Critique of Epistemology: A Study in Charles Taylor

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by

Prasanna. K.V

Department of Philosophy
School of Humanities
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad 500046

JUNE 2012

Department of Philosophy
School of Humanities
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad 500046, India

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled **'Critique of Epistemology: A Study in Charles Taylor'** submitted to the University of Hyderabad in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy is a *bona fide* record of original work done by **Ms**. **Prasanna. K.V** during the period of her study in the Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad, under my guidance and supervision and that the thesis has not been submitted to any other University or Institute of learning for the award of any degree.

Supervisor

Head,

Department of Philosophy

Dean,

School of Humanities

Department of Philosophy
School of Humanities
University of Hyderabad
Hyderabad 500046, India

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis titled **'Critique of Epistemology: A Study in Charles Taylor'** submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy to the University of Hyderabad, embodies the result of *bona fide* research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of **Prof. S. G. Kulkarni.** It has not been submitted to any other University or Institute of learning for the award of any degree.

Signature of the Candidate

Date: **30.06.2012**

Place: **Hyderabad**   **Prasanna. K.V**

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CHAPTER I

THE RECEIVED TRADITION: THEMATIC AND HISTORICAL

PRELIMINARIES

It is rightly said that the fountainhead of all philosophy is the relation between Knowing and Being. Epistemology as an inquiry into the nature and limits of Knowledge has sought to address the question of the relation between Knowing and Being head on throughout its history. However, just as the first half of the twentieth century saw sustained attacks on Metaphysics, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed powerful attacks on Epistemology. As we know, the twentieth century attacks on Metaphysics were preceded by anti-metaphysical trends in from sophists in the classical period for whom man was the measure of the things, to Hume and even to an extent Kant in modern times. Similarly, the twentieth century attacks on epistemology were preceded by anti-epistemological trends like scepticism and relativism. If the pre-twentieth century attacks on Metaphysics called into question the very concept of Reality, the twentieth century anti-epistemological trends are/were less radical in the sense that they called into question the practice of epistemology as traditionally construed. Naturalistic epistemologists like Quine challenged the traditional view that knowledge is a non- natural phenomenon and argued that the approach of epistemology must be descriptive/ empirical/ explanatory. Charles Taylor's critique of epistemology calls into question the subject/object dichotomy, which is central to epistemology at least in its modern phase. The fact that modern philosophy, which emerged in seventeenth century, was the result of a shift towards the primacy of epistemology from

Metaphysics, which was central to traditional philosophy, adds enormous significance to such a critique of modern epistemology, which is the theme of this thesis.

Hence, it is in the fitness of things to begin our discussion with the received tradition in epistemology. Though the central tenets of the received tradition are most palpably and unambiguously present in the modern epistemological tradition which emerged in the seventeenth century. These tenets are not absent completely in the pre-modern epistemological tradition though their texture may be different. Hence, the received tradition has a history that goes beyond seventeenth century. However, our focus is on the received tradition as it flourished in the modern context since it is the received tradition as contextualized to modern times, which is the object of the critiques studied in this thesis. The discussion of the received tradition must be both pre-modern and modern, both in terms of highlighting its core features as well as a brief treatment of the milestones in its history, the former under the rubric 'Thematic preliminaries' and the latter under the rubric 'Historical preliminaries'. Let us begin with the former.

I.1 Thematic Preliminaries

Normativism is the core feature of traditional epistemology. The concept of normativity however needs to be briefly elucidated.

The central question in traditional epistemology is 'What must be added to true beliefs to convert them into knowledge'? In other words, 'What is that which justifies our true beliefs'? Justification is understood as providing adequate reasons to show that our beliefs are true. Normative epistemology, the historically dominant tradition in epistemology, answers that question by claiming that it is the quality of the reasons for our beliefs that converts true beliefs into knowledge. When the reasons are sufficiently cogent, we have knowledge. The quality of

