari was a monist philosopher and he explained every thing in terms of his metaphysical view point. But Saussure was not a 'philosopher' in the strict sense of that word. He simply narrated the function and working of the language only. Bhartrhari's concern was making a 'Grand picture' of the cosmos with the help of his views about language. So Bhartrhari differed very much from Saussure because Saussure never tried to bring a 'Grand Narrative' in philosophy.

In the area of Epistemology we can notice some similarities between Bhartrhari and Saussure. At first we can begin with nature of the word.

We must now examine how successfully Bhartrhari handles the problem of plurality and unity. The gap between plurality and unity was the

greatest challenge to Bhartrhari, because he was a monistic philosopher. For Bhartrhari the task was a difficult one because he has the double task of bridging the gap between the 'word' which is the metaphysical reality of Bhartrhari and the existence between the one and many. Bhartrhari explains the empirical level of the existence with the help of certain concepts. He explains the nature of the relation between word and consciousness.

According to Bhartrhari we are aware of the innumerable events and objects around us. We are aware of them not because of sense perception, but because we can cognise them as distinct and particular things subsumable under different names and forms. In the opinion of Bhartrhari there can be no cognitive awareness without its being intertwined with words. Bhartrhari's famous dictum is that word and consciousness are inseparably related.

Bhartrhari states that there cannot be consciousness without words. For him consciousness and words are not two distinct phenomena. In *Vakyapadiya* 1.118 he says that, "what is called awareness (consciousness) ie, *Samjna* is having the form of speech or words (*Vargupta*). Consciousness in all being never goes beyond it, that is, it is never different from the fact of having the form of the word".

Bhartrhari's explanation of the relation between language and consciousness is interesting. Because here he tries to offer us an explanation,

which is highly logical, and theoretically plausible. Saussure's explanation of the relation between language and consciousness seems very much closer to Bhartrhari's stand. For Saussure consciousness of an individual is the result of the network of signs. To him there is no consciousness apart from language. Consciousness is determined by the structure of the language and its working.

Bhartrhari analyses the problem of concept and universal. In philosophy it is usually believed that all words do not represent concepts. Only class names like 'cow' 'beautiful' 'red' etc. are conceptualisable and hence they stand for the universals. Concepts are formed on the basis of some common attributes shared by the members of the class. But in *Vakyapadiya*, the notion of the concept is quite different. According to Bhartrhari all words are universal, so all words stand for concepts. Matilal explains Bhartrhari's notion clearly.⁵

According to Matilal for Bhartrhari words and concepts are merely two sides of ^{the} same coin. For Bhartrhari all forms of awareness imply the presence of words. And all words are concepts. It is interesting to note that in the *Vakyapadiya* even the terms like 'this' or 'that' which are ordinarily believed to signify pure particulars, are taken as universals. In our ordinary language of philosophy we do not take 'this' and 'that' as universals; the reason for such

a non-conventional view is due to his analysis of meaning in terms of 'sense' rather than 'reference'. As we have seen Bhartrhari takes the sentence as the primary unit of meaning not the word.

It is clear from the *Vakyapadiya* that, for Bhartrhari words can only refer to the universals of objects. Matilal explains Bhartrhari's position very clearly.

He says:

"...If nominalism means simply that universals or abstract ideas are dispensable imaginative constructs or *vikalpas*, generated by linguistic practices only, then generally it leads to a vision of the world populated only by particulars or the Buddhist *svalaksanas*. However, there is an alternative. For one might also be holistic monist, and reject atomism by saying that particulars are also abstractions or are 'falsely' broken or 'extracted' pieces of the indivisible whole. Bhartrhari was such a holist. He said that words, concepts, and universals are all constructs. Words are abstracted out of whole sentences or sentence-complexes, and similarly concepts are abstracted out of the concrete experience of the whole. This abstraction is done through our inherent faculty of speech-impregnated awareness. The reality is an impartite

whole, which we never cognize as such, but always under the *guise* of some words or word-generated concepts. For Bhartrhari, having a concept and using a word are merely the two sides of a coin..."⁶

To explain the relation between universal objects and universal of words Bhartrhari use his monistic standpoint. Bhartrhari connected the two universals in a special manner. In his analysis of 'language in use' he makes a distinction between the expressed (*Vacya*) and the expressive word (*Vacaka*). The *Vacaka* expresses the meaning and the meaning implies the object meant. But objects meant are never directly grasped by the words because the particulars of the world are never knowable. According to him the world always mean the universal of the objects. Universals do not exist in the objects. In the view of Bhartrhari the universals of words and universals of things are word generated and hence there is no opposition between them. The 'word universals' are transformed in to 'thing universals'.

Bhartrhari's concepts about the universals, and its relation with consciousness, universal of objects and universal of words need a comparison with Saussure.

In the 'course in linguistic', Saussure gives us a concrete picture about the nature of language and nature of the concepts and universals. Saussure

does not believe in the 'essence hidden' nature of the words and concepts. No meaning is hidden in the words. There is no one to one relation between words and meaning. Words acquire meaning through the differentiation with other words in a system. Structure of a system produce meaning. Definitely there is no comparison between Bhartrhari's concept of relation between words and consciousness and Saussure's concept of 'language and its structure'; but one point is interesting; these philosophers talk about the relation of the language with consciousness. In Bhartrhari consciousness is nothing but language. Saussure does not take such an extreme view. But from his writings it is clear that he considered the structure of the language as an important fact in the moulding of consciousness. After Saussure post-structuralist thinkers have taken the structure of the language and signs as the ideology of a person who lives in a community.

