MEANING: AN APPROACH FROM ALTERNATIVE STANDPOINTS

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Philosophers widely differ on their conception of meaning. To say this is to imply that there are alternative ways of conceptualizing meaning which gives rise to alternative conceptions of meaning. This important fact regarding meaning shows, first, that meaning may not be perceived as a homogenous concept and, second, that there are alternative philosophical or linguistic standpoints due to which we have these alternative conceptualizations of meaning.

Elaborating these two points, to say that meaning is not homogenous implies that there is a fundamental dichotomy between the two basic constituents—the subjective and the objective dimensions of meaning. These two mutually opposing dimensions or constituents ultimately form the two standpoints in meaning. These two standpoints are the two alternative conceptualizations of meaning where each seeks to explain from its respective standpoint the nature of meaning and the meaning—relationship that is involved between a word and the object. These two standpoints give rise to the subsequent standpoints, namely, the speaker's standpoint and the hearer's standpoint. To put it in philosophical terms, the former standpoint is followed by idealism whereas the latter is followed by realism. These two standpoints themselves indicate the two alternative ways of viewing meaning.

However, at this stage, a question arises: Is meaning not a unitary concept? This, indeed, sounds paradoxical particularly in view of my statement supporting the alternative standpoints in meaning. At a logico-linguistic level, the subjective and the objective dimensions pose a sharp dichotomy leading to the formulation of two clear-cut standpoints in meaning. Meaning in this sense is not a unitary concept. But at a deeper level, meaning exhibits unity which is often unnoticed. This is where we come to the metaphysics of language. At this level, the subject/object dichotomy is viewed in a different

way. Accordingly, a person who is asserting a particular dimension of meaning is not, thereby, rejecting the other dimension. The reason is that what he is rejecting is already implicitly presupposed by him. This presupposed dimension, though largely unnoticed, is necessarily present whenever we are engaged in linguistic activity.

Finally, this paper is based on Professor Kalidas Bhattacharyya's[1] work on meaning. His work on meaning, though neglected, is remarkably original in terms of its insights and approach. The two places, where he made a special study on meaning, was his book, *Philosophy, Logic and Language* and his paper, "Some Problems Concerning, Meaning", which was a contribution to the volume entitled, *Analytical Philosophy in Comparative Perspective.* The latter work was one of his last works where he made a full-length study on meaning. In a certain sense this work on meaning is not totally unrelated to his earlier work where he had developed his own system called alternative standpoints in philosophy. It may be noted in this connection that his work on meaning has been influenced both by the Nyāya theory of meaning and Kant's transcendental idealism.

In my paper, I have presented his ideas in the way I have understood it. This involves both reinterpretation and extension of his ideas. Bhattacharyya offers a framework of analysis which has explicated a structure in terms of which we can understand the meaning — relationship that is involved between a work and the object.

This paper has three sections. In the first section, I shall briefly present Bhattacharyya's view on meaning as a system of convention having both the subjective and the objective sides. In the second section, I shall discuss Bhattacharyya's formulation of the alternative standpoints in meaning. In the third section, following Bhattacharyya's suggestion, my attempt will be to show that at a deeper metaphysical level the subjective/objective dimensions are not in opposition to each other. Rather, they form a unity which makes unitary conception of meaning possible.

I

Meaning as Conventional Relations

The starting point of Bhattacharyya's analysis is the common sense notion of meaning i.e., the notion of meaning that we ordinarily take it to be when we are engaged in everyday conversation. The common sense notion of meaning is not only the starting point but it is also the basis of his analysis. That is why we find that Bhattacharyya is coming again and again to common sense notion of meaning.

For him, whatever abstraction we make, be it linguistic or logical or metaphysical, it cannot be totally unrelated to the common sense conception of meaning.

