

IDEA OF CRITICAL THEORY: STUDY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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BY

S. RADHA KRISHNAN



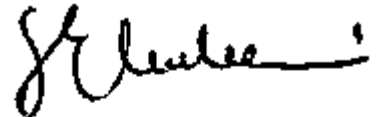
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD - 500 134
SEPTEMBER, 1994

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that S.Radha Krishnan worked under my supervision for the Ph.D, degree in Philosophy. His thesis entitled "Idea of Critical Theory: A Study in the Philosophy of Social Sciences" represents his own independent work at the University of Hyderabad. This work has not been submitted to any institution for the award of degree.

Hyderabad

31-8-94



Dr. S. G. Kulkarni,

Reader in Philosophy.

Dr. S.G. KULKARNI
Department of Philosophy
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad-500 134.

A.R. Narayanaiah
12/9/94
HEAD
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD
HYDERABAD

K. Jayaraman 17/9/94
DEAN
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES,
University of Hyderabad,
Hyderabad-500 134.

DECLARATION

S.Radha Krishnan,
Department of Philosophy,
University of Hyderabad.

date:31-8-94

This is to certify that, I, S.Radha Krishnan, have carried out the research embodied in the present thesis for the full period prescribed under Ph.D ordinances of the University.

I declare to the best of my knowledge that no part of the thesis was earlier submitted for the award of research degree of any university.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SRK' with a stylized flourish underneath.

S. Radha Krishnan

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"Whats emerging... is the belief that the crisis is being caused by the inadequacy of existing forms of thought to cope with the situation. It can't be solved by rational means because the rationality itself is the source of the problem. The only ones who are solving it are solving it at a personal level by abandoning 'square' rationality altogether and going by feelings alone. Like John and Sylvia here. And millions of others like them. . And that seems like a wrong direction too. So I guess what I am trying to say is that the solution to the problem isn't that you abandon rationality but that you expand the nature of rationality so that its capable of coming up with the solution".

—Robert M Pixsig
Zen and The Art of
Motorcycle Maintenance:
An Inquiry Into Values

PREFACE

This dissertation seeks to explicate and evaluate the central concepts and theses that Jurgen Habermas puts forward as constituting a broad theoretical framework for understanding contemporary social reality. In the execution of this task, the dissertation attempts to uncover the genealogy of Habermas' perspective as well as to lay bare the radical or conservative consequences his position engenders. The main concern of this work is to understand and appreciate the philosophical worth of Habermas' point of view vis a vis the various other paradigms of social inquiry. The choice of Habermas as the focal point of the study of critical theory is guided by the fact that, apart from contingencies of space and time, he is perhaps the best living representative of the tradition of critical theory. This apart, it is only in Habermas that critical theory has sought to come to terms with or at least take into account the most recent developments in philosophy in general and philosophy of social sciences in particular. More importantly, he has been a vigorous defender of social theory that is not only a critique in the radical sense, but also a mediator between diverse specialized sciences. His uncompromising espousal of the need for as well as a tireless effort to realize a unified societal view is an effective antidote to positivism, on the one hand, and post modernism, on the other, in the arena of social sciences.

Though, 'Critical Theory' is a name associated with the thoughts and theses of the Frankfurt School of the 1930s and the writings of Jurgen Habermas, it has a history that can be traced back to the era of the Enlightenment. The 'critical' in critical theory has a predecessor in Kant's idea of critique, which under-went significant transformation in the hands of Hegel, Marx and Adorno to become central to the theorization about the origin and development of the modern Western society.

In the first chapter, the trajectory of critical thought is plotted against the background of changing circumstances to reveal the common thread running from Kant to Habermas. What is common to the thinkers who fall in this tradition is a concern for their 'present' and an interest in its significance for the future. An attempt is made to show the continuity of the critical spirit in Habermas' reformulation of Critical Theory in terms of the paradigm of intersubjective communication.

If critical theory is to distinguish itself from the traditional theory, then it must seek its object vis a vis other theories, which fail to measure up to the standards any theory should meet ie.,it should be an immanent critique. The discussion in the second chapter which concerns the debate between critical rationalists and the critical theorists shows how the paradigm of intersubjective communication supplies what the critical rationalism fails to provide: the notion of communicative reason that allows scientific reason to be

understood as appropriate to the world of facts. This makes possible a critique of reason's false universalistic claims. More importantly, we shall see, communicative reason as an encompassing concept that does not leave the question of 'to be rational or not to be?' as a matter of decision.

In his criticism of the classical Enlightenment thought, Habermas shares Gadamer's view that the role of tradition and language is considerable in matters of understanding human phenomenon. But Habermas stresses the centrality of ideology-critique in situations characterized by systematic distortions. Citing the examples of Marxism and psychoanalysis, Habermas tries to make a case for critical theory (as social theory) as more relevant than hermeneutics in the contemporary society in that it can critique the incursion of functionalist reason into spheres beyond its limit. These are the issues taken up in the third chapter.

Because the critical theory is committed to the Enlightenment ideals of autonomy and solidarity, it has to answer the post modernist challenge to the claim that in the light of significant changes since world war II, an understanding of modernity as a project is not only possible, but desirable. Focusing on the debate between Habermas and Lyotard, we examine, in chapter IV, whether the argument from the 'postmodern' condition undermines Habermas' critical project.

Like Weber, Habermas argues that though modernity embodies rationality of, specifically, Western origins, yet it has universalistic claims. But the idea of rationality he develops is not what Weber understands as purposive rationality, but communicative rationality oriented towards consensus. Habermas' attempts to defend modernity in an emphatic manner employing communicative reason involves assumptions that can be questioned. Also, it arouses the suspicion that Habermas' idea of critical theory is less 'critical' and has conservative leanings. In the final chapter, a critique of communicative reason aims to bring into question the claims of Habermas' reformulation of critical theory.

CHAPTER I

HABERMAS AND THE HERITAGE OF CRITICAL THEORY

Since 17th century there has prevailed a kind of thinking that is loaded with a meaning of history as embodied with reason to be realized in all its potentialities. History, as distinct from evolution, is understood as self-fashioning or working out the potentials contained in the 'present'. The break that characterizes the 'modern' is read not as arbitrary, a mere rupture, that cannot be made sense of, but that which is definitive and irreversible, because it is accountable in terms of understanding the world and self-understanding of man and thus marking a new epoch. Events such as the Copernican Revolution, the discovery of new lands, the French Revolution are seen as epochal for their claims to universal significance: what has occurred here and now is likely to have reverberating effects elsewhere. As Kant, with the evolution of constitution in mind, puts it, "for the occurrence in question is too momentous, too intimately interwoven with the interests of humanity and too widespread in its influence upon all parts of the world for nations not to be reminded of it, when circumstances present themselves and to rise up and make renewed attempts of the same kind before". [Immanuel Kant, 1977 p.185]

Though Kant held a naturalized conception of history and society, his philosophy accorded a special place to his time which for him held out the promise of Enlightenment of humanity. For, "we live in the age of Enlightenment", and even though mankind is far from achieving its completion, "we do have indications that the way is being cleared for those to work freely in this direction and the obstacles to universal enlightenment, to man's emergence from his self incurred immaturity, are gradually being fewer" [p.58],

The knowledge that Kant might have over read his situation and not realized the contingencies in the course of history was available only retrospectively. However, this did not diminish the significance of the new epoch, as it has been evident in any number of interpretations of modernity offered to this day.

Philosophically, the significance lies in the implausibility of the old idea of Cosmic order or Idea that provides a metaphysical basis and unity to life. This implies that the truth about the world and life does not depend on the contemplation of a larger order to which everything is attuned, as was believed by Aristotle. The notion of order and what constitutes 'the center of things', is now understood as inextricably tied with human subjectivity and experience. To be sure, the Copernican Revolution had displaced the earth as

the center of universe. But Kant followed it up with a revolution in philosophy that places man, as subject, at the center of the phenomenal world.

This, in a way, was a revolutionizing thought that inaugurated the discourse of modernity through a philosophy of subject. Kant, in his reaction to Hume, contested that man is not just an empirical subject, a bundle of sense-experience, but a transcendental subject, who in his self consciousness comes to an awareness of what constitutes his experience. Kant's transcendental subject embodies a critical consciousness which in its reflection, lays bare the constituents that make possible the unity of experience of the external world, the self and the unity between the two. This comes to be available in the form of synthetic a priori principles, which Kant tries to work out in his three *critiques*.

The fact that Kant produced three *critiques* indicates clearly that he had given up on the old notion of reason of the premodern world, which could provide substantial unity to thought, action and life. With the weakening of the religious-metaphysical world-views, reason loses its unifying force and gets splintered into formal principles that serve the functions of cognition, volition and feeling. Thus these principles concern the world of fact, of moral obligation and of aesthetic experience. What we have in the place of organic

unity is formal unity in terms of a reason whose locus is the subject. The new self-understanding of man is that he is no longer a being who is related to cosmic unity, but one whose subjectivity is the principle of a differentiated order that is in some sense in his control or of his own making.

The recognition of a differentiated world order and the elevation of man as a subject at 'the center of things' can be read in two different ways. Positively, it can mean that man as a sovereign subject is capable of enlightenment and organize his own conditions of life. More importantly, he is not only capable of self knowledge, but also defining his self in relation to his desires, wishes and aspirations, which means that his identity is not 'stamped' or acquired wholly externally, from a larger order but self-given in accordance with norms that he recognizes to be valid.[Charles Taylor, 1977, Chapter I]. The principle of subjectivity, can be encapsulated in the following terms: 1 The idea of individual freedom 2. Right to criticism, and 3. Autonomy of action.

The three historical events that led to the establishment of the principle of subjectivity are: the Enlightenment, the Reformation and the French Revolution. It is this principle that underlies the institutionalization of science, law and modern art. Modern science setting aside the teleological conception of the universe with a mechanistic conception gave

impetus to a view of nature as law-governed and harnessable for human purposes. Modern politics replacing the monarchic authoritarian rule with a constitutional state made possible the establishment of rule of law in accordance with subjective rights. And Protestantism proclaimed the insight of the . subject as the basis of his religious faith against the Church.

Against this background one can understand the rise of critical consciousness, exemplified in Descartes' critical method or better in Kant's critical philosophy, which manifested itself in doubting or reflecting on everything and seeking an acceptance of things not on the authority of tradition, but on the basis of reason. This reason is not a substantial one, but a principle of thought, action and beliefs that allows for criticism and rational adjudication. For Kant, enlightenment means freedom "to public use of one's reason in all matters" [1977, p.55]. The use of reason presupposes the right to criticism. Freedom to question and criticize implies the responsibility of owning up one's answer in the light of reason.

One can also read the differentiation of world order and the elevation of man as a sovereign subject negatively, as the tradition of counter-enlightenment has done. This tradition includes those who affirm the principle of subjectivity, but question the interpretation of radical enlightenment. What this means is that a differentiated world gives rise to an abstract

opposition such as nature/self, body/mind, duty/inclination, reason/feeling and above all subject/object. According to this tradition, the opposition results, further, in the privileging of the former over the latter and threatens the very idea of subjectivity, for accepting a differentiated world means, accepting a divided subject. A stress on subject as self conscious and fully rational purged off emotions and inclinations as the condition of knowledge or Enlightenment, which is what the radical enlightenment does, amounts to the suppression of the spiritual side of man: his capacity for spontaneity, intuition and expressive individualism.

This reaction to the main current of Enlightenment cannot be seen as merely reactionary in the sense of opposing the immediate developments that preceded the rise of critical consciousness, but as being critical of the celebration and advocacy of an one-sided interpretation of the 'modern' in terms of freedom and autonomy of action. It was critical of the dogmatic affirmation of the "present", which needs to be reconciled in terms of an idea or principle that would rescue subjectivity from self-negation. This differentiation or split in the realm of reality is not a harmless one, but a diremption or a fissure that reflected itself in the separation of knowledge and faith, religion and politics and their connection to everyday life.

Kant, to be sure, was the first philosopher to turn inwards and thus make philosophy critical. Of course, Descartes who preceded him had indulged himself in radical doubting to lay claim to indubitable knowledge about self. But what distinguishes Kant's critical reflection from Descartes' doubting is that the former is inspired by epochal changes around him, such as the rise of Newtonian science. To be critical for him was to reflect upon ideas and categorial forms through which sense-data is mediated. It is a reflection upon these forms that provide access to the world around us, for the world as it is (the thing-in-itself), Kant would say, is epistemologically speaking, unavailable. By focusing on the subjective side, reflection brings to scrutiny what common sense takes for granted. Thus, the thing that mediates is brought to conscious awareness.

What Kant overlooked was that genuine critical reflection in bringing to light those categories that make very thought possible must also indicate those alternatives which are excluded. If causality of the if-then kind is taken as fundamental as Kant did, then, other forms of causality such as one presupposed in quantum physics is ruled out. In other words, he confined critical thinking to the justification of dominant thought or the ruling paradigm. More than one commentator has pointed out that the success of Newtonian science had some influence on Kant's table of categories and

synthetic a priori statements.[Norman Stockman 1983 p.49]. This explains why Kant's *critique* remained restricted to the justification of changes around him.

It was Hegel who brought out this fact in his critique of Kant. Hegel's objection was that Kant's critique was not radical enough, for it makes a number of assumptions about the subject, object and the elements of experience. "It supposes", as Hegel puts it, "that the Absolute (object/world) stands on one side and knowledge on the other and itself separated from the Absolute. [Hegel, 1977, p.4]. Thus, Kant's critique, according to Hegel, contains a 'positive' element. Such an account is positive in the sense it is not thought or reflected over, and hence fails to be sufficiently critical. For, if critique is a reflection on what is fundamental view of the object or elements of experience, then it should bring to light the origin and evolution of what is presupposed. As Hegel puts it, reflection "deciphers the process of genesis of the objectified knowledge in all its concrete configurations which are those of the historical formation of the human subject." [Hegel, .1977, p.p.70-71]

From Hegel's point of view Kant's critique is not radical because it neglects the historical genesis and the formation of reason and thus ends up as a justification of phenomenal knowledge. If phenomenal knowledge is relative to a categorial framework, then a critique that aims to overcome the facticity

of the object of knowledge in terms of a transcendental critique would not do. What is needed is an immanent critique of the object as well as the concepts employed. An immanent critique focusing on the concept and object as well, shakes the imperativeness of the former and discloses what it excludes. By exposing the contradiction between how the object is understood in terms of certain concepts and what is the case or what ought to be, immanent critique leads up to a metacritique.

Hegel criticized Kant for conceiving reason as a timeless category hovering around the vicissitudes of history. In contrast, he considered reason as historically evolving via human experience. For Hegel, reason is not just a faculty of thought (*Verstand*) but Idea (Spirit) that is on its journey to self-realization through history. The variety in history is nothing but the Cosmic Spirit playing itself out its possibilities.

By transposing the human subject into a Cosmic Subject, the ontological basis of reality, Hegel accounts for the vicissitudes of thought and history as the dialectical progression of the Idea by self-negation. This negation does not mean, for Hegel, its annihilation, or its falsity, but its transcendence of a stage, which has its momentary truth. The transcendence marks the transition to a higher stage. Thus, Hegel, attempted a reconciliation of the differentiation in

terms of an Absolute Subject and Reason that not only divides but restores the unity given up by Enlightenment, and thus endows significance to the modern as 'higher' stage in history. Through his critique of philosophical systems of Kant and Fichte, Hegel addressed himself to the 'present' as one requiring an adequate conceptualization of the recognition of subjective freedom by a consciousness that is Absolute. This consciousness cannot be embodied in religion, for with Enlightenment, religion has split from reason and relegated itself from public life. For him, religion has "the power to act upon and to establish the rights which reason has bestowed" [Cited from Habermas, 1987b p.25] only when the doctrines of religion are based on universal reason. But the doctrines of Protestant Orthodoxy promoted a private religion that had nothing to do with the institutions of public life. Modern religion had become devoid of the living spirit that could mediate morality which appealed to the minds and hearts of the people.

Nor did he expect this consciousness to be located in the political institutions or the constitution of his day. For he found them as 'positive' as religion in that "the laws have lost their former life and so too the vitality of the present day has not known how to concentrate itself in laws". [Hegel], 1964, p. 146]. With the differentiation of state and civil society, the ancient ideal of the state, which fits well with society to form an ethical whole, has to give way to a state, based on

natural right, that serves private law relationships proper to civil society. In Habermasian terms, the modern state is a steering mechanism of private selfish interests of the market realm that is ethically neutral and self-regulating. [Habermas, 1987b. p.38]

Hegel was critical of the modern state, based on natural rights, that gave full leeway to individuals to pursue their private and particular ends, for it becomes the source of antagonism within the civil society. This antagonism is exemplified in "a great mass of humanity sinking below the standard of certain level of subsistence which brings along with it the greater facility with which disproportionate wealth is concentrated in a few hands once again." [Cited in Habermas, 1987b, p.39]. Later Marx would theorize this antagonism in terms of class-struggle. But Hegel was the earliest to perceive the paradoxical achievement of a society committed to subjective freedom, leading to contradictory results. Unlike his predecessors who either affirmed enlightenment or opposed it, "Hegel's philosophy can be seen as an attempt to realize a synthesis that the Romantic generation was groping towards: to combine the self legislating freedom of the Kantian subject with the expressive unity within man and with nature for which the age longed". [Taylor, 1977, p.539]

But, does this synthesis hold? How plausible is the idea of a Spirit that underlies Hegel's construal of nature, history and human subject? Does not his resolution turn out to be unconvincing, notwithstanding his analysis of modernity as diremption of ethical substance and his idea of critique as a philosophical reflection of the potential present in all its contradictions, as reflected in concepts, and a resolution immanent to it?

After Marx and Nietzsche and the two hundred years of industrial development, it seems so anachronistic to believe in a Cosmic Order or Subject. It seems so far-fetched to hold the view that ultimately the progress of thought and history, is the self-realization of the Spirit. And after the World Wars, Fascism and Auschwitz, the conclusion inevitably follows that the Hegelian synthesis has collapsed.

Marx in his inversion and demystification of Hegelian idealism perceived the collapse. Accepting the idea that history progresses in a dialectical fashion that involves negation and sublation, he transposed Hegelian-transposed-Kantian-subject into a human who transforms nature and herself/himself in a concrete historical milieu. "Man makes over nature into expression of himself and in the process properly becomes man." [Marx in Taylor, 1977. p.549]. He denounced the Hegelian synthesis as achieved in thought

only, overlooking the effective diremption of the real. The foundation of the radical freedom which Hegel speaks of is not Spirit, but man. The logical path Hegel charted out for the journey of the Spirit, for Marx, is the path humanity takes through concrete struggles in history. This transposition led to the most powerful revolutionary doctrine in the hands of Marx.

Part of his critique of mystification consists in showing the spurious synthesis that Hegelian dialectic achieves. Dialectic, for Marx, is both a mode of thinking, a theory of reason - an epistemological category of interpreting reality as well as a characteristic of the relation that exists between thought and being. Thus, the secret of scientific dialectics that is supposedly contained in his critique of political economy (his critical theory) depends upon comprehending economic categories as the theoretical expression of historical relations of production, corresponding to a particular stage of development of material production. In this comprehension lies the possibility of the historical resolution of diremption by uncovering the specificity of pre-capitalist social formation which points to a future order based on entirely new and liberated formative principles.

Marx can claim legitimately that his critique is more radical than that of Hegel's just as the latter claimed the same against Kant, by showing that the contradiction between

object and concept, universal and particular, which Kant tried to gloss over, through his subject-centered epistemology, is real one and not as Hegel thought to be one in appearance only. Hegel understood the problem of modern society to be one of a lack of ethical totality or a sense of community owing to the differentiation in world-views that occurred as a result of the dissolution of metaphysical systems. Pre-capitalist communities assured themselves of their identity and unity by positing a transcendent norm - naturally, cosmologically or metaphysically grounded - which gave cohesion to their self-interpretation, whereas capitalist societies cannot afford any transcendent norm and therefore any sense of the communal relation of the laboring subject to the earth. Freed from the ownership of the means of production and also relations of slavery and serfdom which characterized other societies, the labourer is also freed from organic relation to the land and to the community. [Seyla Benhabib, 1986, p.111]. Though the freedom of the individual is abstract in the sense that he is free to sell his labour to whomsoever he wants, it is still a matter of necessity. Marx claimed against Hegel that this is a real historical process; a product of the historical process that has to be negated.

Thus, the difference between the critique of Hegel and that of Marx turns to be a substantial one in the sense that the former reconciles the contradictions or distance between universal and particular, subject and object in a retrospective

manner, while Marx argues that reality is essentially contradictory and needs to be transformed. Thus Marx's critique turns out to be a prospective one.

If Hegel's contribution to the grand tradition of critical theory consisted in his theoretical contribution in the form of metacritique, Marx's contribution lies in showing that the task of a critique is to achieve identity between subject and object, universal and particular, or in less abstract terms, the resolution of contradictions that afflict modern society. That is the task is a practical one. As he puts it, in his critique of fetishism of commodities, "Fetishism is the expression of a mode of social life in which the social relations and the social content of activity are completely "thingified", reified and treated as abstract exchangeable units. So, the critique of fetishism aims at restructuring social life by transforming the social mode of production into one which does not exist outside individuals as their fate. The goal is not to return to an "original fullness", but to develop a society of universally developed individuals, whose social relations, as their communal relations are also subordinated to their communal control". [Cited in S.Benhabib, 1987, p.117].

After the defeat of left-wing working class movements in Western Europe, the collapse of main left-wing parties in Germany

into reformist movements, the degeneration of the Russian revolution into Stalinism and the rise of Fascism in Europe. it became essential to take a fresh look at Marxism and its contentions.

Accounts of why the Marxian hope was never realized are many, offered by different Marxist scholars. But one of the fundamental difficulties which Marxism faced and still does is a theoretical one :the reconciliation of radical freedom, the promise of all revolutions, and non-oppositional, reciprocal relationship with nature. In the times before the dissolution of metaphysical world-order of traditional societies when world-views were supported by a notion of objective reason, the relationship between the individuals, the society and nature were understood according to their positions assigned in the scheme of things.

The objective reason both accounted for and guided men's relation to the world outside. In the philosophy of Hegel, the idea of spirit allowed for the unity of identity and non-identity of subject and object, for, as Hegel puts it, "men see a larger order and identify with the differentiated structure of society as reflection of this order". [C.Taylor, 1977, p.550].But since Marx had transposed the spirit into historical man, his philosophy produced an aporia : the absence of reason (*Verunft*), as opposed to reason as understanding (*Verstadt*) that mediates men to the world in a manner free of contradictions. The contradictions of the capitalist society, that Marx highlighted,

could not be seen primarily in economic terms, as Marx did and if done leads to the illusion that a radical change in the forces of production and the relations of production would destroy the contradictions. This was one of the lessons that the Russian revolution taught us, because the contradictions that have come to pervade other social relations are not a reflection, a mere effect of capitalist economy, but a reification that can be traced back to the dissolution of substantive reason and the dominance of subjective reason. In other words, a materialist grounding of Hegelian idea of history would not suffice, as Marxism would still need something to replace reason in the stronger sense: a reason that would articulate the contradictory nature of reality and guide its transformations. The project of transformation would not take off without the moment of recognition and reflection that only a stronger sense of reason can accomplish.

George Lukacs, the Hungarian Marxist philosopher, tried to rectify this error in Marxism. He tried to deal with the problem of transformation as an act of choice of "translating ripe conditions of revolution into reality" (Taylor 1977, P.55) or letting things be. His argument was that "historical materialism in which the proletariat becomes conscious of itself is also the self-knowledge of capitalist society because of the pivotal position occupied by the workers within bourgeois... relations of production" (George Lukacs 1971, p.299) According to him, the

proletariat, the real subject turned into object by history, through a self-conscious act would achieve this.

Before Lukacs is criticized for his attempted solution, let us note his achievement. It consisted in developing a theory of reification based on Marx's analysis of commodity fetishism. In the capitalist economy, where all things are turned into commodities, i.e. having exchange value, labour power is also weighed in terms of commodity value. While the first leads to commodity fetishism, the latter forms the first step to reification, for once the relations of production are seen in commodity terms, then other social relations too suffer the same fate, with varying time and degree. In fact, this thesis was further elaborated by the latter day thinkers like Adorno. Now the reification theory also explained the process of rationalization, understood as inherently reificatory. No doubt Max Weber was the first to recognize the nature and role of rationalization in modern society. By 'rationalization' Weber meant fragmentation of work in order to achieve maximum output, the replacement of traditional values based on personal loyalties with rational legal system of formal rules, the bureaucratization of both public and private sectors, the pervasive spread of instrumental rationality oriented to finding the most efficient means to achieve given ends etc.

But Weber was wrong, Lukacs contended, in thinking that the process of rationalization was irrevocable and that it would ultimately destroy the subject altogether. Lukacs believed that the process would find its limit that is built in the very idea of formal reason. The proletariat, the real subject of history, which faces the brunt of the rationalization process, and occupies the pivotal position to carry out the the historical task of transformation, would resist the rationalization process. Somehow, Lukacs found the various labour movements in Europe as an evidence of the resistance.

But Lukacs argument was circular. His argument was tantamount to saying that rationalization process would meet its end when the self- transformation of the object into subject is achieved and it is in the realization of the subject-object identity lies the redemption of reason in the stronger sense.

Further, Lukacs solution does not improve matters. It presupposes a Hegelian reason that mediates the consciousness of the proletariat to the world. For Hegel, it was philosophy that was supposed to play the role of the mediator. For Lukacs it is Marxism that plays the role of consciousness-raiser. Lukacs' attempted Hegelian solution of infusing consciousness into reified subjects is a piece of jugglery that does not confront the problem of providing a rational account that brings to reflection the reified reality and at the same time guide the practice of overcoming it.

The politico-economic developments, both in the East and West belied Lukacs' revolutionary hope. The degeneration of socialism into Stalinism combined with the increasing bureaucratization of life brought out the weakness in Marxist conception of politics and confirmed Weber's premonitions about the rationalization process. In Western Europe, the depressing economic conditions combined with the imminent war threw the whole idea of working class self-emancipation into serious doubt. It became quite clear especially in the U.S. that the working class is well-integrated into the system.

The following years saw a radical break in the Marxist thought that came to be identified as Western Marxism. [Perry Anderson, 1976]. What distinguishes this line of thought, associated with an impressive array of intellectuals such as Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno and others is that Marxism can no longer be considered as the heir to Enlightenment. What began as a new era, in history, in which man seemed to realize his cognitive powers and capacities to express himself through nature, achieve solidarity in which the particular and the universal meet, turned out to be nearly its opposite. Cognitive powers were discovered and used against nature. But they acquired an autonomous development which seems to take the history in a different direction. Self, instead of becoming autonomous, had become dependent and even come to be dominated by a process. which, Max Weber has called rationalization. And solidarity of men had come to mean a system

maintenance in which particulars had begun to dominate each other and its universal appeal was shed off. History is neither dialectically progressive, as Marx thought, leading up to a proletarian revolution nor does it exhibit/irresistible expansion of productive forces to which social structures must inevitably adjust. The new idea of history, as punctuated by sudden breaks and as unamenable to linear assessment is well captured by Walter Benjamin: "the angel of history... his face turned towards the past; where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole of what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has caught his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress". [1940.p.p. 259-60]. Such was the gloom in which this despairing thought emerged of which the Frankfurt school, variant of Marxism constitutes the most important and radical stream.

This gloom is more evident in the case of Theodor Adorno, whose pessimism was so complete that Lukacs called him the permanent resident of 'Hotel Abyss' [M. Jay, 1984, p.187]. Extremely conscious of what went before, Adorno refrained from giving any conclusive formulation of his theses with the result

his thought comprises features that apparently do not go together and is best understood as a 'constellation', as Martin Jay. puts it [1984, p.14]. Adorno, first of all, is a Marxist who accepts the Marxian analysis of commodity fetishism and Lukacs' theory of reification. But he does not accept an economic explanation of reification. He develops the reification theory into a critique of instrumental rationality to give an account of the dialectic of Enlightenment that construes reification as a necessary consequence of the rationalization process. His contention is that the instrumental reason has pervaded the cultural sphere too, which was most evident in the development of culture industry. With the loss of the 'magical' in art, following the dissolution of metaphysical world-views, and the de-auraticization of works of art, there existed the potential of bourgeois artist realizing his fulfillment through his expression in art. But the development of culture industry, linked to market economy, dissolved the potential, not by transforming works of art into commodities, but by producing fungible items for sale in the market. The aura of the magico-mystical world induced cultically, is replaced with pseudo-aura to give the effect of individuality to what are in fact totally standardized commodities. Taking music as example Adorno contends that fetishization took many forms such as the cult of star conductors and performers, the obsession with technical perfection in hi-fi equipment etc., [Jay 1984, p. 122]. "The development of culture industry", Adorno along with Horkheimer contends, "had led to the

predominance of the effect, the obvious touch and the technical detail over the work itself - which expressed an idea but was liquidated together with the idea". [Adorno and Horkheimer 1972, p.125]. The underside of "fetishism of music was the regression of hearing, which meant a growing inability to concentrate on anything but the most banal and truncated aspects of composition.

Culture industry, by putting to (mis) use autonomous works of art has contributed to the distortion of art forms. Tragedy, for example, is identified with anyone who does not co-operate, whereas its paradoxical significance once lay in a hopeless resistance to mythical destiny. Culture is the perennial claim of the particular over the general as long as the latter is unreconciled to the former. But all that culture industry could provide was pseudo-individualism that marked the power of exchange to undermine the non-identical in the administered world. [Martin Jay 1984, p. 124].

In the world dominated by instrumental rationality, where the reification of consciousness appears so complete, genuine art can be a source of aesthetic sublimation, which culture industry represses, only by representing the fulfillment of broken promise. [Adorno and Horkheimer 1972, p.140]. Art does not hold out any promise of reconciliation as Lukacs believed. In fact it categorically denies any such possibility. Hence, Adorno prefers art over science for the latter has totalizing pretensions.

Borrowing Benjamin's concept of mimesis Adorno identifies the task of art as the imitation of reality, both social and natural. By capturing the suffering of the subject it protests against social injustice. And by its pure materiality, art displays the pre-rational mimetic impulse that is irreducible. Its Utopian element consists in being true to the idea of non-identity. This means that it cannot affirm in an absolute sense. It cannot re-enchant the world as the culture industry does. It can point to the constellation that expresses a hope to be realized : irreducible, non-heirarchical and non-oppositional relationship between subject and object.

Of the Frankfurt school thinkers, Adorno remains important even today. As early as 1930, Adorno in his article 'Subject-object' [Adorno 1978] carried out a critique of the subject, which foresees the post modernist critique of subject in many ways. Criticizing Hegel's onto-theological basis of unity between subject and object, he identifies the ideas of *Aufhebung*, the dialectical transition and *Einverlebung*, memory, the reinternalization of the externalized as categories that only achieve forced reconciliation between the universal and the particular. Of constitutive meta-subject, he says, "the basis of humanist ideology, is an illusory hypostatis, a false totality of individual subjects" [Adorno 1978, p. 501]. What shows up faithfully in the doctrine of transcendental subject is the priority of relations - "abstractly rational ones detached from

human individuals and their relationships - that have their model in exchange" [Adorno 1978, p. 501].

The critique of exchange principle is quite central to his *Negative dialectics*. The separation of subject and object is a result of abstract thinking, which is a function of the abstract market. By treating relationships between the subject and the object analogous to fungible items in the market and then hypostatizing this as objective is known as mystification in the Marxian sense. What is a product of false thought, a derivative of false reality is posited as the natural. Adorno along with Marx condemns mystification for concealing social inequalities. According to him, when the principle of exchange, by virtue of its immanent dynamics, extends to the living labour of human beings, it changes compulsively into objective inequality namely that of social classes [Adorno 1973, pp. 177-78].

But unlike Marx and Lukacs, Adorno refuses to see the sphere of production as the source of this mystification. According to the latter, it is the privileging of the production that has led to the replacing of the constitutive meta-humanist subject with proletariat-subject, which amounts to retaining the dominant relationship between subject and object.