Bhartrhari's concepts of 'concepts' and its relation with the world is poles apart from Saussure. According to Saussure concepts also are made by the differentiation process in the network of language.

'Universals' and its relation with the real world bring some knotty problems in the philosophy of Bhartrhari; he synthesized this problem with the help of his monistic outlook. But in the philosophy of Saussure the 'word universal and object Universal' have no place. He totally rejects such an

idealistic stand point and gives importance to particular in his language philosophy.

Vakyapadiya's differentiation of *sabda* form *dhvani* needs some careful comparison with Saussure. In the writings of Bhartrhari *Sabda* occupies a central role, he equates it with *sphota* to show the metaphysical nature of the language. In *pasyanti* state, *sabda* is in an unmanifested state with *pratibha*. According to Bhartrhari *sabda* and *dhvani* are different sides of the same coin- 'sound' which is produced by the speaker of the language is taken as *Dhvani*, and *sabda* taken as the 'real word' or the universal word; then Bhartrhari draws a line of demarcation between two classes of sound, one *prakṛta* sound (original sound) and other *Vaikṛta* sound (derivative transformation). In the opinion of Bhartrhari without the former the unmanifested *sphota* cannot be comprehended. In *Vakyapadiya* Bhartrhari gives a detailed account of the relation between *Sabda* and *dhvani*.

Bhartrhari's concept of *Sabda* and *dhvani* has definitely a metaphysical out look which helped him to construct a 'Grand Narrative' of language. But in Saussure never we can see such an approach. But in this context the similarity and difference between Saussure's theory of *langue*, *parole* distinction with Bhartrhari is noted. *Langue* is the social product of speech and is relatively constant. *Parole* is to be taken as the individual speech

activities which are ephemeral and contingent. If we forget the metaphysical foundations of Bhartrhari's analysis of *Sabda* and *dhvani* we can see some lines of similarities between the concept of *dhvani* with *langue* and *parole*. Kunjunni Raja remarks:

"...The smallest acoustic units of a *parole* are the sounds, whereas the engrams in language (residual trace left in the minds of the members of the speech community) are the phonemes- the phoneme in the language remains the same when uttered by different people at different speeds and intonation. The phonemes or the phonematic pattern with the normal time sequel is analogous to the *sphota* of *patanjali* and sounds of *la parole* is to his *dhvanis*..."⁷

Language in the *Sphota* approach also needs a careful comparison with the Saussure's concept of language.

Rejecting the view points of *Nyaya* Bhartrhari says that the words and their relation with the meaning are eternal; underived and impersonal. For Bhartrhari the relation between the word and the meaning is not a matter of convention as *Nyaya* believes; to him the relation is eternal and universal. Because as we have seen in the concept of universal, the universals are the particulars of the *Sabda* or *Sabda Brahman*. In his holistic approach he does not

take the words as meaningful part. Confronted with the question of what constitutes the meaningful unit of language, Bhartrhari says that, it is the sentence which alone can be taken as the meaning full thing in language. Because meaning is a 'sphota' in the minds of the people. So he rejects the *Abhivahanvaya vada* and *Anvitabhidana vada*. Bhartrhari's *Sphota* theory was an answer to the views of *Nyaya* philosophers. The single unitary nature of the sentence as '*sphota*' reveals the meaning in an integrated manner.

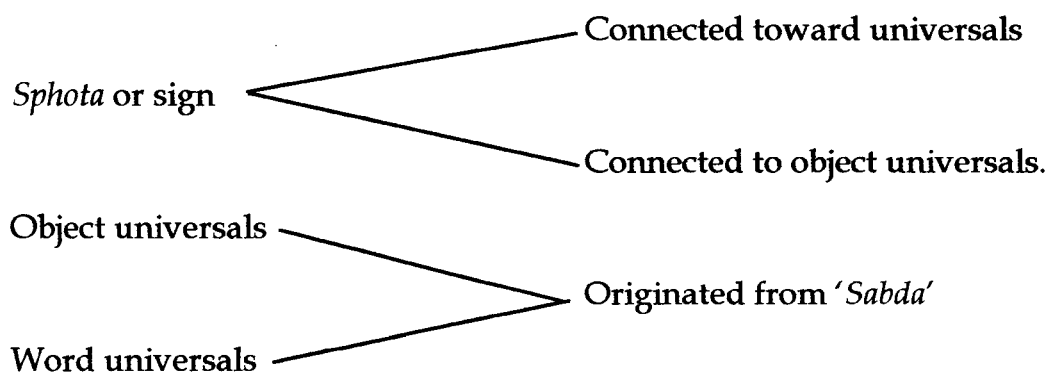
Bhartrhari's concept of language sometimes seems in coincidence with Saussure's theory of Sign. Both of these philosophers talk about the nature of 'sign'. For Saussure the nature of the 'sign' is not a 'static' one with some hidden 'essence'. Every 'sign' gets its meaning through its differentiation with other signs in a system, in this aspect his concept of sign has no similarities with Bhartrhari's concept of the *Sabda*. But Bhartrhari does not take the 'word' as a real one, always pointing to an 'object' meant. He says that the language itself is only an abstraction of the real. So according to Bhartrhari words have no 'real value' as we think.