the reasons is assessed by certain norms. The normative orientation of epistemology consists in its claim that it can discover historically invariant and universal norms that ought to be met by any knowledge claim to be considered as valid. An account is normative when it concerns what *ought to* be the case. If we take logic, it is a normative discipline and its concern is what ought to be reasoning. It is not an account about how people are actually reasoning/arguing and not even a kind of generalization of the way people are reasoning/thinking. In the same way, normative epistemology claims that epistemology is a normative discipline and epistemological concepts like truth and justification are normative ones. Here, I focus on a normative account of justification. The normativists seek to identify what ought to be the case. That means, according to them, when we make knowledge claims we are applying certain norms. Whether our knowledge claims are genuine or not depends upon whether these norms are met or not. Thus, these norms can justify our beliefs. The purpose of these norms, in other words, is to regulate the justification of our beliefs. In the absence of a normative dimension, the very idea of justification ceases to be epistemic (as opposed to psychological). This is because, everybody will come up with his/her own reasons to justify a certain belief and if we do not have a normative idea of justification, then the distinction between correct and incorrect or valid and invalid justification would be impossible.

The formulation of a normative account does not necessarily depend upon the practices as they are formulated in relation to the goal/ purpose of justification. Hence, the correct justification is one which serves the purpose. The purpose of justification is to show that our claims are true. Therefore, the concept of truth plays an important role. According to this account, without reference the goal/purpose it is not possible to formulate certain conditions whose satisfaction makes a belief true. Normative accounts of early modern philosophies mainly

rest on this strategy. In this sense knowledge is a 'normative concept' and knowledge is not on par with natural phenomena whose account is non-normative or descriptive.

The following can be held as tenets of normativism: A normative concept is not an evolving one. It is absolute in nature. It is independent of time or context. It is independent of practice, though it can be seen as figuring in practice. Normative concepts are available to an epistemic agent. Traditional epistemologists assume that normative concepts are available to the agent through a priori reasoning. They assume that normative concepts are wholly transparent to our consciousness. In other words, knowledge is a norm guided phenomenon. In this sense, a knowledge claim is what it is because of the justification, which is subjected to certain norms. As Hunter points out:

> In epistemology we are using certain criteria for correct justification for our belief. These criteria are general principles that specify what sorts of considerations ultimately confer warrant on some of our beliefs and tend to guide self-reflective persons in checking and correcting their judgement. The criteria must be internally accessible through introspection or reflection without relying on further justified belief. In short, Criteria are internalized norms (rules) about when to make and correct judgments ascribing a concept. (2006:594-595).

Finally, norms/criteria should be precisely formulated so as to be identifiable in any context.

The central question in normative epistemology is: 'What are the norms that must be met by any knowledge claim?' In the later sections, I discuss the various norms of justification advocated by traditional and modern epistemologists. Within the normative tradition two views

about the proper structure of norms can be found foundationalism and coherentism.   Among the two, the more commonly held view is foundationalism.

Foundationalism is a view concerning the structure of justified belief. Such a structure is divided into foundation and superstructure. Beliefs constituting the superstructure depend on the foundations for their justification. If knowledge is justified true belief, one may think of knowledge as exhibiting a foundationalist structure by virtue of the justified belief it involves. That is, reasons / norms of justifications concern a foundational structure comprised/consisting of 'basic' beliefs. 'Basic' beliefs are self-justified and derive none of their justification from other beliefs / propositions.

The foundational propositions that are basic beliefs have autonomous justification. Thus, some beliefs are accepted on the basis of other beliefs. So justification of beliefs is like a chain such that a belief constitutes justification of the belief that follows it which in turn is a justification of the one that follows it. Here a question would   arise: 'Is there any termination for this belief chain?' According to foundationalism, the belief-chain terminates with a particular set of beliefs that are commonly called basic beliefs. These basic beliefs are, as pointed out above, self-evident beliefs. Foundationalists differ among themselves as to what conditions have to be met in order for a belief to be basic and what conditions have to be met in order for other beliefs to be appropriately supported by basic beliefs. The strictest versions of foundationalism require that a basic belief be infallible, indubitable or incorrigible if it is to be self-justifying. A belief is infallible if it is impossible to have (or entertain) the belief and for it to be false; a belief is indubitable if it is impossible to doubt whether it is true; and a belief is incorrigible if it is impossible to have good reasons for thinking that it is false. The strictest versions of foundationalism also impose stringent constraints on the support-relation, restricting it to logical

implication or enumerative induction; a non-basic belief is justified only if it is implied or inductively supported by one's basic beliefs. Many of the most influential figures in the history of epistemology are strict foundationalists. The basic beliefs can be of several types. Empiricists such as Locke and Hume hold that basic beliefs concern knowledge initially gained through the senses or introspection. Rationalists such as Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza hold that (at least some) basic beliefs are the result of rational intuition.