Bhattacharyya sets a context in which he tries to understand and identify the notion of meaning. The context is the language/reality relationship. We use words to refer to things or objects. But how do these words get their meanings? The relation between words and objects is, thus, vitally important for us to know how words get their meanings. Things or objects in the world necessarily have features or properties. We distinguish them and specify them individually on the basis of these features. These features may be, thus, regarded as that which define the nature of the thing concern. But what is then meaning? Meaning consists in stating these features. These features taken together form a complex. Thus, for example, the meaning of a word, say, lemon can be given by specifying the constituent features of lemon. This way of defining meaning has an obvious danger—a logical danger. Bhattacharyya is well aware of this danger. Some of his remarks, though brief, express his deep concern. Let me try to interpret his line of thinking. The danger involved in this perspective on meaning comes from the side of objects or things. To say that a lemon has these following features, say x, y, z, is to say that there is an analytic connection existing between these features and a lemon. Considering this analytic connection between a lemon and its features, the definition of a lemon will be likewise analytic. Thus, the definition stating that anything having these features will be called a lemon is an analytic truth. Meaning in this sense is given in terms of analytic definitions expressing truths which are both necessary and knowable *a priori*. But to hold this will be to rule out the possibility that lemons can ever lack any of these features as mentioned in the meaning statement. However, the fact is that we can always think of the presence of abnormal members in the class that we are describing. This may happen due to some changes in the environment. As a result some of the earlier-mentioned features of the object may be dropped and, instead, some new features may be included in its definition. But such a revision is not possible because the features associated with the object are taken to be analytically tied to the object concerned. Thus, incorporating the new change will involve a contradiction. But this is simply untenable. It is untenable on the ground that change is a fact and in view of this fact it must be maintained that the sentences expressing meaning can never be analytic.

In view of this difficulty, the constructive suggestion of Bhattacharyya is that to say that something is a lemon or a tiger is not to say that it

necessarily must have all those features that we normally associate with that term. It is due to this loose connection that a three-legged tiger is still called a tiger and a blue lemon is still called a lemon. Thus, the proposal that the meaning of a term consists in stating the features of a thing does not make meaning fit into an analytic definition. Bhattacharyya has openly questioned this move when he said why one should be so fastidious about linguistic precision even at the cost of forgetting the empirical reality? Perhaps, the best way to reconstruct Bhattacharyya's thesis that meaning consists in stating the features of a thing will be to identify meaning with what Hilary Putnam calls stereotype. Features of a thing taken together form a stereotype. Thus, to give the meaning of a term is not to offer an analytic definition but to spell out the associated stereotype.

The above discussion shows that meaning is largely a matter of convention. A word getting its meaning is the result of the convention that we develop. In the same way, a stereotype which constitutes the meaning of an expression is also a convention developed by a particular linguistic community.

On the basis of his interpretation of meaning as conventional relations, Bhattacharyya introduced the two aspects or dimensions of meaning. A particular meaning–convention, when it continues for a long time, acquires an objective status. As a result, the relation between the symbol and the symbolized is taken as objective. However, as Bhattacharyya points out, treating meaning and meaning-relation as objective does not deny its subjective origin. It is due to its inherent subjectivity that meaning is still viewed as a matter of convention. Meaning is, thus, what Bhattacharyya calls an amalgam of both subjectivity and objectivity. The task before us is to find out the nature of this amalgam. It is because of this amalgam that we find meaning to be a unitary phenomenon.

II

Meaning in Alternative Standpoints

Everything in this world is distinguished in terms of their respective features. We refer to a thing through these features and this is how we make the hearer recognize the thing that we are referring to. We are essentially trying to draw the hearer's attention to it through these features. These features, thus, play the key role in determining the meaning of an object or a thing. Bhattacharyya considers these features as the objective determinant of the meaning of a word.

In Bhattacharyya's submission the distinction between meaning and its determinants corresponds to the same as *Śakya and Śakyatāvacchedaka* of Nyāya and connotation and denotation of J.S. Mill. With this clarification, he explains the distinction. To do this, he takes the example of the term 'man'. Its meaning, that is denotation, consists of individual men, such as, Ram, Rahim, David and so on. But, on their own account, these individual men do not constitute the denotation. As such, they are only living creatures, and as living creatures, they possess certain features which are the distinguishing features of 'man', such as, rationality, ability to speak, laugh, etc. In this sense, they constitute the meaning of the term 'man' solely by virtue of possessing these features. To put it in Bhattacharyya's terminology, these features constitute the connotation *Śakyatāvacchedaka* of the term 'man'. The same is true of the classic example – *The Morning Star and The Evening Star.* The star that is called by both these names is the denotation of each of the terms, whereas Morning Star-hood and Evening Star-hood may be viewed as determinants or *Śakyatāvacchedaka.* Bhattacharyya thinks that they may be rightly called connotations since they constitute the distinguishing marks of the denotation.