Adorno understands "reification as forgetting". This does not mean just a logical extension of commodity fetishism, as it

did for Lukacs, but the suppression of heterogeneity. And overcoming reification does not mean re-membering something that is dismembered, the perfect wholeness or original plentitude. It means the restoration of difference and non-identity to their place in the non-heirarchical constellation of subjective and objective form he called "peace". This is clearly foreseeing the development of post structuralist thought. But unlike the post-structuralists, Adorno did not give up the notion of subject altogether. He only insisted on the preponderance of the object, irreducible to, although not unmediated by, our active subject.

What Adorno and Horkheimer did was to detach the idea of reification from the context of capitalist society and link it up with identity-thinking, which pre-dates the institutionalization of instrumental reason. Instrumental reason, they say, presupposes identity-thinking, which already contains the potential for domination of the object. This is clearly evident in the definition of subjective reason as the capacity to act in terms of means and ends. The relationship gives the point of view of the subject and not the manipulated object. This intransitive relationship stands in complete contrast to the mimetic, non-oppositional relation that existed prior to the dissolution of objective reason. And because of the loss of substantive reason, there is a new star in the constellation that cannot be suppressed : non-identity [M. Jay, 1984, p.21].

Almost all philosophers since Hegel have attempted to gloss over the problem of non-identity. Adorno thinks that the differentiation in reason and corresponding split in truth, justice and beauty have come to stay. Hegelianism and Marxism hitherto have tried to overcome this differentiation through a spurious identity thinking. Positivism and variants of realism have simply taken all reason to be instrumental/subjective reason and have either assumed the identity between subject and object as obtained in employing subjective reason or have been indifferent to the existing oppositional nature of non-identity embodied in the relationship between subject and object. What Adorno calls negative dialectics suggests an entirely different proposition: the unity of identity and non-identity of spirit and nature can only be suggested, referred to or gestured towards. It cannot be conceptualized, for we do not have a concept of reason that gives unity to the differentiation, by retaining the non-identity. Hence, negative dialectics points to a truth which suggests the idea of constellation of collective subject, individual subject and object (nature/society), each occupying its place and the idea of peace as contained in non-identical, non-oppositional relation between the three. The Frankfurt school had initially committed itself to the programme of inter-disciplinary materialism-owing to traditional philosophy coming to an end and sciences becoming empirical. But Adorno's philosophical position that opts for a collaboration between

negative dialectics and aesthetic theory, stands in complete contrast.

In this connection it is interesting to note that the butt of Adorno's critique is not just instrumental reason traceable to the Enlightenment, but the very idea of reason known to Western thought, starting from Greek philosophy. That is to say, according to him, it is that reason has not just come to be instrumental reason but reason is domination and suppression of non-identity. Western reason which originated in the mimetic act to master otherness by becoming like it, culminates in the act of projection, which via technology of death, succeeds in making otherness disappear. (Seyla Benhabib 1986, p. 165]. He tries to trace the problem to language itself. For language separates the object from its concept, the self from its other, the ego from the world. Language acquires a mastery over the world, the other, by reducing it to a technical substratum.

A critique of the above kind opens itself to an objection that "if the plight of Enlightenment reveals the culmination of the identity logic, constitutive of reason, then the theory of the dialectic of Enlightenment, which is carried out with the tools of this very reason, perpetuates the very structure of domination it condemns. The critique of Enlightenment is cursed by the same burden as Enlightenment itself". [Benhabib, 1986, p. 169].

Actually, Adorno and Horkheimer were not unaware of this problem: a totalizing critique of reason is either self-refuting or must give up the claim to discursive moment of truth. Hence, they turn to aesthetics. For only art can capture non-identity as truth. Thus a critique of Enlightenment cast in terms of a critique of commodity fetishism and reification of consciousness (Marx), transformed itself into a critique of reason as instrumental reason and generalized it to Western thought as such has the result of devaluing theoretical knowledge and the relinquishing of its connection to the social sciences. [Habermas 1984, pp. 386-91].

Adorno, despite the radical break from the tradition he was influenced by, shared a framework within which he worked out his critique of instrumental reason and which led his variant of critical theory i.e., negative dialectics, to a dead end: the philosophy of subject. This philosophy puts subject or consciousness at the centre of things. Though Adorno is critical of this privileging of the subject, he is equally caught up in it in so far as he does not take the centrality of language and communication to thought seriously and thus ends up criticizing the philosophy associated with the subject as one at the service of self-preservation. While Lukacs tries to overcome this difficulty i.e., the difficulty of reason at the service of self preservation by suggesting a revolutionary change by the

proletariat-subject, Adorno vacillates between a nostalgia for a past, where men related themselves to nature in a mimetic way that did not confront non-identity as a problem and hope for a future that recognized the unity of identity and non-identity. While Lukacs kept his variant of critical theory rooted in a Marxist framework that included his thesis of reification, Adorno sought the redemptive potential in works of art and aesthetic theory.

As opposed to the non-discursive, non-conceptual approach to social reality, which contains little emancipatory potential, owing to its allegiance to the framework of philosophy of subject / consciousness, Habermas proposes, following the linguistic turn, a shift of paradigm to communication theory. Developed out of the sociological works of Herbert Mead and Emile Durkeheim, the paradigm assumes that human beings produce themselves and reproduce society, regulated not just by cognitive - instrumental rationality, but communicative reason that is built into the linguistic medium of the species. According to Habermas, the formal split in the tradition of objective reason reflected in the differentiation of the spheres of cognitive - instrumentality, moral- practicality and moral-aesthetics as well as the process of selective rationalization can only be understood against a reason embodied in communicative action. Communicative action, in the strict sense, is different from other types of action, namely.

teleological, normatively regulated and dramatalugical, in that it is oriented towards reaching an understanding of situations that give rise to divergent interpretations. In a sense, it encompasses other three, in so far as it brings to theoretical reflection the validity claims that are inherent in speech acts. Habermas uses the notion of communicative action to highlight the inseparability of meaning, intelligibility and understanding from validity, rationality and assessment. This helps critical theory, on the one hand, to go beyond interpretative social science that lays over - emphasis on the symbolically pre-constituted nature of reality, and on the other, avoiding the defect of systems theory in not taking note of the cultural mediation of social processes.

Corresponding to what is called *Sinnerverstehen* or interpretative understanding, Habermas maintains, there is the life-world which forms the background for every day communicative practice of life. It exists in the form of norms, customs and rituals embodied in the institutions of society. Life-world not only accounts for everyday life, but also for three fundamental aspects of social reality: reproduction, integration and socialization. Individuals acting within the horizons of the life-world reproduce society; acting in co-ordination with each other achieve/social integration; by interpreting and reinterpreting the elements of culture, they achieve individuation and thus socialization.

Since modernization of society presupposes the rationalization of the life-world and subsequently the system too, what exists as presupposed and unquestioned hitherto, comes to be examined as rational/irrational, justifiable / unjustifiable, legitimate/ illegitimate etc. Weber had seen the rationalization process as increasing domination of purposive rationality. Horkheimer and Adorno, following him, were led to deny every trace of reason in the structures of modern life. Habermas opposes this as an one-sided interpretation of the rationalization process. He thinks that modern society as it has come to be in the twentieth century, proves that the Utopian content of the Enlightenment thought is ideological, but not a mere illusion. Habermas writing about the paradoxical nature of the process says "it makes possible a systematically induced reification and opens the Utopian perspective from which capitalist modernization has always been faulted for dissolving traditional form of life without salvaging their communicative substance.[Cited from McCarthy, 1984,p.p. xxxvi]

What is wrong with modern society is not that 'instrumental reason has gone wild* but that the differentiation of society into system and life-world, owing to the imbalanced rationalization process, has led to the onslaught of functionalist reason of the system that overrides the claims of communicative reason in different spheres. What is required is the salvaging of this reason and its restoration in societal

interaction. Habermas has attempted a move in the theoretical perspective of the above kind to pull critical theory out of the impasse that limited the choice either to radical transformation (Lukacs) or an intellectual exercise in gesticulating towards truth that is without normative grounding (Adorno).

From Habermas' perspective it turns out to be that from Kant to Adorno, the model of understanding of the relationship between subject and object rests on treating the subject as one who has an objectivating attitude towards the other. And the object as one that can be represented, gained control over. From this perspective, the attributes of the mind or the capacities of the subject, such as knowing and acting, serve the function of mere self-preservation. This modern idea of self-preservation understood as rationally pursuing one's own end or securing one's own continued and contingent existence is a shrunken version of the pre-modern idea of self-preservation. This means that every being strives to realize the end that is immutably intrinsic to its essence according to the natural order. But Adorno's and Horkheimer's critique of reason as instrumental reason has retained the model of philosophy of subject. The critique of instrumental reason is still tied to the model that instrumental reason itself follows. Because a pre-modern idea of self preservation cannot be rehabilitated and the modern idea amounts to domination and suppression of identity and difference through the exercise of reason, they think, it seems no longer possible

to articulate explicitly what is lost in the Instrumentalization of reason. What is lost can only be hinted at : mimesis i.e., the capacity to accommodate the other, identify yet maintain a distance, a relationship in which the surrender of the one to the other does not involve a loss of self, but enrichment. [Habermas 1984, p.390]

But Habermas contends that the rational core of mimetic understanding is salvageable only if the paradigm of subject is given up. That is, if one assumes, that there is one and only rational way of relating to the other. To be sure, according to Habermas, the paradigm of subject-centered model which operates with cognitive-instrumental reason is more suited to the sphere of nature. What is needed to elaborate this model is a model of intersubjective understanding or communication, which puts the cognitive-instrumental reason in proper place as part of a more encompassing communicative rationality. What is gained in this reworking of the model is that the image of a solitary subject oriented towards the world in an inevitably objectivating manner, on which everyone is fixated, is replaced by an image of community of subjects as participants oriented towards the world and each other in an inter-subjective manner. This has the virtue of conceiving the truth not as an accurate representation of the object by the subject, but argumentatively achieved consensus by the participants in communication.

The preceding account of the trajectory of the philosophy of Enlightenment as well as its critique can be succinctly summed up by crystallizing it in terms of the various notions of critique entertained by philosophers from Kant via Hegel, Marx and Adorno and finally, to Habermas. In tracing the path of the philosophy of Enlightenment, it is possible to discern the fluctuating fortunes of the critique. Though Kant can be credited with becoming conscious of the significance of modernity for philosophy, his critique remained limited to the idea of self reflection through which the subject comes to be aware of the categorial determination. Though he was inspired by the changes around him, such as the rise of Newtonian science and the French Revolution, he understood the philosophical meaning of 'critique' and 'criticism' as the 'subjective judgement' about the 'objective process' of history or society or nature. It was this that provoked Hegel to criticize Kant's critique as not radical enough. For Hegel, modernity is a philosophical problem in the sense that the differentiation in value spheres of science, morality and aesthetics, accompanied by institutional differentiation in economy and polity meant a divided ethical life. Modern civil society meant the loss of community. This means that a critique cannot merely reflect on the differentiation, but must also focus on the contradictions and crisis - ridden nature of society. One could say that Hegel reestablished the original relationship between 'critique' and

'crisis', which was lost in the early Enlightenment era. [Benhabib 1986, p.p. 19-20].

One sees the preservation of the Hegelian sense of critique in Marx when he applies critique to the analysis of capitalist mode of production. As was noted above, Hegel could radicalize Kant's idea of a transcendental critique by questioning the facticity of the categorial framework itself, thus clearing the way for metacritique. Metacritique brings out what is implicit in the critique of knowledge. From Hegel's point of view, Kant's critique is abstract, a characteristic of the early Enlightenment spirit, for it does not accept knowledge except on the basis of one's own authority, and which follows one's own conviction, "or even better to produce every thing oneself and regard only one's own act as the true". [Hegel 1977, p. 49]. Since an abstract critique does not take into account the objectified products of mankind, the system of presuppositions, the tradition that makes critique possible, what it excludes or negates remains an abstract or indeterminate negation.

Though Marx found fault with Hegel for overcoming the splintering in an idealistic fashion, he retained the metacritical dimension of Hegel's thought: that which exists as real is historically formed; what is as having become. Metacritique does not merely question or criticize but reveal the formation of the 'existent'. This has a defetishizing effect in

that the 'existing actuality' reveals what it is not. Marx's distinction between immanent and transcendent Utopia depends on his acceptance of Hegel's meta-critique which alone can bring to fore the normative potential that is contained in the present. The process of negation and sublation, avowedly a human task, does not exist as a possibility in an external sense but as immanent in the subject of critique.

With Marx, 'critique' no longer meant 'recognition' and 'reappropriation' by the concept of an objective historical configuration of the social and political totality, which Hegel termed as objective spirit. [Benhabib 1986, p.33]. Marx was the first to show the impossibility of the speculative experience, which Hegel's philosophical discourse tries to explicate. With the dissolution of Hegelian system critique is no longer a purely philosophical enterprise. "Philosophy has become worldly and the most decisive proof of it is that philosophical consciousness has been drawn into the torment of struggle not only externally, but internally as well. "[Marx, cited in S. Benhabib, 1986, p.33 ; in Garbis Kortian 1981, p.p.41-42].

Critical theory of the 1930s fully endorsed Marx's opposition to Hegelian idealism. The dialectic of speculative thought which Hegel understood to end up in absolute knowledge was interpreted as a determinate negation and an unfinished dialectic of material determination. This meant that the

Aufhebung situation where thought and being, subject and object come together is unachievable. But critical theory adopted Hegel's critique to criticize both the rationalists and empiricists to undermine the foundationalistic pretensions, whether conceived in epistemological or ontological terms. In its criticism of positivism, as it becomes evident in the next chapter, critical theory employs a metacritical argument to show that the Enlightenment science is ideological in nature.

With Habermas, who perhaps is the best living representative of the critical tradition, the idea of critique preserves the influence of all the major thinkers discussed above. In the Kantian sense, it means self-reflection on the conditions of knowledge and the constitutive interests: "it interprets the historical conditions for the constitution of a constellation of interests to which, as it were, the theory still belongs through the acts of cognition ... "[Cited in G Kortian, 1980, p.46; also Habermas, 1973, p.p.1-2]. Reminiscent of Kant's critique, Habermas sets out to differentiate three types of knowledge and the constitutive interests. But like Hegel, Habermas is conscious of the fact that the differentiated value spheres can be a source of strife and alienation. This explains his interest in reason in the stronger sense, which is not just cognitive in the narrow sense, but normative in that it mediates the differentiated spheres and, at a different level, theory and practice. What is constitutive to reason for Habermas, in the emphatic sense, is a

bias for emancipation from alienation. The emancipatory dimension of reason is not conceived as an abstract possibility, an Utopia, but a real possibility that is contained in the actuality of the 'present'.

Like the Frankfurt school, Habermas is acutely conscious of the dissolution of the Hegelian system and construes the emancipatory project as a prospective task. He considers Marx's historical materialism as offering an explanation of social evolution, "which is so comprehensive that it extends to the conditions of the possibility of the rise of the theory itself as the condition of its application". [Cited in G Kortian, 1980, p.46; also Habermas 1973, pp. 1-2]. Though he, like the Frankfurt school, does not hold Marx's ideology critique as valid under changed circumstances, he retains the Marxian sense of critique: "as concerned with social praxis, on the one hand, which makes knowledge possible; on the other hand, it is concerned with a political praxis which is consciously directed towards overturning the existing institutional system." [Cited in G Kortian, 1980, p.46; also Habermas 1973, pp. 1-2].

It is in this way Habermas seeks to capture what he considers to be the core of critical theory that is supposed to run through the meaning-shifts that the concept of critique has undergone. That core, according to him, lies in a concern with the present and the idea of 'present' as crisis-ridden though

embodying a potential for the future. The following chapters are devoted to an understanding and evaluation of Habermas' attempt to develop this core and thus bring about significant revisions in critical theory through an active engagement with alternative philosophical standpoints that have animated the contemporary scene in the philosophy of social sciences.

CHAPTER II

CRITICAL THEORY AND CRITICAL RATIONALISM

The critical theory, of the Frankfurt School as a theory of modern Western society, including Habermas' reformulation of it, has concerned itself with the development of a notion of reason and its embodiment in the history of modern society. While looking at the historical background of the theory, we noted how this concern can be traced back to Kant via Marx and Hegel. The emergence of critical theory can be understood in the light of the fact that the hitherto metaphysical basis of world-views had collapsed owing to the Enlightenment 'discovery' that there is no cosmic order that is rationally substantive. Reason, subsequently, came to be understood not only as an organizing principle of cognition, but also a potentially organizing principle of society. It is this notion of reason that underlies the thesis of rationalization in Weber and the Frankfurt school - a notion of reason that has its roots in the natural scientific model of Newton and which gradually made its impact on society as a whole. In the political realm this impact can be seen in "the establishment of a republican form of government with guarantees of civil liberties and an institutionally secured public sphere; in the economic sphere as the establishment of social space for the free pursuit of one's

own self- interest, so far it is compatiable with a like pursuit by all other individuals". [Thomas McCarthy, 1984, p. xvi].

There is another tradition that has flourished on the German soil, namely, critical rationalism, which claims Kant as its past master and itself as a heir to the Enlightenment and which is equally concerned with reason but more as a category of thought and criticism and also as an intellectual tradition that has shaped the course of modern society. In the pursuit of knowledge this reason is critical in the sense that it puts to test knowledge-claims through argumentation, i.e., the method of trial and error and thereby seeks to secure their objectivity. To be 'critical', 'rational' or *reasonable*, according to this tradition, means adopting the attitude, "I may be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer the truth", [Karl Popper, 1974 p._1086] - an attitude supposedly reflected in the purest form of scientific approach, and derivatively reflected in any society fit to be called 'open'. Such a rational and open society is characterized by vigorous competition among individuals and schools, social institutions such as journals and congresses that promote competition and a state which tolerates free discussion [Karl Popper, 1976, p.96]. Critical attitude, though as old as pre-socratics, and strongly formulated by Kant's critical philosophy is properly crystallized only in modern logic and in the employment of deductive model in scientific explanations. Thus, deductive logic is the theory and organon of all critical thinking and hence of reason itself.

In early 1961, in a conference on the logic of social sciences, Karl Popper, the most articulate representative of critical rationalist tradition and Theodor Adorno, one of the prolific contributors to the tradition of critical theory presented their papers dealing with issues primarily concerning the foundations of social sciences. Though the papers failed to bring out the differences in the open, it is possible to take stock of this debate nearly three decades later in the light of the theoretical developments that took place in the following years. More importantly, for the purpose of evaluating the claims of critical theory especially its comprehensive notion of rationality, it is necessary to examine the claim of critical rationalism, whose representatives, Karl Popper and Hans Albert, formulated their theses sharply. Notwithstanding the fact that the debate was marred by polemics, mutual labelling and what Habermas called 'shoulder shrugging' and 'pretending to be stupid', [Habermas 1976. P. 224.], it highlighted the contrasting images of science and scientific method, ontological conceptualization of society, the issue of value, and above all, the idea of reason. The debate began with Karl Popper enunciating, with his characteristic clarity, his fundamental position in epistemology (Critical Rationalism), philosophy of science (hypothetico-deductivism) and philosophy of social sciences (methodological individualism). The articulation of his central assertions is done in terms of twenty-seven theses whose synoptic view is in order.

Critical rationalism recognizes the progress of science as characterized by fallibilistic approach i.e., critical approach, which is one of trial and error. No matter where it gets its ideas from, science puts them to critical tests. The method of science consists of bold formulations of hypothesis and experimental test, and retains only what survives as corroborated. [Popper,1976,p,89] What is 'corroborated', as opposed to 'refuted', has withstood the test of experience. That is, it has survived the test of contradiction between theory and experience. The objectivity of a 'corroborated' theory is guaranteed by the fact that it is never beyond argumentation. Our knowledge is always tentative and can never achieve the quality of certainty. Truth is not measured in terms of conclusive proof but in terms of degree of explanatory power of a theory over its predecessor, in terms of higher truth-content and lower falsity-content [Popper 1972, p.46]. The case of social sciences is not different. They do not call for a different method just because they deal with human beings as the tradition of *Geisteswissenschaften* presumes. Nor can they be seen differently owing to the role of limited generalization and absence of laws. Views that call for different method, such as the one mentioned above, misunderstand the scientific method employed in natural sciences. The objectivity which natural sciences claim neither lies in the scientist's attitude nor depend on the object investigated. The objectivity of science

lies in the possibility of intersubjective testing to which our theories can be subjected. The intersubjective testing is carried out in terms of a method which Popper calls hypothetico-deductive method whose core is constituted by deductive logic which is not only "the theory of transmission of truth from the premises to the conclusion, but also the theory of retransmission of falsity from the conclusion to at least one of the premises". [Popper, 1976, p.98]

Historical inquiry is similar to inquiry into nature, except that the former is carried out by reconstructing the past hypothetically, using singular causal statements. This apart, large-scale interpretations of historical phenomena are permissible, provided they are accessible to critical discussion. Critical rationalism is deeply suspicious of terms such as 'unfolding of history', 'laws', 'meaning' and 'interpretation', [Popper,1975,p.102], that offer a totalistic perspective on history. As in this case of nature, what we know is little and is always uncertain. As in the case of natural sciences, our explanations in history are always tentative solutions to what we think is not in order.

Sociology is different from historical inquiry to the extent that it involves law-like assumptions regarding regularity of behavior. It is autonomous in the sense that it is free of psychological categories. Its appropriate subject-matter is the

study of the unintended consequences of human actions: study of social events that no one desires or anticipates. For Popper, objective understanding consists in realizing that the action was objectively appropriate to the situation. This has been achieved to a great extent in economics. The method consists in the analysis of the logic of the situation, also called situational logic. The virtue of this method is that it enables our conclusions to be empirically criticizable and capable of improvement.

As is evident, critical rationalism puts a heavy premium on a method that is logically rigorous and demands empirically testability. That is, its central categories are experience, testability, criticism etc. And its values are truth (i.e. verisimilitude), objectivity, empirical content, explanatory power etc. Critical theory, in contrast, operates with different categories: totality, dialectics, mediation, identity etc., which are considered important for a social theory that seeks adequate understanding of a given social phenomenon. And its method is opposed to deductivism and its notion of truth is emphatic i.e., not just epistemological, but comprehensively suited to the study of the object. Truth applies not only to statements, but to society and being too.

Placing epistemological questions at the centre of things as crucial for the determination of questions about the world and

its subject is peculiarly modern. Descartes , Kant and the critical rationalists have done this in different ways. The primacy of epistemology has been questioned by Hegel in his critique of Kant, the metacritique, as we noted above, and by Wittgenstein in his criticism of Cartesian tradition. Critical theory, to justify its espousal of immanent critique has performed a similar critique of the epistemological claims of critical rationalism in relation to subject, object and experience. The immanent criticism shows that the epistemological model of critical rationalism assumes a number of things, which when reflected upon begin to look implausible. This critique is well supported by the recent developments in the philosophy of science.

Popper's over-all philosophical position, including and especially his view of scientific knowledge has been subjected to severe criticisms, both factual and logical. Though some of the criticisms can be met by Popper or his followers by making some modification in the over-all scheme of critical rationalism, there are many criticisms which undermine Popper's position. Such criticisms can be traced, among others/to Kuhn and Feyerabend. Our intention here is not to recount all those criticisms and anticipate the possible defense by Popper and his followers. Rather, we confine our attention to criticisms that are made or can be made from the point of view of Habermas, who tries to come to terms with certain issues raised by Popperian position. Of

course, incidentally we mention certain anti-Popperian remarks of Kuhn which have an affinity at least apparently, with the basic thrust of Habermasian critique of Popper. Our intention here is to see how Habermas's understanding and evaluation of Popper's position, provides him an occasion to effect a metamorphosis so far as the concept of critique is concerned and thus give a new turn to the tradition of critical theory.

First of all, critical rationalism makes too much of the concept of falsification and puts it to uses that are historically false and methodologically misleading. No doubt, Popper concedes that absolute falsifiability is, in principle, ruled out and that relative falsification depends upon agreement upon 'basic' statements that identify/a counter-instance. However, falsification, as a criterion for demarcating genuine from pseudo-science could be taken seriously only if one assumes a simpler view of reality and research process; only if it is assumed that research process is like a game in which the individual engages her / himself with clearly laid down rules that separates 'basic' from 'non-basic' statements, true from false like black from white. One also assumes that the researcher is clear about what she or he is looking for or that she or he is working with well-articulated hypothesis that are logically sound, such that, confronted with a "counter-instance", she / he perceives the contradiction between her or his hypothesis and reality.

The actual research experience is much more complex. It is a communal activity backed by a repertoire of rules and procedures that guide the individual scientist's approach- Every step in the process is related to a rule or a standard, implicit or explicit, that assumes the sanction of the peer group. Factors such as mutual recognition, consensus through communicative action are central to what is later hailed as discovery or contribution. As Habermas puts it, "research is an institution composed of people who act together and communicate with one another; as such it determines, through the communication of the researchers, that which can theoretically lay claim to validity" [1976,p.152].

The instances Popper draws attention to, in natural sciences, may appear to be cases of falsification in the Popperian sense:Lavosier's experiments on calcination, the eclipse expedition of 1919 and the recent experiments on parity conservation etc. But they are, as Kuhn points out," called forth either by a prior crisis in the relevant field or by existence of theory which competes with the existing canons or research [Kuhn, 1974, p.80]. Popper blacks out such prior conditions from his view and thus finds in them instances of a methodological rule that defines science as such, not realizing that the recognition of prior conditions would be ill at ease with anything like an unconditional logic of falsification. In fact, the recognition and articulation of such prior conditions are

unavailable to anything like a logic of science . They are amenable only to an idiom which is sociological and not logical. And it is here that Popper and other critical rationalists miss out on the crucial insight of social science: the preunderstanding that provides the framework for carrying out a group activity - an understanding that is implicit; and that exists in the background and enables the very activity. In short, what critical rationalism lacks is the reflection that research activity presupposes a practical orientation on the part of the scientists, whose individual contributions depend on drawing from the common fund of experience that is locked in the traditions of research. Popper's way of dividing research activity into a series of steps (the problem, hypothesis, test and falsification/ corroboration) is in order with the logic of discovering i.e., research conceived in a logical continuum, but hardly has any bearing on the crucial aspects of scientific practice.

Problems, both theoretical logical and empirical, have been identified by the critics of Popper to show why falsificationism cannot conceptualize scientific practice adequately. While at the formal level it seems to be better than verificationism, it is not clear how it could work at the level of actual scientific practice as well as the critical rationalists claim. In a situation where a scientist has put a theory to test and faced with apparent contradiction between it and 'facts', what should she/he do? Should she/he give up the theory or should she/he try

to explain away the apparent contradiction? Considering the fact that a theory is developed over a period of time and has proved itself to be well 'corroborated' by scientists makes it difficult to set it aside in the face of a contradiction. As Kuhn says, "Normally the practitioner is blamed and not the tools" [1974.p.803] Scientists usually try to adopt the option of retaining their theory by dissolving the contradiction. And if the problem persists for a sufficient period of time (which is relative) or if it generates more problems, then a crisis may be perceived and an alternative explanation may be sought. The critical rationalists oppose this move as detrimental to scientific progress. Arguing against conventionalists such as Duhem who see the test situation not as one in which single scientific proposition is compared with results of empirical observations, but with a whole system of propositions, falsificationism treats experience as playing a decisive role in the outcome of test-situation. Conventions, they hold, might be methodologically convenient and the decision to apply them to save theories from falsification have always run the risk of immunizing effect (Popper,1972, P.30]. Admittedly,what counts as falsification, and under what conditions, is not given but bound by tradition and to this extent,critical rationalists can allow conventionalism as methodologically necessary. But the question of validity, they argue, is never wholly a matter of convention. In comparison, a critical theorist like Habermas would not have a problem with the distinction between the conventionality and

validity of rules as he himself argued against relativists in favour of the distinction between the character of social facticity and rational validation of knowledge' claims [Habermas 1988, p.170] - a point to be discussed in the next chapter, Habermas's objection is that the critical rationalist is not aware of what more is involved than methodologically explicated rules. As Habermas puts it, "It is certainly not sufficient to know the specific aim of an investigation and the relevance of an observation for certain assumptions. Instead, the meaning of the research process as a whole must be understood in order that I may know to what the empirical validity of basic statements refers at all..." [1976, P.203].

At the level of scientific practice a criterion of falsification is not only insufficient but also impossible. A critical theorist argues that falsification as a method appears possible only because the falsificationist assumes that at some level 'facts' or 'experience' play a decisive role in judging the status of theory. But the fact is that the scientist is in a quandary as much in a 'refuting' instance as in a 'confirming' instance. The reason is that the rules by which she/he is guided are not just logical but institutional too.

This practical problem engenders the pragmatic interpretation of science given by Habermas. Rules, Habermas maintains, "motivate us (the scientists) to orientate decisions

of this sort towards an implicitly pre-understood goal but they do not define it. We behave in this way in the course of everyday communication and also in the interpretation of texts. We have no choice when we move in a circle and yet do not wish to forgo explication" [Habermas 1976, p.p.201-202] That this circularity is not peculiar to scientific research is also recognized by Popper elsewhere (1968, p.p. 109ff) when he discusses how the systems of judicial norms and the facts of a case are related in a fashion that judges cannot apply the rules in a mechanical fashion, but only in an interpretative manner, which means that the rules cannot be independent of the facts of the case. To quote Popper, "The case is analogous to that of basic statements. Their acceptance is part of the application of a theoretical statement, and it is only this application which makes any further application of the theoretical system possible". (1968, P.110.ff).

The significance of the role of practical knowledge, implicit in rules and conventions that are learned in the course of doing and known as 'know-how' and the circular character of understanding in which what is implicit is brought to reflection in an interpretative fashion is the legacy of the Hermeneutic tradition, dating back to Schleiermacher and Dilthey. The post-empiricist philosophy of science has incorporated this hermeneutic insight, as exemplified in the works of Kuhn, Feyerabend, Mary Hesse etc., to show, for instance, in the

history of physics the 'data' are not merely theory-dependent, in the Popperian sense, but paradigm-dependent and that theories are developed not according to the principle of falsification, but according to the requirements of the paradigm which constitutes the tradition of thought for a period. As Mary Hesse puts it, "the logic of science is circular interpretation, reinterpretation and self correction of data in terms of theory, theory in terms of data" [Cited from Habermas, 1984 p.109]

The critical rationalists surely underestimate the importance of the role of tradition as a mediating force in research process. Scientific activity, whether one of theory-building or theory-testing cannot be carried out independently of some tradition and the matter of empirical examination or crucial testing would depend on how a given tradition informs the practice. Criticism as a tradition, they seem to lose sight of, is a component of a paradigm of research and it does not come into force everywhere in the course of research. And in some cases, it remains idle in the sense that it plays no role in the changes that take place in research practice. Kuhn gives the example of Ptolemaic theory as one having been replaced, before it was tested [1974,p.805]. Feyerabend gives instances where critical testing in the Popperian sense could have been an hindrance than an impetus to scientific progress [1978 Chapters II & III].

The congruence between the type of critique of critical rationalists' construal of science which Adorno and Habermas have carried out at the conceptual level, and the critique which the post-empiricist philosophy of science has offered is not fortuitous. Both of them point to the fact that scientific activity cannot be adequately understood at the level of methodology alone. In a manner reminiscent of Hegel's critique of Kant, critical theory criticizes critical rationalism for restricting itself to a level of reflection that does not touch questions of historico-sociological aspects of methodology. To be sure, both Kant and Popper were more reflective than the positivists in that they tried to give a transcendental justification of science (Kant in terms of a priori categories essential to objective experience and Popper in terms of his philosophy of trial and error and his model of evolutionary epistemology). But both of them have not reflected upon the genesis and formation of what they think is central to science, viz, scientific reason. Thus, there is a need for a radicalization of the types of reflection on knowledge engaged in by Kant or Popper. In the case of Kant, such a radicalization has to account for the historical development of the subject of knowledge, conceived as a self formative process. In the case of critical rationalism, the radicalization implies taking into account the historical development of what they take to be scientific reason. Obviously, such radicalization would result in going beyond Kantian and Popperian terms.