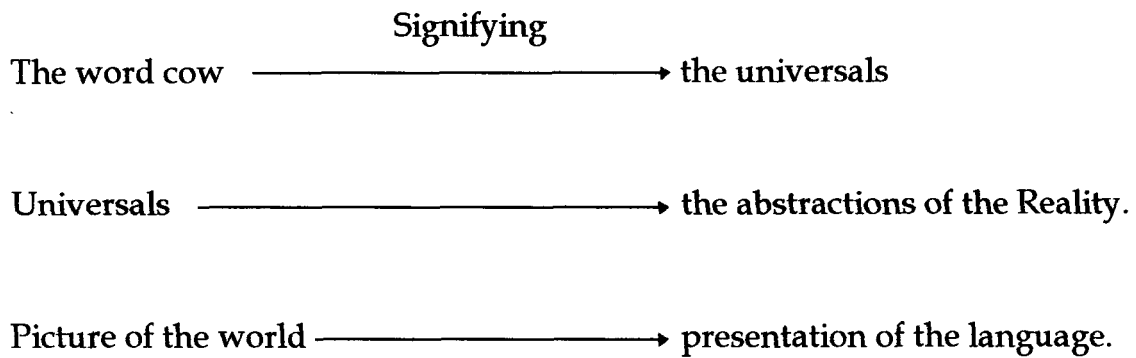
It is not easy to draw a parallel between Bhartrhari's concept of language and Saussure's concept of image. But the concept of language in the writings of the two thinkers is noticeable. Both of them do not believe that the language gives us a clear cut picture of reality. According to them what

language presents is only an abstraction of the 'Real'. For Bhartrhari and Saussure the 'Reality' which appears in language 'as real' is not real as we believe. Both thinkers pointed out the 'fictional nature' of the language. Language in the structuralist approach does not give us a concrete picture of the world as the old tradition of language philosophies does. Structuralism was a break with the tradition of Moore and Russel. In the same manner Bhartrhari differs very much from the *Nyaya* school of thought.

The concept of sign, which is taken by Bhartrhari and Saussure as the pivot of their study separates them from the old tradition of language philosophy. Now we can make an enquiry about the nature of the *Sphota* and 'sign'. As we have seen in the second chapter Bhartrhari's concept of *sphota* is not simple as Saussure, Bhartrhari's concept of sign has many ramifications. He did not study the sign in isolation as Saussure did.

We can represent the concept of Bhartrhari's sign as shown below.





Bhartrhari's concept of *sphota* involves a complicate network of different concepts of his thinking. We have discussed the different aspects of the concepts *sphota* in the second chapter. Saussure's concept of sign is not as complicated as Bhartrhari's. He says about the nature of signification, to him the 'sign' gets its meaning through differentiation. But Saussure misses some important points in his explanation of sign.

Saussure gives us an unsatisfactory explanation of the nature of sign. He is explaining about the nature of differentiation of sign in a system of sign, but a crucial question emerges here. What is the relation between a word and the objects, which stand as a reference of the word, in the external world. Take the example of 'Tree'. According to Saussure the word 'Tree' acquires its meaning by the differentiation of the word with other words in a system; for example, 'Tree' may differentiate itself from other words like 'thought', 'thick', 'thin' etc. In a system, at first this explanation of Saussure seems as a plausible one. However it does not solve the ontological problem of the

existence of the 'real tree' in the external world. Saussure's concept of sign 'Tree' does not refer the external tree which stands outside of the speaker. Then isn't any relation between the term tree and the object which stands outside of the language? Saussure does not consider this issue. So in the writings of Saussure we can see a deep gulf between language and reality. Marxist language philosopher Volosinov clearly pointed out this dangerous gulf in his 'Marxism and Philosophy of Language'. David Hawkes says,

“...The danger for structural analysis of signs is that, by focusing on the formal relations between the various elements of linguistic or semiotic codes, they will exclude or render nugatory the influence exercised on these signifying systems by external reality. Post-structuralist theory often takes the autonomous, constitutive role of representation for granted, or even celebrates it as a ludic liberation from dour referentiality. A salutary warning against this tendency was sounded in one of the earliest responses to Saussure, V.N. Volosinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929). Volosinov attacks Saussure's assumption that the structure of language is inherently imprinted on the human mind, and he points out the heritage of this idea in Cartesian rationalism:

The idea of the conventionality, the arbitrariness, of language is a typical one for rationalism as a whole... What interests the mathematically minded rationalists is not the relationship of the sign to the actual reality it reflects or to the individual who is its originator, but the relationship of sign to sign within a closed system already accepted and authorized. In other words, they are interested only in the inner logic of the system of signs itself, taken as in algebra, completely independently of the meanings that give signs their content.

Saussure and his followers, that is to say, cannot account for either the individual subjective origin or the objective referent of signs. Like Descartes, Saussure suggests that the material world is constructed by certain universal properties of the human mind. In Volosinov's view, this ignores the interdependence of ideas, signs and things..."⁸

But in the *Vakyapadiya* Bhartrhari explains the nature of word with the help of his 'monistic philosophy'.

Once more we have to revalue Saussure concept of sign, which is already explained in the third chapter.

Concept	=	Signified
Sound image	=	Signifier

In this example Saussure take the example of a Tree. But what does he mean by the term 'concept' 'tree'? The real tree or a concept of the tree? These questions are not answered in the writings of Saussure. In Saussure we can see a mixing up of 'concept of the Tree' and an object tree, which stands as a signified of the word Tree. Saussure does not separate it. Examining the Ogden- Richard's basic triangle of meaning Kunjunni Raja observes:

"...Sir A. Gardiner while emphasizing the distinction between meaning and the thing meant, criticise Saussure for his omission of a clear reference to things...."⁹

Bhartrhari's concept of 'sphota' and Saussure's concept of 'sign' are poles apart. But a basic similarity exists between these two thinkers lay in their analysis of the working of the language. Both of them do not take the language as the 'clear picture giving' mirror. According to them language only gives us the *Vikalpas* of the reality. The words try to signify the things, but it fails. For Bhartrhari it may be due to the phenomenal nature of the world, in case of Saussure it is due to the nature of language itself. In this view Bhartrhari's vision comes close to the structuralist view of language.