Analysis of Demonstrative from Alternative Standpoints

In the light of the distinction between meaning and its determinants or *Śakya* and *Śakyatāvacchedaka,* Bhattacharyya analysed the demonstrative expressions, like 'this' or 'that'. Apparently, these demonstratives do not come under this distinction. Bhattacharyya, on the contrary, claims that this distinction can be most significantly noticeable in the context of demonstratives, such as, 'this'. He offered his own method of analysis which led him to arrive at certain important conclusions regarding language and meaning. It should be made clear that Bhattacharyya takes the expression 'this' to have enormous significance. For him, it symbolizes the world of objects. It may be relevant to mention here that on this issue, Bhattacharyya has been clearly influenced by K.C. Bhattacharyya's analysis of indexicals. According to K.C. Bhattacharyya, the word 'this', unlike 'I', expresses a general meaning because 'this' can be used by two different persons while referring to the same object having the same sense. It is a part of the semantic demand of language that whenever a word is used to refer to an individual thing it is identified as 'this'.

The speaker uses the expression 'this' or 'that' in order to draw the hearer's attention to the particular thing which he is referring

to. The use of 'this' or 'that' is meant to convey the precise nature of the thing that the speaker is talking about. Considering from this perspective, 'thisness' or 'thatness' is certainly a determinant in all the cases where the word 'this' or 'that' is used by the speaker. But now there is a problem which Bhattacharyya himself has recognized. How can 'thisness/thatness' be a determinant or connotation? The reason is that it does not constitute the property or the feature of the thing concerned. The use of the word 'this' by the speaker functions as pointing to the thing. It is the same as pointing to a thing by a finger post. Beyond this, the demonstrative expression 'this' does not have any more semantic information to contain. There are, of course, exceptions to this – where a speaker may be using the word 'this' to intend the property of a thing. This happens on an occasion where a *class* of things is meant or in a context where a particular is meant on the basis of some additional property, such as, 'this red flower'. Apart from these exceptions, the word 'this' is not concerned with a property of the thing meant. Hence, it may be proper to say that what we call as a determinant may not have anything to do with properties of the things meant. The word 'this' may not be, thus, qualified as a meaning-determinant.

But accepting this will have a serious consequence, leading to the distortion of some vital facts regarding linguistic communication. Bhattacharyya, thus, comes forward with his own system of explanation narrating the semantic significance of demonstratives in the context of the speaker-hearer communication.

To view it from the point of view of the speaker-hearer communication, it may be said that the demonstrative 'this'/'that' may not have the same role to play across the contexts. Thus, for example, from the speaker's point of view, the role that it plays is different from the role that 'this/that' assumes in the hearer's point of view. Accordingly, as Bhattacharyya brings out, 'this'/'that' is "intelligible primarily as spoken and secondarily as heard". As a result, the same expression 'this' is meant in two different ways. 'This' means the thing as spoken and it also alternatively means the thing as pointed out by the speaker. Now to approach it from the hearer's point of view, the hearer understands the thing necessarily as that which is spoken out to him as 'this' which is distinguished from what he—the hearer speaks of as 'this'. In this sense, the hearer, as Bhattacharyya points out, is in a perfect realistic attitude because he comes to know the existence of a thing over there with all its individuality through the word 'this' as spoken out to him. It plays the role of an indicator. Consequently, for the hearer, the word that

is heard means the real thing lying over there in front of the speaker. It is assumed as if there is a necessary relationship existing between the speaker and the thing situated in front of him. But to assume this, as Bhattacharyya claims, is not to embrace idealism. The reason is that the speaker is only a 'he' to the hearer having the same status with other things of the world. However, with the difference that this 'he' is a living conscious item of the world.

Now to approach it from the speaker's point of view, the expression 'this' is not related in the same way as it is to the hearer. The main point of difference is that the speaker here is 'I', and 'I' is not an item of the world to be placed along with the other things of the world. This remark is not meant to mystify the description of 'I', rather, it is meant to show the uniqueness of 'I'. It is this uniqueness which distinguishes 'I' from the rest of the world, including 'he'. Given this conception of 'I', its relationship with 'this' is understood by the speaker. Whereas, the same is not true of the hearer. The hearer takes 'this' as used by the speaker to be in a necessary relation with someone whom he calls 'he' and, accordingly, he holds that the expression 'this' in question is what the speaker called 'this'[2].

There are two clearly demarcated attitudes revealed here. The one is of speaking and the other is of hearing. Bhattacharyya thinks that unfortunately these attitudes are not properly recognized in philosophy. These two attitudes express the respective philosophical standpoints here. The attitude of speaking expresses the speaker's standpoint where we find the predominance of 'I'. The dependence on 'I', philosophically, leads to idealism. Whereas, the attitude of hearing which expresses the hearer's standpoint does not subscribe to such idealism, because of its dependence on 'he'.