Even though Popper has connected rationality and criticism to a tradition, i.e., the critical tradition, it is not unfair to say that he conceived of critical reason as independent of any tradition. This is evident in the fact that he conceives traditions as settled modes of behaviour and as analogous to theories that "are instruments by which we try to bring some order into chaos in which we live so as to make it rationally predictable" [Cited in Peter Winch, 1974 p. 901] What is more, he conceives critical tradition itself as a natural fact, a contingent thing to be preserved against the irrationality of other traditions, which, from the point of view of critical rationalism does not provide an adequate account of reason and its embodiment in sciences. On the one hand, Popper accepts decisionism since he is against giving a priori grounds for our acceptance of critical tradition. On the other hand, he feels the need to provide a rational basis for our choice of critical tradition. The precariousness of his position, as we shall see, is fully exploited by his opponents like Habermas.

Just as Hegel's critique of Kant revealed the abstract separation of subject and object and the categories in terms of which the latter is understood, critical reflection on critical rationalist account of science reveals the separation of method and practice, tradition and reason. This is because, as Albrecht Weilmer points out, the transcendental criticism offered by critical rationalism remains partial and thus is unable to ground

reason [Cited from Norman Stockman, 1983, p. 51]. The inner limit of critical rationalism is the principle of non-contradiction that nothing is and not is. This is trivially true and its application presupposes the thing to which the principle is applied as unchanging. "Nothing is and not is", which is derived out of "whatever is, is", does not say anything about that are and have undergone change. Dialectical thought, an anathema to critical rationalism, in contrast, attempts to come to terms with the statics and dynamics of reality.

To put it in less abstract terms, deductive logic cannot comprehend scientific practice, for the latter is dynamic while the former deals with form. Deductive logic cannot explain why it must apply to reality, just as Kant could not explain why precisely those categories, which he laid bare are indispensable for objective experience- an irony, Adorno points out, that lapses into irrationalism. This predicament of critical rationalism has been used by radicals like Feyerabend to debunk methodology as such, whereas, moderates like Kuhn have responded by insisting on providing a historico-sociological dimension to the philosophical reflection on science. No doubt, Kuhn does not transcend or nullify the distinction, between internal and external historiography of science. In fact, he seeks to remain within the internalist framework. However, he tirelessly espouses the need for providing sociological terms of discourse for a historiography which believes in the autonomy of the cognitive.

The shift of interest from methodology to history and sociology is intelligible from the point of view of dialectical thought, as the result of methodology's interest in anchoring itself in the context-bound scientific practice. Radically separated from the object, methodology ends setting up its own ideals, like simplicity, explanatory power, objectivity etc., that are too abstract. Critical rationalism, in so far as it absolutizes method over object, is guilty of distorting the image and practice of science. Criticism, the organon of which is deductive logic, in so far as it takes the latter to be constituent of thought cannot go through the moment of reflection to recognize that thought and object are not radically separate. Dialectical thinking perceives the distinction but sees the relation as inseparable. Hence it avoids the mistake of privileging one over the other. For it, neither logic nor facts/experience is sacrosanct as it is for critical rationalism. It is conscious of the fact that one presupposes the other. Methodological rules are articulated within the frame work of practice/research experience. But the latter is carried out with the implicit idea of the rules. This circularity is perceived to be vicious only because the law of non-contradiction is taken to be fundamental to thinking as such and as that which cannot be reflected upon.

Similarly, the relationship between reason, fact and attitude is to be understood in a dialectical manner. That is, deductive

thinking needs non-deductive justification. Because critical rationalism draws a strict line between theory and experience, facts and values, context of discovery and context of justification and assumes that all knowledge is geared to the deductive ideal, it cannot take recourse to other forms of justification and hence, remains ungrounded.

But Popper's own arguments, as Habermas points out, against inductive thinking, instrumental view of science, the idea of source of knowledge etc ., are not strictly deductive. Popper champions the cause of falsifiability with reasons, maxims, quasi- moral ideas that cannot be related strictly in terms of premises/and conclusions. As Habermas puts it, "A reflection on what Popper himself does makes us aware of the metatheoretical discussions in so far as they advance beyond linguistic analysis. On the one hand, Popper pursues the immanent critique of given theories and in so doing employs the systematic comparisons of logically compelling deductions. On the other hand, he develops alternative solutions, he makes suggestions of his own and attempts to support them with arguments. In this, he cannot confine himself to the verification of deductive connection "1976, p.210]. Presumably, Popper does not attach much importance to the kind of reasoning that presupposes attitudes, values and motivations that in turn require justifications. They nevertheless, occupy an important place in his espousal of critical rationalism which is the core feature his philosophy.

Hence, he leaves the belief in criticism as belief in reason, which is a faith among faiths.

From the perspective of critical theory nothing could be more ironical than this conclusion. If decisionism is accepted it becomes a matter of luck, that there is something called the 'critical tradition' that has been able to influence the development of sciences. The survival of this tradition, according to Popper, is a contingent thing: to be accounted in terms of certain positive features of an 'open society' such as the phenomenon of competition, belief in freedom of thought and progress, sponsorship of the state etc.

What is striking about this account of science, even if it is factually unobjectionable is that it is scientistic in Habermas' sense i.e., as faith in science - the conviction that we should no longer apprehend science as one form of possible knowledge but should identify knowledge with science (Habermas, 1976, p.213]. Since, according to Habermas, positivism is "scientistic self- understanding of the sciences" [Habermas, 1974, p.4], critical rationalism is not different from positivism. In fact Adorno and Habermas are not alone in characterizing the Popperian philosophy as positivistic despite Popper's disclaimers. von Wright characterizes Popper and his followers as "the heirs" to the neo-positivism of the Vienna circle" [von Wright 1971 p.9]. von wright goes to the extent of

saying, "this somewhat patricidal anti-positivism of Popper and his followers must not be allowed to obscure the historic continuity... nor to blur the contrast with other professedly anti-positivist currents of contemporary philosophy" [1971, p.175]. He traces it back to the thoughts of Comte and Mill. What is supposedly distinctive about science, the critical method, is used as a norm for the meta-theoretical self understanding of all sciences. This amounts to the establishment of the monopoly of scientific knowledge and concealment of the interests that promote the ethnocentricity of scientific subcultures. But critical method turns out to be scientistic even in Popper's sense when we see that this method does not apply to natural sciences themselves and are falsely projected on to social sciences. The critique of a false account of natural science, which gives central place to methodology such as the methodology of falsification, undermines the possibility of upholding the unity of scientific method, which the critical rationalists argued for. As is well known, one of the distinguishing features of positivism is the belief in the idea of unity of method. The critical rationalists in their critique of positivism argued that the positivists were misguided in the search for a unity of method by understanding it as "careful generalization from observation." For science they argued is usually speculative and daring. However, Popper claims in the dispute with Adorno that he had always opposed the aping of the natural sciences by the social sciences. But, as is evident from

his writings, Popper believed that there is no fundamental heterogeneity in method, though there are significant differences between natural and social sciences [N.Stockman, 1983 p.123]. Thus Popper's attempt to underplay the distinction between natural and social sciences adds a great of credence to von Wright's characterization of critical rationalism as essentially positivistic.

Hans Albert is clear on this issue. Citing examples from natural sciences which distance themselves from empirical knowledge of everyday life, he wonders, "Why should things be different in social sciences?" He accuses Habermas of privileging common sense or everyday knowledge in the name hermeneutics and pedigree over performance of theories. And he asks, "What can be done if after empirical examinations other theories stand the test better than those with better pedigree?" [1975, p.167-68]. The crucial differences between natural and social sciences, for him, consists in that in the latter values enter the realm of study at the level of object, whereas in the former values come into consideration only at the level of meta-language. But this difference according to Albert, does not call for a different method. The social scientist can decide, conventionally, to exclude value considerations and proceed value free. Of course, the decision itself might be governed by some considerations of value such as usefulness, better explaining power etc., but this is true of natural sciences too [N Stockman 1983, p.133].

In order to assess what is wrong with the critical rationalists' conception of social science and how it embodies ideological features, let us take a look at the debate between critical rationalists, on the one hand, and, the tradition of *Geisteswissenschaften* thinkers and later Wittgenstein inspired analytical philosophers, on the other, who have argued for a distinct method for social sciences. The critical rationalists' claim that those who argue for a distinct method for social sciences entertain a misconceived understanding of natural sciences, which partly support their claims for methodological dualism [Popper, 1957, p.134]. Because they assume positivistic ideas such as natural sciences are in search of causal laws to be discovered inductively, they conceive social sciences to be hermeneutical or interpretative in search of meaning and value by the method of 'verstehen'. And what is more, the so-called method of verstehen remains equally 'positivistic' upon closer examination. In the words of Hans Albert, '*Hermeneutic positivism* in the theory of *Geisteswissenschaften* is in this respect to be considered as a parallel phenomenon to the sensationalist positivism which one time had a certain influence on the development of natural sciences...Both philosophical tendencies accentuated direct, pre-theoretical experience as a means of knowledge; only in the one case it was outer, in the other inner experience, " the other laid greater value on the experience of meaning which in the comprehension of socio-culturally

significant relationships seem to play an analogous role" [Cited from N. Stockman, 1983, p.136J.

Albert attributes to historicist hermeneutics the view that a "historical process is a system of events, which bear their meaning in themselves and which should be grasped in their context of meaning directly i.e without the application of universal standards or laws [N Stockman, 1983, p.136]. The meanings embodied by the events, according to Albert, are understood by the hermeneutic philosophers as given. what the historicist hermeneutics is opposed to is the view that the historical phenomena can be judged in terms of absolute and timeless standards and "the explanation of the course of history and hence of social and cultural phenomena by means of universal, timeless laws, on the model of the natural sciences can be given" [N Stockman, 1983, p.133]

The critical rationalists' assertion that the model of verstehen is positivistic in the sense that it depends on a notion of 'given', that involves 'immediacy', cannot be denied of early hermeneuticians such as Dilthey. In Dilthey's theory of understanding expressions such as 'empathy' (understood as 'transference of one's self into a given unity of expression of life)', simultaneity of the interpreter and his 'object', 'reproductive feeling of the psychic states of others', etc,) play an important role. It is this which gives plausibility to the sensualist interpretation of early hermeneutics.

Dilthey was one of the earliest thinkers to outline the hermeneutic basis of methodology of social sciences. Since he was impressed by the ideal of objectivity in natural sciences, he wanted to ensure this for the cultural sciences too. Thus, we have the distinction between systematic cultural sciences, which take their object in permanent structures and isolatable partial systems of social life, that include study of language, economy, state, law, religion and art and historical and cultural sciences whose object is concrete developmental structures and the self-formative processes of specifiable social subjects. The latter covers the area extending from biography to world history [Habermas, 1972, p.184].

The critical rationalists, like Albert, are right in characterizing the methodological assumptions of hermeneutics, such as the one mentioned above, as positivistic. Dilthey, like, Kant before him conceived of the subject of knowledge as a solitary being. The subject who empathizes another person or a work shares a structure in the sense that structure is already present in his own experience. And what happens in the process of understanding is designated as the transference of one's self into a given unity of expression of life. The objectivity of knowledge consists in the virtual simultaneity of the interpreter with his object. The under current of the Kantian idea of objectivity is all too evident.

A critique of early hermeneutics outlined above has come within the hermeneutic tradition itself. Heidegger and Gadamer have done much to give respectability to hermeneutics as a universal mode of understanding, which provides a vantage point to critique science as a form of knowledge. Habermas, influenced by this tradition, offers a different critique.

According to Habermas, "the methodological basis of the historical cultural sciences is obviously too narrow for the systematic ones. They do not restrict themselves to the explication of meaning structures but analyze law-like relations between empirical variables. To the extent they are nomological sciences, they must employ empirical-analytical procedures. Yet, to the extent that they pursue the intention of the cultural sciences, they remain bound at the same time to the methodological framework of hermeneutics and do not like the natural sciences, enter the behavioral system of instrumental action." [Habermas, 1972, p.185]. The problem of reconciling empirical-analytical procedures with hermeneutic principles was not resolved by Dilthey, but he was the first to attempt a solution systematically. As Habermas points out, the problem remains with us today, but the situation is better in the sense that our conception of science has shed the pretensions of naive objectivism. To this end, critical rationalism has made its contribution via its critique of positivism.

The critical rationalists take up issue with later Wittgensteinian conception of science conceived as one language-game among other games. Scientific method is conceived as rules internal to the game such that the games are incommensurable; for, each of them is a different social form of life [Stockman, 1983, p.137]. Peter winch, under the influence of later Wittgenstein, expounded an idea of social science that goes about its business of understanding social phenomena, not in terms of method and categories that professional social scientist brings with him, but in terms of concepts that are peculiar to the form of life under study. Since concepts and reality are two sides of the same coin, social science must take adequate account of concepts immanent to the reality to be understood [1958 p.123].

Albert, reacting to Winch, makes, curiously, two charges that are apparently at odds with each other. He thinks that Winch's social science is a prioristic as well as positivistic; a prioristic because it demands intuiting the conceptual structure of a form of life to understand what belongs to it and positivistic because it takes the meaning and truth of what is to be understood as given [Stockman, 1983 p.146f]. He goes on to say that Winch's idea of social science as well as Wittgenstein's philosophy is conservative and inimical to the critical spirit. As he puts it, "Theory and criticism, explanation and enlightenment disappear together and give way to a conservative descriptivism, which is suited to the unexplained acceptance and

uncritical taking over of whatever already exists, as it is embodied in traditional form of life" [Cited from Stockman, 1983 p.148]

Before discussing what is inadequate about a purely interpretative approach to social phenomenon, as is suggested by Winchian social science and its lack of critical thrust, it is necessary to examine the assumptions of critical rationalism in terms of which the former is rejected and an alternative as an adequate method is being offered. To repeat the queer objection, Winchian interpretative science is both 'a prioristic' and 'positivistic'.

For a view of social science under discussion, concepts, rules and language as such are central to the understanding of human phenomenon. This is so because human beings, unlike physical objects or animals see themselves and others in terms of ideas, values or significance. To understand a piece of action or practice involves knowing what goes with it in ideational terms. And the relationship between them is internal, unlike the one between an object and a concept. For instance, " the concept of war belongs essentially to my behaviour. But the concept of gravity does not belong essentially to the behaviour of a falling apple... "[Winch. 1958, p,128].

In contrast, we have theoretical rationalist arguing that social phenomenon ought to be understood in terms of models that avoid positing 'entities' or 'essences' behind observable events. These models are abstract and theoretical in character in that they make do without 'things' or 'essences': they enable us to understand all social phenomena in terms of "*individuals*", their attitudes, expectations, relations, etc - a postulate which may be called 'methodological individualism'" (Popper, 1957, p.136].

Popper's argument is directed against variants of 'holism' and 'historicism' that tend to reify features of social reality as independent of individuals who are part of it, which then call for explanations in holistic terms. But, according to Popper, social reality is nothing more than individuals who part take in it and their relationships. As a Popperian puts it, "take away the attitudes of shop-keepers, local authorities and housewives, and institutional objects such as ration books shrivel into bits of cardboard. [J.W.N Watkins, 1973,p.89.]. Words such as 'capitalism' do not refer to any feature of social reality but, nevertheless, help characterization of it in terms of constructs/models that explain the phenomena in which particulars / individuals exist and interact. Since any characterization in abstract terms such as 'spirit of the age', 'bourgeoisie', 'revolutionary class' etc., cannot be empirically anchored, they can always be misused in sweeping explanations that are not amenable to empirical testing or refutation. Therefore, the

'holistic' terms are to be substituted by theoretical concepts, which, though cannot be related to observable particulars via individualistic types, can find a place as analytic aids in the scheme of explanation.

Winch is not a methodological 'essentialist' in the Popperian sense, nor does Popper have him in mind when he criticizes essentialism. But it is instructive to discuss Winch's social science to point out something very important which explanations of methodological individualist kind cannot account for : that particular features cannot be understood without a general idea. Over and above individuals, attitudes, expectations etc., an explanation requires concepts that are not brought from outside by the social scientist but are taken from the "context," or 'form of life' in Winch's sense. And the concepts are not intuited, as Albert says, but understood in terms of particulars. The process of understanding involves a movement from general to particular, from concept to reality within the context of the phenomenon. This is the hermeneutic insight which was mentioned above in connection with scientific method and the actual practice of science. Analogous to the situation of the scientist who has to decide whether to take a given 'fact' as a 'counter-instance' to a theory under test, a sociologist or an anthropologist, who is confronted with a phenomenon that is seemingly unintelligible, cannot resolve the problem by an act of decision whether to apply his standard of intelligibility or not,

but must look for a criterion in the context itself. The adequacy of an explanation always depends on how well it captures the internal relationship between the concept and object, language and -reality. Methodological rigour, sought to be provided by methodological individualism, cannot escape the hermeneutical circle of understanding.

The circular character of understanding is true not only at the level of sciences, but of understanding as such. Thus, Steven Lukes, arguing against Watkin's interpretation of methodological individualism, says that it is not clear how any social phenomenon can be understood in terms of individuals / particulars, when it presupposes relations that can only be made sense of in terms of concepts that are general. The working of a bank, the army march, proceedings in a court room, activities in a stock-exchange involve individuals and their observable behaviour, but one understands them only to the extent that one already understands the concepts of banking, army, stock market etc. Here understanding is itself an explanation [Steven Lukes, 1973,p.126].

The tradition of social sciences which is influenced by the *Geisteswissenschaften* has found language to be the key to understanding alien forms of life. It is in language, it argues, that culture and whole ways of looking at the world and life are couched. This comes out clearly in the experience of 'culture

shock' : what cornea as a shock is not just due to the unfamiliarity of the situation; for unfamiliarity of the situation is itself due to the inaccessibility of 'meaning' that gives sense to the social object. To know the meaning is to participate in the form of life; to use the language that goes with it.

The issue at stake between interpretative social science and methodological individualist science is not just methodological but conceptual too. That is, it concerns the very idea of social science. From the former's point of view a nominalistic theory of language might achieve methodological rigour and ontological austerity, but would fail to do justice to the task of understanding; for, it does not recognize the dimension of world disclosing, which all natural languages have. The problems of translation and the difficulties in cross-cultural understanding draw attention to the distinctiveness of individual languages and forms of life. The anthropological experience of running up against the limits of language is a reminder of the fact that what the social scientist brings with him as 'theory' and 'know-how' is not enough, if genuine understanding is to take place. The case of Evan Pritchard's study of Azande Witchcraft illustrates the dangers of ethnocentric understanding, which consists in extending what is peculiar to one culture to others in a pseudo-universal manner.

But Winch's conception of social science seems to be partial in that it does not discuss how an emphatic interpretative approach to social phenomenon in terms of the relevant form of life open up the possibility of criticizing it. He seems to endorse Wittgenstein's view that a form of life is 'given'¹ in the sense of 'take it or leave it', when he infers that no criticism is possible or worthwhile, given the fact that there is no a priori universal idea of rationality available by which we can judge a form of life to be correct or incorrect.

Obviously, for both the critical rationalists as well as the critical theorists, an idea of social science without a critical thrust would be unacceptable, as we noted above, even though they would assent to the proposition that there is no self evident idea of rationality that social science could exemplify. The rationality available at hand, the critical rationalist would argue, is of criticism, which is characteristic of science. [Popper, 1972, p.347-48], To be rational is to be open to criticism and learning new things, which is possible only if what one says is falsifiable. But we have seen above that if to be critical is defined so broadly, it is not clear what is necessary about it? Why should one be critical?

Because critical rationalism identifies rationality strictly with deductive reasoning, it cannot clarify the normative basis of criticism and of critical social science. Hence, decisionism

becomes the basis of rationality. Viewed from the point of view of critical theory, critical rationalism is inadequately critical, for its conception of reason is restricted- Because critical rationalism takes all thinking to be embodying the logical form ' $P \supset Q$ means $\sim Q \supset \sim P$ ', it cannot give a deductive argument for criticism without circularity. Therefore, it remains satisfied with decisionism. In order to understand the full meaning and significance of critical theory's rejection of the critical rationalists' notion of reason, including and especially the decisional element involved in the latter, it is necessary to remind ourselves of the historical context of the genesis and dynamics of the concept of reason as embodied in modern thought. As we noted in the previous chapter, with the collapse of the substantive reason embodied in the metaphysical system of the pre modern world- view, the problem of modernity, as the critical tradition perceived, was one of providing a conception of reason that could be a unifying force without ontological pretensions. Hegel perceived the problem of modernity as the problem of the division of society: as divided into civil society and the state and tried to resolve it through his idea of Absolute Subject. And we saw, briefly, why and how it was criticized by Marx and the early Frankfurt school thinkers.

By the end of the first half of the twentieth century, the idea of human history as the embodiment of progress construed either in terms of Hegelian synthesis or its Marxian

transformation had lost much of its force. Consequently, Frankfurt school quickly shifted its interest from the critique of ideology in the Marxian sense to a critique of sciences; a critique of reason as a critique of domination of man over/nature; and domination of man over man.

with Enlightenment man could no longer see nature as anything but the 'other' to which he is related in a contingent manner. This contingency meant freedom in the sense that man could choose to organize the world around him. Nature is no subject, no dialogic partner, but one whose otherness has to be kept under control and manipulated for the self-preservation and perpetuation of mankind. The history of the increasing control over nature contains not only the modern story of rapid development, natural and social, which has, to be sure, its redeeming features, but also the history of instrumental reason repressing the inner nature of man. At the individual level, it means the rational organization of ego against the instinctual drives that contained "a promise of happiness which threatened civilization at every moment [Paul Connerton, 1980, p. 67]. But the suppression is achieved by a radical separation of reason and emotion within one's experience. This meant, consequently, the drying up of one's emotional world. Increased intellectual potentiality began to be seen as inversely proportional to decreased affective / expressive capacities. At the societal level, instrumental reason meant a rigid organization, with

self-governing features that almost look mechanical. The institutional structures of bureaucracy, polity and economy have become so rigid and impenetrable and lacking in self-reflexivity that Adorno saw their relationship to society as analogous to that of the snail to its shell. One consequence of the rationalized society is the growing apart of the society and the individual to the extent that the former has become autonomous and confronts the individual in an alienated fashion.

Against this background, the task of critical theory as social theory would be to reflectively account for how the Enlightenment project of modernity, history as a collective enterprise, has come to develop features that has a relation to reason. An account of this would be an account of how reason in its embodiments has become unreason, an irrational force. According to Adorno, the focal point of the *positivistsmusstreit* is that the Enlightenment reason has become predominantly subjective reason [Adorno, 1976, p 8]. But the critical rationalists do not seem to perceive this as a central issue. In fact, both Popper and Albert express their inability to understand what is being claimed. what they make out of the thesis of instrumental reason is that the critical theorists (mis)construe the nature and orientation of theories in empirical sciences to be of instrumental nature [Albert, 1976, p 1921. Thus, they offer a critique of instrumentalist theory of sciences. Scientific theories, they argue, need not necessarily

have any instrumental value. They are increasingly adequate if they draw increasingly close to reality, in accordance with Popper's theory of verisimilitude. [N Stockman, 1983, p.100]

But Habermas has clarified that it is the critical rationalists who misunderstand what is being claimed. He is not claiming that the knowledge which natural science has provided us with is merely instrumental or has use value. Instead, he is claiming that the potentiality of technical control constitutes as the very condition of natural sciences, which follows from the split between man and nature. Theories of the empirical sciences contain information about reality from the view point of possible technical control everywhere and at all times under specifiable conditions. [Habermas, 1976, p.206; also, Fred Alford, 1985, p.p.10-11]. They can, of course, be descriptive but in relation to "feedback monitored action in predictable situation." In contrast, historico-hermeneutic sciences contain practical knowledge from the view point of seeming and expanding possibilities of mutual self understanding in the conduct of life. Finally, the emancipatory sciences contain insights into pseudo-natural constraints from the view point of enabling emancipation. Admittedly, the typology of knowledge which Habermas has outlined and the kind of interests, particularly the third one, he attributes to them have come under sharp criticism.

Be that as it may, what is of interest here is that Habermas is employing the Kantian - cum - Hegelian critique to explicate the conditions of scientific knowledge, the interest and kind of rationality peculiar to it. This gives him the advantage of distancing himself from the critical rationalists' decisionistic attitude towards reason and criticism, on the one hand, and resisting the thesis that all 'reason' is instrumental reason, on the other; it helps him to locate scientific reason as a type within a complex called communicative reason. Like the critical rationalists, he is a strong defender of reason. And like the critical theorists, such as Adorno, he is critical about its particular embodiment. He could do this only because he has a comprehensive notion of rationality, or better still, the notion of comprehensive rationality, at hand, that includes universal pre-suppositions of communicative interaction such as, comprehensibility, truthfulness, Tightness and truth. To be judged as rational in the above sense, includes either one or all the features and involves corresponding standards by which claims made can be redeemed. For instance, in the case of Azande witchcraft, one could go along with Winch in seeing it as neither scientific approach to reality nor a form of technology, but, perhaps, a way of being in tune with things. [Winch, 1958,p.p.38-39]. In this case even if questions of truth and efficacy do not arise, questions of Tightness, comprehensibility and truthfulness are involved. This allows rational evaluation of claims implicit in utterances and practices. Only against the

background of communicative reason, one could argue like Winch that what is particular and peculiar to science cannot be extended to witch craft. Similarly, Adorno's critique of instrumental reason presupposes a broader notion of reason that questions the universalistic pretensions of Enlightenment reason. Habermas' communicative reason, it might seem, is equally pretentious in its claim to universality and that it tries to substitute itself for substantive reason of the pre-modern world. Habermas has tried to protect his position from these misapprehensions, but not with much success. It is enough to mention here that Habermas' basic motivation in developing a comprehensive notion of reason is to bring out the normative force of critique, which is intrinsic to it and which differentiates it from 'mere criticism'.

With the help of communicative reason and a discourse model of understanding, Habermas distances himself from the 'decisionism' of critical rationalism and the suggested 'pluralism' of Wittgenstein inspired philosophy of social science. His attempt to go beyond the two positions outlined above is to show what more is involved in the act of critical understanding than they seem to realize. "Anyone who acts with an orientation towards reaching understanding, since he unavoidably raises truth and rightness claims, must have implicitly recognized that this action points out to argumentation as the only way of continuing consensual action, in case naively raised

and factually recognized validity claims become problematic. As soon as we make explicit the meaning of discursively redeemable validity claims, we become aware that we presuppose the possibility of argumentation already in consensual action." [McCarthy,1978.P.323]. With Popper he affirms the role of criticism as necessary for redeeming knowledge-claims and the learning process it makes possible. It is a predicament of modern social life that one cannot accept anything unreflectively or assert oneself dogmatically. This is true even of one's attitude towards sacred tradition and religious belief. With Winch, he affirms that criticism cannot be 'arbitrary' but must be sensitive to the coherence and meaningfulness of social phenomena immanently given. Yet, Habermas recognizes that specificity of cultures and the plurality of meaning situations for ever pose the threat of ethnocentricity in social scientific understanding. Thus, he is in a position to criticize both the critical rationalist as well as the Winchian philosopher of science as 'positivist' in that they do not reflect on the normative feature of understanding which consists in the fact that the question of rationality is linked to the idea of discourse oriented to consensus that is striven for but never achieved completely, "Universal pragmatic analysis of the conditions of discourse and rational consensus show these (the validity claims) to rest on the supposition of an "ideal speech situation" characterized by effective equality of chances to assume dialogue roles. This unavoidable (but usually counterfactual) imputation is an

-illusion" constitutive of the very meaning of rational argumentation; in making it we anticipate a form of life characterized by 'pure' (unconstrained and undistorted) inter-subjectivity" [McCarthy, 1978.,p.325].

But one could ask," What is necessary about Habermas* idea of comprehensive rationality?". As McCarthy asks on behalf of Winch, "Why is it more rational to settle validity claims discursively?" and, "To what standards could one appeal in justifying the claim concerning the possibility of rational consensus?" Similarly, a critical rationalist can ask, "Does Habermas really succeed in overcoming what he calls 'decisionism'?" and, " What is the status of communicative reason?"

Habermas has developed a complex argument in favour of communicative rationality, which is the core of his social theory in the larger sense, that has both logical or conceptual as well as empirical elements. He avoids a 'decisionistic' turn by a 'transcendental' argument "that attempts to convince anyone who inquires after the grounds for an argumentatively conceived principle of rationality. As Habermas says, "This argument can, I believe, be applied not only to someone who has (at least once) entered into argumentation, but to any subject capable of speech and action" [Cited in McCarthy,1978,p.323]. Interestingly, Habermas finds the idea of rational speech located not in the

structure of discourse, but in the structure of linguistic action itself, an idea that comes close to Popper's view of rational criticism as one of the functions of language. But the difference is that while Popper sees no possibility of discursively justifying rational speech or rational criticism, for that would lead to circularity, Habermas seeks to rationally reconstruct the presumably universal bases of rational experience and judgement. Through reconstruction what is implicit and operative in everyday communication is made explicit on the level of theory. Here, Habermas is relying on formal semantics, speech-act theory and other approaches to the pragmatics of language to reconstruct universal rules and necessary presuppositions of speech actions oriented to reaching understanding. These reconstructions are of hypothetical nature to be "checked against speaker's intuitions scattered across as broad a socio-cultural spectrum as possible"[Habermas,1984, p.138]. In such a checking it can be found out if and whether individuals engaged in communicative action are able to justify whatever normative claims they advance, pertaining to truth, authenticity, Tightness and comprehensiveness.

The empirical argument relies on the developmental logic underlying the acquisition of communicative competence. According to it, the capacity to raise validity claims and argue over them in a discursive fashion represents an advanced stage of species-wide cognitive and moral competences. [McCarthy, 1978,p.321].

Habermas is of the view that the cognitive and moral competence mentioned above first emerged in the Enlightenment era. But its validity is not restricted to the modern West. "The release of a potential for reason", as he says, "embedded in communicative action is a world historical process..."[Habermas, 1986, p.184]. This gives a good reason for a social scientist to evaluate other cultures in terms of standards developmentally made available. To be sure, the empirical argument is inspired by Piaget's studies of the development of logical reasoning that try to show that each successive stage is superior to the previous one. To this extent Habermas' notion of comprehensive rationality is dependent, if only indirectly, in the truth claims of an empirical theory.

Theories which start with transcendental presuppositions, but look for support from theories in empirical sciences are called by Habermas 'social theory', in the larger sense, that proceed reconstructively. Making use of conclusions from fields such as genetic epistemology, cognitive psychology and generative linguistics, his social theory seeks a reconstruction of speech and action. Thus, the criteria of communicative rationality are the results of the learning processes that can be meaningfully reconstructed and not taken as something given a priori or as a cultural fact. "They would then be shown to be deep structures underlying cognitive and interactive human competences. These competences are indeed changing and evolving, but their evolution

represents an internally compelling sequence." [S Benhabib,1986., p.265]. As is evident Habermas is making a strong claim for communicative action and reason: that they are necessary as well as universal. Necessary or unavoidable in so far as their denial i e., the denial of the need to strive for consensus, and give reasons for one's claims, leads to "performative contradiction': the values of consensus and reciprocal accountability are presupposed in the justification of the denial of them. They are universal because without them social theory from the start would be limited to "a particular,culturally or historically bound perspective..." [Habermas,1984, p.137] and thereby would forego the possibility/objectivity.

To be sure, many objections can be raised against Habermas' attempt to make a case for a notion of reason in such strong terms. First of all, the 'necessary' character of communicative rationality depends upon the *willingness* and *agreement* among the participants to adhere to only those norms that are universal. This itself requires a process of communication, argumentation and a moment of 'decision', which raises the question, " In what sense action oriented to consensus through rational argumentation can be construed as an unavoidable presupposition?". Secondly, the universality of communicative reason depends upon the universality of Modernity as a project, which is yet to be validly reconstructed or at any rate to be agreed upon by all - a fact evident in the diverse and

conflicting interpretations of modernity available today [Michael Kelly,1990,p.76].

