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## MEANING IS A MAGIC

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In existential tradition Philosophy of Language or meaning of words or sentences are described as human possibilities, not in terms of sense and reference. But in so far as truth of a sentence or word is concerned it is relative, similar to the concept of contingent or probable of other philosophical tradition but not same as them. In my paper I will discuss the views of both Heidegger and Sartre of meaning or language and I will try to point out the similarity and difference between them as well as their point of departure from linguistic tradition.

Heidegger in his *Being and Time*, considers words and its meaning as—purposive in their use in the human world. We use words and ascribe meaning on things according to the purpose they serve for us. Things are intelligible to us as Theatre, as knives etc. for the purpose they can be useful. Moreover, the meaning of a building as Theatre indicates human possibilities such as writing, producing, appreciating plays. So, the world with words and meaning actually indicates human possibility which called 'Horizon' in Heideggerian terminology. This horizon also includes scientific understanding of the things in which things are understood in terms of substantiality of the matter and human world is modified into articulation of things as mass, motion, energy etc. i.e., as some moving bodies in a space time continuum. Thus, meaning is not in words or things but in the structure of understanding. But things are also, for Heidegger, capable of independent existence and these concrete things play an important role in understanding of mind, knowledge, number etc. which belong to the world of human being.<sup>1</sup>

Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness* in depicting concrete relation with Other, considers language as one of the primary attitudes towards Other. His depiction is totally based on his understanding of lack of unilateral relation of I and other or of man and things, the relation is rather reciprocal and moving. For Sartre, language is a psychological or historical problem in terms of its existence.

Learning and use of a particular language is not in terms of its discovery or invention. Language need not be discovered, since it is given in the relation to Other. As I need not discover me and my relation to others, I need not discover language.

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<sup>1</sup> Heidegger's Philosophy by MAGDA King, pp 6-11

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But, like my other actions, my using of language drives me towards my possibility of my being this or that. The meaning of my action is outside the action. Thus, use of my language is a proof of my being this or that to others.

For Sartre, Others presence as a look confronts me and give rise to the use of language to seduce other. But primitive language may not be seduction, language can be a seduction with complete realization of it. So, I try to find a fascinating language to make myself an object before Others.

But the effect of my language along with posture and gesture cannot be known by me. Only I can read it on Others which may be wrong. So, I can only guess the meaning of my expression and at the same time the meaning of my being.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the use of language takes me away from myself. So, Sartre calls language 'sacred' as if my language is an offering to Other, who is silent hearer of my language. To Others I become an object but a magical object, for Sartre which we cannot get hold of, it is just an appearance whose property is language. So, from the speaker to the hearer word is sacred and from the hearer to the speaker word is a 'magic'.

Sartre has made an excellent contribution to the philosophy of language by conceptualizing the origination of completely realized form of language as to encounter or win Others. Language is not simply a means of communication for Sartre, because nothing like proper communication is conceived between speaker and hearer through language. Neither speaker nor hearer is sincere about the expression. Atheist Sartre does not consider sacred as something pure. But it seems that Sartre considers language nothing other than a human relation and ignores the aspect of language as a means of description. But in so far as description of other human beings, are concerned we can say that language describes it as magical object for Sartre i.e., describing him without grasping it in its actuality but with a tendency to escape it.

But while discussing Language, Sartre is not using the concept of magic or escape, in relation to the description of inanimate object. But in case of horrifying appearance of object as we run or faint Sartre calls it a magic. So, the meaning which is ascribed is a magic no matter it is on linguistic expression of speaker or on an inanimate object or on man.

Inanimate objects are ascribed with meaning for Heidegger according to the human possibilities attached with it. So meaning is purposive. But as in discussing human development Heidegger says that we sang before we talked as he considers language as instinct of a mature man or not as outside of his conscious domain, the language is escaping the thing in its actuality as a human faculty.

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<sup>2</sup> Being and Nothingness, pp. 372-374

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So, for both Heidegger and Sartre meaning is magic i.e., an escape from the reality of the thing on which meaning is ascribed.

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