The concept *Pratibha*, which is a special feature of the philosophy of Bhartrhari separates him from the structuralist point of the comprehension of meaning. A man is capable of using the language because, according to

sphota theory the *Prathiba* lies in his consciousness. It is a distinctive feature of Bhartrhari's thought. As we discussed in the second chapter it is flash of understanding; in the language philosophy of Saussure we cannot see such a concept. He does not turn his attention to such a 'metaphysical' explanation.

In the philosophy of Bhartrhari as we have already noted, we can see the levels of language and they are rooted in the doctrine of absolutism. Bhartrhari takes words as the unreal abstraction of the sentence, and the sentence the unreal abstraction of the paragraphs, thus he moves towards a hierarchy of monism. Thus at the top of the language hierarchy there is only one indivisible reality present, the ignorance of the human being prevent them from the understanding of the world in its real nature. Then he offers the practice of *pranavadhyana* to rectify our thought. Definitely the stand point of Bhartrhari is basically metaphysical and in Saussure we cannot see such a an argument.

In this section we have compared the main concepts of Bhartrharis language philosophy with Saussure in a traditional manner. The similarities and difference between the basic issues such as, language, understanding, and meaning are explained. In the next section we will place the philosophy Bhartrhari and Saussure against the broad post-structuralistic notion of

thinking aimed at to bring a new exegesis of the concept 'subject' in the postmodern situation with the help of Bhartrhari's insights on 'subject'.

FOUR

Bhartrhari/Saussure/Derrida on the deconstruction of the subject

Once more in this chapter of comparison, we have to turn our thought towards the problem of subject and identity in the postmodern situation; which is dealt briefly in the introduction. As pointed out in the first chapter we face the problem of subject as the central question of philosophy in this postmodern condition.

We have seen that the concept of the human subject undergoes a significant transformation as a consequence of the developments in philosophy and psychology by the time of Nietzsche. To make a clear picture we have to summarise the attacks of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida on modernity and its project of subject making.

Here we seek to analyze critically the antipathy exhibited in postmodern theory towards the modern project. Whereas modernism tried to elevate man to God's place, postmodern theory seeks to destroy the very place and position of God and the modernist concept of man. Heidegger uncovers the originality of postmodern thought. In his works on Nietzsche

he says that through transvaluation of all values Nietzsche destroys the 'above' 'high' and 'beyond'.

Postmodern theory has been intent on completing Nietzsche's project of vanquishing God's shadow. He tried to eliminate the 'shadow' of the God from philosophical thinking. The denial of God, which is inaugurated by Nietzsche is reflected in postmodern theories of the language and truth. That is why Lyotard has defined postmodernism as the rejection of the meta narratives of modernism. Modernism in this sense is defined as a science that legitimates itself with reference to a meta discourse.

Descartes grounds all knowledge in the certainty of man's subjective existence. In his works the existence of God is proved only after giving the proof for 'cogito'. Only after demonstrating that man's ego is *res cogitans* does Descartes in his fourth meditation attempt to prove the existence of God. But this specious proof of God's existence serves only to ground the validity of the *cogito's* reason, the very thing that proves the existence of God. Descartes' attempt was to formulate an understanding of God, through the reason. In Descartes' philosophy God is merely the metaphysical ground for the operation of the independent, autonomous ego. Reason here is not dependent on God, but God depend on the reason.

In his writings Nietzsche locates the origin of metaphysics in the distinction between the two worlds, a 'true' and an 'apparent' world. Nietzsche believes that in theology man has falsely projected his values upon God and upon a true divine world. Nietzsche believes that through the death of God and the abolition of the true world one can destroy the metaphysical foundation of the ontology. He formulated a new mode of thinking in philosophy, instead of giving a rational content to man he likes to rise the man at the realm of 'super man' with the help of a dionysian element.

While Nietzsche seeks to abolish the distinction between a 'true' and 'apparent' world Heidegger seek to reinscribe a distinction; the ontological difference between Being and beings. As Nietzsche Heidegger also wants to destroy the theological character of metaphysics. Because theology forgets this difference in defining Being as a being, as the efficient cause of beings. Like Nietzsche Heidegger seeks to destroy this theological character of metaphysics, which defines God and his transcendence. 72

In the place of a theological transcendence, which defines the position of God above man Heidegger formulates the ontological difference, based upon the relationship between human Dasein and Being, in which transcendence defines not the place of God above man, but rather designates

man's ability, in his essence as *Dasein* to differentiate between Being and beings.

Derrida deconstructs the traditional metaphysics not through identifying metaphysics as the forgetting of the *ontico ontological difference*, but rather by defining metaphysics as the debasement of writing. Both Heidegger and Derrida are questioning the privileging of 'presence' by traditional metaphysics, but Heidegger looks first to the description of human being while Derrida begins with description of writing in order to deconstruct the metaphysics of presence. In his 'Being and time' Heidegger focused his attention upon the metaphysical character of ontology; but in 'Of Grammatology' Derrida concentrated upon the metaphysical character of Linguistics.

Derrida's critique of transcendence in metaphysics takes the form of deconstruction of philosophy's irrepressible desire for a 'transcendental signified', which is taken by the philosophers as the source and ground of truth. Derrida questions the belief in a transcendental source of meaning and realm which seeks to impose a final, true interpretation of the world or text. In the writings of Derrida we can see the elucidation of Nietzsche's remark that "...I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in Grammar..."