There are considerable problems surrounding Habermas' attempt to reconstructively show communicative reason as developmentally achieved competence that puts modern society on a higher scale in evolutionary terms, Very little empirical evidence exists to prove that development of logical reasoning is linear and progressive as Piaget labours to show. Moreover, if Habermas attempts a strictly 'transcendental' justification of communicative rationality as somehow located in language itself. then it is not in tune with the fallibilistic spirit he upholds. Alternatively, if he thinks his theory can be falsified, then he must specify what would count as an argument against it. This question becomes important in the light of the fact that he does not share Popper's notion of fallibilism, which, he thinks is very demanding. By fallibilism, Habermas means discursive justification. [Habermas,1991,p.231]. To be more specific, if his criterion of falsification is less demanding in the sense of requiring a theory to possess the ability to withstand argumentation, then the whole exercise becomes more 'philosophical' than 'scientific'.

This brings us to the question, "How to construe the so-called reconstructive sciences? That is, given the typology of sciences and interests constitutive of them, where do the

reconstructive sciences fall?. Since these sciences does not fall in any of the three types, as they pursue neither the technical nor the practical nor the emancipatory interests, are they to be construed as 'interest-free'? would not the "interest-free" character of these sciences affect the radical character of cognitive interests? [McCarthy,1978,p. 102]. Interestingly, Habermas, in his response, accepts the objection and sees no way of circumventing it unless the theory of cognitive interests is reformulated.[Habermas,1982,p.233).

Having noted that his theory of cognitive interests needs to be recast, if not given up, it is necessary to ask, "what is distinctive about his idea of natural sciences?"*, "What according to him is crucial for the difference between natural sciences and social sciences?", and, lastly, "What, according to him, gives a sense of unity to the relationship between natural sciences and social sciences?"

To answer the first question, Habermas parts company with philosophers like Husserl and Heidegger who adopted a negative attitude towards natural sciences, at least as they are practiced. Like Popper, Habermas claims for natural sciences the epistemic virtues like objectivity, rationality and progressiveness. But whereas Popper construes rationality and progressiveness in relation to truth as correspondence, which science realizes in somewhat cumulative way, it can be said that Habermas conceives this virtues in terms of cumulative

possibilities of instrumental control. However, this does not mean that he is an instrumentalist in a simple sense, that is one who holds all scientific theories to be black boxes or inference tickets aiding the scientists in precise predictions. For Habermas truth in science is not to be understood in relation to the match between the ontology of theories and the reality they putatively describe, but to be located in the consensus that is obtained or obtainable among the practitioners. In this connection it is interesting to note his agreement and difference with Thomas Kuhn. In Mary Hesse's words, "In terms of the dialectic between Popper and Kuhn, Habermas accepts the Kuhnian insight that actual languages and conceptual schemes change, but against Kuhn, he does not accept that this results in the relativism of truth; for within the domain of empirical sciences truth is a demand and a commitment now, which must entail abstraction from local *interests*, but cannot involve abstraction from the particularity of local conceptual schemes in terms of which true propositions must be expressed." [1980, p.218]. Habermas is an anti-positivist not only in this technical sense, but in a more substantive sense as is evidenced by the fact that he rejects Marcuse's view that the establishment of socialist society will change even natural sciences, as the natural sciences of today are guided by empiricism which is allied with bourgeois capitalism and maintains that natural sciences as geared towards predictive and technical control of nature do not change even in a liberated society.[1971,p.86].

In rejecting the possibility of a transcendental justification of the idea that science has representational achievement to its credit in a unique way, he is close to post-positivists like Feyarabend. But he differs from him in so far as the latter considers technology as a trivial by-product of scientific development and that the claim for external truth or objectivity of scientific theory as damaging since it degenerates easily into dogmatism by circular reinforcement of theory by experience conditioned by theory- Habermas, as Hesse points out, "while agreeing that theory has no claim to objectivity as such, nevertheless maintains the more conservative view that it is the possibility of technical exploitation that guarantees the value and objectivity of natural sciences" [Hesse,1980,p.178].

In the light of his idea of natural sciences we have delineated, "How does Habermas construe the distinction between natural and social sciences?" From his classification of sciences and corresponding human interests, however problematic it might be, it is possible to infer that he rejects a positivistic construal of natural sciences - a construal common to positivists who maintain methodological monism and early hermeneutic philosophers who maintain methodological dualism. Habermas distinguishes natural sciences from social sciences on the basis of the contention that natural sciences are singly hermeneutical in that their practice presupposes a dialogue or communication geared towards a consensus among the investigators and the social

sciences are doubly hermeneutical in the sense that their practice presupposes a dialogue not only among the investigators, but also between the investigators on the one hand, and the object of investigation on the other.

Though Habermas wishes to be understood as arguing for a difference of methodological orientation and not a difference in ontological or metaphysical terms between nature and human subject, he does rely, on the traditional argument that nature cannot be a dialogic other or a text that can be read or interpreted. That is, nature can be only be approached in an objectivating manner. But the question arises whether one could rule out the possibility of alternative approach that suggests some kind of 'dialogue' with nature. A denial of such an alternative implies accepting the separation of man and nature as a metaphysical truth. Such a denial is blind to the historical fact that most fundamental theories in natural sciences express the myth or metaphysics of a society. In doing so, as Hesse says, they "have ...been part of the internal communication system of that society. Society interprets itself to itself partly by means of nature". [1980, p.186]. The mechanization of the world picture which Descartes articulated in his idea of nature as a clock and Galileo's idea that language of nature is Mathematical **are** all nothing but modern society's extension of self-image to nature. To overlook this fact of natural sciences is to eschew reflection and in a way amounts to succumbing to scientistic

self-understanding of sciences which Habermas indicts positivism with.

While Habermas is insistent upon the difference between natural sciences and social sciences in that the former "do not have to first gain access to their object domain through hermeneutic means" [1982, p.274], unlike the latter. he also attempts to establish some kind of unity between the two types of sciences through his notion of truth: discourse theory or consensus theory of truth. Habermas' originality as far as the notion of truth is concerned consists in trying to avoid a naive representational theory of truth on the one hand, and a radical relativist position that does away with truth, on the other. Truth is neither a matter of obtaining a relationship between theory and reality via basic statements nor reducible to the consensus between investigators. Truth is a matter of grounding problematic assertions through discourse. It is a matter of arriving at genuine consensus among the investigators- a consensus that is always open and questionable". 'Final consensus' expresses only an idea that determines the assertoric meaning of assertions, 'each *in its place and its time*' [1982, p.277]. Truth understood in the consensual sense is regulative.

There can be two kinds of objections against the discourse model of truth. Firstly, skeptics of the very idea of truth can ask, "What is the status of consensus as a regulative ideal in actual scientific practice?", "Is not truth reducible to other

values such as utility, simplicity, richness , etc., which themselves are relative to the nature of practice?" Habermas' response to the first question seems at best an invitation to discourse or dialogue to resolve differences: genuine consensus as a necessary condition and not a sufficient to arrive at truth. As to the second question his answer would be negative, which he would justify by taking recourse to " a pragmatism with transcendental turn." [1982, p.276]. However, it is not clear how the discourse theory of truth escapes a purely pragmatic interpretation. Secondly, the discourse model of truth does not explain how basic statements describing initial conditions can be justified in the sense of confirmation or refutation. As Habermas himself admits, " the 'evidential dimension of the concept of truth is badly in need of further clarification" [1982, p.275]. In the absence of further clarification it seems that the discourse model must accept either a whiff of representational character of truth or go along with relativists in holding that truth is what a relevant language defines it as.

Nevertheless, Habermas must be given due credit for trying to develop a conception of reason that addresses itself to the 'present' and which is neither purely philosophical nor strictly scientific. We shall examine in the following chapters how he employs his notion of communicative reason and action against Gadamer and Lyotard and finally, the problems associated with them in the final chapter.

CHAPTER III

CRITICAL THEORY AND HERMENEUTICS

The last three decades have been significant for philosophy, science and politics in different ways. The different debates spread over this period, involving different schools of thought, raised fundamental questions about reason, knowledge, scientific method, experience etc. Each of these debates has had a specific set of issues, whose very nature was part of the debate, that called forth responses seeking to go beyond traditional understanding of the central problems under consideration. But in doing so, each of these debates pointed to a truth, whose implications are not yet fully clear, viz, there is no transcendental ground / vantage point / privileged position from where knowledge claims could be made. Of course, this truth is not entirely new. It had been noted by those who foresaw the implications of the collapse of the idea of the cosmic order in the modern era. what had kept this truth concealed was the enormous success science enjoyed over the last three centuries and the dominance of associated philosophies which were held captive by a picture of science that legitimized scientific knowledge/reason as paradigmatic. Critical rationalism, the last of such philosophies, which was discussed in the previous chapter and which came under severe scrutiny in the so-called Popper -

Kuhn debate, problematized the idea of scientific reason as method. Consequently, what came into focus was science as a practice that is community-bound and governed by norms and values, which require interpretation in order to judge what is rational, progressive, empirical etc.

The explanation - understanding debate (known as *Erklärung-verstehen*) in social sciences, revived by Peter Winch's *The idea of Social Science* sought to expose, in a way different from the post-positivists' developments in philosophy of science the false claim of scientific reason to universality. Arguing from a Wittgensteinian perspective, winch had tried to show that while rationality is a universal category in that every culture / form of life must have some sense of it, the form and importance of rationality is a function of the context. This is particularly true of the social context, constituted as it is by language, that has varying functions. Moreover, the internality of the relationship between the concepts and the world, language and reality, shows that the idea of reason or knowledge in a scientific sense is restrictive. Before we directly deal with the controversy between Gadamer and Habermas, it is necessary to make clear what is the latter's contention. According to Habermas social sciences have not only empirical- analytical dimension but also a hermeneutic dimension that centers around the practical interest of mutual understanding and an emancipatory dimension that construes freedom from unnecessary constraints as the goal

of critique. The last dimension necessitates a construal of social sciences that demands going beyond the idiom of hermeneutics - a point that is the bone of contention between Habermas and Gadamer. Habermas visualizes the last dimension in relation to psychoanalysis. Obviously, his understanding of psychoanalysis is, in a sense, fundamentally different from that of Gadamer's, for whom psychoanalysis is essentially a hermeneutical practice. The debate between Habermas and Gadamer which began with the publication of Gadamer's *Truth and Method* in 1961 has a striking affinity with the other two debates mentioned above, namely, Popper - Kuhn and explanation - understanding controversies; it too questions sciences' claim to universality. Though it is not the central theme, it is supplementary to the main issue at stake which is the very idea of understanding - an idea which, according to Gadamer, is fundamental to human beings, preceded and presupposed by all forms of knowledge. The underlying Heideggerian thesis is that human existence embodies in its ontic constitution, as part of its being, a pro-ontological understanding of the self and of the world in which it finds itself. [Gadamer, 1979 p.131]. This thesis confers a distinctiveness to human beings, in opposition to nature. and derivatively, to human sciences, in contrast to natural sciences. Thus, it appropriates the category of 'understanding' exclusively for the sciences of man. In the words of Heidegger. "with the term 'understanding' we have in mind a fundamental existential, which is neither a definite species of cognition, distinguished,

let us say, from explaining and conceiving nor cognition at all in the sense of grasping something thematically". [Cited in KurtMueller-Vollmer, 'Introduction', 1985,p.32.]. Because human beings, in contrast, to other beings, possess an ontological priority with respect to the question of Being, the investigation and analysis of human existence and all that comes under the concept of social phenomena involves, Heidegger maintains, interpretation. The Heideggerian notion of understanding is not merely an epistemological concept; it is an existential one in the sense that it is closely related to the temporality of human existence. Human beings live in a horizon of past, present and future, in which understanding plays the mode of grasping the possibilities and potentialities of life, disclosed to them, toward a projected future calling for the realization of this possibility or fulfillment.[Richard Bernstein, 1983, p.p.139-44].

The thesis of existential hermeneutics is different from the hermeneutics of the 19th century exemplified in the works of Dilthey and others in that the latter worked out a notion of understanding in conscious opposition to a mode of cognition that supposedly characterizes natural sciences. The latter, like the traditional philosophies of science, was held captive by an image of science as/governed by the interest of 'objectively understanding' things as it were. From a Heideggerian point of view, this notion of objectivity is misconceived. For, it takes

no note of the close relationship between existence and understanding that always makes the latter possible and never allows an escape from the temporality of the former. It may be mentioned in the passing that though Heidegger unambiguously debunks the traditional construal of objectivity in relation to a meta-theory of social sciences, his view regarding such a conception vis- a- vis natural sciences is quite ambiguous. This equivocal position of early Heidegger is organically related to his former view of natural sciences, which is essentially theory-centered - a view which was replaced by him later by praxis-centered construal of natural sciences. [Joseph Rouse,1987,chapter III].

The notion of objectivity guaranteed by a disinterested perspective has been one of the unquestioned assumptions of Cartesian epistemology. The latter was stuck to a model of subject - object relationship In which the subject stands against the object. In Descartes, for instance, it is pure reflection in which the self comes to know itself transparently. This Cartesian prejudice takes different forms: pure experience, ideal language, pure communicative community etc. The 19th century German hermeneuticians, who questioned the universality of natural scientific method, were nevertheless influenced by the idea of objectivity, which they explicated in terms of the concept of inner experience and the concept of empathy - a notion of objectivity Gadamer calls 'eunuch-like'. [1976, p.28]

The various debates which we mentioned above highlight in different ways the recovery of the hermeneutical dimension of experience called understanding. Central to that dimension is the idea that understanding neither requires of the subject to stand over the object, as scientifically inspired philosophers advocate, nor implies that the object of understanding stands over or against the subject, which he must grasp without prejudice, as Romantically inspired methodologists like Dilthey and others proclaim. Gadamer, taking his cue from aesthetic experience, invokes the notion of play that involves an element of internal buoyancy, a to- and- fro movement that results in understanding. The phenomenon of understanding cannot be accounted for in terms of individual subjects, object and their attitudes alone. It presupposes a setting which requires engagement on the part of the individual subjects. This engagement is guided by a pre-understanding of the situation that not only sets the course of the 'play' but is also shaped or transformed in the playing. This is illustrated by Gadamer in explicating what happens in a dialogue : "when one enters into dialogue with another person and then is carried along further by the dialogue, it is no longer the will of the individual person, holding itself back or exposing itself, that is determinative... the law of the subject- matter (*die Sache*) is at issue in the dialogue and elicits statements and counter-statements and in the end plays them into each other" (Gadamer, 1976, p.66]. Thus conceived, understanding as play is not a kind of activity, but a

fundamental mode of being in that it, " absorbs the player into itself and thus takes from him the burden of the initiative which constitutes the actual strain of existence'. [1975, p.94]. Understanding¹ is not an achievement of the player or players, but a result of a 'happening' that cannot be guaranteed by any prudent application of method. From a hermeneutical point of view, philosophy of science's preoccupation with method indicates, at best, a concern with a kind of understanding, exemplified in the sciences, which requires a methodic distantiation and abstraction. But even this understanding is not free of the hermeneutic dimension of all understanding such as engagement with the relevant tradition, subsequent appropriation and a dialogic process in which scientists engage and through which it is achieved. The notion of understanding that is developed under the influence of scientific experience presupposes the relationship between subject and object that is taken to be naturally given. Hence, it gives the illusion that the task of understanding is better achieved by methodic reflection. The question whether there is an opposition between methodic understanding, that informs scientific experience and understanding as 'play' that informs experience of art will be discussed later. However, the hermeneutical answer to this question depends upon how successful Heidegger and Gadamer are in their attempt to develop a hermeneutics that explicates 'understanding' and 'truth' at a deeper level than that of epistemology, namely, that of ontology.

Before we examine Gadamer's claims for philosophical hermeneutics and Habermas' profound reservations about them, let us take a critical look at Cartesian epistemology and its variants, to identify the shared background of these two thinkers. The epistemological approach to 'understanding' suffers from the limitations of being dependent on terms such as reflection, experience etc., at the individual level, for founding its project, when the terms themselves come mediated by ideas, society and language in general. Mediation as a fact can be ignored only if one makes assumptions about the subject-object relationship, the structure of the world, the nature of experience, etc. For instance, Descartes could strive for certitude about knowledge only by taking the immediate consciousness of the individual ego as the locus of reflection. The argument that consciousness for its self identity requires 'the other' which extends beyond the individual ego exposes Descartes' assumption. Similarly, Kant could answer the question 'How is science possible?', only by positing a priori categories that structure experience, which on further reflection stands ungrounded.

A critique of the epistemological enterprise, popularly known as the immanent critique, in terms of what it claims against what is the case, brings to foreground a number of problems

This point was discussed in Chapter I in connection with Hegel's critique of Kant.

associated with it. Of them the first is the problem of objectivism, i.e., the problem of showing that knowledge could be founded on a fundamental principle or idea, or that its certitude could be guaranteed by a given method. Either way, the problem is one of avoiding error. But according to the epistemological enterprise if one could start from something that is unquestionable, for instance, one's own experience, error could be avoided and certitude could be guaranteed. But as Hegel put it, the fear of falling into error is the fear of facing the truth [Garbis Kortian, 1980, p.29]. If one starts from one's own experience, reflection etc., one is sure to miss the phenomenon of mediation. Hegel's critique of Kant, Wittgenstein's critique of ideal language programme and Habermas' and Gadamer's critiques of objectivist epistemology have highlighted this fact in different ways.

Secondly, these critiques show, one way or another, the implausibility of epistemology as a foundational enterprise. But the most decisive argument in recent times has come from a focus on language and its relation to the world or reality. For, one of the things assumed by those who argue for the privacy of epistemology or its equivalent is a certain conception of the nature of language and its relation to reality. According to the most commonly accepted understanding of language the essence of language consists in its capacity to represent reality: the relationship between language and reality is construed in terms

of correspondence between concept and object, theory and phenomenon, narrative and event etc. Admittedly, this relation between language and reality goes well with the subject - object metaphysics which was mentioned earlier. In fact, they come as part of the package offered by the epistemological approach.

Thirdly, even though language does have a representative function (otherwise one would not be able to make distinctions like fact / fiction, truth/ falsity (in the empirical sense) illusion / reality etc) the relationship is not one of simple correspondence as it has been implicit in Russell's logical atomism, Wittgenstein's picture theory of meaning, the ideal language of Carnap etc. As is well known, later philosophers of language have shown that the idea of propositional truth cannot be explained in a straight forward sense in terms of statement and state of affairs. The reason is that a statement purported to be true or stating a fact or stating a real possibility needs to be made intelligible in a context before it is evaluated. What makes the relationship between the language and what it represents complicated is that there is an internal relationship between what is said or meant and what is the case. Or as winch. a staunch Wittgenstenian, has showed that language and reality are the two sides of the same coin. [Winch, 1958. p.123].

Later Wittgenstein's 'theory' of language signifies what is popularly known as the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy. Actually,

the linguistic turn, in the sense of analysis of language as a key to philosophical problems was initiated by Russell, early Wittgenstein, Carnap etc., who upheld a view of language criticized above. But the 'turn' assumed significance around 1950s when it was directed towards ordinary language, which had lost its primacy when the scientific approach to 'every thing' had taken hold. The failure of the ideal language programme inspired by the supposedly "unequivocal" language of science, has restored ordinary language to its original place, resulting in the realization that there cannot be a more reliable meta-language than ordinary language.[Habermas, 1971,p.p.168-69]. Thus, natural language as a universal language has recaptured the centre of philosophy and became the locus of understanding.

Though Wittgenstein can be credited with for contributing much to the rehabilitation of ordinary language and its centrality to the idea of understanding he failed to make a number of distinctions through which he could have avoided the aporias in his critique. First of all, he does not make a distinction between a kind of understanding that is required for the ongoing of everyday life and understanding in the reflective sense familiar to philosophy. The former is intuitive, unproblematic and functions largely in the background which gives stability and regularity to everyday life-praxis. The latter, on the contrary, is called for only when there is an interruption in communication and activity.[Habermas, 1971.p.203]

Secondly, the kind of understanding which every day life-praxis requires is acquired through a process of acculturation or learning a form of life. This is not differentiated by Wittgenstein from a kind of understanding which an adult learner, who is already in the possession of a language and rooted in a culture, seeks to acquire what is alien to him. In other words, Wittgenstein does not make a distinction between learning a native language and learning a foreign language. Note in this connection the examples Wittgenstein discusses in *Philosophical*
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Investigations as to how children learn languages. However, such a distinction is essential to clarify what is involved in understanding an alien culture.

Thirdly, because he conceives of understanding as rule-following and understanding a language as the mastery of rules he does not realize that understanding is an hermeneutic exercise which means interpretation and application. This means that the grammar of language game or life-form does not exist as 'given' as Wittgenstein says, but constantly gets interpreted and the rules applied anew. Consequently the inter-subjective consensus is ever under the threat of being broken and is susceptible to revisions.

Both Wittgenstein and his disciple, Winch, criticizing a naive objectivist version of understanding have relied on a restricted notion of language, which does not throw light on a number of questions: How can life forms undergo change or survive radical ruptures? How can radically different life forms understand each other? From the fact there are no general rules of understanding practices and life forms, since there is an internal connection between them and language, does some kind of relativism follow?

Philosophical hermeneutics developed by Gadamer as an account of understanding claims to be in a better position than Wittgenstein-inspired and hermeneutically oriented philosophy of science in that it goes to the very root of the phenomenon of understanding i.e., to the ontological condition of human existence, thereby situating itself outside the restricted choice between objectivism and relativism. Gadamer and Habermas have developed their views in a philosophical climate characterized by the linguistic turn - a turn away from the choice of objectivism and relativism. Criticizing the derivation of the idea of understanding from a false picture of science, they point to the historicity and culture-specificity of all understanding. We had noted this point in the other two debates wherein 'understanding' was tied to paradigm (Kuhn) and form of life (Winch). In the Habermas - Gadamer debate this point comes out more forcefully. They construe understanding as an essentially linguistic. It is

this linguistic character that enables understanding to go beyond any kind of particularism. The diversity of human life, understood in terms of time, place and culture, is united in language, which points to something beyond itself. Therefore, for Habermas and Gadamer, a critique of objectivism need not imply a relativistic thesis. For Gadamer, "the variety of languages presents with a problem... but this problem is simply how every language, despite its difference from other languages, is able to say everything it wants." [1976, p.16]. At an inter-cultural level, understanding is a productive achievement, a result of encounter between different languages or situations. Gadamer captures this process with the idea of fusion of horizons. "If we place ourselves in the situation of someone else, for example, then we shall understand him, that is, we shall become aware of the otherness, the indissoluble individuality of the other person, by placing ourselves in his position." [Gadamer, 1975,p.p.271-73.] It is a matter of acquiring a common framework in which both identity and difference are intelligibly related.

Habermas endorsing Gadamer on this point, goes further and says, "the pluralism of life-worlds and the language-games is only a distant echo of the world-views and cultures that Dilthey projected onto a hypothetical plane of simultaneity"[1988, p.154]. What is meant by historicity of understanding is not just situatedness or changing character of our knowledge, but the emphatic character of the historical influence of the past over

the present that cannot be shaken off in the name of objectivity. What is more, any understanding of the past or the 'other' is possible only to the extent one recognizes the past already in the present. The fusion of horizons does not mean that horizons exist independently as 'theirs' and 'ours', but is projected and integrated in the process of understanding that moves in a circular fashion.

The effectivity of history or effective historical consciousness points out something crucial about human understanding itself: that we, as human beings, are ever bound by the prejudices of our tradition, which both enables as well as limits our understanding. The limits can be overcome by opening ourselves to that we seek to understand. This involves the act of play, referred to earlier. Genuine understanding is a fusion of horizons of the subject and the object in which coming to know the other is knowing oneself. Gadamer uses the notion of effective historical consciousness against the false pretension of science's claim to universality. According to him, 'the element of historical influence is operative in all understanding of tradition, even where the methodology of the modern historical sciences have been largely adopted...' [1975,p.xxi]. He believes that the methodologically alienating fashion in which science approaches its object needs to be corrected by the pre-understanding which one has before scientific experience. But Habermas finds it difficult to accept the 'either or' choice

between truth and method or methodic understanding and hermeneutic experience. He does not think much of Gadamer's attempt to remove the humanities from the sphere of science. For, "the sciences of action would not be able to avoid joining empirical-analytical method and hermeneutic ones" [1938, p.167]. While Habermas approves Gadamer's criticism of the absolutism of general methodology of sciences he wonders how hermeneutics can relieve itself of "the business of methodology as such; this claim... will be effective either in the sciences or not at all" [1988, p.167].

In order to fully understand Habermas' criticism of Gadamer, it is necessary to clarify how the latter relates understanding to tradition and draws certain radical conclusions. According to Gadamer, "understanding is not to be thought of so much as an action of one's subjectivity, but of placing oneself within a process of tradition in which past and present are constantly fused" [1975, p.258]. The role of foresight is not just to provide us with presuppositions, but to guide us to explicit understanding of what we know in a primordial sense. Therefore, the meaning of what we seek is traceable to our presuppositions. Interpretation is an act of explicating what is implicit in our understanding. Conceived this way, every understanding is in some sense confirmation of our prejudices, which has its roots in the tradition we seek to understand.

Habermas' objection against Gadamer is directed at his attempt to anchor understanding at an ontological level. According to Habermas, Gadamer does not "recognize the power of reflection that unfolds in *verstehen*." [1988, p.168]. He agrees with Gadamer that hermeneutic understanding involves a reflective moment in which we are conscious of our prejudices guiding us to seek what we find and, therefore understanding is, in a sense, making explicit what is implicit in the understanding prior to reflection. But reflection does not always terminate in the fusion of horizons in the sense that our prejudices may not always get confirmed. For Habermas, reflection has a radical element that threatens the foundations of the tradition as well as the life- praxis.

This point has a practical import for Habermas who wants to show that understanding is not completed by referring to the prior consensus manifested in the influence of tradition, but by anticipating it as a possibility through a critical enterprise. "From the fact that understanding is structurally constituted by a tradition that further develops through appropriation, it does not follow that the medium of tradition is not profoundly altered by scientific reflection" [Habermas, 1990a p.236]. The alteration consists in the weakening of the consensus and calling forth a reflection which takes the form of critique.

To be fair to Gadamer, there is a radical strain in his

view, which comes out clearly in his reply to Habermas and later writings. When he is arguing for the positive role of tradition and its authority and how effective history works, it seems that he is endorsing all that tradition and history stands for. It seems there is a lack of critical sense in his hermeneutics. Statements like a "history precedes me and my reflection" can be (mis) understood to be dogmatically implying an attitude of uncritical acceptance towards that which "tradition presents *de facto*" [Habermas, 1990a, p.286]. Similarly, when he opposes truth to method or hermeneutics to science / method, it seems he is privileging tradition over reason. But Gadamer has clarified that tradition is not something that stands over and against the knower. It is not something that speaks from above. Nor is it something to be thrown off as a shackle. Tradition is transmitted or interpreted by those who let themselves be addressed by it. As Gadamer succinctly puts it, "Even the most genuine and solid tradition does not persist by nature because of the inertia of what once existed. It needs to be affirmed. embraced and cultivated. It is, essentially, preservation such as is active in all historical change. But preservation is an act of reason, though an inconspicuous one." [Gadamer, 1975, p.250]. In other words, the preservation of tradition is an act of reason since it is a freely chosen act.

Similarly, the notion of authority has been popularly misunderstood -a misunderstanding which Gadamer traces to the

Enlightenment prejudice. Against this, he say, authority is based on the recognition of superior knowledge. Authority has nothing to do with blind obedience.[1975, p.248], its legitimacy is derived from the acknowledgement that tradition has a point of truth. As Ricoeur paraphrases Gadamer, "that which has authority is tradition", [Cited in Ricoeur, 1990a.. p.306].

So, Gadamer finds the opposition between tradition and reason, interpretation and critique as a false one, which Habermas succumbs to under the influence of Enlightenment's false consciousness. As far as he is concerned, there cannot be any reflection that can make our structure of understanding completely transparent. The finitude of our existence and the linguisticity of understanding demands from us a recognition of the universality of hermeneutic consciousness that cannot be sublated by any reflection, including Habermas' critical reflection. As Ricoeur puts it, "the critical instance can only be a moment subordinated to the consciousness of finitude and dependence upon the figures of pre-understanding which always precede and envelop it." [Ricoeur, 1990a, p.316].

Habermas finds Gadamer's hermeneutics better placed than Wittgenstein's conception of plurality of language games in that the former recognizes language as encompassing all specific language games and thus avoids a kind of relativism that ensues from Wittgenstein's thesis. He admits that it is useful to

conceive language as a kind of Beta-institution on which all social institutions are dependent. But since language as "a tradition depends on social processes, such as labour and domination that are not reducible to normative relationships" [1990a p.239], it is neither to be absolutized nor to be idealized.

But Gadamer clears up the allegation that he is advocating a kind of idealism [Gadamer, 1976, P.15]. He wonders how a reference system understood as labour and domination can fall outside the purview of linguistic mediation [1976, P.31], or how any reflection on language can be other than a hermeneutic experience. He asks, rhetorically, where does reflection operate from, if hermeneutic approach restricts itself or changes into critique of ideology as Habermas demands? Gadamer says further that even though Habermas is "a hermeneutically reflective sociologist" very unlike technicians of social structure, his argument for critical social science with emancipatory interest, that wants to put hermeneutics at the service of social sciences, betrays the objectivistic or transcendental aspirations. Habermas' turn to psychoanalysis, he says, belies his hope of founding critical social science on independent grounds.

Here, we come to some of the central issues that have been controversial enough to keep the debate alive: the significance of psychoanalytic interpretation ; its relationship to

hermeneutics in the Gadamarian sense, and finally, its relation to the critical theory.

Hermeneutics, as Gadamer understands, is an exercise in search of meaning and interpretation of something that is unclear or misunderstood. It depends on the Idea of pre-understanding embedded in the context of tradition and praxis. The hermeneutic exercise takes the form of a dialogue which presupposes a prior consensus resulting in the production of a common framework that enriches the prior understanding and consolidates the consensual base of what we already possess. However, let us first consider what an interpretation in psychoanalysis involves. Psychoanalysis too is an exercise in search of meaning and Interpretation of something which is, at least, *prima, facie* alien and hence, unintelligible. Meaning in this context, is a problem In the sense that it belongs to the privatized world of the patient. Dialogue or communication in the ordinary sense is not helpful owing to the lack of prior consensus over the terms of understanding. Hermeneutic reflection in which one can "deem/freely what in one's own understanding may be Justified" [Gadamer,1976,p.38] is not available as a choice to the patient, since he does not recognize the motives of his own actions. Motives take the fora of causes and actions symptomatic behaviour. In what is called the analytic situation, the task of

the analyst consists in reconstructing the original experience, usually traumatic, with the help of patient's account of it. The task is made difficult by the fact that it is dependent on the patient's recapitulation with all its gaps and possibilities of misleading suggestions. It is constrained by the phenomenon of resistance, which is, in large part, unconscious.

The task of recovering the lost meaning or what Habermas terms as restoring distorted communication and helping the patient in his self-formative process involves a circularity: the power of the resistance can be broken only to the extent the patient recognizes his alienated past, [Habermas, 1971, p.266], but the recognition depends on the diminution of resistances. Briefly, the task consists of two things: 1) The investigation and the acquisition of right interpretations, and, 2) The struggle against resistances.

The peculiarity of psychoanalysis is that its subject-matter has a dual character constituted by energetic and symbolic (ideational) features. The difficulty lies in accounting for both what exists and what it means to the patient i.e., an ontology and hermeneutics. Freud himself offered material in his works for both the approaches, the causal and the textual. And he has been castigated by his critics for over-emphasizing one over the other. Those who are hermeneutically influenced see the idea of analysis as one of achieving insight, "becoming conscious of

one's distorted past."[Habermas,1971,p.256]. This means language and communication play a very important role. Desires, wishes dreams etc., are understood like a language. Psychoanalysis deals at the level of *instinctual representatives* and not at the level of instincts. That Freud was aware of the importance of interpretation to understand the unconscious is evident in his remark about dreams : " the interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the Mind" [Cited in Paul Ricoeur, 1977, P.400].

On the other hand, desires and wishes have the character of force for the patient. Separated from their representatives, they make their presence felt as effects. Even though psychoanalysis does not confront these forces directly, it has to come to terms with them, if it is to be called a practice. "Talking cure" is not just a matter of the analyst talking his way through.