In Bhattacharyya's reading, these attitudes expressing the two standpoints are revealed in the Western Philosophy and in the Indian Philosophy respectively. In their concern for languages, western philosophers, commonly assume the speaker's standpoint. As a result, the meaning of a verbal expression is understood from the point of view of the speaker. This is the same as to find out what the speaker means when he uses that expression. But the scenario is different when we come to the Indian Philosophy where the meaning of an expression is mostly understood from the point of view of the hearer. These two standpoints mark the two approaches to the philosophy of language or to the study of meaning. The former leads to an idealistic approach emphasizing the subjective aspect of meaning, whereas, the latter leads to a realistic approach emphasizing the objective aspect of meaning. As Bhattacharyya claims, both in

philosophy of language and in epistemology, Indian philosophers (the only exception being Buddhism) are thus consistently found to be realists. Following this classification, the question on meaning may thus be approached in alternative ways. The alternatives are: either it is we that mean objects outside or it is words themselves that do so. To say that it is we who do it means that it is we who use words to refer to objects. Or, alternatively, it is words themselves that refer to objects. As pointed out earlier, due to their adherence to the hearer's standpoint, Indian philosophers largely accept the second alternative, that is words themselves denote objects. But how does it constitute the hearer's standpoint? This takes us to the Nyāya doctrine called *Śābdabodha*, a doctrine that Bimal Matilal[3] particularly highlighted in his work. The present essay follows Matilal's account closely.

Śābdabodha: The Hearer's Standpoint

Language generates awareness. It is the awareness of meaning of an utterance—the *Śādabodha*. It is the awareness of the hearer who acquires it from the utterance of words and sentences. The basic presupposition of this theory is that there must be a linguistic community consisting of speakers and hearers. Speakers utter words and sentences to convey their thought, intentions, commands, etc., and hearers, on the other hand, try to understand what these speakers are saying on the basis of the knowledge that they derive from such utterances. It is this knowledge, which is derived from speaker's utterances, that is called *Śādabodha*. It is distinguished from perception, etc.

The knowledge that is acquired assumes a process involving three stages. First, utterance of words results in producing knowledge about these words. Second, this knowledge of words makes the hearer aware of the objects meant by these words. Third, this process culminates in producing knowledge of meaning. As we can see, if language is conceived as the instrumental cause producing a certain cognition in the hearer, the concept of meaning is accordingly formulated only from the hearer's point of view giving a very minor importance to the speaker's point of view.

The second important element involved in this perspective on meaning is the notion of meaning – linkage holding between the word and its meaning. We have said that the hearer comes to know of the object meant from the knowledge of words. But this will not be possible unless we establish that there is a special meaning-linkage holding between the word and its meaning. This linkage should be

known to the hearer in each case. This meaning linkage is called the denoting power of the word, i.e., *Śakti.* Apart from denoting power, the word may have another power which may help in generating the knowledge of its meaning of the object meant. This specific power of word is called metaphor or *lakṣaṇā.*

The next important point to be raised in this connection is: how do words get their denotative power? According to some interpretations, a word having a denotative power is natural to the word. However, Nyāya offers a different interpretation to this. The word acquires its denotative power either through the will of God, called *Śakti* or through the intention of a particular human being, called *paribhāṣā.* One should note that in both cases the relationship stipulated between the word and the object it denotes is conventional.

A competent hearer will be one who will be able to collect information about such stipulations. How do hearers learn these stipulations embodying the knowledge of the denotative power of words? The hearer acquires this knowledge from the speaker or his fellow hearers by watching them – their actions, responses, etc. It is through instruction also that he acquires this knowledge.

We now come to the form and the structure comprising the internal constituents of the knowledge of the denotative power. The knowledge of the denotative power, as Matilal puts it, may be expressed in the following form: "The word X is empowered to present…" The element that feels the gap here is called *Sakya* – the object meant. We now come to a very specific question concerning the nature of the object that is meant by such words as 'cow'. Is it the individual 'cow' or 'cowness'? The word 'cow', as J.L. Shaw[4] puts it, means a complex consisting of three elements. First, the particular or the individual cows; second, the configuration or *ākṛti* of particular cows; and third, the class-character of the universal called 'cowness'. *Ākṛti* is the relation called 'inherence' in the Nyāya system which relates the universal character to individual as the instance of it. The first one in the complex (particular, cows) is the referent *Śakya* of the word 'cow'. The third one, that is the universal, is the limitor or the distinguisher of the object meant by the word 'cow', *Śakyatāvacchedaka.* The second one is the relation of inherence which relates the third with the first.