The force of Derrida's move from man to language and from being to writing comes from his deconstruction of the subject, of the self-presence of the conscious subject. The deconstruction emerges out of Derrida's encounter with Edmund Husserl.¹⁰ The rereading of Husserl is made possible for Derrida by shifting the focus from consciousness to semiotics, from the subject to signs. In his writings Derrida deconstructed Husserl, demonstrating his complicity with the metaphysics of presence taking sign as his clue.

Through a deconstruction of Husserl's distinction between expression and indication, between 'spiritual' ideality and the 'bodily' reality of communication, Derrida will show that there is no pure internal sphere of self-consciousness and self-presence in which one expresses meaning to one self without signs. Derrida's goal is to show that consciousness does not produce language, but rather that consciousness is produced by the structure, sign, and play of language. There is no innersphere that is completely internal, completely "one's own".

In Husserl's theory expression does not mean that the subject expresses itself to another; rather expression describes the way in which consciousness gives itself meaning about an object. According to Husserl, this process of expression is completely internal and completely free of the need for signs. But Derrida argues that the very process that allows for the distinction

between the transcendental consciousness, and the empirical consciousness, ie, the process of idealization, needs signs in order to constitute ideal objects. Here Husserl's attempt was to overcome this problem through positing a medium of expression which does not need signs, i.e., the phenomenological voice.

According to Derrida, Husserl will radicalize the necessary privilege of the phone which is implied by the whole history of metaphysics. By privileging the voice in expression and excluding writing and indication from consciousness, Husserl confirms the classical metaphysics of presence. Husserl begins with a distinction between the sensory or bodily aspect of expression and its non-sensory or mental aspect. His goal in positing the phenomenological voice is to exclude the physical, sensory, and bodily aspect of language (Indication) from the spiritual, non-sensory aspect of language (expression). Thus, Husserl's theory of language, which makes possible the division between the transcendental and worldly, is based upon a metaphysical dualism between spiritual /ideal and the physical /sensible.

Expression is characterized by all the privileged features of the 'spirit or soul' while, indication is characterized by all the denigrated features of the body and death.

Derrida deconstructs Husserl's theory of internal time consciousness, he says.

“...The possibility of re-petition in its most general form, that is, the construction of a trace in the most Universal sense- is a possibility which not only must inhabit the pure actuality of the now but must constitute it through the movement of difference it introduces. Such a trace is -if we can employ this language without immediately contradicting it or crossing it out as we proceed -more “primordial” than what is phenomenologically primordial...”¹¹

According to Derrida the movement of difference is not some thing that happens to a transcendental subject, but it produces the subject. Thus Derrida deconstructs the metaphysical subject through demonstrating that is written, in the sense of ‘proto writing’.

While in his writings, Descart uses the ideality of the “I am” to prove the immortality of the soul, Derrida deconstructs this ideality to deny the possibility of an immortal ‘I’ or soul. Derrida shows that the ideality of the “I am” can only be produced in signs and that the desire to exclude the needs for signs from the interior monologue which says “I am” is the desire to exclude one’s death. For Derrida, the sign is the place of interweaving of

presence and absence, life and death, expression and indication, which Husserl has tried to separate through his transcendental idealism.

Heidegger's attempt to destroy the history of metaphysics by aiming to work out the question of the meaning of Being in general through a mediation of Dasein. At the end of 'Being and time', this aim is made explicit; "our way of exhibiting the construction of Daseins Being remains only *one way* which we may take; our aim is to work out the question of Being in General". In a structurally similar move, Derrida deconstructs the metaphysics of presence through raising the questions of the structure of the sign in general through a meditation of writing.

Does the deconstruction of the rationalist logos mean that all truth is the product of difference? Does the deconstruction of the transcendental consciousness mean that all transcendence has been destroyed? To give an answer to these questions we have to reread Bhartrhari.

From the above paragraphs we can reach at a conclusion, that, in the realm of philosophy now we have to make a new approach to discuss the problem of Being. Nietzsche and his followers deconstructed the logo-centric tradition of Western metaphysics. In this situation can we follow any alternative which is neither logo-centric nor metaphysical in its nature? In Bhartrhari we can see a new orientation of thinking. Matilal in his word and

world shows Bhartrhari's unique position in the philosophy of Indian tradition which shows his anti 'logo centric' position in *Vakyapadiya*.

"...From the point of view of Bhartrhari's *sphota* or the notion that language is an integral part of our consciousness, we may say that both speech and writing can alike be the 'illuminator' of the *sphota*. One is not primary and the other does not particularly *distort* the *sphota*. In fact both can equally 'distort' the *sphota* in a non-pejorative sense. Both 'transform' (cf. *vikara*) the untransformable, unmodifiable *sphota*, which is part and parcel of everybody's consciousness. In the light of Bhartrhari's theory, therefore, both the translations and the original (whether vocal or written) are in some sense transformations.

