Chapter VI

Conclusion

It has been our primary concern in the thesis to trace Derrida's deconstruction from the epistemology and the ontology of Locke, Berkeley and Hume. Our attempt was also to show that postmodernity is a part of modernity.

We applied our Dialectico-historical method to bring out the implicit assumptions of the above mentioned thinkers, to have an effective comparative study of them and to understand their philosophical system in totality. As a part of it, we found Locke had a theory of semiology. The main theme of Locke's semiology is that, words in their primary or immediate signification stand for the ideas in the mind of the user. That means, for Locke, words do not signify objects rather they stand for ideas in the mind. We found, in this context, Derrida also observes that 'sign' does not refer to anything beyond the general circulation of signs.

In order to justify our comparison between Locke, Berkeley and Hume with Derrida we observed, how postmodernity can be regarded as a
continuation of modernity. In this context we took into account Lyotard’s view that post-modernity is a continuation of modernity. Besides this our argument was that the issues which constitute the centre of postmodern writings can be found at the margins of modernists writings also.

It was also one of our findings that the ontological and the epistemological positions of Locke, Berkely and Hume, irrespective of their differences in conclusion, can irreversibly be traced back to the basic assumptions of Cartesian dualism.

We marked, there are lots of inconsistencies in locke’s philosophy, which in our view, is a natural outcome of Locke’s attempt to build his empiricism on Descartes ontology. The main inconsistency in Locke’s system is his assertion of the dictum that ‘mind can know only its own ideas’ on the one hand and the acceptance of the existence of ‘material substance’ on the other. Berkeley taking advantages of the inconsistencies of locke’s philosophy observed, if mind perceives only it’s own ideas then the very assertion of material substances which exist beyond the ideas and independent of being perceived is a mere contradiction. We found there was a sense of scepticism in Berkeley’s philosophy also. Berekely attributed the very origin of his scepticism to Locke’s assertion of material substance.
Berkeley's scepticism was confined only to the existence of matter, but Hume's scepticism was extended to mind as an enduring substance and to the necessary relation between cause and effect, besides the materials substance and the existence external world.

Our observation was that Hume's ontological position was a pluralistic one. For Hume the mind can never have anything but perceptions. He observes perceptions are distinct, separable and are different from each other.

Hume divided all meaningful proposition into two groups namely 'Relation-of-ideas' and matters of fact. Here Hume attempts not only to eliminate metaphysics but speaks of propositional form of knowledge. He further declares all our knowledge concerning 'matters-of-fact' are always probable.

We discussed, postmodernity is a movement involved in a vast field of activities ranging from Art, Architecture, drama to fashion, and literature. Poststructuralism is a philosophical school under postmodernism and Jacques Derrida is its chief exponent. Derrida applies 'deconstruction' as a method against the Logocentrism of the whole history of western metaphysics (Plato to Heidegger). It criticises the whole history of philosophy on the ground that
it operates through a false conception of Language and as Derrida claims
assumes dualism either explicitly or implicitly.

Deconstruction of Jacques Derrida is based on the modern theories of
semiology. It is an attempt to show that language is non-transcendentable in
nature. Deconstruction as we discussed also aims at reading texts in terms of
their marks, traces or indicidables. It treats texts as the finality. We also
discussed postmodernism is an expression of epistemological and ontological
anti-foundationalism.

Our analysis of Derrida’s Deconstruction also shows that, (a) it is futile
and unprofitable to speak of a universal truth or thing-in-itself; (b) it is no
longer appropriate to speak of a language as being representative of the world
or anything beyond it (c) our knowledge is not a representative of the objective
world, it is instead continued to text analysis.

We also discussed that though locke accepts the existence external
world, yet he argues that the immediate object of our perception are only
ideal¹ Berkeley clearly observes that ideas are not representative discussed an
ideas can be like nothing but an idea.² It may be noted in this context for

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² Berkeley, George, The Principles of Human Knowledge, G.J. Warnock (cd.) op.cit., p.68.
Hume also that we can never go beyond the narrow compass of impressions and its corresponding ideas.\(^3\) It is also important to analyse in this context Derrida’s claim that “there in nothing outside text” which in called textually.

Hence we find as the modern British philosophers give emphasis on ‘Ideas’ the last part of twentieth century thinker Derrida give equal importance to ‘text’. Emphasising this point Richard Rorty writes, “In the last century (centuries) there were philosopher who argued that nothing exists but ideas. In our century there are people who write as if there were nothing but texts. These people whom I shall call “textualists”.\(^4\) Hence our summation is that inspite of all claims made by Derrida that his project aims at deconstructing the whole history of philosophy seems futile because his deconstruction itself is an outcome of a particular methodological approach and a logical culmination of the process of the development of philosophy of British empiricism.