The above constitutes the structure of hearer's knowledge of the denotative power of the word. The complex consisting of three elements presented here is constructed from the hearer's standpoint. It essentially conveys the structure that is already contained in the meaning awareness of the hearer.

A question may be raised: why there is no much of importance given to the hearer's standpoint? The reason is that language as a means of communication to be successful must ensure that the hearer understands what the speaker intends to convey. It is assumed that the speaker already has the knowledge of what to communicate to the hearer. Thus, for example, in the case of making inference for oneself, the person does it without using any word. But this is not possible when he wants to communicate his inference. To do this he uses sentence. It is the hearer who has to understand the meaning of the sentences. Considering from this perspective, meaning is thus defined as *Sakti* producing a certain cognition (or, awareness) in the hearer on hearing the word uttered by the speaker. The concept of meaning, so conceived, ignores completely the speaker's point of view.

Finally is the realism assumed in this account? In this connection, Bhattacharyya mainly refers to universals, such as, elephanthood or cowness. These universals are understood in Nyaya as wholly objective and even observable in the context of particulars instantiating these universals. Thus, as he argues, when a child sees an elephant for the second time in his life speaks out loudly 'elephant'. He has no time to compare the present instance with the previous instance. The only option left is that the child must be directly perceived the elephanthood. The elephanthood is the determinant *avacchedka* providing the ground for applying the word to the object to which it applies. These are the ways through which one can probably see the significance of the hearer's standpoint in relation to language and meaning. With this, we may now try to understand the speaker's standpoint as exemplified in the Western philosophical tradition.

The Speaker's Standpoint

As pointed out earlier, according to Bhattacharyya, in Western Philosophy, the meaning of an expression is understood from the speaker's point of view, that is what the speaker means when he uses that expression. This standpoint is posed against the hearer's standpoint exemplified in Indian Philosophy, particularly, in Nyaya, which expresses realism. The speaker's standpoint in meaning adopted in Western Philosophy, on the other hand, leads to idealism. Here we find distinctively the predominance of 'I' or the subject in the formulation of meaning. It is undeniable that in Western Philosophy and, particularly, in the analytic tradition, meaning is mostly understood as the speaker's meaning. But to claim on the

basis of this fact that the Western philosopher's approach to language and meaning is thereby idealistic is, indeed, an over exaggeration. Certainly, they have conceptualized meaning from the speaker's point of view but they have not always opted for idealism. Bhattacharyya is not unaware of this feature. In fact, he made it explicit that the contemporary Western Philosophy is not idealistic though it subscribes to the speaker's point of view in its stand on meaning[5]. It is important to note that the idealism that Bhattacharyya is talking about is Kant's transcendental idealism which offered a structure of thinking that influenced the subsequent course of development in Western Philosophy. The prominence of 'I' —the subject —is thus noticeable in the Western philosophical thinking throughout. In this connection, Bhattacharyya particularly mentions Kant's well-known phrase "**I think**" which Kant used it while discussing transcendental unity of apperception. To recapitulate the Kantian context of the use of phrase, **I think** we know that through sensibility we are given only a manifold of impressions. This manifold is combined by the self as thinking or understanding. It essentially means that combination is, thus, done by me. But I cannot combine my representations if I am not conscious of them. All representations must be, thus, accompanied by the phrase "**I think**". To show the relevance of the Kantian phrase **I think** in this context of the present inquiry, Bhattacharyya suggests that **I think** can be reconstructed as **I speak** on the ground that speaking and thinking are one and the same activity. Conceived in this way, when a speaker uses the word 'this', it is necessarily prefixed by the phrase **I speak**. It is not suggested here that the thing which the speaker indicates through his utterance of the word 'this' can be reduced to mere pointing. Certainly, something is pointed out. But more than that what primarily interests the speaker is its thisness which functions as the determinant here. The expression 'this' is constitutionally a referring expression. As he says, it is a forward-looking expression which is always ready to refer. To see it in the Kantian framework, the word 'this', as Bhattacharyya says, functions as "the apriari anticipation of anything in nature". Further, ('this' or such class names as cow, elephant, red) "coalesces" with a thing presented in Nature.