In spite of Bhartrhari's explicit use of *sabda* and speech, I would argue that he was not guilty of 'logocentrism' in Derrida's sense. In fact, in Indian tradition, where oral transmission of the *Vedas* (wrongly called the Scriptures, for the Sanskrit term is *Sruti* = something to be heard) was the norm, where oral recitation of the Buddha's dialogues (the Buddhist scriptures where each section always starts 'Thus, I

have heard....') lasted for centuries after the death of the Buddha (and the same is true of Jainism), and where oral transmission of other texts called *sastras* continued for a long time and texts were first memorized by students before any explanation or understanding was attempted, it is no wonder that the word for language was the word for sound (*sabda*). All these facts of the Indian tradition might have been historically conditioned because scholars faced extreme difficulties due to climatic and other conditions, for example the monsoon, in preparing and preserving writing materials. But the tradition, I argue, is free from the *fault* of logocentrism. For logocentrism, as I see it, flourishes and derives nourishment from the explicit condemnation (and also 'damnation'- it has been called a *sin*) of writing, otherwise 'speech' cannot be promoted to the prime place. And for this point one can turn to Derrida. It is obvious to any reader of Derrida how this 'condemnation', in paradoxical manner, provides ammunition for Derrida's deconstruction of the texts of Saussure and Rousseau. As far as I know, such condemnation of writing was conspicuous by its absence in

the Indian tradition in which Bhartrhari flourished. Hence the *sphota* theory of language was not 'logocentric' in any damning sense. As I have said, both sonic and graphic symbols can be the 'illuminator' of the *sphota*; and being the illuminator either of them can be identified with the illuminated. Both speech and writing can be in perfect harmony (where talk of 'violence' would be pointless) in Bhartrhari's holistic view of language..."¹²

Following these insights of Matilal we can analyse Bhartrhari's concept of Kala and Derrida's Concept of Differance. As Derrida Bhartrhari also rejects the logocentric vision of language. It is interesting and remarkable that Bhartrhari, standing in the monistic tradition of East, rejects successfully the logocentric concepts of some other schools, especially of *Advaita vedanta* of Sankara.

In the view of Bhartrhari in language at all its levels, the dynamics of separation into words (*Sabda*) and meaning (*artha*) present beginninglessly. In the same manner Derrida asserts that language has no origin. According to Derrida 'There is nothing outside the text; that mean there is no metaphysical "other" outside of the text or speech that starts the language. Like Derrida Bhartrhari sees sequencing or difference as the characteristic dynamic of

language in all its levels. To him the innermost apparently unitative level of speech is pregnant with the power of difference. In *Vakyapadiya*, *Sabdatattova* is not taken as a lesser Brahman, but is identical with Brahman itself and the only Brahman there is. Brahman, for Bhartrhari, as the word principle, in an intrinsically dynamic and expressive reality. Both Bhartrhari and Derrida describe the immanent power of becoming in terms of time and space.

For Derrida as we have seen in the first chapter, writing in prior to spoken. Derrida's real point has nothing to do with historical priority of the written. His aim is by reversing the usual speech writing hierarchical opposition which has been accepted in the west since Socrates, to counter the simple choice of one of the term over the other. For Derrida writing includes even the neuronal traces in the brain. Derrida even playfully alludes to DNA as a 'writing' or trace present in all living substance. Here Derrida's initial aim is to deconstruct the traditional priority accorded to speech over writing. According to Derrida western thought has always been structured in terms of dichotomies or polarities: good *vs* evil, truth *vs* error, man *vs* women, being *vs* nothingness etc. these opposites, however have not been seen as equal entities. The second term is always put in position of being a fallen or the corrupted version of the first. Thus evil is the lack of good, absence is the lack of presence. Both in time and quality the first term get the priority. The

general result has been the privileging of units, identity and temporal and spatial presence over diversity, difference, and deferment in space and time. Thus in Western philosophy the question of the nature of being has been answered in terms of *Presence*.

As we have seen earlier the self presentation of meaning in the spoken word is known as *logocentrism*. Writing from the logocentric view, is seen as a secondary representation of speech to be used when speaking is impossible. Derrida's critique is not aimed at reversing this value system. Rather his critique attempts to dissect the whole system of metaphysical opposition upon which the speech versus writing debate is grounded. Derrida finds that both speech and writing are beginninglessly structured by difference and distance.

Almost all of the schools in Indian philosophy, with the exceptions grammarian school, largely share the same logocentric biases towards being and speech. In the tradition of Indian thought we cannot see the exact parallels of 'logocentric' concepts, but so many philosophical systems in India privileges one opposite or extreme over the other in case of speech and writing.

Both Derrida and Bhartrhari agree that there is no source or ground of language outside or beyond language. Language does not depend upon

something known as god or logos. In the *Vakyapadiya* the absolute is known as *Sabdatattova* or the word principle. For Bhartrhari there is not something apart from or beyond language. Derrida as we have seen, deconstructed the old view point; that a separate being or presence is immediately reflected in speech and then given a secondary representation in writing. Derrida deconstructed this argument as it is presented in Plato, Rousseau, and others, by finding writing when understood as difference, to contain all of spoken language, and all inscribed language.

We can see some interesting points of similarities between Bhartrhari's *Sabdatattova* and Derrida's arche-writing or trace. For Derrida the arche-writing or trace contains within it the possibility for all oral and written language. Arche-writing is nothing but a dynamic expressive difference. Arche-writing does not depend upon sound or writing; but it is the condition for such sound and writing. According to Derrida the arche-writing does not exist its possibility is anterior to all expression (signified-signifier, content-expression etc.). In the *Vakyapadiya* Bhartrhari says that *Brahman*, the word principle is without beginning or end. The *Sabdatattova* is divided by the function of its own inherent powers. Through the sequencing power of time or *Kala* the word principle manifests itself in the expressive activity of language. As a contrast to the philosophy of sankara and his theory of *Maya*,

this activity is seen as a real manifestation of *Sabdatattva*. Hear Bhartrhari refutes the *vivartavada* of sankara. For Bhartrhari *Brahman* is the word principle, the intrinsically dynamic and expressive reality. And the language is its manifestation through the process of temporal becoming. As Derrida who say about trace Bhartrhari also uses the notion of a beginningless trace that is inherent in consciousness; known as *Pratibha*. We have discussed this concept in chapter two of this work. Bhartrhari discusses the trace of speech in relation to previous birth.