However, the hermeneutical construal of psychoanalysis, which is grounded in the textual approach of Freud does not sound wholly adequate. This is clearly evident in the struggle against resistances. Psychic resistance is different from the resistance a text offers in that the former works systematically and behind the back of the individual (patient). Therefore, the goal of psychoanalysis i.e., of enabling self-knowledge for the patient, depends for its realization on weakening the power of the resistance - an arduous task that is not achieved through

sheer "talking power".[Ricoeur, 1977, P.410]. As Freud says, "Informing the patient of what he does not know because he has repressed it is one of the necessary preliminaries to the treatment .For informing the patient of his unconscious regularly results in an intensification of the conflicts in him and an exacerbation of his troubles" [Cited in, Ricoeur, 1977,p.412]. In other words telling what the patient does not know results in the accentuation of the conflict - a task necessary for overcoming the resistances. The second part of Freud's statement indicates what is peculiar to the psychoanalytic practice : "working through" (*.Durcharbaiter'*) the barrier of repression in a situation of transference. That is to say , 'talking through' is only a means of 'working through.'

In what is called the transference situation the technique of psychoanalytic practice comes into full light. Simply put, the goal of psychoanalysis is to bring the traumatic situation or the original experience within the analytic framework with the effect of seeing the past as a past [Ricoeur, 1977, P.415]. But this requires harnessing the force of resistance to its own dissolution. The task of enabling the patient to remember is momentarily subordinated to the technique of playing upon the patient's pleasure and unpleasure [Ricoeur,1977, P.416].

Both Gadamer and Habermas oppose a scientific account of psychoanalysis. For Gadamer, psychoanalysis falls very much

within, "the larger perimeter of hermeneutics". For, in psychoanalysis, " hermeneutics and the circle of language that is closed in dialogue are central" [Gadamer, 1976, P.41]. Habermas, on his part, is critical of the attempt of Freud to reformulate psychoanalytic assumptions in the categorial framework of strict empirical science. He supports the other attempt of Freud in developing an analysis on the level of inter-subjectivity in ordinary language between doctor and patient, which incorporates the crucial aspect of self-reflection [Habermas, 1971, p.251]. The subject matter of psychoanalysis is basically & distorted text manifesting itself as compulsion, lies and even neurosis. Instinct theory, while necessary, is not to be confused with the type that applies to animal behaviour. Causality is to be understood not as of nature but of fate, because It prevails through the symbolic means of the mind [Habermas, 1971, p.256].

Despite this common ground between Habermas and Gadamer, the former claims that psychoanalysis undermines the universality of hermeneutics. Is Habermas justified in calling psychoanalysis a distinctly emancipatory science in contrast to historico-hermeneutic sciences? For Habermas, psychoanalysis is different from historical or anthropological studies and therefore. hermeneutical in three significant senses : 1) It assumes a framework which is different from that of hermeneutical studies in that it provides the logic of interpretation in psychoanalytic dialogue; 2) It presupposes a general interpretation which

serves as a narrative foil for the reconstruction of individual life histories and 3) it involves application of this schema to life histories [McCarthy, 1978, P.202].

Let us elaborate:1) The framework of the psychoanalytic of interpretation involves assumptions about language, behaviour and interruptions in self- formative processes. According to Habermas, these assumptions explicate the possibility of psychoanalytic knowledge. What makes psychoanalysis different from natural and cultural sciences is that the methodology of the former cannot be separated from material content at the level of self-reflection. That is to say, to comprehend the transference situation as the condition of possible knowledge means at the same time comprehending a pathological situation.

2) The assumptions provide a methodological framework in which general interpretations can be developed which deal with the development of the early childhood of the patient, his learning mechanisms and defense mechanisms. These general assumptions deal with interaction patterns of the child which form its personality structure. The general- interpretations are generalized histories of the patients in a narrative form. They form the empirical core of psychoanalysis which means that they are subject to corroboration and refutation like empirical theories in other disciplines. "In contrast to the hermeneutic anticipation of the philologist, a general interpretation is

"fixed" and like a general theory, must prove itself through predictions deduced from it" [McCarthy, 1978, P.203].

3) But the difference between general interpretation of the psychoanalytic nature and general theories of other disciplines is that the validity of the former depends upon the object's (patient's) recognition and application of an interpretation to himself. As Habermas puts it, "the empirical accuracy of general interpretations depends not on controlled observation and subsequent communication among investigators but rather on the accomplishment of self- reflection and subsequent communication between the investigator and his object." [1971, P.259]. The question of validity of a certain interpretation is not easy to decide. A simple 'yes' or 'no' does not resolve the question. While 'yes' or 'no' could be compatible with the correctness of interpretation, it does not suffice to decide the validity of the interpretation. A simple answer could be an expression of resistance which is an indication of the incomplete self-formative process.

Habermas' interpretation of psychoanalysis as an instance of critical emancipatory science has been questioned from different quarters. One line of argument goes that he has left out the significance of instinct theory which forms an important part of the orthodox Freudian position and that his turn to language has

resulted in diminishing the importance of materialist presuppositions required for a satisfactory explanation of psychic phenomenon. [Joel Whitebook, 1985, p.p. 153-160]. The selective utilization of Freudian thesis in the name of a preconceived purpose of restoring meaning or emancipation is achieved by Habermas, according to this line of argument, only by glossing over many of Freud's observations and the clinical experience of others. For instance, Habermas understands unconscious essentially as opposed to the conscious and as a repository of lost meanings, while Freud did not see the unconscious merely as the place where lost meanings dwell, but a place from where instincts or instinctual drives operate. Seen this way, the unconscious is not a result of repression, as Habermas' interpretation would imply [Habermas, 1971, P.271], but a part of "inner nature" that could be complementary to the conscious. [Russell Keats, 1981, p.p.94-132].

Secondly, to conceive the subject-matter of psychoanalysis purely in terms of distorted text and the task of the analyst as restoring meaning is to lapse into linguistic idealism of which Habermas is, elsewhere, critical [Habermas, 1988, p.p.173-74]. Such a textual approach to psychoanalysis directly goes against the clinical experience. A purely textual approach may result in reading meaning into the patient's pathological behaviour, which may have purely physiological reasons. In such a circumstance to persist in pursuit of meaning is to give up the task of curing

the patient of his illness by psychoanalysis. The situation of transference, central to clinical experience, is "regarded by practicing psychoanalyst as supplying the additional energy to overcome the power of resistance and showing special paths along which to direct the energy " [P Ricoeur, 1977, P.413]. In other words, even if one agrees with Habermas that the validity of an interpretation does not depend on what the patient has to say, but how it helps his self-formative process in the long run, it is doubtful whether, as Habermas thinks, the success of a therapy can rest solely on self-reflection i.e., communication with oneself.

However, Habermas, in his reply to these criticisms, has expressed his wariness about a mechanical model of psychoanalytic explanation that conceives the Instincts in terms of drives or energy. For, according to him, what are lost in a reifying theory of drives is both the linguistic structure of and autonomy of inner nature. [Habermas, 1985b, P.213]. For him, there is no way of getting to the reality of psyche in an alinguistic way. Psychoanalysis, he thinks, is depth-hermeneutic and cannot be made compatible with a physicalistic approach. For methodological reasons Habermas prefers a communication theoretic model. [Habermas, 1985b, p.213]. Considering the poor record of experimental approach, he prefers to account for the subject-matter of psychoanalysis in terms of interaction concepts rather than physical or biological concepts. He makes it clear

that he is a materialist without reductionistic pretensions.

This rather lengthy discussion on the nature of psychoanalysis was undertaken to bring out its importance for critical theory. For, Habermas claims that the Methodology of psychoanalysis offers a clue to the method of critical social science, the goal being "the construction of a general interpretative framework in the form of a systematically or a theoretically generalized history which can be applied to a historically oriented analysis of present society with practical intent" [McCarthy, 1978, p.205]. This claim has invited two important criticisms: 1) The goal of psychoanalysis and critical theory as such i.e., of emancipation requires a reflection, "that goes behind the conscious superficial interpretation, breaks through the masked self-understanding and sees through the repressive function of social taboos." [Gadamer, 1976, p.41]. This can take place only against a background of consensus that is taken for granted as true and authentic. Therefore, Gadamer's conclusion is that psychoanalysis does not undermine the claim to universality of hermeneutics, as Habermas believes. On the contrary, it confirms it. Furthermore, the limited claim³ of psychoanalysis to the psychoanalyst himself and the need for a hermeneutical clarification of the self-understanding of

³ The reduction of psychoanalyst to a game partner who is "seen through" is well brought in the play *Equuss* by p.Schaffer. The play illustrates Gadamer's point that psychoanalysis cannot claim the status of an independent science. -

metapsychology go to show that the project of putting psychoanalysis and consequently, critique of ideology i.e., critical social science into a category of science different from that of historico-hermeneutic sciences is highly questionable, if not misconceived [Paul Ricoeur, 1981, P.85]

2) To what extent is the psychoanalytic model appropriate for a critical social science conceived as critique of ideology considering the fact that there is an asymmetry between theory and practice, between unmasking ideological distortion and realizing the practical task of transforming conflict-situation into a consensus situation? As Gegel says, "The revolutionary struggle is by no means a psychoanalytic treatment on a large scale" [Cited in McCarthy, 1978, p.207|.

It is true that the kind of self-reflection which a critique of ideology and psychoanalysis demand is markedly different from hermeneutic or phenomenological reflection. The former refers to a "dialectic that takes the historical traces of suppressed dialogue and reconstructs what has been suppressed [Habermas, 1971, P.315]. The self-reflection in the case of critique of ideology brings to consciousness those determinants of a self-formative process which ideologically determine a contemporary praxis and world view?" [Habermas, 1971, p,228]. In the case of psychoanalysis, reflection, "reveals the genetically

important phases of life-history to a memory that was previously blocked and brings to consciousness the person's self-formative process" [Habermas, 1971,p.228].But, it is questionable to assign psychoanalysis and critique of ideology to a category altogether different from cognitive-instrumental and historico-hermeneutic sciences. This is a problem related to Habermas' classification of sciences and corresponding interests which we referred to in the second chapter. Habermas' mistake lies in locating the classification of inquiry with constitutive interests at an anthropological level, Gadamer rightly questions the primordially of emancipatory science. And, as Ricoeur points out, the talk of ideological distortion and emancipation makes sense only against the background of a consensus, which may not be 'given' as Gadamer thinks, but anticipated, as Habermas stresses. But since ideological distortion and emancipation arise in communicative experience, they can only be criticized or 'seen through' in the name of a consensus not anticipated emptily in the manner of a regulative ideal *a la* Habermas; they must be exemplified in the existing traditions or interpretation of works received from the past [P Ricoeur. 1990a, p.327]. In short, a rigid classification of interests or goals or setting an opposition between hermeneutics and critique of ideology, as does Habermas, is to confuse the issue of understanding rather than clarifying it.

The above discussion has brought out certain serious

problems that beset Habermas' position in the controversy with Gadamer, especially, in connection with psychoanalysis to which he takes recourse. However, this does not lean that Gadamer's position is without its shortcomings. No doubt, Gadamer is right in arguing for the universality of hermeneutics in the sense that all understanding is situated in language, and interpretation as well as criticism is bound to some tradition or the other. However, he fails to address himself to a number of issues that Habermas has raised. He explicitly rejects the charge of relativism but does not show how conflicting claims to validity could be resolved. Moreover, what Habermas calls ideological difference is more than a matter of misunderstanding, as Gadamer seems to think. The fact that the basis of difference is linguistically constituted and culturally interpreted does not mean that a dialogue would resolve ideological differences. The case of psychoanalysis and the critique of Ideology, notwithstanding the disanalogies, instantiate a different kind of orientation towards the interpretand. Even if psychoanalysis and the critique of ideology are hermeneutical as Gadamer insists, they exemplify a different kind of hermeneutics i.e., of suspicion, whose guiding interest is not just truth but authenticity that incorporates the ideals of autonomy and responsibility, in contrast to the hermeneutics of faith, which is what Gadamer construes hermeneutics to be, that serves the

ideals of solidarity and self effacing identity.

Habermas has clarified that 'the interest in emancipation can only develop to the degree to which repressive force, in the form of normative exercise of power, presents itself permanently in the structures of distorted communication - that is to the extent that domination is institutionalized "[Habermas, 1973, p.22]. That modern society is not without its share of repression is obvious in the high level of institutionalization of power an issue brought to foreground by Michel Foucault. It is another matter that the hermeneutics of suspicion today is carried to the extent of being skeptical of meaning itself. The discourse of hermeneutics in terms of restoration of meaning or reminiscence of being and the discourse about self is seen by Foucault as techniques of signification and techniques of domination [M. Foucault, 1993, P.203]. What is overlooked, among other things, in Foucault's approach is the normative dimension of understanding. What is wrong with his approach is that it is one-sided like Gadamarian hermeneutics, though in an obverse sense. Since Nietzsche, the relationship between *Knowledge and Power* as been taken seriously. In a certain version of what is roughly called the 'postmodern' thought the relationship between the two is drawn so closely that one is almost reduced to the

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The **distinction between hermeneutics of suspicion and hermeneutics of faith is borrowed from Ricoeur.** [See, his *Freud and philosophy*, 1977, p. 32]

other. Knowledge is seen as a function of power. Foucault as if caricaturing Habermas' thesis of the relationship between knowledge and human interests sees the cognitive-instrumental, historico-hermeneutical and emancipatory interests as three major types of techniques at work in modern society: 1) The techniques to produce, manipulate or "transform correspond to cognitive-instrumental interest of empirical-analytical sciences that objectify or externalize nature. 2) The techniques which permit one to use sign systems correspond to the interest of historico-hermeneutical sciences that seek to bring about unconstrained agreement among human beings and, 3) The techniques which permit one to determine the conduct of individuals to impose certain wills on them and to submit them to certain ends corresponds to the interest of emancipatory science that aim at autonomy and responsibility [M Foucault, 1993, P.203].

As mentioned earlier, Foucault, takes the negative hermeneutics i.e., hermeneutics of suspicion to the extent that 'power' is seen as omnipresent. And what is more, it is subject less and independent of all normative considerations. As Habermas puts it, "Foucault abruptly reverses power's truth-dependency into the power-dependency of truth' [Habermas, 1987b, P.274] Without going into the differences between Habermas and Foucault on power - an issue in itself - let us conclude the discussion on the Habermas - Gadamer debate with observations on why

hermeneutics of faith. that is, hermeneutics understood as reminiscent of meaning or recovery of the ruptured relationship with the past must make room for a 'critique' in the Habermasian sense, that is, in communicative- theoretic terms.

To be sure, critique has varied connotations in .. history as well as in Habermas' writings. And Habermas has not always used them unambiguously. In fact critics like McCarthy have pointed out the conflation of meanings of 'critique' in Habermas' usage.: critical self-reflection and transcendental reflection; the former understood as " reflection on specific determinants in the formative processes of particular subjects and the latter as reflection on the self formative process of the species as a whole". [McCarthy,1978, p.99]. In his response to criticisms he clarifies that/critique is reflection on something particular with practical consequences, transcendental reflection can be understood as reconstruction of the universal conditions of speech and action. [Habermas,1973,p.226]. The differences between the two kinds of reflection can be summed up as follows: 1. Critical reflection deals with a particular subject, individual or group, with regard to the determinants of its identity. Reconstruction, in contrast, deals with anonymous system of rules which any subject can follow in principle with required competence. 2. Since, critical reflection deals with the formation and importantly deformation of subject's identity it is inherently linked to emancipation from those determinants of

deformity. Since reconstruction, on the other hand, deals with sentences, actions, competences it is related to the idea of making explicit what is implicit. [Paul Connerton, 1980, p.p. 25-261

In the light of the above explication of 'critique', it is possible to understand what is that Habermas is arguing for. While Gadamer seems to be arguing that 'critique' as a Moment is subsumable under thinking as such, Habermas sees 'critique' as a determinative reflection that/in making sense of what is contingent, unnecessary, dispensable, releases the potential for its transformation. The difference of opinion over 'critique' is not so much a matter of meaning as of emphasis. While Gadamer wants to say that all reflection, including critical, is limited by a larger consciousness or social understanding by which social community continues to exist, [1985a, p.291], Habermas says " we have good reason to suspect that the background consensus of established traditions and language games can be a consciousness forged of compulsion, a result of pseudo-communication, not only in the pathologically isolated cases of disturbed familial systems, but in entire social systems as well" [1985a, p.317]. Hence, a critique in the latter sense is pressed against Gadamer's hermeneutics.

In the twentieth century, especially after world war II, modern western society has been perceived as becoming

increasingly complex in the sense, on the one hand, it has acquired, owing to the structural changes in capitalist expansion, systemic character that has given rise to functionalist theories and on the other, it lacks a common ground or vantage point from which social phenomenon could be adequately understood. There is an acute feeling that any attempt to relate or mediate myriad points of view, interests and orientations is futile, if not, ideologically suspect. But paradoxically, the current western thought has not given up on philosophy or social theory altogether. In the absence of substantive reason, the demise of philosophy as the 'centre' of discourse and the rise of plurality of discourses, which Weber called the new polytheism, philosophy can only function as critique to ensure that particular interests are not brought to bear unnoticed on the theoretical perspectives of social scientific understanding. To be sure, 'theorizing' in the speculative or foundationalistic sense has been brought to question for good reasons, some of which we have discussed in this chapter. But with the multiplication of perspectives and an increasing sense of 'us' and 'them' a need is felt for 'theory' in the larger sense that can fill the vacuum created by the disappearance of philosophy in the traditional sense on the one hand, and, the questioning of science as the paradigm of knowledge, on the other. Thus the grand narrative is making a come back in various theoretical guises. [Quinton Skinner, 1985]. Among them, the hermeneutics of Gadamer is one. And as we noted, it rightfully questions the

consignment of truth to modern science. But its critique of modern science in emphasizing the dialogic node in bringing together various specializations and sectoral finalities in contact with common awareness fails to grasp the significance of empirical-analytical method of sciences and discounts the cognitive value and the learning processes the latter has made possible.

Habermas would contend that while science cannot claim privileged access to truth, it should be given its due as a mode of inquiry appropriate to the study of desacralized world. In accordance with the self-understanding of the modern world, the study of natural world and the material substratum of the social world can be carried out only in an objectivistic fashion, as the empirical-analytic sciences have done. But, because those sciences are a specialized discourse and can be at odds with the commonsensical understanding of everyday life, it is necessary to account for the achievements and limitations of scientific orientation at a broader theoretical level. For Habermas, a critique of science from within philosophy of science or from without, such as hermeneutics cannot strip off the cognitive potential of sciences by relativizing it to tradition or language. But this is what, according to Habermas. Gadamer's

5 Habermas contends that the post-empiricist philosophy of science which lays stress on paradigms and their incommensurability do not pose a threat to his conception of science and its cognitive significance [Habermas, 1986, p.164].

hermeneutics seems to be doing.

It is clear that Gadamer does not think much of modern scientific knowledge owing to its character of distantiation and objectification. This is clearly evident in the fact that he concedes, rather reluctantly, science its cognitive claims. Habermas, on the contrary, upholds the knowledge provided by sciences as distinctly modern achievement. Gadamer sees in science a reflection of a devalued self-understanding of man i.e., 'externalizable' and 'subjugable'. Modern science, for him, could have arisen only in a 'rationalized' (in the pejorative sense) world that is devoid of meaning or significance. In his critique of objectivism there is an implicit critique of the modern world as replacing *phronesis* (ethical knowledge in the classical sense) for *techne* (technical knowledge). Here it is interesting to note Habermas' affinity with Gadamer's critique of objectivism and the technocratic character of modern western society. Both of them share a reading of modern society as dominated by technocratic rationality. While Gadamer highlights the feature through his appropriation of Aristotle's distinction between practical and technical knowledge, Habermas draws attention to the same feature through his analysis of the nexus between technocrats, politicians and administrators - a nexus that deprives the public of political enlightenment and self-determination - a point discussed in the next chapter. But the difference is that Habermas questions the false

universalistic claims of science and technology without debunking them as a whole,

From Habermas' point of view there need be no opposition between method, on the one hand, and experience and truth on the other - an opposition implied by Gadamer's hermeneutics [Bernstein,1983,p.151]. Utilizing the method of empirical-analytical sciences Habermas makes a case for a kind of knowledge of a given human 'object' that could supplement or be supplemented by an experience of truth that Gadamer's hermeneutics points to. Gadamer's hermeneutics resting on a kind of 'humanism' seems to privilege the tradition embodied in language over and against the latter's capacity to develop heterogeneously. It appears that whenever Gadamer appeals to 'common', what is 'ours' or 'the ground of being', he is troubled by the heteromorphous character of language-games. Such an appeal appears to be a concealed plea for social theory in the larger sense. But Habermas argues, social theory cannot ignore the non-hermeneutic modes of thinking, whether in the form of ideology-critique, (Marxism), archaeology of knowledge (Foucault), structural-functional theory (Parsons and Luhmann) etc. For such ignoring would undermine the importance of both objective science as well as the sphere of modern society that needs to be preserved as one of the achievements of the modernity project. Gadamer comes close to those whom Habermas **calls 'old conservatives' who are averse to cultural modernism.**

"They", Habermas writes "observe the decline of substantive reason, the differentiation of sciences, Morality and art, the modern world and its merely procedural rationality, with sadness and recommended a withdrawal into a position anterior to modernity" [Habermas, 1983a, p.14]. Gadamer, like the old conservatives, seems to crave for a de-differentiated reality.

For Habermas, a plea for de-differentiation would mean regression, a betrayal of the incomplete project of modernity. The project of modernity for him consists in relinking the autonomous and elite areas of art, science and morality to the everyday life-praxis. This requires not giving up on cultural modernity, but steering the societal modernisation in a different direction from the one taken by present day western society. In order to realize this change in direction, "the life-world has to become able to develop institutions out of itself, which sets limits to the internal dynamics and imperatives of an almost autonomous economic system and its administrative complements" [Habermas, 1983a, p.13]. To be sure, this is a practical task that requires the participation of all those affected. With the institutionalization of communicative action, where linguistic understanding is indispensable (i.e., cannot be substituted by the steering media of money and power) communicative rationality helps mediating the esoteric discourses of sciences, morality and aesthetics to the praxis of life-world. This has the advantage of avoiding a recourse to substantive reason in the metaphysical

sense, on the one hand, and a shrunken fora of instrumental or purposive reason.

Habermas' critical theory, following the linguistic turn, incorporates the hermeneutic insight that the critique of ideology, whatever form it takes, cannot operate from outside language, as it were. It distances itself from the critique offered by earlier critical theory and the various post-modernist critiques of reason and subject by stressing the linguisticity of reality and the communicative dimension of language. It allows one to do without the notion of 'subject' and 'reason' familiar to the paradigm of philosophy of subject. With the turn to an inter-subjective framework, the subject is transformed into a participant of concrete fora of life. To be sure, the participant part takes the everyday life praxis only via the resources available to her/him from the side of culture. The formation of her/his personality and social identity depend very much on her/his role as a participant in the various social practices. But being a participant implies that social action and its consequences are dependent on her/his interpretative accomplishments. That is, participants do not merely reproduce/the life-world that enables them to speak and act as they do; they actively revise and underline the authority of the tradition and contribute to the on-going of life-worldly practices.

With the rationalization of the life-world both socialization and individuation take place in the same proportion. In both the processes, the role of critique is central. Critical testing and fallibilist consciousness. "even enhance the continuity of a tradition that has stripped away its quasi-natural state of being. They stake comprehensible why abstract, universalistic procedures for discursive will-formation even strengthen solidarity in life-contexts that are no longer legitimated by tradition." [1987b p.347]., One of the major criticisms against Habermas* interest in action-theory oriented towards clarifying the normative considerations of critical social science is that it holds out no hope for the possibility of revolutionary praxis, even though Habermas claims Marx as this past master. The charge is that his interest is very academic in its orientation and has not really shown how the theory- practice problematic can be resolved. But Habermas has tried to clarify that given the fact that there is no identifiable class that can possibly be the bearers of revolutionary praxis, there occurs a crisis within the Marxian framework of critical theory. Critical theory does not have a historical addressee that could support the idea of radical transformation through its critique of bourgeois ideology. Added to this is the fact that the development of capitalism has acquired a certain complexity that contributes to the theory-practice problematic. This, according to Habermas, has some important consequences for critical theory: **firstly**, any talk of revolutionary praxis in more than a

metaphorical sense has to acknowledge the incalculability of interventions into deep-seated structures of highly complex society and the rise of catastrophic alternatives that follows revolutionary transformations [Habermas, 1982, p.223]. Secondly, Marxism must take seriously the problems associated with its theoretical generalizations. On the one hand it must scale down the philosophical questions into problems to be dealt with scientifically, and, on the other, it must renounce the philosophical concept of science that Hegel made popular (1982, p.223] Like any other science, the empirical import of Marxism requires to be validated. In other words, it has to be fallibilistic.

It is evident in our critical exposition of Habermas-Gadamer debate the balance is tilted in favour of Habermas. Though a detailed critique of Habermas will be undertaken in the last chapter it is necessary to make here itself some critical remarks about Habermas' position as it has been developed in his debate with Gadamer.

First of all Habermas has not been able to show that critical social science is independent of hermeneutics as he initially wanted to. As a matter of fact, he has admitted that no theorization can be free of the hermeneutic dimension. He writes. "critique, too, remains bound to the traditional context which it reflects" [1985a, p.317]. Therefore, it is misleading to pose his

differences with Gadamer as one of "hermeneutics or critique of ideology". This false disjunction not only conceals the amount of influence hermeneutics has had on his critical theory. It also, as Bernstein, points out, prevents one from seeing the
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fundamental affinities with Gadamer's position.

Secondly, granted that his analysis of modern society as dominated by functionalist reason and as having little space for communicative interaction is more useful than that of Gadamer in the sense that it provides a clue to the practical task of establishing communicative infrastructure, whereas Gadamer merely points to what is lacking in contemporary society by drawing our attention to what existed in ancient Greek society, Habermas has nothing more to offer as a solution than communicative action oriented to consensus. That is, his solution seems to consist of endless communication between participants of diverse spheres or domains. The question is, "Can communicative interaction resolve problems that are strongly rooted in labour and domination?" This question is all the more significant in the light of the fact that Habermas himself is not so optimistic about the possibility of setting limits to the systemic imperatives through communicative processes (Habermas, 1975,p.138p;also 1983a p.13].

Thirdly, even though Habermas has made a good case for

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See, "What is the Difference that makes a Difference? Gadamer, Habermas And Rorty", Richard Bernstein, .PSA.1982.

'theory' which needs to steer clear of both positivism and as well as metaphysical speculation and is significant particularly at a time when 'theory' is being debunked by postmodernists like Lyotard, one might ask "Does not a theoretical interest in what is called communicative rationality itself indicate a misplaced and outdated hope in Universalism - a notion that is abstract and empty?". Is it not a speculative exercise in the sense that it has no bearing on contemporary social reality?" Or, as a hermeneutically inclined critic may ask, " Given the fact that ideas including reason, do not fall from heaven but culturally handed down what is the status of rationality in & procedural sense?" [Anthony Giddens, 1985, p 115].

And lastly, given the emphasis on action-oriented to *consensus* in Habermas' working out of the normative foundations of critical theory, it seems 'critique' in the sense of oppositional thinking, radical questioning of Enlightenment, gives way to 'critique' in the sense of differentiation, reconstruction and evaluation of Modernity in its own terras. As we shall argue in the last chapter, critique in latter sense implies being less critical about modernity project and thus prevents critical theory from seeing through the prejudices of the self-understanding of modernity.

However, we must note here that in his response to criticisms, Habermas says that his attempt to reconstruct

formal-pragmatics of speech and reason is not empty or abstract, but is generated from the "normative contents of the universal and ineluctable presupposition of a non-circumventable practice of everyday process of understanding." [Habermas. 1991,p.p.243-44]. His theory of communicative action, he claims, is an explicit articulation of the intuition that reason even though situated and develops through traditions transcends the context of its origins. As Habermas writes, "it is not a matter of this or that preference, 'our' or 'their' notion of rational life, rather we are concerned here with reconstructing a voice of reason, which we cannot avoid using whether we want to or not when speaking in everyday communicative practice" [1991,p.p.243-44].

In the last chapter we shall have an occasion to discuss the inherent tensions in Habermas' thought between the hermeneutic influence, on the one hand, and the rationalist 'prejudice' on the other. We shall argue that if Habermas has to do justice to the universal character of reason - a character that secures, to use Habermas's own words, "unity of reason in the diversity of its voices", [Habermas, 1992, p.115] then he must soften his emphatic interpretation of modernity, which is at odds with the professed hermeneutic turn his critical theory has taken.

CHAPTER IV

CRITICAL THEORY AND POSTMODERNITY

In the reconstruction of the critical theory, from Kant to Habermas, we noted three features: a concern with the present as something new: that this new is not just a sequel to the past. but a definite break with it; and, the present as containing potential for the possibilities of the future. As Hegel saw it. "The spirit (of the modern) has broken with what was hitherto the world of its existence and imagination and is about to submerge all this in this past..."[G.W.F. Hegel, 1968, p.20]. And as Habermas supplements it, "the new, the modern world is distinguished from the old by the fact that it opens itself to the future, the epochal new beginning is rendered constant with each moment that gives birth to the new". [Habermas, 1987b. p.6]. The significant feature of modernity, which is also a problem, as Hegel identified, is that the modern age, unlike any other age, bases itself on the principle of subjectivity, 'the principle that all the essential factors present in the intellectual whole are coming into their right in the course of their development, [Cited in Habermas, 1987b, p.16]. The problem of modernity is that the principle of subjectivity is not understood *merely* as self-assertion but one that is understood in normative terms such as self-consciousness, self-expression and

self-determination. To be modern is to prefer these norms over other norms that underlie other ages. This means that the normative justification for modernity is not provided by a recourse to the models of pre-modern periods, such as classical Greek conception of rational man or rational order, but by recourse to reasoned justification that the differentiated world-view allows. If 'freedom' and 'reflection', which modernity has made possible, are not merely illusions, they have to be accounted for in discursive terms. .

But in the early 20th century, as we noted, the historical circumstances such as depressing economic conditions, and the two world wars contributed to the disenchantment with the ideals of Enlightenment, such as freedom and happiness. Against this background, one can understand the early critical theorist's particularly Adorno's, interpretation of Enlightenment as embodying instrumental reason traceable to the very roots of Occidental thought. Habermas understands such a pessimistic interpretation of the above kind against the background of the three main features of their times: the development of Russian Marxism, the rise of Fascism in Germany and Italy and the integration of the working class into the capitalist system in Western democracies, especially in the U.S. In this setting, Habermas contends, Enlightenment reason can only appear as a failure, i.e., the dialectic of reason as in culminating in 'unreason' and the disintegration of the subject. During the

post-war period, changes in Europe and the U.S. the forms of knowledge such as information-systems, enhanced productive capacity due to improvement in the technologies, changes in the social structure such as the emergence of a new Middle class, mass production and mass consumption, changes in cultural forms since the post-avant garde art etc., have put the issue of modernity in a new light: it is a *passe* for one living (in the advanced western countries) in a post-modern situation. What is 'new' in this situation is that the project of modernity is not seen as a failure, an unfulfilled promise, but as irrelevant, a willful nostalgia. The newness of this situation is felt to be overwhelming to the extent that the temporal sense of existence is radicalized. "Post modern", we begin to hear, 'in a part of the modern; it is first and nascent stage and a constant one' [Lyotard, 1984, p. 79].

The discourse of 'postmodern' is unlike the counter-discourse of modernity in that it does not fault modernity for its negative consequences construed as the alienation of the self, the disintegration of ethical community etc. In contrast to the views of early critical theorists, like Adorno and Horkheimer, who interpreted modernization as reification to the extent of eclipse of reason and disintegration of the subject, the post modern theorists interpret the transition to the post modern condition as problematising the concepts of reason, subject, universality etc., - ideas central

to the discourse of modernity. What is more, the very idea of discourse as having to do with Meaning, interpretation and truth is displaced. Consequently, the question of normative content of modernity, which concerned the philosophical tradition from Hegel to Habermas becomes a non-issue. Any attempt to answer this question is dubbed as 'modern' in the pejorative sense: a discourse of legitimation with respect to its own status, a discourse called philosophy,[Lyotard, 1984,p.xxiii].