Another major strand in traditional epistemology is representationalism. According to the representationalist theory of ideas in Descartes and Locke, what we are directly aware of is not external objects, but our own mental states, but the mental states which represent those objects. By representing them they facilitate description of things existing out in the world. Ideas (in Descartes and Locke) or 'representations' (in Kant) thus formed a kind of bridge, both causal and experiential, between the inner and the outer world.

The central idea of representationalism is that there is an independent world, i.e. the world whose existence and nature is independent of our perceptual experience of it. Secondly, knowing about an object located in that mind-independent world necessarily involves a causal connection with that object. Thirdly knowledge is most immediately about the perceptual experience caused in us by the object, and only derivatively about the object itself. However, this derivation is the locus of the representative relation which knowledge has with the external world. Thus knowledge is the representation of the external world. And the representation of reality is what constitutes knowledge.

We now proceed to see how normativism, foundationalism, and representationalism figure in the epistemological theories of Plato, Aristotle, and Modern Epistemologists like

Descartes, Locke and Kant whose works are milestones in the history of pre-twentieth century epistemology.

I.2 Historical Preliminaries

I.2.A. Plato's Epistemology

It was Plato who first attempted to provide a systematic theory of knowledge. If we look at the pre-Socratic philosophers, we find that their main concern was not theory of knowledge as much as the nature of reality. Through his conception of knowledge, Plato tries to give an account of Reality as well as Knowledge.

In Plato's terms, norm/criterion lies in providing reasons for our own belief about Reality. For Plato, only if the belief is about the Reality, it can be a true one. "At *Meno* 98a, Plato giving what may be the first explicit account of knowledge in Western thought proposes that knowledge is true belief plus an *aitias logismos*, an explanatory account." (Fine,Gail.1999:9) According to Plato, justification of knowledge consists in showing that the belief is about Reality: that is, the object of belief must be real. So the norm which Plato gives for knowledge is that belief should be about Reality. Nicholas White terms it as 'Metaphysical Epistemology'. And this position is in sharp contrast with modern epistemology. Modern epistemology disconnects itself from Metaphysics. Modern epistemology concerns the method, which leads to knowledge. The contrast between the modern epistemology and Plato's epistemology can be elucidated as follows:

Now if I want to acquire a collection of flints, and only prehistoric flints, one way is
to collect a lot of flints, and then investigate which of them, if any, are prehistoric.
This might be inefficient, compared with a method of acquiring them in the first

place which made it more likely that any flints I acquired were prehistoric ones. But the analogous process with acquiring true beliefs would be not just inefficient, but incomprehensible. (Williams, Bernard. 1978: 24)

This is an early version of the still familiar view that knowledge is justified true belief. Plato argues that belief is to be distinguished from knowledge on the basis of justification. His distinction between knowledge and mere belief rests upon the distinction between appearance and reality. Belief (which is false) is about appearance and knowledge is about Reality. Plato says that knowledge is always true belief. Though apparently true belief could be proved as false at a later stage, knowledge could never turn out to be false. In that sense, Plato's concept of knowledge is a very strict one.

Plato argues that knowledge consists of propositions, which are 'secure and unshakeable', and differs from true opinion in its 'immovability'. Why does Plato insist that knowledge is unchangeable? We can see that it is based on some kind of introspection. Here we can see that Plato's metaphysical ideas are dependent upon his epistemological notions. As we see, Reality must be non-corporeal or non-material. For him, Reality is distinct from the appearance of the world. He argues that Reality is always perfect and unchanging. So it must consist of a world of Forms or Ideas independent of the sensible world. And the sensible things are the imperfect copies of these Forms or Ideas. In his view, sensible things remain as objects of opinion while Forms function as universal entities. The universal entities cannot be perceived in our sensible world. They do not exist in our sensible world. Reality must be a single, eternal, unchangeable, object of thought, above the realm of the senses, in the world of Ideas. The Ideas are then the real essences and the objects of knowledge. Plato is concerned about these objects of knowledge. He argues that, "Knowledge is only of what is unchangeable" (Moser, Paul K. and

Nat, Arnold Vander. 2003: 25) Plato's assumption is that we cannot rely upon our sense perception because our sense perception is always changing. So, we have to relegate beliefs about sensory objects to the status of opinion. So according to Plato, justification is related to Forms.