In the writings of Derrida and Bhartrhari we can see that, it is the pure possibility of difference that is manifested as language. For Derrida the arche-trace manifests into the opposing forms of inner concept and outer sound image. When Derrida uses the term 'sign' to refer the whole, Bhartrhari uses the term '*sphota*' to refer the whole. In the signs of Derrida signified refers to the abstract concept, and signifier refers to the spoken image. *Sphota* represents both *artha* and *dhvani*, *artha* refer to the concept of meaning and *dhvani* refer to the uttered sound. For both Derrida and Bhartrhari the linguistic whole or the sign or *sphota* has an inherent force towards manifestation that produce the signifier and signified; or *artha* and *dvani*. Both sign and *sphota* are rooted with in language, that works through spacing, punctuation, differentiation in time and space.

Today in our area of postmodern discourse we can see that Bhartrhari's concept *Sabdatattoa* and Derrida's concept of arche-writing have no difference. Both of them would find common cause against those who try to locate the absolute out side of language.

In the tradition of Indian philosophy Bhartrharis position is unique. He distinguishes himself from other schools such as *Vedanta*, *Sankhya*, and *Saivism* with the help of his own philosophical outlooks. As we have seen Bhartrhari successfully avoided the 'logo centric' and 'phono centric' charges against his thought. In his approach he comes very much close to the position of Nietzsche and Heidegger. Bhartrhari does not consider the 'being' as the metaphysical reflection of the 'Being' as Sankara. He takes the whole universe and language as a fiction or a *leela* or in Nietzsche words a 'childs play' - or a huge cosmic drama. He is always trying to move away from the 'truths' of language. Finally he arrives at the conclusion that, as Nietzsche, the metaphorical language, which give us only the false picture of the world is not sufficient to give us the 'true picture' of the world.

Bhartrhari has, finally, extended the notion of *apoddhara* - abstraction which is peculiar to grammar - also to language which implies that for him language is as fictitious as grammar.¹³ Here we can hear the echo of Nietzsches words, that "I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still

have faith in grammar". At the end of his philosophical enquiry Bhartrhari relinquished the very subject matter of his enquiry, that is the language itself, as Nietzsche relinquished 'the false mirror of reality'. For Bhartrhari and Nietzsche grammar is the sanctum sanctorum for the 'God' or 'presence' or the metaphysical truth; which gives meaning to our 'language' and 'life'. Rejecting the position of Grammar and Language in ontology and epistemology both of these thinkers rejected the metaphysical foundations of philosophy in their own tradition.

In our present day postmodern situation all most all of the traditional modes of thinking have been deconstructed, even the approaches of Saussure has also been deconstructed by Derrida. In this situation we have to make a thorough study of Bhartrhari and his philosophy, in order to escape from the 'aimless and futureless' situation of philosophy. Fortunately unlike Derrida, Bhartrhari's philosophy offers us a picture of 'being', which is free from the charges of 'logocentrism' and the traditional metaphysical outlooks. As Matilal did we should take the responsibility of the construction of the new Bhartrharian approach in our philosophical tradition. Which alone will help us to mould our own thought and future in philosophy.

NOTES

1. S. Radhakrishnan, "*Philosophy East and West*", 1951, April.
2. Bimal Krishna Matilal, *The word and the world* (Oxford University Press; New York, 1990), p. 7.
3. Jitendra Nath Mohanty, *Reason and tradition in Indian thought* (Clarendon Press; Oxford, 1992), p. 291.
4. J.J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment* (Routledge; New York, 1997), p. 121-122.
5. Bimal Krishna Matilal, *Perception* (Clarendon Press; Oxford, 1986), p. 397.
6. *Ibid*, p. 387.
7. K. Kunjuni Raja, *Indian theories of Meaning* (The Adyar Library and Research centre; Madras, 1977), p. 105.
8. David Hawkes, *Ideology* (Routledge; London, 1996), p. 151.
9. K. Kunjuni Raja, *Indian theories of Meaning* (The Adyar Library and Research centre; Madras, 1997), p. 12.
10. Joseph Claude Evans, *Strategies of Deconstruction; Derrida and the myth of the Voice* (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

11. Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena* (North Western University Press, 1974), p. 67.
12. Bimal Krishna Matilal, *The word and the world* (Oxford University press; New York, 1990), p. 131-132.
13. Bhartrhari, *Vakyapadiya*, III. 11.6 - III . II . 9.

CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

The bequest of Bhartrhari

".... The visionary capacity is basic to man, but it is intertwined with the capacity to cultivate a vision and to turn it in to a reality by acting in its light..."

Herbert V. Guenther, On Spiritual Discipline.

The problem of Language, Subject and Reality which are the key concepts of present day philosophy, as elucidated in the foregoing chapters reveal certain specific features of the philosophical insights of Bhartrhari and Saussure. A brief outline of the thesis is presented in the preface. The realm of the relation between language and reality as explained by Bhartrhari and Saussure is examined in the second and third chapter. In the fourth chapter the comparison and the contrast between Saussure's and Bhartrhari's approach to language and its role in constituting the subject and its impacts upon the postmodern thinking has been examined. In this regard, we think, the classical and modern theories on 'Language' and 'Subject' has also been discussed. The central issues such as 'Language', 'Subject' and the 'External Reality', which are the crucial problems in our

present day philosophical discourse are examined in the light of the postmodern approach as we have intended in the preface.