Bhattacharyya's analysis of the word 'this' may not be acceptable to all. But it offers a perspective which explains why adopting the speaker's standpoint involves idealism. In this standpoint 'I' becomes the necessary presupposition of any linguistic activity which is also a cognitive activity. This is the way how the subjective dimension of meaning becomes important.

III

Alternative Descriptions as Complementary Descriptions

We are, thus, having two alternative standpoints —the speaker's standpoint and the hearer's standpoints. These standpoints are followed by the subjective and the objective conceptions of meaning and by idealism and realism. This situation results into a distorted picture of language and meaning. True, there are alternative standpoints, but at the same it is also true that meaning is a unitary concept. Meaning has both subjective and objective aspects and one cannot see one aspect at the exclusion of the other. In the context of meaning the subjective and the objective become complementary. Bhattacharyya did not rule out this possibility. He, on the other hand, talks about the amalgam of the subjective and the objective.

The two aspects of meaning may be described as, following J.N. Mohanty[6], 'I mean' and 'It means'. These two are not rivals; on the contrary, they are complementary to each other forming an intimate relationship between them. In view of this relationship, it may not be proper to say that they are alternative ways of describing meaning. The expression 'it means' leads to the ontological hypostatization of meaning. It needs to be supplemented by including the subjective and the linguistic backgrounds in mind. In a similar way the expression 'I mean' leads to subjectivism and linguistic relativism. This can be overcome only by admitting the ideality and the objectivity of meanings. Since meaning is a unitary phenomenon, these two dimensions of meaning cannot be taken to be alternative but complementary descriptions of meaning.

Notes

1. Bhattacharyya, K. "Some Problems Concerning Meaning" in *Analytical Philosophy in Comparative Perspective: Exploratory Essays in Current Theories and Classical Theories of Meaning and Reference*, ed. by Bimal Motilal and J.L. Shaw, D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985.
   —. *Philosophy, Logic and Language*, Allied Publishing House, 1965.
2. In connection to this point, one can find the influence of K.C. Bhattacharyya's analysis of the indexical expression 'I' on Bhattacharyya's thought. He assumes here implicitly K.C. Bhattacharyya's reflection on 'I'. In K.C. Bhattacharyya's analysis, 'I' as used by the speaker is never understood by the hearer "to convey what he would himself convey by the use of it. (K.C. Bhattacharyya, *The Subject as Freedom,* p.2). However, the hearer understands the word 'I' as one which stands for the speaker. Note the understanding achieved here is not in terms of the meaning of the word 'I' that itself carries the significance, that is, the

intention of the speaker is expressing through the utterance of the word 'I'. Thus, as K.C. Bhattacharyya holds, the 'I' itself does not have any meaning. It has only a meaning function, that is, it has only "the function of speaking" (Ibid, p.175). The I and the speaker are not distinguishable. It is not that the speaker is someone who comes first and then utters 'I'. The two are one and the same. See in this connection the paper entitled 'Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's Theory of Meaning', by J.N. Mohanty in his book, *Explorations in Philosophy: Essays in Philosophy,* by J.N. Mohanty, Vol 1 and 2, Oxford Univ. Press 2002.

3. Motilal, B.K. "Awareness and Meaning in Navya-Nyaya" in B.K. Motilal and J.L. Shaw, eds., *Analytical Philosophy in Comparative Perspective.*

4. J.L. Shaw "Proper Names: Contemporary Philosophy and he Nyaya" in B.K. Motilal and J.L. Shaw, eds., *Analytical Philosophy in Comparative Perspective.*

5. In Bhattacharyya's own observation there has been a deviation in Western Philosophy from its original position which is distinctively characterized by the phrase 'I think'. As a result, Western Philosophy, instead of taking a turn towards transcendentalism takes recourse to empiricism. How does this deviation take place? In Bhattacharyya's analysis, the notion of speaking is the central characteristic of western philosophical thought; the notion of freedom comes as a natural corollary. But, then freedom instead of being utilized for achieving higher ends has been used to dominate and to exploit nature to gain materialistic end. This gives rise to a culture which is far away from its original idealistic mooring. The attitude of speaking is thus replaced by the attitude of hearing or what he calls "a form of aggressive hearing". See, in this connection the paper entitled, 'From Language to Metaphysics', by Nirmalya Narayan Chakraborty in Madhumita Chattopadhyay ed., *Alternative Standpoints: Tribute to Kalidas Bhattacharyya,* Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy Jadavpur University, 2015.

6. Mohanty, J.N. *Phenomenology and Ontology,* Martinus Nijhoff, 1970.