In this chapter the focus is on Issues central to the 'modern / postmodern' problematic as it came up in the 'debate' between Habermas and Lyotard. Firstly, how does one make sense of the so-called postmodern condition? Secondly, given that it is a genuinely new situation, does it call for a renewed orientation in the ethical-political terms, of the project called 'modernity' to realize its fulfillment? Lastly, how does it call into question Habermas⁴ critical theory understood as an affirmative critique of modernity?

At the outset, something is to be said about the intractability of elucidating what exactly 'postmodernity' is. The term 'postmodern' eludes a definite meaning. The meaning varies

Of course, the 'debate' unlike the other two discussed before, never took place. While Lyotard attacks Habermas in a few places in his *The Postmodern Condition*, Habermas hardly makes a reference to Lyotard in his criticisms of postmodernists. Nevertheless, it is possible to 'construct' a debate, as we have done here, to bring out the affinities and differences between them to show what is at stake.

to the extent that the Modern day Dictionary of Received Ideas² says, "The word has no meaning. Use it as often as possible." It is often so flexibly used to name anything entirely new from art to everyday experience that the death of postmodernism has been already announced. For this reason, it is not surprising that the term has gained a derogatory connotation. The rather liberal (mis)use of the term has given rise to the suspicion that it is one of those academic exercises in naming something that has little to do with what is named.

Fredric Jameson understands 'postmodern' as a transitional period "in which the new international order (neo-colonization, the green revolution, computerization, the electronic information) is at one and the same time set in place and is swept and shaken by its own internal contradictions and by external resistance" [1983, p,113]. What is basic to postmodern condition are two features: 'pastiche' and 'schizophrenia'. He explains 'pastiche' by drawing examples from films and lays that the stylistic innovations peculiar to modernism is no longer possible. "All that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with voices of the styles in the imaginary museums".[Jameson, 1983, p.115]. Jameson uses *schizophrenia* to refer to an experience fundamental to postmodern condition -

²See, "In Pursuit of Postmodern :An Introduction'.Mike Featherstone,1988.

"experience as isolated, disconnected, discontinuous Material signifiers which fail to link up in a coherent sequence" [1983, p.119] The schizophrenic does not know 'personal identity' in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the "I" and "me" over time. This experience is understood to be induced by a fragmented reality, which comes in the form of immediate sensation and spectacle, the stuff with which consciousness is forged. The overwhelming power of this experience dissolves the question of alienation of the subject as a non-issue. For there is no unitary self that resists or overcomes alienation. Instead, we have what is called the fragmentation of the subject.

David Harvey in his book *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, acknowledges that there has been a sea change in the political, economic and cultural practices since 1972. He traces it to the post world war boom since 1945 witnessed in Europe and the USA. This boom was achieved by 'labour control' practices, technological mixes, consumption habits, and configuration of political power, termed as Fordist - Keynesianism. But this configuration broke up in 1973 resulting in a period of change, flux and uncertainty.

Jameson and Harvey consider the 'postmodern' condition as significantly new but do not stop short of connecting the momentous changes to what one is familiar in the modern world:

capitalism. Jameson, for instance, sees the newly emergent phenomenon as related to the third stage of capitalism, i.e., late capitalism. He echoes Edward Said's view that postmodern experience is an inability to take a satisfactory overview of the situation, which is then put forward as undesirable.[Edward Said, 1983, p.p.135-136]. Similarly, Harvey understands the changes in the cultural forms related to capitalism as owing to the emergence of more flexible modes of capital accumulation and a new round of 'time-space' compression in the organization of capital. Like Jameson he prefers to see the important features of the postmodern against the background of capitalism. He focuses on the development between 1945 and 1972 and since 1973 to the present.

Before we discuss how Jameson and Harvey relate the sea-change in various fields to capitalist development, it would be of relevance to note that the central feature of all these changes is accelerated turn-over time which alters one's sense of space and time and orientation to postmodern reality. Harvey says that the significant feature of the postmodern society is the compression of space and time reflected in the sphere of fashionable clothing, ornament, decoration, life-styles, and consumption of goods and services. It is relatable to accelerated turn-overtime aided by improved systems of communication, information flow, coupled with rationalization in techniques of distribution (packaging, inventory control, market

feedback, electronic, banking, plastic money etc.). Volatility in all these fields makes long term planning difficult and even unnecessary . Short term planning, adaptability and crisis management become the central thing. This is reflected in frenzied life style, 'Yuppie flu'¹ (a psychological stress condition that paralyzes the performance of talented people by producing long -lasting flu-like symptoms) and what Jameson calls schizophrenic experience of space having shrunk (the world as Global village) and time as accelerated (twenty four hours as a very long time in the stock market) is peculiarly a postmodern feature.

The principle of accelerated turn over time is operative in the production and consumption of not only goods and services, but in cultural products too. For instance, those who work in higher education, publishing houses, magazines, broadcasting media, theaters and museums whom Daniel Bell calls the cultural mass [D.Bell, 1977, p.124] who process and influence the reception of serious cultural products specialize in the acceleration of turn over time through the production and marketing of images. The cultural mass, as Harvey puts It, " la the organizer of fads and fashions and as such it actively produces the very ephemerality that has always been fundamental to the experience of postmodernity. It becomes a social means to produce that sense of collapsing time-horizons which it in turn so avidly feeds upon".[Harvey, 1989, p.291]. The challenge of

accelerating turn-over time, Harvey says, ranges from novel writing and philosophizing to a rapid write off of traditionally acquired values. This is supported by Baudrillard's observation about the American society as characterized , "by speed, Motion, cinematic images and technological fixes; as, in essence representing the triumph of effect over cause, of instantenity over time as depth; the triumph of effect of surface and of pure objectification over the depth of desire." [Cited in Harvey, 1989, p.291]. And lastly, talking about the fluctuating status of money, Harvey points to the crisis of representation. "The central value system to which capitalism has always appealed to validate and gauge its action is dematerialized and shifting, time horizons are collapsing and it is hard to tell exactly what space we are in when it comes to assessing causes and effects, meanings or values." [Harvey, 1989, p.298]

What do these changes, however, wide in range, signify? Is the Western society, in an entirely new situation that calls for a radical departure from familiar modes of construing modernity? Lyotard, for one, denies the possibility as well as desirability of a theory that makes sense of one's situation in the postmodern condition in a comprehensive way. He goes on to characterize any attempt to provide a 'total' picture as 'modern'; as aspiring to legitimate itself with reference to a meta discourse as making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the

rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth". [1984, p.xxiii].

Before we go onto discuss how Lyotard, arguing from what he considers to be the significant features of postmodernity, concludes that an attitude towards metanarratives can only be one of incredulity, let us note how Jameson and Harvey answer the questions raised above.

Jameson and Harvey recognize the 'postmodern' as genuinely new period. But they periodize it as a part of late capitalist and therefore do not think that a critique of capitalism in Marxian terms is irrelevant. In the foreword to Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, Jameson observes that the absence of a revolutionary social class or classes in the present day capitalist society does not mean that the category of social class is irrelevant, as Lyotard thinks. The primacy of sciences and technological inventions, the rise of technocracy to a privileged position and the shift from older industrial technologies to newer informational ones - issues which Lyotard discusses in his work, can still be accounted, Jameson says, in Marxian terms. According to him, the above factors are "indices of new and powerful, original global expansion of capitalism which now penetrates the hitherto pre-capitalist enclave of the Third world agriculture and the first world culture, in which, in other words capital more definitely secures the colonization of

nature and the unconscious." [1984, p.xiv]. Jameson cites Ernst Mandel's *Late Capitalism*, as an example of Marxian analysis of 'consumer' or 'postindustrial' society. He sees the arguments of *Postmodern Condition* as a symptom of the state it seeks to diagnose i.e. the crisis of meta-narrative, the non-possibility of traditional alternatives in terms of teleology. And he says the contradictions can be resolved by taking a step further in seeing the meta-narrative as buried and "political unconscious" that affects a way of seeing and acting in the current situation rather than dismissing it as irrelevant, as Lyotard does.

Similarly, David Harvey argues that the development of 'postmodern' is better seen as changes "set against the basic rules of capitalistic accumulation" and "as shifts in surface appearance rather than signs of emergence of some entirely new post-capitalistic or even post-industrial society"[1989, p.viii]. The transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation, he thinks, is very much comprehensible in terms of capitalistic mode of production. That is to say that it can be understood in terms of three 'essential' features of capitalism: 1) Growth as an essential feature of economy and crisis as lack of growth; 2) The growth of economy as dependent on the exploitation of labour in the sense that there has to be a gap between the value labour creates and what it gets, with the consequent need for the strategy of labour control; and 3) Technological innovation as a feature complementary to labour control and the growth of profits.

Yet, at a deeper level, the three features mentioned above, stand in a contradictory relationship to each other, as Man showed in his analysis of capitalism long ago. The technique of flexible accumulation is analyzed by Harvey as a simple reconstruction of two basic strategies, which Marx had identified for procuring profit or surplus value: firstly, procuring absolute surplus value that rests on the extension of the working day reproduction at a given standard of living; and, secondly, relative surplus value which rests on organizational and technical change set in motion to gain temporary profits for innovative firms such that more generalized profits are secured as costs of goods that define the standard of living labour are reduced.

Our discussion of Jameson's and Harvey's interpretation of postmodernity in terms of capitalist development and as part of a larger order was meant to show that, at the outset, Lyotard's argument that in the wake of postmodernity the idea of meta-narrative is redundant is not very plausible*. On the contrary, as we shall argue, there is a greater need for a 'theory' in the Habermasian sense that is not only explanatory diagnostic, but also emancipatory-utopian. This is very much in accordance with the complexity and ephemerality of the so-called post-modern society. But before that, it is necessary to take a closer look at Lyotard's interpretation of what he calls 'postmodern' society. Lyotard succinctly expresses his position in

these words."In contemporary society and culture - post industrial society, post modern culture - the question of the legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation."[Lyotard 1984 p.37]. Here Lyotard is attacking the German philosophical tradition from Kant to Marx who, according to him, have tried to come up with one unifying narrative or the other to legitimize the spheres of human activity that are perceived to be distinct from each other since the modern era. Like Habermas, he perceives the distinctive characteristic of modern period as one of differentiation in knowing, willing and feeling to which stand the corresponding realm of denotative, pre- scriptive and evaluative languages with their own rules. Lyotard admires Kant for having developed three critiques which bring out the logics internal to the cognitive, moral and aesthetic domains of experience. He thinks that Kant has shown that the three frameworks are Incommensurable or heterogeneous - a fact which is exemplified by the differences between Kantian intellect (*verstand*) which centers on the objective data on the one hand and Kantian reason (*verunft*) which being autonomous and self productive, deals with subjectivity on the other.(Villem van Beijen.1988, p 2731.

But he is critical of Kant when the latter tries to bridge the gap between the frameworks by positing a human subject moving

towards a natural end. Lyotard seems to be right. For, the strong propensity towards a unitary narrative in Kant is very well brought out when he says that the faculty of judgement, "with the concept of the finality of nature provides us with the mediating concept between concepts of nature and the concepts of freedom - a concept that makes possible the transition from the pure and theoretical laws (laws of understanding) to the pure practical laws of reason) and from conformity to law in accordance with the former to final ends according to the latter.[Cited in Willem Van Reijen, 1988, p,274].

Yet, according to Lyotard, critical philosophy cannot allow the actual reality of teleology of the history implied by Kant, because it would mean subsuming the whole of critical reason under the concept or ideal of natural teleology. That subsumption does not work in the way of the schematism of *verstand* subsumes data under a concept (the categories), that is, by a determinate judgement. For, as Kant himself says, 'Judgements rendered by the faculty of judgement moulding data to the ideal of a natural end can only be reflective, 'as if' only regulated by an ideal, not determined by a concept".[Willem van Reijen, 1988, p.274].

Lyotard understands Hegel as saying that the speculative narrative legitimizes other language games as knowledge games for it is the highest or truest in the sense that it lifts itself up by citing its own statements in a second level discourse. The

speculative process, Lyotard contends, of legitimating other knowledge/ language games, such as sciences, is itself a language game of legitimation. Lyotard's objection is that the speculative metanarrative of Hegel must assume a hierarchy of narratives, which indicate increasing reflexivity than positivity and presuppose a subject (Spirit/Absolute), which in recognizing other³ recognizes itself as 'highest' or 'truest'. As opposed to this he prefers the line of thought originating in Nietzsche and culminating in postmodern thought, where the speculative narrative gives way to the perspective of language games. "what we have is a process of delegitimation fuelled by the demand for legitimation." [Lyotard, 1984, P.39].

As to the emancipatory metanarrative of Marx and his followers, Lyotard understands that it must rely on grounding the legitimation of science and truth in the autonomy of interlocutors involved in ethical, social and political praxis. Additionally, it has to overcome the gap between what *is* and what ought to be for emancipation to be possible. But there is nothing to show that from a statement describing a situation as real, a statement prescribing something as just can be derived

Lyotard arguing from the Wittgensteinian perspective of language games makes a case for saying that there has been a conflict between scientific narrative and the traditional narrative. This conflict poses the problem of legitimation

Though the conflict is traceable to an earlier period , only in the modern era science has assumed a legitimacy that Bakes narrative knowledge look like primitive or superstitious. But the post-empiricist philosophy of science has problematized the legitimizing character of science. It has shown that there is nothing to prove that modern narrative is in any way superior to the traditional narrative. Neither is it more necessary than the other [Lyotard, 1984, p.28]. If one takes seriously the dispersal of narrative into denotative, prescriptive and descriptive elements, as Lyotard does, then science can neither legitimize itself in a speculative manner nor can it be a model for other narratives.

The same problem i.e., of legitimation of knowledge, arises In the French and German thought, whose narratives take humanity to be educated, emancipated or enculturated (Lyotard, 1984, p.37]. The dubious subject is the 'people' or the 'party' in the case of Marxism or 'race' in the case of Fascist Ideology. Referring to the French educational policy, ho talks of one type of legitimation of knowledge which sees the people as the subject which is supposed to win its freedom through the spread of new domains of knowledge. Thus, not only the discourse about science, but also the institutions of science are given authority. "The state resorts to the narrative of freedom every time it assures direct control over the training of the "people" under the name of the "nation" in order to point them down the path of progress." [1984, p.32]

An interesting example of the speculative narrative which Lyotard provides is with reference to Heidegger. According to Heidegger, Lyotard says, the German people constitute the historico-spiritual people who has the "historical mission" of realizing the "true world of the spirit" by recourse to the three services of labour, defense and knowledge. The university is supposed to be the home of meta-knowledge of the three sciences. In this way, ironically, the French and German thought reintroduce the meta-narrative which was discredited in the wake of modern era.

That is to say, in the modern era with the splintering of reason or what is called 'rationalization' of knowledge, what followed was the proliferation of sciences, which nurtured an incredulous attitude towards metaphysical thinking. This should have meant the disappearance of grand narrative. Instead, in the modern era, one can think of a number of attempts to come to grips with the crisis in legitimation through grand narrative. Prominent among them are the ones offered by Hegel, Humboldt, Marx and, in our times, Habermas. Lyotard contends that in the postmodern condition the incredulity has been heightened owing to the remarkable progress made in scientific knowledge and technology.

In some ways, Lyotard's criticisms of the narrative of 'humanity', and 'emancipation' have affinities with Habermas'

critique of the 'philosophy of subject' framework. Both of them question the presuppositions of subject as 'hero' conceived in the speculative and emancipatory metanarratives. Both of Them recognize the problem of moving from description to prescription, from theory to practice. Both of them, above all, are sensitive to the differences in language games and the absence of a vantage point from which the heterogeneity of language games could be unified in the hierarchical Banner. In essence, both Lyotard and Habermas are united in questioning the 'foundationalistic' character of Hegel's and Marx's theoretical framework.

Yet, one of the main targets of Lyotard's the *Postmodern Condition* is Habermas' attempt to articulate the theoretical framework of communicative action as a foundation for the critical theory of modern western society. According to Lyotard, this is an exercise in legitimating the different knowledge discourses, including science, by invoking the principle of consensus as a criterion of validation at the service of emancipatory project.[1984, p.60] He goes on to question the assumptions of what Habermas calls the normative basis of dialogue in the light of heteroamorphous nature of language games and the nature of scientific activity in the post modern context.[1984,p.p.65-66].Finally, he notes a peculiarly mixed inspiration of Kant and Hegel in the way Habermas seeks to defend modernity against the neoconservatives, as differentiated at one level, but united at another level of experience He wonders what

kind of unity Habermas has in mind. Is it one of organic whole or a new order of synthesis? [1934, p.p.72-73].

It must be mentioned at the outset that there is some truth to the criticism that Habermas' thesis of knowledge and human interests and the notion of universal pragmatics concerned with communicative competence and its relation to the problem of theory and practice are foundationalistic, but with an important difference. The traditional motivation behind foundationalism in the case of Descartes, Locke and Kant was epistemological in nature since foundationalism revolves around the question. "How do we know with certainty what we know?" In the case of Hegel it could be said that the motivation was to show what is real is rational and what is rational is real in order to make sense of history in its totality. But in the case of Habermas, to the extent he is charged with foundationalism, the motivation is different. For, according to Habermas, "the theory of communicative competence (reason) is decidedly not a theoretical luxury in the context of critical social theory; it is a concerted effort to rethink the foundations of the theory-practice problematic." [Cited from McCarthy, 1978, p.273]. For Habermas, critical social theory is unlike the traditional theory in the sense that it seeks not only to explain or diagnose the pathologies of modern society, but anticipate a form of life free from unnecessary domination in all its forms. Already in *Knowledge and Human interests*, Habermas makes it clear that his

concern with the truth of statements is linked in the last analysis to the intention of the good and true life." [1978, p.317]. This formulation is very much in the spirit of critical thought whose core consists in its conviction that the 'present' contains untapped potential for enlightenment and emancipation and an unrealized promise of freedom and happiness. From Lyotard's point of view, the link that Habermas is trying to forge between consensual truth and emancipation is yet another attempt to unify the denotative, prescriptive and descriptive in a metanarrative. And it must fail like it did before since Kant, For. a number of developments have taken place in this century that heightens one's incredulity towards metanarrative: the computerization of society, the redeployment of advanced liberal capitalism, the elimination of communist alternatives, and, most of all the development of post-modern science.

Before we go to examine Lyotard's criticisms of Habermas' narrative of emancipation which rests on a notion of consensual truth, let us discuss what he means by post modern science. Lyotard lays particular emphasis, undue to be sure. on the development of what he calls post-modern science. According to him, "the pragmatics of science has centered on denotative utterances, which are the foundations upon which it builds institutions of learning (institutes, universities etc ,) but only in the postmodern condition a decisive fact comes to the fore: even discussions of denotative statements need to have

rules." [1984, p.65]. And these rules can be called metaprescriptive in that they say something about the moves allowed in the language games. What is distinctive about postmodern pragmatics of science is that its differential, imaginative or paralogical nature highlights the metaprescriptives or the "presuppositions" of science and thereby urge the 'players' to accept different rules which ensures the generation of new ideas and new statements. Lyotard's reflections on science have highlighted two features: scientific knowledge is a result of the practice of plurality of language games, whose rules and the moves they allow depend on the contract between the partners. [1984, p.65]. Secondly, "progress" in knowledge corresponds to both moves made within the language games as well as the invention of new rules. This means that the traditional philosophy of science, from Aristotle to Hill, which has remained fixated on the method of a particular model of scientific language to develop a universal metalanguage of science must make room for "the principle of a plurality of formal and axiomatic systems capable of arguing the truth of denotative utterances." [Lyotard, 1984, p.43]. Generalizing from Godot's thesis that a proposition is neither demonstrable nor refutable within the system it occurs, he goes on to proclaim the internal limitations of formal systems. Lyotard draws out the implications for our understanding of science: science does not keep out paradoxes or paralogisms as it was traditionally supposed. It highlights and feeds on them. Focusing on what one might call the external'

features of the practice of science, Lyotard argues that the practice of scientific research and its education (transmission) is not guided by the idea of 'truth' of Metanarratives but the principle of performativity. The so-called crisis of science reflected in the legitimation problem is a result of rapid increase in technology and the expansion of capitalism. [1984, p.39]. Although the role of technology has been central to the production of proof in research ever since the inception of modern science, it is only in the postmodern condition that the technology which is supposed to aid in providing evidence in scientific argumentation, in turn, reinforces 'reality'. It legitimates science by power: "Power is not only good performativity, but also effective verification and good verdicts." [1984, p.47]. Performance of technical criterion of truth determines, and is also determined by, the question of right and justice. The evidence for this, Lyotard finds in the computerization of society." The performativity of an utterance, be it denotative or prescriptive, increases proportionally to the amount of information about its referent one has at one's disposal." [Lyotard, 1984. p.47].

"The decline of narrative", according to Lyotard " can be seen as an effect of the blossoming of techniques and technologies since the second world war, which has shifted emphasis from the ends of action to its means." [1984 p 37] It can also be seen as an effect of the redeployment of advanced

liberal capitalism and the elimination of communist alternatives. More than one writer has pointed out the three features, namely the rapid increase in technology, the changed character of capitalism, and the disappearance of the revolutionary possibility as constitutive to the emergence of postmodern culture.[Perry Anderson, 1988, p.p.323-25] But for Lyotard, whose interest lies in the decline of metanarrative, the seeds of delegitimation lie in the speculative game of metanarrative itself. It is an inevitable consequence of "loosening the weave of the encyclopedic net in which each science was to find its place." (1984, p.39). The crisis of scientific knowledge or its legitimation problem is not a remit of the chance proliferation of sciences, but the rationalization process of the sciences taken to its limits.

Adopting the model of the language games enables Lyotard to pursue the delegitimation process and to consider science as one among diverse language games that needs no legitimation. Just as the proliferation of science undermined the idea of grand narrative, the proliferation of new languages [1984. p.41], and language games undermine the idea of the traditional subject. "The social subject itself seems to dissolve in this dissemination of language games." [1984, p.40]. With this the idea of realization of the spirit or the emancipation of humanity gets dissolved.

The 'postmodern condition,' according to Lyotard, can be seen as calling for a paradigmatic shift in the way one thinks about the 'present'. Drawing upon a number of changes twentieth century has witnessed in the realm of thought and practice, some of which some of them we have noted above, Lyotard perceives the social bond as linguistic, but as not woven with a single thread. It is a fabric formed by the interaction of at least two language games. What is more, the question of social bond is itself a game of inquiry. [1984,p.40]. Consequently, the traditional understanding of any social Interaction as comprising subject-subject/object is replaced with the model of 'player' as addresser -addressee/ referent positioned in the game of inquiry. The linguisticity of games brings communication to the fore. But what is important in communication is not the flow of information though it is crucial to the systemic features of society. Nor is it normative consideration such as consensual truth, as Habermas argues* What is central to the understanding of language game that depends so much on input/output of information is the type of interaction Lyotard calls 'agonistic': 'players' are involved in making 'moves' and 'counter moves' and get displaced and transformed from 'sender' to addressee / referent'.

In the present state of knowledge and society Lyotard declares, the critical theory has lost its theoretica status and is reduced to mere 'utopia' or 'hope'.(1934 p 131 The fact that

today information technology and scientific practice are so closely interwoven gives some credence ' to systems theory. But even this does not allow us to view society as a giant machine. Citing the examples from quantum theory, microphysics and the Catastrophe theory of Rene Thorn, he contests the claims of deterministic interpretation of systems and processes .[1984, p.59], Also, the present state of society,he says, is not amenable to a dualistic conception of society in terms of system and life-world as espoused by Habermas. As was noted in chapter I, Habermas' interpretation of modernity employs a two-level construal of society to distinguish functionalist reason from communicative reason. His critique consists in showing that the so-called paradoxes of modernity which Weber had identified is not attributable to rationalization per se, but to a situation where language as genuine and irreplaceable medium of reaching an understanding has been substituted by the steering media of power and money.[Habermas, 1984, p.342]. The conflict between the system and the life-world has resulted in the systematically induced life- world pathologies. Therefore, the task of emancipation requires the establishment of communicative infrastructures for the life-world.

As is evident, both Habermas and Lyotard recognize the systemic features of modern social life. Both of them consider communication to be central to the ongoing practices. Like Lyotard, Habermas sees the distinctive feature of modern /

postmodern society as consisting in the lack of metaphysical assurance and its need for pragmatic orientation to the pursuit of knowledge. Hence they stress the communicative competence of the players / participants as crucial to the legitimation / justification of moves / utterances.

Despite this, the reason why Lyotard includes Habermas among those who cling to the emancipatory narrative is that the latter, according to the former, is still committed to the metaphysics of 'whole' and 'order'. The advocacy of a consensus through dialogue implies that society was an unified whole in the original, but has come to be 'divided' 'reified' or 'colonized' in the course of history. This phenomenon seems to call for consensus as a normative concept. In actuality, Lyotard says, consensus is no indication of truth or genuine order. As a matter of fact, Lyotard thinks, consensus could be a component of systems, [1984, p.60] through which it makes its power felt. And it is not necessarily bad, since it helps in improving the performance of the system without taking recourse to any metanarrative. Lyotard assures us that the system cannot assume absolute power. For one thing, it would be destructive to its own performance. But more importantly, the nature of post-modern science and the pragmatics of knowledge prevent the stabilization of the system: its differential or pragmatic character would ensure steady flow of ideas that would unsettle the order of reason. In short, in science Lyotard finds a model of

anti-system, Given this, Habermas' attempts to find a rational order in which science would be related to the other two spheres i.e., morality and aesthetics can be termed as regressive, from Lyotard's point of view. In undertaking such a project Habermas is enamoured by the modernist aesthetic of the beautiful, whose gaze is turned backwards to the lost order.

Richard Rorty, the American pragmatist goes further than Lyotard to characterize the concern with the problem- of modernity i.e., one of 'grounding' modernity in a metanarrative as peculiarly German obsession. Drawing support from Bacon, Dewey, and Blumenburg he argues that in the postmodern condition, metanarratives of emancipation are "an unhelpful distraction" to attend to what Dewey calls "the meaning of the daily detail." [Richard Rorty, 1985, p.171]. Values such as consensus, communication, solidarity and the 'merely' beatific can be retained, he assures us, without recourse to an emphatic account of modern history, as offered by Habermas. But, Rorty also takes on Lyotard for falsely inferring from the current state of knowledge that the central feature of science is 'dissension' and not 'consensus'. Moreover, Lyotard does not raise the normative question of what is achieved by paralogical legitimation or an emphatic agonistic approach. In fact, he is susceptible to the criticisms he levels against others that one cannot move from 'what is' to 'what ought'. In comparison, Rorty's pragmatics is consistent in that he finds no use in

talking about the aims of science either as consensus or paralogy.[1985, p.161]

But if Lyotard and Rorty have to distinguish themselves from the naive advocates of science, and avoid regression into positivism they must allow for a kind of reflection and theorization that Habermas has traced to Kant's consciousness of modernity. This theorization would enable one to understand the limits of science by realizing that questions of justice and questions of beauty cannot be dealt with in terms of performative criterion of truth (Lyotard) or pragmatic criterion of usefulness (Rorty). This reflection would enable to relate the particular professional and specialized interest of an individual or asocial group, to that of everyday life. It is also essential to ensure the autonomy of scientific practice, Lyotard by valorizing the performative criterion of truth in science seems to take insufficient account of the enormous power science exercises over the world in terms of being the dominant discourse. Rorty, on his part, does not realize the importance of autonomy and the inner learning processes of science when he collapses the interests of scientists and politicians into one. That there is a normative dimension to Lyotard's characterization of postmodernity as incredulity towards metanarrative cannot be denied, as it is evident in his repeated attacks on metaphysical or foundationalistic thinking. As early as his *Discours Figure* [1971] Lyotard declares that there is no ultimate truth. But, for

Habermas, the crisis in metaphysical thinking or in philosophy's commitment to an emphatic theory, partly, a consequence of the development of sciences, is as old as modernity itself. And many of the critiques of science have exposed the discrete or explicit attempts to legitimize science in terms of a grand idea, which is one of Lyotard's target of attack, as having false claims to universality. More than anybody else it was Weber in the 20th century who captured the tension between the rationalized cultural spheres of the science, morality and aesthetics which are constituted by distinctive logics. Not only he perceived the difficulty of universalizing logic of any of these spheres, he also believed science cannot criticize the speculative way of life.

Lyotard, in contrast, does not see the possibility of science being a dominant discourse because intrinsic to its 'pragmatics', he sees the principle of paralogy which immunizes it against the possibility of knowledge being at the mere service of the system. But given the way the production of scientific knowledge is linked up with capitalist development, a fact which Lyotard knows and is stressed by many, it is doubtful whether the differential function of science would allow it to serve as an anti-model to the system. In his foreword to Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* Jameson raises the same doubt. He goes on to assert that "the profitability of the new technological and information revolution cannot be dealt with by the "pleasures of

paralogisms" and of "anarchist science" but can be challenged only by genuine (and not symbolic or proto-political) action." [1984, p.xx].

The suppressed normativity in Lyotard's thought surfaces again in the end of his answer to the question, "What is postmodernism?" Lyotard says that from the experience of '19th and 20th century one could learn that the attempt to unify the differentiated value spheres in a metanarrative is 'totalizing', 'terroristic'.etc. And he urges us to wage a war on 'totality': "let us be witness to the unrepresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honour of the name." [1984, p.p.81-82]. Here, Jameson suspects that Lyotard transfers the older ideologies of aesthetic modernism, the celebration of revolutionary power to science and scientific research proper, [1984, p.xx] and he thinks that the crisis in metanarrative cannot be resolved by dismissing it as irrelevant, but by seeing it as buried 'political unconscious'. From Habermas' point of view, Lyotard is an odd postmodernist neoconservative, who "welcome(s) the development of science not to carry forward technical progress or capitalist growth but to transfer the explosive content of cultural modernity on to the endless game of generating ideas" , [Habermas,1983a p.14], a play without purpose and orientation to the life world. The employment of the model of language game which restricts one to conceptualize social life and praxis, in terms of rules, players, differences and incommensurabilities would seem to Habermas as glossing over

conflicts and ruptures that Weber and Habermas have called 'pathologies'. Lyotard's suggestion that we should make do with 'little narrative' i.e., a narrative without a dubious subject and the grand idea of emancipation would be a choice as unacceptable as Lyotard repudiates. The problems of modern/postmodern western society which have come in the form of themes like "the destabilizing intervention into ecological systems and natural milieux, the destruction of traditional form of life, the depletion of non-regenerable natural and cultural resources, 'the negative side effects of capitalist growth etc., according to Habermas, cannot be accounted for in terms of an austere theory that eschews all speculative thinking . For the post modern society continues to be capitalist oriented, the various protest groups/classes/nations continue to struggle for self determination and recognition, the resurgence of ethnicity and fundamentalism stress the importance of tradition and culture and the spill over from the economic and political realm into the private and communitarian realm has kept the idea of participatory democracy as relevant to the present condition of society. The persistence of such phenomena as these, according to Habermas, does not square with the post-modernist debunking of 'theory' in the larger sense. As we noted earlier Habermas' reading of modernity perceives its problems as one of selective rationalization and development of subsystems of society, such as economy and polity that are steered by the Media of power and money. The so-called paradoxes of modernity, which weber has

identified, according to Habermas are to be attributed not to reason or rationalization *per se* but to the phenomenon of functionalist reason making its inroads into those spheres of social life that depends on intersubjective understanding and communication. what Weber understood as 'iron cage' and the Marxists as 'reified' society, Habermas understands as the 'colonization' of the life-world owing to the systemic imperatives of monetarization and bureaucratization. "The 'colonization' of the life world means "the subversion of socially integrated sphere of symbolic reproduction and their assimilation into formally organized domains of economic and bureaucratic action". [MacCarthy, 1984.p.xxxii]. Given this interpretation, a critique of Enlightenment reason takes the form of a critique of functionalist reason.