In this thesis we have tried our best to provide an initial demonstration showing that the Nietzschean tradition of Western philosophy and the tradition of Bhartrhari can come together in constructive and critical dialogues. The 'demonstration' has been made by focussing on the problem of 'subject' as conceived by structuralist and post-structuralist in the West and in the Indian philosopher Bhartrhari. The comparative analysis undertaken between Bhartrhari and Saussure has not only identified a large area of common ground between Saussurian and Bhartrharian approaches to language, it has also intended to point out and highlight the distinction between viewpoints within Eastern and Western philosophy. The difference between Bhartrhari and Sankara, on ontology and epistemology in Eastern tradition and the difference between the tradition of Descartes and Nietzsche on the problem of 'being' in Western tradition is clarified in chapters one and two, and also in the chapter of comparison. The purpose of this East-West dialogue on philosophy of language is the deeper self-understanding achieved by examining one's own thinking in relation to the thought of other.

The comparative study of Saussure's sign theory and Bhartrhari's *Sphota* theory in the light of post modern theory has proved stimulating and fruitful. This comparative study has identified many points of formal and often substantive contact between the tradition of Saussure, and Indian philosophical outlook. This comparison has demonstrated the value of new insights on both sides. Reading Bhartrhari with Derrida highlights the error of previous interpretation that have read the *Vakyapadiya* through the eyes of *Advaitavedanta*. The comparison of Bhartrhari with Saussure also highlighted how Bhartrhari escaped from the trap of logocentrism, which was the drawback of Saussurian system, successfully and how he presented a new system of thought in Indian Grammarian tradition. In the chapter of comparison the problem of self, which is the pivot of our enquiry is shown through the arguments of Bhartrhari and this chapter also explain how Bhartrhari successfully avoided the Logocentric picture of the subject and traditional metaphysical account of the subject. Presenting Derrida's challenge against Husserl and 'phonocentric' theories, the place of Bhartrhari's philosophy in the post modern situation is elucidated with the help of the views of Matilal.

The dialogue between the positions of Bhartrhari and Derrida on the problems of 'self' 'language' and 'Reality' carried out in chapter four did establish a new forum from which the philosophy of Bhartrhari can constructively engage post-structuralism and vice versa. We saw that for both Bhartrhari and Saussure what language present to us as real is only *Vikalpas* in language. And in the same chapter we discussed the nature of language in the writings of Derrida and Bhartrhari. For both of them language at its origin is beginninglessly infected with a pregnancy of difference. Just as Derrida finds that even the apparently undifferentiated inarticulate primitive cry has inherent within an impulse of difference, that shapes itself into articulate expression, so also Bhartrhari sees the beginningless and unitary *Sabdatattva* to contain a power to manifest itself as the *Veda* and as speech at all levels of actualization. The two approaches of East and West are demonstrated here not only to show the similarities in approach, but to show Bhartrhari's radical difference with other Indian philosophers. In the writings of Bhartrhari and Derrida, language at its origin is seen not as the mirroring of a passive logos or divine presence, as in the case of their predecessors, but rather the dynamic becoming of the reality itself. In Derrida's writings this natural and inherent impulse of language to manifest itself is referred to as *trace* or *Psychicimprint*. In

Vakyapadiya, Bhartrhari establishes the notion that *Sabdatattva* or language has within itself a pregnant power for differentiation. The concept of differance, which is put forward by Derrida seems similar to the concept of *Sabdatattva*. Because, for both, the dynamic dialectic and evolution of language is seen to be inherent in the free becoming of language itself rather than a result of the action of a Separated 'God' "playing" in the world. This aspect, or the *Sabdatattva* of Bhartrhari separates him from other traditional philosophers like Sankara, and Madhava.

It is hoped that this comparative analysis will help to distinguish Bhartrhari's view from the other schools of thought in India and West and at the same time encourage us to face the 'Nihilistic' outlook of postmodern approach. However we should not forget some of the sharp differences between Bhartrhari and Derrida. Derrida would reject Bhartrharis confidence that one can have a pure perception or *pratibha* experience of the word. Such a mystical experience of language is not possible in Derrida's analysis. At its base this disagreement between East and West is a disagreement as to the definition of human nature, its epistemological and psychological limitations. In the Eastern perspective human nature is inherently perfectible but most of the philosophers in West do not take this

position. This study leads to the conclusion that this fundamental difference between Derrida and Bhartrhari points to the need for a thorough study of Western and Eastern views of human nature and their philosophical implications.

Then the crucial question remains as to how we can construct a new school in the Indian tradition, seemingly dead. How can we use our old tradition? Can we avoid the reductionist mistakes of our old philosophical analysis? Kar.H.Potter narrates the present condition of the young Indian philosopher:

"... The plight of the young Indian philosopher is that he cannot find anyone who can initiate him in to the problems of classical Indian thought in a way that will make them live for him and his times. And yet on the other hand he feels a need to find something unique in his own heritage, some thing which will give him the right to say honestly that Indian philosophy can contribute to the world at this juncture and which will inspire him in the knowledge that he is a living part of a functioning tradition...."¹

To give an answer to this question and a meaningful response to our own time we have to re read our tradition with a new orientation. Instead

of following our old models of traditional schools of thought, we must prepare ourselves to receive the new dimensions from the grammarian philosophers. In order to make a new philosophising we should revalue and restate what Bhartrhari had left to us. Let *Vakyapadiya*, which is the intellectual bequest of Bhartrhari be a new starting point.

NOTES

1. Karl H. Potter, *Presuppositions of Indian Philosophies* (Motilal and Banarsidas; Delhi, 1991), p.255.

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