

**NOTES CONCERNING DE SAUSSURE**

1.) All signs are arbitrary conventions

- There is no necessary connection or essential relation between the signified and the signifier.
- Signs are historically constituted and always subject to change.
- Signifiers do not refer to pre-existing concepts.
- Signs have no essential meaning independent of the relative, temporal network within which they are inscribed.

2.) Saussure reverses the 'modern' turn to the subject: instead of constituting the language that creates the world, the speaking-subject is constituted by its place within the linguistic system.

- The (thinking) subject is a function of the system (of language).
- Language must be received from without.

3.) The differential nature of signs inverts the traditional relation between identity and difference.

- Traditionally, philosophers have given priority to identity over difference. A first principle in logic is the principle of identity:  $a=a$ , or, a thing is the same as itself.
- For Saussure, difference has a certain priority over identity. While applied to language as a system, Saussure posits an intimate and inseparable relation between sound-image (signifier) and concept (signified), such that this carries with it ramifications to the formation and status of concepts.