When the critique of functionalist reason is carried out in the framework of communicative action, which allows for a number of distinctions such as communicative and functional reason, life world and system, action oriented to understanding and action oriented to co-ordination, then the type of social pathologies such as consumerism, religious fundamentalism, various protest movements etc., that are becoming increasingly visible can be explained as the subordination of communicatively structured domain of life to the formally organized systems of action.[Habermas,1984,p.xi] Discussing the conflicts in advanced western countries, Habermas observes that the conflicts,"arise in areas of cultural reproduction of social

integration and of socialization" where language functions as a genuine and irreplaceable medium of reaching understanding and "cannot be gotten around by the media of money and power." [Habermas, 1984, p.xxxv]. Thus the critique of functionalist reason interprets the pathologies as systematically distorted communication, which arise as a result of a confusion. between action oriented to understanding and action oriented to success. More specifically, the problem lies at the level of contradiction between the rationalization of the life-world and the rationalization of the system - "between the mechanism of linguistic communication that is oriented to validity - claims and the delinguistified steering media through which systems of success - oriented actions are differentiated out." [Habermas, 1984,p.342]. According to Habermas, Marx had perceived the contradictions that result out of social rationalization in the self-destructive movements of an economic system that on the basis of wage-labour organises the production of goods as the production of exchange - values. Reformulating Marx and Weber within the paradigm of communicative action Habermas offers a theory of modernity that supposedly allows critical theory vis-a-vis other competing theories to diagnose the 'present' as having entangled itself in contradictions. In line with the traditional understanding of critique, it seeks to show the untapped rational potential that is ingrained in the structures of communicatively rationalized life-world. In accordance with its aims, the critical theory seeks to be both

explanatory-diagnostic and anticipatory -Utopian. [Benhabib, 1986,p.226]. It seeks to expose the contradiction immanent in the present condition as well as identify its normative content.

Under the circumstances, it is not theoretically fruitful to interpret the so called post-modern condition as epochal in the sense of complete break with the 'modern'. Like Jameson and Harvey, one could see the 'postmodern' as significant in that the forms of cultural change could be related to the changing structure of capitalist growth. One could go along with wellmer in characterizing 'postmodernity' as a dialectical outcome of the internal contradictions between the promises implicit in the project of modernity and their unrealizaton. [Wellmer, 1990,p.94 J.Like Habermas, one could see the postmodern movement as a continuation of the impulse of counter-discourse of modernity to bring to question the traditional concepts of Enlightenment reason, subject and claims to universality. Seen this way, an account of post modern condition would be a critique of modernity. However, the changes any account, identifies with, though momentous, does not signify that the 'present' is making a decisive break with Enlightenment . Rather, from the critique offered by post modern movement the 'present' is to be understood as a renewal of its relationship with the early Enlightenment spirit. What such a renewal of relationship means theoretically is a shift from the traditional philosophy of subject-paradigm to linguistically constituted intersubjective framework. which

allows one to see modernity as an "unfinished project" than to bid farewell to it as 'passe'.

It is an open question whether Habermas has been able to help the cause of defending modernity as an incomplete project by making the so called shift to the paradigm of communicative action. Postponing the discussion of problems and prospects of Habermas' interpretation of modernity to the next chapter, let us conclude the modern / post modern debate between Habermas and Lyotard with a prima facie justification of the need for critical

theory in the present context. In doing so and thus anticipating Habermas' response to Lyotard's criticism in as comprehensive and effective terms as possible, it is fruitful to go to Habermas' early work *Toward a Rational Society*.

In the article, "The Scientification of Politics and Public Opinion" contained in this work Habermas draws attention to the fact that in post-liberal society questions of practical life have been substituted by questions of technical application. Society, he says, has become technocratic in the sense that the nexus between science, technology, industry and administration interlock in a circular process. Consequently, the relationship between theory and practice can now assert itself as the purposive rational application of techniques assured by empirical science.[Habermas, 1970, p.71]. "The real difficulty" he clarifies elsewhere, "does not arise from this new function of

science as technological force but rather from the fact that we are no longer able to distinguish between practical and technical power,[Habermas,1973, p.254] - point which we noted in the Gadamer- Habermas debate to highlight the distinctive character of modern society. Habermas, we may recall, endorsed Gadamarian view that in modern society the traditional distinction between *techne* and *praxis*, technical application and *phronesis* have collapsed. The evidence for this, Habermas saw, is reflected in the dependence of the politician on the professional [Habermas, 1970, p..67] The politician today, he says, is a mere cog in the wheel of technocratic power, who passes on the initiative of the decision making to scientists and technocrats. Since from the technocratic point of view, all actions are evaluated in terms of performative values such as maintenance, stability, adaptability, efficacy etc., it fails to account for the "development of new techniques governed by a horizon of needs and historically determined interpretation of these needs, in other words by value system".[Habermas, 1970, p.67].

The substitution of technical orientation for practical, according to Habermas, is not only a distortion of *praxis*, but also is ideological. For, "the direction of technical progress is still largely determined today by social interests that arise autochothonously out of the compulsion of the reproduction of social life without being reflected upon..." [1977, p..59-60]. Practical knowledge which, to be sure, presupposes hermeneutic

reflection and conscious application of traditional norms and values on the part of participants to social life, requires to relate the aspect of technical progress to political enlightenment of those actors " who have to account with their life histories for the new interpretation of social needs and for accepted means of mastering problematic situation". Habermas, 1970, p.75]. That such a type of knowledge is not available today in the western society, Habermas says, is attributable to the
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disintegration of 'bourgeois public realm . This has resulted in the depoliticization of the masses and the privilization of needs and interests.

The technocratic consciousness of society as a self-regulating system is false for both Habermas and Lyotard. While Lyotard sees an antidote to this in the pragmatics of science geared to the generation of new ideas, Habermas thinks that only a self conscious determination of practical question vis-a-vis technical potential is an answer to the mediation between technical progress and conduct of social life [Habermas, 1970, p.67]. This he thinks, is achieved in the context of an intervening communication and *intersubjectivity* that emerges among actors on the always precarious basis of mutual recognition. The point which Habermas would bring forcefully into

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See Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge:MIT press, 1989, for a detailed defense of this point.

focus is that if the ideal of society as a system to be managed in a technical fashion is to be eschewed, as both Habermas and Lyotard agree, [Lyotard, 1984, p.61] ; Habermas, 1970, P.106], then it is necessary to re-establish the traditional distinction between technical and practical, politics and morality. It is necessary to retain the traditional view of society as a system of interaction among human beings who consciously organize their practice. Only against such a self-understanding is it possible to reject the view of society as self-stabilizing systems "in which the political enlightenment of the citizenary becomes superfluous" [Habermas, 1970, P.106].

The discussion of Habermas* early work on science, technology and politics brings back the importance of critique that does not renounce the normative dimension, as many of the post modern critiques such as Lyotard do. Habermas points out in his critique of postmodernism inspired by Nietzsche that such a renunciation leads to vitiate its own force and has to be content "in a world of illusions, in which lighter shadows can be distinguished from darker ones, but not reason from unreason" [Habermas, 1987b, P.125], For Habermas, a critique is necessarily related to 'enlightenment and 'emancipation', though the former does not lead to the other automatically. The events in the twentieth century such as the world wars, "Auchwitz", 'Solidarity movement', 'May 1968', 'The Prague spring' etc., undermined the empirical possibility of emancipation from unnecessary

domination and constraints to some extent. But critique cannot, for these reasons, dispense with the idea and the pursuit of emancipation altogether. He does not share Lyotard's view that these events justify the valorizing of local or localized thought and action. From Habermas¹ point of view, Lyotard's position amounts to theoretical nihilism that nullifies critique and, hence, reflection itself.

For Habermas, to take critique seriously is to work out its normative dimension: to be conscious of what it affirms and what it negates. In this sense, his concern with the foundations of critical theory is understandable. He is not off the mark when he criticizes early critical theorists such as Adorno, on the one hand and the post-modernists such as Derrida, and we can include Lyotard, on the other, for refusing to make explicit the normative force of negative dialectics, in the case of Adorno and deconstruction in the case of Derrida. Without an articulation of the normative dimension their critiques become indistinguishable from the critiques of their opponents. More importantly, they cannot address themselves to the ethico-political questions in any constructive fashion since they are skeptical of serious critique in the sense that presupposes reflection, insight and emancipation. In a way their critique's sensitivity to the suppression of otherness is incompatible with their antipathy to 'theory' 'reason' and universalist ideas, for one cannot make sense of the former without resorting to normative terms such as

rights, justice, tolerance and respect etc. In this respect it is not Lyotard alone who is guilty of this incompatibility. As Habermas has shown with regard to Foucault [1987 b.p.284], and McCarthy with regard to Derrida, the postmodern "prophets" embroil themselves in a contradiction when they use a language that is crypto-normative, but refuse reflection on its normativity. Derrida, for instance, construes deconstruction as a "language and political practice that can no longer be comprehended, judged, deciphered by existing codes", while using terms such as "minimal friendship", "grammar of response", "promise", "commitment", etc. , [McCarthy, 1990, p.p. 157-58] , which is part of the humanist vocabulary that post modernists find unpalatable.

Even though Lyotard's argument against 'metanarrative' from what he considers to be significant changes does not hold and his reading of Habermas' theoretical position as aspiring for a 'grand narrative' is not altogether sound, he can be said to be problematizing the goals of Habermas' critical theory i.e., of emancipation and good and true life [McCarthy, 1978, p.317], in the light of Habermas' explicit post metaphysical, non-substantive, formal or procedural concern with reason. It is true that a critique cannot avoid the question of its own status and in this sense a concern with the theory of rationality is understandable. This is a concern familiar to the critical tradition - a point we discussed in the first chapter. But in

what sense, a post modernist can ask, a procedural conception of rationality contribute to the question of 'true and good life'? A related objection concerns the issue of 'Universalism'. It is true that Habermas has a point against those who claim that they have nothing to do with the idea of universality. The point is that, any attempt to privilege 'particular' over 'universal' has to face the problems of avoiding particularism or tribalism [Bernstein, 1990, p.314], Or at least they must presuppose the notion of universal as a critical category in terms of which a particular's false claim to universality can be questioned. But the questions Habermas in turn have to face is, "Is his critical theory truly universal in the sense that it is sensitive to the differences between particulars?" "Does not his critique which construes all social 'pathologies' as a manifestation of communication-distortion arising out of 'colonization of the life world by the system'¹ turn a blind eye to the particular struggles of women's movement, regional and cultural autonomy etc. In this connection critics like Benhabib have pointed out that Habermas' critical theory presupposes a notion of abstract subject in the form of 'humanity* or fictive 'we' - a conflation of empirical and normative subject [Benhabib, 1986, p.331]. This means that he is still caught up in the framework of philosophy of subject, which is supposed to have been replaced by the framework of intersubjectivity. And lastly, a critic who sympathizes with Habermas' critique of science and technology as ideology would wonder in what sense has his concern with comaunicatlve-theoretic

foundations of critical theory really addressed itself to the theory-practice problematic? This question is significant particularly in the context of global expansion of capitalism and its penetration into newer areas such as Third World agriculture and the development of mass media which promotes an 'universal' popular culture to the exclusion of 'traditional' culture. The absence of the 'political' or 'real politics'¹ in the 'modern/postmodern' context seems to be reflected in the marginalization of the discussion of politics in Habermas' later writings. [J.M.Bernstein, 1989, p.423]. That is, Habermas' concern seems more 'theoretical' than 'practical' and thus is guilty of failing to translate the knowledge of what is wrong with the 'present' into a political programme for action.

What, then, is the precise bearing of our 'construction' of the debate between Habermas and Lyotard on the former's critical theory, both as social theory and philosophy of social sciences? It is true that Habermas does not consider Lyotard to be the principal representative of postmodernism, unlike Foucault or Derrida. However, his response to post modernists - a response, which we have brought to bear on Lyotard's views -consists in the emphatic assertion that a critique in the sense familiar to the critical tradition is not only necessary but essential if one is not to opt out of the project of modernity in a premature fashion. For Habermas, the attack on all that modernity stands for in the name of postmodernism is a powerful reminder of the

prospective task of completing the project of modernity than abandoning it. In focusing our attention on the response of Habermas to postmodernism we sought to emphasize an important dimension of critical theory: that a social theory and a philosophy of social sciences constructed on it can and must share something significant with the 'grand narrative' tradition and must locate itself in the critical tradition inaugurated by Kant. And this 'grand narrative' need not entertain a nostalgia for the whole or an idea of "reconciliation of the concept and the sensible, of the transparent and the communicable" as Lyotard assumes that all grand narratives do. [Lyotard, 1984, p.p.81-82] It is this felt need to make Habermas social theory and its philosophy of social sciences a paradigm of thought that is continuous with and yet transcends the Enlightenment ethos that constitutes the leitmotif of Habermas' endeavor. This chapter purported only to highlight that leitmotif - a task necessary for a detailed critique of Habermas' critical theory to be undertaken in the last chapter.

CHAPTER V

TOWARDS A CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL THEORY

In the first chapter an attempt was made to locate Habermas' thought in the overall context of the critical tradition. The following chapters explicated the different dimensions of Habermas' scheme of thought as he develops them in and through his debates with other thinkers with different philosophical persuasions. The final chapter seeks to refocus on the overall content of Habermas' theory as it revolves around his seminal concept of communicative action - a task necessary for a detailed critical evaluation. Our basic criticism hinges upon the contention that the concept of communicative action and the ideas related to it lack sufficient theoretical clarity and strength to enable Habermas to realize his avowed intention,' namely, realizing the task of bringing the project of modernity to fruition by resurrecting its normative content.

It must be evident from our discussion of critical theory and Habermas' reformulation of it in communication-theoretic terms that distinctions such as communicative action and instrumental action, life world and system, socially integrated and systematically integrated domains, life-world imperatives and system imperatives etc., are central to his intention of providing normative justification for critical theory. While our

focus was on one or the other of these distinctions in the debates above, it is necessary to critically analyze them to assess the claim of Habermas' interpretation of modernity as an incomplete project. And finally, we take up the question whether the repertoire of the distinctions mentioned above help critical theory to address itself to the theory practice problematic. In conclusion, we register critical remarks about Habermas' stubborn affirmation of 'nature / culture' distinction, which rules out alternative conceptions of nature and his Eurocentric concerns, which are at odds with his avowed universalistic claims for modernity.

The central feature of Habermas' reformulation of critical theory is a shift from the paradigm of subject to the paradigm of intersubjective communication. The chief consequence of this shift is that the problem of modernity is no longer understood as a society divided against itself (Hegel), or alienated humanity (Marx) in terms of dubious presupposition of a macro subject and the idea of emancipation consisting in reconciliation or transformation. As is well known, central to both the Hegelian as well as the Marxian idea of the end of history is the Subject (Spirit in the case of Hegel and humanity in the case of Marx) which in actualizing itself through externalization or objectification overcomes the moment of alienation through an act of either reappropriation or transformation. Common to all these views is the idea of the activity of the subject as manifested in the historical process, which can be understood in self

reflection in an objectivistic manner. The moment of emancipation consists in the recognition of subject as constituted subject of the past. That is, the subject emancipates itself through its reflection of itself as historically formed.

This idea of radical subjectivity and its emancipatory project has been shown, as we noted in the first chapter, to be false by the course of events itself in the twentieth century. But, theoretically, it was the Frankfurt school and Adorno in particular, who brought to foreground the problematic assumptions underlying the revolutionary subject. Adorno deconstructed not only the Hegelian-Marxian idea of the subject, but also the notion of individual subject central to the liberal tradition through his critique of instrumental reason and showed that the traditional notion of subject was defunct in the post-liberal capitalist society. But his critique of subject was not without a normative ideal. Having accepted Lukac's theory of 'rationalization as reification' and having been confronted with the troubling features of Russian Marxism, the rise of Fascism in Germany and Italy and the integration of working class into capitalistic system, he despaired of the possibility of emancipation. For, he found Lukac's solution as implausible as Hegel's. This theorization, according to Habermas, led both Adorno and Horkheimer to de-historicize reification by uncovering the emergence of instrumental reason as something already present in the Greek History.

When reason *per se* is seen as instrumental reason, there is no possibility of critical reflection, for there is no alternative concept of reason. Confronted with the failure of this reason, Adorno and Horkheimer attempted to anchor their own critique that is not trapped in the dialectic of reason. This led them to retrace a primal state in which the separation between subject and object does not exist. For Habermas, a total critique of subject which refers to the archaic or primal is unacceptable for it cannot validate itself in any manner, and further, it rules out the possibility of a fair account of modernity.

Habermas faults Adorno and the Frankfurt School for not developing a suitable alternative i.e., a framework of the intersubjective understanding through communication oriented towards consensus. Instead, he says, they sought to regress to a de-differentiated state of history. They could have, Habermas observes, traced the "disintegration of objective reason, externalized in its objects, as it displayed itself in the practice of the most advanced sciences, to **develop** a "phenomenological" concept of knowledge expanded through **self** reflection in order thereby to open up (not the only) one avenue of access to a differentiated but encompassing concept of rationality", [Habermas, 1984,p.377], Instead, their philosophy by withdrawing "behind the lines of discursive thought to **the** "mindfulness of nature" pays for the wakening power of its exercises by renouncing the goal of theoretical knowledge"

[Habermas, 1984, p.385] and the programme of interdisciplinary materialism to which the critical theory of 1930s was initially committed. For Habermas, this theoretical dead end marks the exhaustion of the paradigm of philosophy of subject-

It is against this critique of philosophy of subject one must understand Habermas' theory of communicative action. As a framework it is encompassing in that it helps delineating four action types in accordance with their intrinsic features: 1) From the point of view of this framework, the action type central to Hegelian-Marxian understanding discussed above, would be called purposive rational or cognitive instrumental in so as far as its purpose is to make or bring about a state of affairs. This means that the relationship presupposed is subject-object mediated through technique or skill. [Habermas, 1984, p.333]. 2) But in so far as Hegelian-Marxist model is expressivist or essentialistic, it can be put in the category of expressive action type, whose purpose is self-realization or self-actualization. It presupposes a subject-object or subject-subject relationship depending upon whether the act is one of recognition or self-enhancement [Benhabib, 1986, p.138]. 3) In addition, the communicative theoretical framework distinguishes strategic action. whose purpose is command or manipulation and the relationship is subject-subject, from instrumental action in that the former is non-symmetrical or non-reciprocal, with the suggestion that it is inappropriate for orientation towards subject-modality. 4) Finally, communicative action, whose purpose is to reach

understanding and in which the relationship between the speakers cannot but be subject-subject, reciprocal and symmetrical. In contrast to strategic action which can be understood under the aspect of following rules of rational choice, communicative action is to be understood only under the aspect of an attitude oriented to reaching understanding. "A communicatively achieved agreement has a rational basis; it cannot be imposed by either party whether instrumentally through intervention in the situation directly or strategically through influencing the decision of opponents...Agreement rests on common convictions. The speech act of one person succeeds only if the other accepts the offer contained in it by taking (however implicitly) a 'yes' or 'no' position on validity claim that is in principle criticizable." [Habermas, 1984, p.287].

Using Austin's theory of speech-acts Habermas strengthens his own distinction between communicative action and strategic action by explicating four important differences between illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts. Firstly, the difference between an illocutionary and a perlocutioary act is that in the former "the communicative interest (of the speaker) does not go beyond wanting the hearer to understand the manifest content of the speech act." [Habermas, 1984,p.290], whereas in the latter the aim of the speaker does not follow from the manifest content of the speech act. Secondly, the success of the act does not depend on anything more than the hearer's

understanding of utterance and accepting it as true or right, whereas the success of perlocutionary act depends upon the consequence of the action i.e., whether it brings about the intention of the speaker. Thirdly, the illocutionary results are regulated by conventions, whereas the perlocutionary effects depends upon fortuitous contexts. Lastly, illocutions are expressed openly whereas perlocutions may have to be concealed. In the light of these distinctions, Habermas attempts to demonstrate not only the distinctive status of communicative action, but also the use of language in reaching understanding as an original mode. This is illustrated by the fact that the perlocutionary aim of influencing, bringing about, achieving something etc., is dependent upon the hearer's understanding of it. "If the hearer failed to understand what the speaker was saying, a strategically acting speaker would not be able to bring the hearer, by means of communicative acts to behave in the desired way." [Habermas, 1984, p.293]

Having explicated Habermas' formal pragmatic analysis of communicative action in relation to speech-acts, we now turn to his account of the rationalization of the life-world. This is to explain why the concept of communicative action holds such an important place in Habermas' defense of Modernity. As we noted in the third chapter, one of the differences of opinion between Gadamer and Habermas is that the latter insists on understanding as a normative concept in the sense that the task of understanding requires of participants taking a stance towards

the interpretand. To the extent one cannot take a reasoned 'yes/no' position on the validity-claims implicit in speech acts one has not understood at all. Habermas' idea of communicative action, as opposed to Gadamer's dialogue, lays stress on rationality and argumentative speech in arriving at an agreement over truth claims [Habermas, 1987a. 120]. As we noted further, Habermas buttresses his point by arguing that with the rationalization of the life world, communicative rationality is built into the structures of preunderstanding already reached within an inter-subjectively shared life world. This means that communicative reason applies not just as a procedure for consensual truth, but also as part of the structure of state of preunderstanding that guides modern ways of looking at things. What makes the relationship between life world and communicative action complementary is that while concrete forms of life can be said to be reproduced via the agency of validity oriented action, communicative actions are "always already moving within the boundaries of life world." [Habermas, 1987 a. p.119]. In other words, while the life-world is fed through communicative action, it functions as a context or horizon within which communicative action operates in maintaining a structurally differentiated world.

The dialectical relationship between communicative action and life world presupposes the separation of the processes of cultural reproduction, social integration and personality formation. The dialecticality of the relation seems to imply that

neither communicative action nor life world is privileged. Life world is the horizon within which action takes place. It cannot be thematized. [Habermas, 1987a. p.137]. That is, life world cannot be brought to reflection, as facts, norms and experience can be. The knowledge about the life world, which one has at any time, "conveys the feeling of absolute certainty only because we do not know about it. It's paradoxical character is due to the fact that the knowledge of what one can count on and how one does something is still connected with - undifferentiated from - what one pre-reflectively knows." [Habermas, 1987 a. p.135].

From Habermas' communicative-theoretic perspective life world does not get restricted to culture, as in the case of Alfred Schultz. What is called cultural knowledge subjects itself to the interpretative mechanism of communicative action. It has to prove itself against facts, norms and experiences. Because the life world is reproduced via communicative action one of the two extreme consequences is possible: renewal of cultural knowledge and the consolidation of tradition or a cognitive rupture leading to the undermining of the authority of the tradition. Nor does life world get reduced to the aspect of social integration, as in the case of Durkheim's or Parsons' account. Habermas' account also distances itself from George Herbert Mead's attempt to reduce the life world to the aspect of the socialization of individuals [Habermas, 1987 a.p.p.139-40]. The narrower construal of the life world in the three cases mentioned is the consequence of privileging of one of the three aspects of the life world.

What is missed out in each of the abridged versions of life world is the dependence of one aspect on the other two. Habermas lays bare the interconnections between the three aspects of the life world in the following manner:

1) *cultural reproduction* contributes to the *legitimization* of institutions and also to the *socialization* patterns; 2) A well *integrated society* contributes to the *legitimately* regulated social memberships of individuals and also to the recognition of moral duties and objections; 3) Personality systems are linked to the *interpretative accomplishments* of the individuals as well as the motive *formation* for actions that confirms to norms. [Habermas, 1937 a. p.141]. Not only are the three aspects of the life world interconnected as mutually reinforcing processes, they are connected to communicative action, in the final analysis. Communicative actions are not only processes of interpretations in which cultural knowledge is "tested against the world; they are at the same time processes of social integration and of socialization". [Habermas, 1937a. p.139]. As we mentioned above, all the three aspects of the life world are not merely routed through communicative action, but are "saddled upon the interpretative accomplishments of the actors themselves." [Habermas, 1987a. p.145].

Taking his cue from Mead's attempt to reconstruct a sequence of stages of forms of interaction Habermas identifies communicative action as anthropologically fundamental to social

life. This enables him to pursue the idea that "if the structures of the historical life world vary within the scope defined by the structural constraints of communicative action not accidentally but directionally,"[Habermas, 1987a. p.145], then one can speak in terms of a developmental logic underlying the stages of human evolution. This would mean every stage is higher to its preceding stage in terms of increased learning processes, if it can be shown that it means an increase in rationality. According to this thesis, if modern world view can be shown to embody an increase in rationality, then it is developmentally superior to previous world views. Habermas is of the view that the first part of the thesis can be shown to be true in the case of modern European world by virtue of the level of rationalization of the life world it has attained.

Habermas encapsulates the distinctive features of modern rationalized life world in following terms:

1. Structural differentiation of the life world:

- a) Cultural speaking, traditions become more and more reflective and undergo continuous revisions.
- b) For society, legitimate orders come to depend upon formal procedures and justifiable norms.
- c) For personality, abstract ego identity is stabilized through self steering.

2. Separation of form and content:

- a) Cultural traditions tend to separate off from concrete contents in contrast to tightly interwoven relationship in

mythical world views; formal elements such as world concepts (objective, social and subjective) communication presuppositions, argumentative procedures and abstract values become crucial.

- b) "At the level of society, general procedures and principles crystallize out of particular contexts" [Habermas, 1987a, p.146]; i.e., modern societies come to be based on principles of morality and legal order, which have an abstract character and require to be interpreted in concrete contexts.
- c) Personality systems embody cognitive structures and competences which have a character of generality hitherto unachieved.

3, Reflexive symbolic reproduction:

A consequence of structural differentiation is the functional specification of reproductive processes in the form of action systems which undertake specialized tasks such as cultural transmission, social integration and child rearing. Not only the development of science, law and art but the development of political institutions, discursive will formation, formal education etc., are the significant results of the rationalization process. [Habermas, 1987a, p.147].

In the light of this sketchy explication of the rationalization of the life world, we can understand Habermas' contention that since the modern world, both culturally as well as institutionally, embodies a level of differentiation i.e., "a state of development of a symbolically structured life world

...indicated by the separation of culture, society and personality" [Habermas, 1987a, p.152], it is developmentally superior to other worlds. One of the consequences of this differentiation is the institutionalization of more and more interaction contexts which are to be rationally regulated towards mutual understanding and consensus formation that depends on "the authority of better argument". [Habermas, 1987a, p.145]. Thus, seen in evolutionary terms, communicative action, as an outcome of evolutionary trend, comes to be recognized as a medium for the reproduction of the life world. By this what is implied is that "rationally motivated action orientations are sustained only when the different aspects of sociation are mediated by processes of understanding in which agents or participants take up a performative attitude towards the different validity claims raised in cognitive interpretation, moral expectations, expressions and valuations"[Steven White, 1988, p.99]. The differentiation of domains of validity claims is in accordance with the cultural differentiation of science, morality and art and the decentration of the modern consciousness, which Weber had captured in his famous term 'disenchantment'.

One of the differences between weber and Habermas is that the latter has extended the concept of rationalization to world views, which the former had restricted to religion and the emergence of economic ethics. with this move Habermas could address himself to the issue of multiple learning processes reflected in the multidimensional rationality as opposed to

Weber's fixation on purposive rationality. As we had noted in the third chapter, for Habermas, the developments of modern science and art are not an arbitrary and fortuitous phenomena. They are in accordance with the self-understanding of modernity i.e., fallibilist consciousness and subjectivist sensibility. Similarly, in the ethical sphere, Habermas' interest unlike that of Weber, goes beyond uncovering the basis of the rise of capitalism to the identification of structures of post conventionalist ethics and their embodiment in modern law. [Habermas, 1984, p.p.197-98]. The rationalization process, according to Habermas, led to the institutionalized production of discourses of science, morality and aesthetics. The project of modernity, since then, has been to release the cognitive potentials of each of these domains from their esoteric forms.

Only from the point of view of action oriented towards reaching understanding, Habermas claims, is it possible to understand the ambivalent character of the rationalization process. For, the negative consequence of this process is the reification of everyday life praxis - a result of systematic barrier to communicative interaction. What is required is the relinking of specialized autonomous spheres to the everyday life praxis through the institutionalization of centers of communication. This means a great deal of burden on individuals to organize, interpret, argue and take stances. Consequently, the risk of disagreement and the disruption of life world practices run high. With religion becoming a matter of private faith and family becoming an important sphere of intimacy that

can bring about personal fulfillment, "a political sphere of private persons takes shape, which as a medium for permanent criticism, alters the conditions for the legitimation of political domination" [Habermas, 1984, p.341].

Adopting the communicative theoretic perspective, Habermas thinks, it is possible to avoid, on the one hand, celebrating institutionalized individualism of Parsons and on the other, construing the rationalization process as containing potential risks for irrationalism and social disintegration. Simultaneously, he could understand why Weber, with the spread of purposive rationality in the institutions of economy and polity, construed all action as essentially oriented towards success to the exclusion of communicative action. From Habermas' perspective rationalization has found its institutional embodiment not just in the form of action oriented towards understanding but also in action oriented to success.

What Habermas could gain in terms of insight is that the communicative-theoretic paradigm helps explaining the contradiction between the institutional complexes of economy (differentiated out via money) and the administrative systems (differentiated out via power), which Weber had seen, as not due to the fact that they embody purposive rational action, as Weber thought, but as something that is to be anchored in the life world. "The rationalization of the life world", as Habermas says, "makes possible a kind of integration that enters into

competition with the integrating principle of reaching understanding and under certain conditions has a disintegrative effect on the life world [1984, p.343]. This is what Habermas means by the 'colonization.'¹ of the life-world by the systemic imperatives.

Viewing the rationalization process at different levels allows Habermas to see, on the one hand, the rationalization of the life world has lent modernity its positive side, while on the other hand, the rationalization of the system has become its thorny side: the latter regulating itself through functional interconnections has assumed an autonomy that imposes serious constraints on communicative interaction. In this way Habermas locates himself in the counter-discourse of modernity that can be traced to the very beginning of the modern era. What is notable is that all those who contributed to counter discourse before him gave an one-sided interpretation of modernity, owing to their allegiance to the paradigm of philosophy of subject and an exclusive focus on one type of action and rationality. Habermas with his switch to the intersubjective paradigm and a comprehensive theory of action theory and rationality is supposed to have overcome the limitations of his predecessors so as to provide an account of both the ills and gains of modernity project. For instance, he could see societal modernization i.e., the separation and institutionalization of economy and administration not only as a mark of evolutionary advance from a systems perspective, but also as a phenomenon that

methodically undermines the process by which a rationalized life world is symbolically reproduced, [S. White, 1988, p.p.104-105.] But this presupposes a two fold perspective of life world and system, which we shall discuss below.

Habermas writes in his *Theory of Communicative Action Vol.11* that on the hand, society can be conceived from the participant perspective of acting subjects as the life world of a social group. On the other hand, society can be conceived from the observer perspective of some one not involved, as merely a system of actions, in which actions attain functional value according to their contribution to the maintenance of the system", [1987a, 179]. Just as an exclusive focus on the former leads to the oversight that material conditions are necessary for the reproduction of life world, a wholly system-perspective has the consequence of theorizing social phenomenon in a purely objectivistic manner. Consequently the latter view cannot account for the social pathologies such as alienation, anomie etc., which can be made intelligible only from the perspective of lived crisis of participants. In contrast, Habermas favours a two-fold perspective in such a fashion that the systems perspective can be developed out of the life world perspective. For, the former is inaccessible to observation and must be unlocked hermeneutically, that is, from the internal perspective of members. In other words, the significance of societal modernization i.e., differentiation of subsystems of economy and administration can be grasped adequately only if the internal

perspective is broadened to incorporate an observer's perspective, Those who have been hyper-sensitive to the costs of modernization, like the Romantics in the 19th century, have suggested a radical solution such as the dissolution of the modern differentiated economic and administrative realm. Alternatively, a certain variety of socialists have suggested a radical reorganization which denies the autonomy and capacity of these systems to steer themselves via the neutral media of money and power. For example, Marx, who in terms of the dialectics of dead labour and living labour, of abstract labour and concrete labour, had captured in a seminal way the distinction between system and life world and identified the counteracting tendencies that ensue from the colonization of the life world by the system, suggested a solution that seems to crave for a, in Habermas¹ words, "nostalgically conjured, often romanticized past of premodern form of life" [Cited from S. White, 1988,p. 109]. While Marx was right, Habermas contends, in locating the reification of the life world in the material sphere, he focused, exclusively to be sure, on class conflict as the ultimate cause of the problem. - This produced an account of the 'colonization' exclusively in terms of the erosion of the life world of producers who can offer only their own labour power as commodity. Consequently, decolonization for Marx takes the form of total reabsorption of the subsystem into the life world. Like others, to quote Habermas again, "he could not appreciate the evolutionary significance of the development of Media steered subsystems and their contribution to enhanced material

reproduction"[Cited from S. White, 1988, p.108].

In contrast to Marx who argued from the perspective of the life world, a systems theorist like Niklas Luhman argues from a perspective which has no place for the 'life world'. He celebrates the functional differentiation of society to the extent that he does not perceive that when subsystems regulated by power and money are severed from the control of the lived perspective of the participants, disquieting consequences can follow. In the functionalist language of the systems theorist these consequences are explained away as 'disequilibria' - a functional irritant that threatens the ongoing of the system. But a purely functionalist description of this sort fails to take account of the normative dimension of the situation i.e., as crisis ridden for those affected. For example, "the class - specific distributive effects of the media's being anchored in property laws and constitutional norms does not come into view at all" [Habermas, 1987a,p.355]. Similarly the die-hard advocates of capitalist modernization, whom Habermas called neo-conservatives, do not pay attention to the disintegrative effects of the growth of the system. They think that the problems created by the need to sustain continuous capitalist expansion can be taken care of by the embracing role and power of the state. But Habermas points out this led to what is called the 'juridification' of social life. The state addressing itself to the problems related to family relations, old age, education, health care etc., in a highly legalistic and bureaucratic manner - puts pressure on those

who are 'benefited' to redefine their everyday life situation. The redefinition forced from the outside and not called from the lived perspective of the affected results in the abstraction of their situation. "Juridification thus exerts a reifying influence on the life world, which then combined with the enhanced claims to expertise of social workers and other administrators in the newly defined categories of life, produces an insidiously expanding domains of dependency". Habermas observes that since the end of the 19th century it has become difficult to see how "shoving problems back and forth between the media of money and power is going to give us new impetus"[Cited in S.White, p,113].

The neo-conservatives' zeal to gloss over the crises engendered by the expansion of the subsystem is well matched by the stubbornness of the critics of growth in their opposition to the differentiation and complexity of the system. The latter's solution to the crises consists in reversing the rationalization process itself, i.e., realizing a de-differentiated reality. Habermas contends that the problem does not lie with the systemic differentiation *per se*. He thinks that the differentiation promotes economy of effort and efficacy of means in production and administration. It co-ordinates action without having anyone to command an overview of complex functional networks or anyone being solely responsible for them. The demand for the reversal of rationalization, for Habermas, is not in tune with the post traditional state of the development of society, which separates contexts of instrumental or strategic and contexts of

communicative action. What Habermas suggests as solution to the crisis is that these subsystems be anchored in the life world and remain subject to the normative requirements of the life world rather than "subordinate the life world to the systemic constraints of material reproduction and thereby 'mediate' it" [Habermas, 1987 a, p.185].

As was noted above, Habermas' endeavor in developing a two-fold perspective of life world and system is to provide an adequate account of how the rationalization process understood at the cultural and at the societal level is an achievement as well as a problem. He would contend that it cannot be denied that many of the benefits of contemporary life accrue from the differentiation and hierarchy of structures of modern economy and state. The incessant increase in productive forces through technology have freed a great mass of humanity from unnecessary labour and scarcity known to premodern societies. The evolution of the constitutional state and the institutionalization of civil rights have done away with the traditional stratification of society, thus dispensing with unnecessary oppression and suffering, legitimized by religious - metaphysical world views. Habermas shares the socialist view that freedom from the reals of necessity and traditional ideological distortion have been partially achieved in advanced Western countries. All these things would not have been possible without the separation of functionally interconnected domains from communicatively structured spheres. System complexity is surely a mark of

progress, though not the only one. In the case of social evolution, growth of system complexity is to be preserved by subordinating it to the communicative rationalization of life [Habermas, 1976, p.139]. But unfortunately the former is corroding the later, thus making rationalization itself a suspect notion.

In the light of this analysis Habermas concludes that an ideology- critique in the traditional Marxist sense is no longer relevant. What is of concern and of central importance is that "in advanced Western societies conflicts have developed in the last ten to twenty years that deviate in various respects from the social welfare state pattern of institutionalized conflict over reproduction...these conflicts arise in areas of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization" [Cited in McCarthy, 'Introduction' to Habermas 1984, p.xxxv]. The problem is no longer one of distribution of economic value but of identity and rights to self determination for groups and sub-groups. And these groups or sub-groups have expressed themselves in new social movements which include women's movements, ecology movements, movements for regional and cultural autonomy etc.

For Habermas these movements illustrate his 'colonization' thesis. What they underscore above all is the significance of 'communicative sociation' and a space for the construction of group identity and political deliberation. Because these groups

are diverse and their priorities are different, , if not incommensurable, they cannot think in terms of totalistic revolutionary programme. At the same time they should resist being assimilated into formal political system. [Habermas, 1987b,p. 364]. Otherwise they would sever themselves from the orientation and attitudes of their members and end up as another subsystem. Habermas believes that given the lack of symmetry between capacities for self-reflection and self-organization, a feature of modern societies, it is necessary to have centers of concentrated communication that arise spontaneously as well as centers of discursive thinking exemplified in philosophical abstraction and scientific analysis. This means both retaining grass root concerns with an eye on the concrete situation as well as providing an interpretation of the self and the world in accordance with "the enlightenment potential of strictly universalistic legal and moral representations..." [Habermas, 1987 b, pp.364-65].

At a time when radical critiques of modernity are widespread to the extent of having become fashionable, it is remarkable that Habermas is persistent in his defense of it as an unfinished project. What makes his interpretation of Modernity vulnerable to criticisms, as we shall below, is that he has rested it on certain distinctions discussed above, which when probed fall to hold ground. Consequently, the Universalism he wants to claim for modernity and derivatively for critical theory turns out to be ideologically suspicious.

In what follows, we shall examine the problems associated with the ambiguous definitions of communicative action and life world, the distinction between life-world and system, social integration and system integration, between symbolic reproduction and material reproduction, between questions of Justice and the questions of good life. Of course, our probings will have an indirect bearing on, finally, the primacy of 'communicative action'. which Habermas, in evolutionary terms, wants to secure through what he calls 'reconstructive sciences'.

To take up his foremost concept first, i.e, 'communicative action'¹ which is contrasted with strategic action , it must be said that Habermas has not been consistent in his formulations of what he means by communicative action. As Fred Dallmayr has incisively pointed out, communicative action is defined as a kind of 'praxis' on the intersubjectively shared life world, but is also understood in some contexts, for instance, in his debate with Gadamer, as related to consensus to be achieved. That is communicative action in the weak sense means consensual mode of inter action and in the strong sense, 'communicative action' is related to consensus to be achieved in a rational Banner. [Dallmayr, 1987, p.164], Similarly in his *postscript* to *Knowledge and Human Interests* communicative action figures under 'everyday exchanges' but also under 'rational discursive communication' [Dallmayr, 1987, p.p.167-68;p.172]. Sometimes communicative action is explained as action intended by the participant to reach understanding. [Habermas, 1984, p.37]. It

is also defined as the structure of action whose *telos* is reaching understanding [Habermas, 1984,p. 287; also 1982, p.241]. A related ambiguity concern his scope and function of language. Language is construed as an indispensable medium for achieving consensus and at the same time as a mechanism for co-ordinating action situation [Dallmayr, 1987, p.165]. This ambiguity gets reflected in the distinction between success-oriented and consensus-oriented actions. How is the word 'orientation' to be understood? Is it related to the aim of speaker / actor or to the structure of the action itself? [Dallmayr, 1987, p.166].

Dallmayr is not merely raising semantic objections to Habermas' formulation of the "communicative action" and related ideas. The ambiguity can be said to be a sign of tension endemic to Habermas' attempt to avoid the extreme positions. On the one hand, he wants to dispel any suggestion of unmediated understanding familiar to objectivism, and, on the other, he tries to circumvent the relativistic suggestion of understanding as free of validity considerations. This is explained by the importance Habermas attaches to the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy and social theory as well as the 'rationality of understanding'. In the third chapter, we discussed at length Habermas' agreement with Gadamer on the centrality of language and understanding as consensus based as well as the difference which consisted in his emphasis on the 'rationality' of understanding as discursive (argumentative) redemption of truth claims. Habermas¹ turn to language was to secure a notion of

intersubjectivity, which presupposes language as an inseparable medium of reaching consensus. But his stress on the rationality of understanding in the sense of redemption of validity claims requires language as a mechanism for achieving consensus. The later stress smacks of subject concerned philosophy, as Dallmayr points out, given its pervasive emphasis on basic "dispositions towards the three worlds". i.e. objective, social and subjective [Dallmayr, 1987, p.175]. Dallmayr remarks that Habermas' recourse to speech act theory confirms his subjectivistic leanings.

Not just 'communicative action', but its complementary concept of life world also suffers from an inherent ambiguity. Here, too, one can make a distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' versions of life world. In the strong sense, life world is a "reservoir of taken for granted, of unshaken convictions that participants in communication can draw upon in co-operative processes of interaction". [Habermas 1984. p.124]. One implication of this conception is that from the perspective of the participant the life world cannot be brought to reflection as and when one pleases; it is at nobody's disposal. [Dallmayr, 1987, p.170]. However, life world in the weak sense becomes accessible to description and explanation both for narrative presentation as well as theoretical presentation without the speaker or actor having to take a participatory stance in relation to it (Habermas, 1987 a, pp. 136-37]. The dual meaning is at the root of his two fold perspective of life world and system. The

ambiguity is exploited by Habermas to have it both ways: to do justice to the hermeneutic insight that all understanding is situated as well as to make room for the independence of theory - a move made, as we noted above, to avoid the twin poles of hermeneutic idealism and pure rationalism [Anthony Giddens, 1979, p.p.66-67]. Actually, this duality of meaning is not unrelated to the ambiguous explication of 'communicative action' discussed above. Communicative action in the strong sense of redeeming validity claims presupposes a relatively weak life world, which is employed to argue that hermeneutics must give way to a critique of ideology. And communicative action in the weak sense as action - co-ordination operating within the bounds of the life world confirming the latter's ineffability is pressed against Luhman's system-functionalist theory. Yet, one may read Habermas, in his critique of hermeneutics, as arguing that one can take an objectivating stance towards tradition or life world. But as Hans Joas points out, "no theory about changes of cultural reproduction, of social integration and socialization can claim to have originated from an objectification, in principle* of the life world. It holds good also for the human being Jurgen Habermas that the life world envisioning him, which forms the horizon of his cognition, cannot in principle, be fully thematized or completely and clearly grasped". [1991, p.116].

The vacillation between the systems-perspective and the life world-perspective in Habermas' writings is a consequence of drawing a sharp distinction between life world and system. The

domain of system i.e, economy and polity is, according to Habermas, integrated formally and steered by the media of power and money. The domain of life world, in contrast, is integrated through communicative action oriented towards mutual understanding, whether traditionally secured or communicatively achieved. While the administrative system is primarily responsible for regulating and complementing the economic system, the legitimation system, as Habermas calls it [Habermas, 1976, p.36], ensures mass support for the functioning of the economic and protecting the administrative system from effective democratic participation. As opposed to the economy and the state the public sphere, where public opinion is supposed to take shape and the 'will of the people is given expression through communicative processes is that important segment of the life world which is supposed to influence the functioning of the system. But in advanced capitalism the opposite is the case owing to an irresolvable tension between the subsystems, i.e. of economy and administration. For the former has to be kept growing without restrictions such as demand for legitimation directed by the public at the administrative system. The incessant need to sustain economic growth and bureaucratic disempowering together, Habermas thinks, has undermined the public sphere. Welfare state, which, through its programmes resorts to compensatory steps such as dole, health insurance etc., minimizes the need for public deliberation that might influence decision making. [Habermas, 1976, p. 37].

As we noted above, Habermas' account of the rationalization process sees the uncoupling of the system from the life world as of developmental significance. Modern society, according to him, has acquired a complexity thanks to the differentiation of contexts of strategic/ instrumental and communicative action. This means that it will have to give over certain economic and administrative functions to functionally specified media steered domains of action. At the same time, the democratic institutions and processes have to be strengthened to prevent 'colonization'.

The above account of the specter of 'colonization' that haunts the advanced capitalist society and Habermas' solution as 'decolonization', quite naturally, relies heavily on his distinction between the life world and the system, socially integrated and systematically integrated. But does the distinction really make sense, as Habermas construes? Can society be divided into two so neatly as he does? Setting aside the empirical adequacy of his explanation of what ails modern Western society, one could question the very distinction as Thomas McCarthy does. One can ask whether the political and economic system can be understood as steered merely by the media of power and money. For example, even in the most bureaucratically hierarchized form of organization such as army, intelligence service etc., is it not true to Bay that traditionally pre-established consensus or communicatively achieved consensus plays an important role? And, can we say that in matters of

economy such as budgeting, investment and expansion there are no normative considerations involved such that the activity cannot be understood as also socially integrating? Similarly, in matters of opinion formation, mobilizing support for collective decision, in both public sphere and the family -the spheres of life world, according to Habermas - it is not just social integration but system integration too that gives 'sense' to social praxis. An interesting example of opinion formation and securing public support through the medium of money is family planning in over-populated countries like China. Habermas would find it normatively objectionable only because he draws the distinction between life world and system sharply to the extent of one excluding the other, the denial of one leading to the other.[McCarthy, 1992, p.130].

The seducements of systems theory, as McCarthy puts it, undermines the life world perspective which Habermas would like to retain. It contradicts Habermas' earlier critical stance of normative inadequacy of systems concepts and his commitment to radical democracy. [Habermas, 1976, p. 123-24]. As McCarthy puts it, "if self determination, political equality and the participation of citizens in decision making processes are the hallmarks of true democracy, then a democratic government could not be a political system..." i.e., cannot be regulated via the media of money and power. This is a point Habermas had brought against Luhman to argue for the need for participation in political praxis [Habermas. 1976, p.p. 142-43). McCarthy. like

Joas mentioned above, wonders whether Habermas really needs to concede so much to systems-theoretic perspective. He remarks further that considering the popularity of systems-theory in the wake of the emergence of technologically complex societies, the former only serves what Habermas once called "second order technical knowledge" of which he was critical in his earlier work.

The distinction between life world and system can be questioned at another level too: at the level of symbolic reproduction and material reproduction. Nancy Fraser in her critique of Habermas' critical theory shows that Habermas' construal of the distinction does not serve the critical task of taking into account the gender question. Consequently, his critical theory, she points out, despite the insights it provides such as how welfare capitalism inflates the consumer role and deflates the citizen role, is unable to account for the gender sub-text of these developments [Nancy Fraser, 1985, p.122]. She identifies three assumptions which when questioned bring out the unthematized gender question. When life world and system are understood not just as methodological perspectives but as "two different kinds of institutions", [Fraser, 1985. p. 106] then they look like natural kinds which Means that they exclude each other. An activity of the life world such as child rearing, if construed as serving symbolic reproduction, because it involves language teaching, initiation into social Mores, in short enculturation, then, according to Habermas it cannot be

construed also as serving material reproduction, without pathological consequences. But Fraser questions precisely the rigid distinction between 'symbolic reproduction' and 'systems reproduction'¹. Child rearing, she argues, involves not just those things mentioned above, but also teaching how to interact with nature, to take care of oneself etc. Similarly, the activity of food and object production is serving not just material reproduction, but also symbolic reproduction in so far as it presupposes cultural contexts, symbolic meaning and language as such [Fraser, 1985, p.101]. In short , any activity would presuppose and contribute directly or indirectly, to the reproduction of language, tradition and culture as well as the material substratum. To separate or classify activities strictly in terms of one or the other medium would not only be difficult, but misleading too.

As Fraser argues further, by construing the distinction in a rigid manner Habermas has relegated the domestic sphere to the life world, thus construing it to be as free from the influence of money and power. But domestic sphere is also "a site of ego centric, strategic and instrumental calculation as well as sites of usually exploitative exchange of services, labour, cash and sex..."[Fraser, 1985, p. 107]. What does not come into view if one follows Habermas construal of family as part of the life world is domestic activity as "unpaid labour".

Finally, the idea that economy is the source of reification in late capitalist countries does not take into account other factors that are crucial for the gender question such as the

familiar "normatively secured consensus concerning male domination and female subordination" that informs the system reflected in sexist discrimination in jobs and assignment of roles and duties, wage discrimination etc. Fraser can be understood as arguing that there are multiple sources of reification in modern society, of which economy might be an important one.[Fraser,1985,p.125]. Therefore, an analysis of reification as 'colonization' does not leave room for other factors. Consequently, Habermas' colonization thesis comes close to, contrary to his intention, 'mode of production' analysis.

In the light of these objections which Fraser holds that colonization thesis as advocated by Habermas is inadequate to capture what is at issue for women's struggle. Fraser points out that for the first time women as social welfare clients are economically independent, which means that the problems of distribution are as important in welfare capitalism as questions of identity and political participation. And their enemy is not welfare capitalism as such but a certain stereotypical understanding of women - an understanding embodied in the established framework of gendered roles and institutions. (1985, p. 127]. If what Fraser says is true then decolonization as the reversal of the direction of Motion from the side of the system to the life world would not suffice. What is required is, "the replacement of normatively secured contexts of interaction by communicatively achieved ones" [Fraser,1985, p. 127] that is communicative action in the stronger sense. And the struggle for

women would not be just with the state and economy over money and power but with other competing movements and conflicting interpretations over social needs. This makes it difficult for women to decide on which side they are, given the multiple roles they might be called to play. This is all the more so considering the fact that the articulation of needs and interpretation of meaning is largely controlled by men. [Fraser,1985, p.128].

What can be gathered from the above discussion is that Habermas' interpretation of the problem of modernity as colonization of the life world and the solution to it as decolonization in a communicative manner is that it fails to take into account the specificity of socio-cultural background which makes a difference to those who live through the crises. For instance, it has little to say specifically about contemporary women's struggles in advanced capitalism. Thus, it invites the charge of being androcentric and ideologically loaded. From the lived perspective of women the solution could only consist in a radical transformation of the current gender roles and the transformation of content, character, boundaries and relations of the spheres of life which these roles mediate. Habermas' two fold perspective, rigidly drawn cannot take into account 'their' needs, bodies and identities. Thus, it justifies the charge brought against his critical theory that it is falsely universalistic.

The universalistic claims of Habermas' critical theory is particularly questionable owing to the formalistic character of communicative ethics which is supposed to serve as its foundation. According to communicative ethics, questions of justice are to be separated from questions of good life, for only the former have a "strong normative character and express a general interest", while the latter are "inextricably linked with particular form of life or the totality of the individual life history. The universalization principle rests on the notion of justice, while the notion of good life can be evaluated in terms of needs and preferences that are culturally shaped to be sure". [Habermas, 1990b, p.204]. Questions of good life do not admit rational debate and consensus like the questions of justice. Questions of justice deal with preferences as well as validity of norms of action. While questions of justice can be answered on the basis of a criterion of universal process of understanding, questions of good life are linked to notions such as 'health' and 'sickness', 'ultimate meaning' and 'fulfillment' etc. Consequently, Habermas considers the latter type of questions as more clinical than moral.

Here again doubts can be raised regarding the possibility of making a rigid distinction between questions of justice and good life, moral concepts and clinical ones. Thus, Taylor has argued that virtues such as reasonableness and openness towards others are central to moral problems familiar to the modern western world. The very idea of rational understanding, he points out, is

closely bound with the notion of dignity, 'which in turn is inseparable from self development and self obligation'[C. Taylor, 1992, p.32], Arguing in a similar vein, Seyla Benhabib points out that Habermas' communicative ethics lays exclusive emphasis on the stand- point of the 'generalized other' governed by the principle of reciprocity, which has the form of "If I have the right to X then you have the duty not to hinder me from enjoying X". It has no place for the standpoint of "concrete other", which is governed by what she calls the principle of complementary reciprocity, which takes the form, "I recognize you not just as human being but as an individual with specific history, identity and affective emotional constitution". [Benhabib, 1986, p. 341]. That is to say, Habermas is inspired by only a vision of community of rights and entitlements. What does not come into view is a vision of community of needs and solidarity. But what is surprising is that the vision of community of needs and solidarity, actually, is implicit in Habermas' theory which he refuses to develop owing to his commitment to the formal universal approach to rationality.

Finally, it is possible question Habermas' distinction between communicative action and instrumental/strategic action as two distinctly specifiable attitudes towards the domains of differentiated reality as maintained by Habermas. For him, the disenchantment of nature and the development of modern science, which takes an objectivating stance towards nature has revealed the differentiated interests constitutive of human actions.

Henceforth, according to him, nature can only be approached in a cognitive instrumental manner. This means that nature -in-itself is unknowable. Nature is accessible to the scientists only under the horizon of the technical cognitive interest. Of course, he does not rule out the possibility of relating to nature in other ways such as purely aesthetic one or one inspired by the idea of unity with nature familiar to premodern world views. But neither of these attitude could be scientific [Habermas, 1982, p.p. 244-45]. Science proceeds by the constitutive cognitive interest of technical manipulation for humanity's survival. This interest, as we noted earlier, is rooted in specific fundamental conditions of the possible reproduction and self-constitution of human species. In contrast, a science of society, i.e., historical-hermeneutic sciences and what he calls emancipatory sciences approach their object linguistically and communicatively with the interest of producing practical knowledge and emancipation, respectively. But here too, science can relate itself to its object in an objectivating manner i.e, in an instrumental or purely strategic manner so as to use or manipulate it. But this does not serve the purpose of mutual self-understanding between social actors or genuine emancipation of social agents. In other words, Habermas is claiming that the differentiation of cultural spheres has necessitated taking different attitudes towards the different domains of reality. Though one can in principle take any attitude towards a given domain of reality, an instrumental attitude towards nature and a communicative attitude towards society is the most appropriate one.

Habermas' dualistic approach to reality and the acceptance of the disenchantment of nature as the price of modernity is at odds with the critical spirit and emancipation from the constraints of inner nature. For the disenchantment of nature implies an objectivating attitude towards the internal and external constraints of nature and it excludes a communicative approach as Habermas advocated in the case psychoanalytic treatment. This oddity is a consequence of construing the distinction between communicative and instrumental/ strategic action as mutually exclusive. In this connection, McCarthy's suggestion is instructive. He thinks that Habermas' critical theory instead of affirming the differentiated value spheres and the fragmentation of reason should seek a reconstitution of broken unity at a higher stage without regressing into undifferentiated unity, which Habermas wants to avoid at all costs. A move of this kind would require modifying, if not giving up, the rigidly construed dualistic scheme of methodological orientation. [McCarthy,1982,p.77].

It is necessary to clarify that it is true that Habermas advocates what may be called a triadic view according to which one may adopt an instrumental attitude towards natural or objective world, communicative attitude towards the social world and expressive attitude towards the subjective world of man. However, the last attitude which is directed towards the inner reality of human being takes a back seat with the consequence the

central thrust of Habermas' message turns out to be dualistic rather than triadic.

The force of McCarthy's suggestion regarding the overcoming of the dualistic approach becomes clear in the light of increasing environmental disasters to which the unchecked progress of science and technology has contributed, though in an indirect way. The problems of acid rain, the depletion of ozone content in the atmosphere, soil and air pollution etc., can be said to have some connection to the rapid expansion and utilization of scientific and technical knowledge. Consequently, Habermas' construal of nature as nature-in-itself and his conception of science of nature as guided by technical interest seems to take little cognizance of the environmental problems. In fact, one could suggest, as, Henning Ottoman does, that the term 'technical cognitive interest' looks like an equation with the will to control and manipulate nature and the environmental disasters as the revenge of nature. Inspired by the early critical theorists such as Adorno, Ottoman takes objection to Habermas' scheme of assigning different interests to the domains of reality in an exclusive manner as ruling out alternate conceptions of science and nature. He points out, additionally, that the anchoring of interests in a quasi transcendental sense provides no force in Habermas' system to bind and limit man's will to control or manipulate nature. This renders the aesthetic orientation, which Habermas allows, invalid [1982, p.p. 79-97].

Arguing from more or less the same premises Joel Whitebook contends that the dualistic scheme, which Habermas presses into service to argue for the idea of rational autonomy of the individual as central to Enlightenment, discredits the project and reason of Enlightenment as inadequate to conceive of nature as an end-in-itself. His communicative ethics being anthropocentric cannot answer the question whether we can "continue to deny all worth to nature and treat it as mere means without destroying the natural preconditions for the existence of subject. Likewise, one can ask, "Can (the worth of) nature be secured without devaluing the dignity of the subject?" [Whitebook, 1982,p.p. 52-53]. It seems that Habermas' anthropologically conceived distinct human interests exclude in advance a range of possibilities regarding the relationship between man and nature. For instance, it does not consider an approach to nature prevalent in psychiatry and non western medical practices that is more 'communicative' and less 'instrumental' and in fact a 'blending' of both. Of course, Habermas would reject such a 'blending' as unscientific in the sense that it is not 'theoretically' fruitful, which incidentally he does not articulate sufficiently. But his construal of formal-pragmatic relations, the scheme of basic attitudes corresponding to the domains of reality outlined by him already preclude the possibility of exploring alternative approaches to nature.

In this connection, another important objection can be made against Habermas' critical theory: it has nothing to say

whatsoever about colonialism and its legacy in the post-colonial context of non western societies. [Edward Said, 1993, p.336]. Habermas' silence on what lessons critical theory can impart to the struggles in third world countries seems unfortutious considering his Eurocentric account of the origins and development of modernity as a project. But it is surely ironical considering the Universalism Habermas has been championing for both modernity as well as for his discourse ethics. What Weber had claimed for the structures of modern consciousness as "the product of universal historical process of disenchantment" and as not merely reflecting "idiosyncratic traits of a particular culture" [Habermas, 1984, p. 239], Habermas wants to show in a systematic manner through his reconstructive science and thus demonstrate the superiority and universality of the self understanding of modernity. But such a programme is at odds with the modesty of a hermeneutically influenced theory of society - a theory of society that does not close itself a priori to the possibility of becoming aware of what one has unlearnt in the course of learning which is made possible by the modern understanding of the world, [Habermas,1987b p.400]¹, so long as the programme operates with rigidly drawn distinctions and built in conceptual obstacles examined above. Given the tentative character of his programme which seeks to show the inherent superiority of modern self-understanding, a distinction such as

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See Anthony Gidden's "Reason without Revolution", 1982p.118-119 for a similar criticism.

the one between modern and premodern in terms of differentiated or undifferentiated world views or increase in rationality is one sided and a preprogrammed exercise. Moreover, it does not help to see through the prejudices in the Gadamarian sense, which modern self-understanding embodies. Operating with an evolutionary scale Habermas assigns mythical and premodern world views a place in his scheme of 'progressively' differentiated worlds. But the assignment which is already loaded with assumptions puts these world views on a lower level, which means that they fall short of a level of rationalization modern world views have attained. This way of looking at other cultures forecloses the possibility of dialogue that can open up areas of cultural differences and affinities and an authentic fusion of horizons.

The problem with Habermas' emphatic interpretation of modernity is that it lays much stress on the formal-pragmatic aspects of rationality in terms of which other cultures are supposed to be judged. Consequently it cannot do justice to the difference in substantial terms between cultures. It cannot allow, theoretically, a genuine interaction and experience of process of reaching understanding which makes room for a critical examination of modern structures of consciousness that can learn from the repressed potential of other traditions.

A theory of society in order to be sensitive to the

differences between cultures or forms of life cannot operate with a notion of communicative action that already presupposes its own validity. Nor would it help to take recourse to reconstructive sciences, for that would be taking recourse to 'naturalization* of reason, which would conflict with the normative or binding character of reason. As McCarthy argues, Habermas' critical theory cannot rely on the so-called empirical import of the developmental model to argue for the self understanding of the modern as the highest stage, if he wants to use communicative ethics as a foundation for critical theory. [1982, p.127].

If communicative action is not to be reduced to just 'communication' or 'action' and if communicative reason is to be understood as more than formal-pragmatic rules of validity, then it must give up the pretense of operating from 'nowhere' and see itself as situated on the seams of social/ cultural practices that cut across the boundaries of substantive traditions. Communicative action then would mean coming into force wherever social phenomenon is characterized by opaqueness and reification. Communicative reason is not just a means to come to consensus that was already achieved and ruptured. It would be a mode of reaching understanding across, to use Martin Seel's expression I 1992, p. 48], "plural, non integral and yet non-separatist practices and forms of life.'

From our discussion of the problems that beset the idea of communicative action and the associated notions something must be

said as a conclusive remark about Habermas' philosophy of social sciences. Habermas' social theory, as we noted, in chapter II, is related to the various social theories or paradigms, on the one hand and the rationalized social reality on the other in the sense that it draws from the conclusions arrived at by the major theories such as Weber's rationalization theory, Marx's analysis of capitalism, Parsons-Luhman's system-functionalist theory, Piaget's developmental psychology etc., to reconstruct or interpret the rationalized life world of the modern western society . At the same time, rooting itself in the philosophical tradition called critical thought it initiates a critical inquiry into the universalist claims built into the various modern social theories as well as its own claim to universality. Thus, his social theory i.e., *The Theory of Communicative Action* because of its relation to strictly theoretical-empirical sciences i.e., non-normative sciences retain its connection to ground reality on the one hand and on the other avoid lapsing into positivism since this theory collaborates with philosophy as critique.

The problems that surround his reconstruction of the modern west are related to the problems concerning Weber's interpretation of modernity, the centrality of economic categories in Marx's analysis of capitalism, and the lack of empirical corroboration of Piaget's developmental psychology theories. To the extent the theories on which Habermas' theory of communicative action depends for the reconstruction of the modern West, its status is precarious and can be problematized by other

interpretations. That is. the 'theoretical' character of communicative action which is not strictly transcendental but relates to the constative feature of his reconstruction of the way language is used in modern life world is tenuous and yet to be confirmed. Moreover, given the problems surrounding the question as to what counts as a satisfactory validation i.e., whether it is 'empirical' in any sense or argumentatively redeemable, as Habermas recently wants to argue, [1991, p.231], puts limits to strong claims about the truth that concerns his theory of communicative action.

While the status of Habermas' social theory is under intense discussion, especially in the debate concerning communicative ethics, his *Theory of Communicative Action* has already proven itself to be an example of communicative action oriented towards reaching understanding. Independent of considerations of its validity its contribution to the philosophy of social sciences consists in re-opening the issue of the nature and and scope of social sciences - an issue that was caught up in the debate between 'objectivism' and 'relativism'. The central problem of that debate was that understanding a particular society in its own terms implies a degree of relativism, which is epistemologically indefensible, for by its very nature reflection needs concepts which are in some sense at least global. However, the available global concepts seem to smack of Eurocentrism. The central task of philosophy of social sciences is to identify those concepts which are genuinely universal and in which

particular societies could be understood. Only then philosophy of sciences can claim to transcend its present problematic of the persistent influence of positivism on the practice of social sciences. Habermas' contribution lies in bringing issues such as these to the forefront and provide the philosophy of social sciences an idiom to grapple with them. Important in this connection is to note how Habermas tries to formulate the concept of rationality and reconstruct the category of reason in order to transform the fundamental orientation of social sciences as they are practiced. In stressing rationality as a central concept for social sciences Habermas drives home the crucial point that philosophy of social sciences is concerned with not just methodology in the sense of means and efficacy of modes of scientific understanding, but also with meta-theoretical issues such as the status and role of social sciences in the modern / post-modern societies. In doing so, Habermas has pushed the horizon of the philosophy of social sciences beyond methodology to eschatology. Habermas' attempt to develop a theory of communicative action and rationality is not just a theoretical exercise but an *invitation* to join the discourse of modernity - a discourse in which Habermas' interpretation is a provocative one. The theory of communicative action and rationality can be seen not just as an interpretative exercise but also as a normative one in the sense it invites criticisms against the prejudices that block the formation of a *genuine* notion of universality.

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