Extending this line of thought, Plato goes on to say that perceptible things reside between being and non-being as they are presenting contrary appearances and hence they are not real. On this basis he argues that perceptibles are not what knowledge is concerned with; rather they are what opinions or beliefs are about. Knowledge has to do with 'being' or 'what is', namely, Forms, which are distinct from perceptible and which do not present themselves in contrary ways.

One of the key points of Plato's epistemology is the enquiry about the methods of reasoning which can provide access to Reality. This part of Plato's view is quite close to Modern Epistemology. It concerns what statements a person is justified in making. Here, there is discussion of the grounds on which a statement might be established or refuted, and of the kinds of arguments that can be given for or against something. In Plato's works this part is loosely associated with the portrayal of Socrates as practicing a procedure of *elenchus*, scrutiny/refutation. Arguably this procedure is capable only of refuting a statement, never of establishing one. "In the early dialogues Socrates often asks the 'What is F?' question: for example, 'What is piety?' in the *Euthyphro*; 'What is courage?' in the *Laches*; 'What is friendship?' in the *Lysis*; 'What is temperance?' in the *Charmides*. The interlocutor thinks it easy to answer Socrates' question, and he readily does so. Socrates then questions him further, and he answers 'as it seems to him'. Eventually, despite the interlocutor's initial self-confidence, he is caught in contradiction. This is Socrates' *elenctic method*." (Fine, Gail.1999:1) Thus, the method

is for detecting inconsistencies. Socrates seems to believe that if one doesn't know a definition of *F* (what F is) then one doesn't know anything at all about *F*.

In the *Meno*, the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* he develops what has been called the 'method of hypothesis', which seems to be a method by which claims can ultimately be demonstrated, unconditionally. In the Republic, he holds that one can arrive at an 'unhypothesized' basic principle, which will work as a basis for demonstrating everything. Here his suggestion is that what is demonstrated thereby will have to do only with Forms. Such positions indicate that he was considering some kind of foundationalist epistemological position.

The method of hypothesis is earlier offered as something that is used by 'Dialectic', the style of philosophizing that takes place through conversational questions and answers. In later works, however, such as the *Phaedrus* and the *Sophist*, Plato says that dialectic makes use of the 'Method of collection and division', which is a method for constructing taxonomies and definitions. Nothing in his description of this method, however, indicates that it could be used to demonstrate or justify definitions.

Thus, the first claim of Plato is that a belief can be justified only by assuming that Forms are the object of knowledge. Then Plato discusses about methods, which give us access to Reality/Forms. In what follows, we briefly discuss about the intelligibility of Plato's claim that the world of Forms can be accessed through reason. On what basis does Plato claim that reality is accessible to the enquirer through reason?

Platonic Epistemology holds that knowledge is innate so that learning is the manifestation of ideas concealed deep in the soul. Plato claims that we can know this world of Form through our reason. Plato argues that it must be due to the factors, which are prior to experience. What is

it to be prior to experience? Plato's answer leads us to his theory of recollection. He discusses this theory of recollection in his dialogue *Meno* and *Phaedo*. Here he gives an explanation that we have achieved our present knowledge before our existence. Plato's assumption is that at the time of birth, we will lose our awareness of our previous knowledge, but later we repossess our awareness. At birth, we have no consciousness about it, but later we recollect it. According to Plato, "Since our knowledge of the Forms cannot be derived from present sensory experience, it must be due to our prior existence; therefore, our souls existed before embodiment. Such an argument, then, was motivated by Plato's effort to explain a priori Knowledge of immutable Forms" (Moser, Paul K. and Nat, Arnold Vander. 2003:26) What Plato wants to demonstrate is that knowledge is innate. Perfect knowledge is the knowledge about Form, and such knowledge is in our soul. Soul exists before our birth. So we have *a priori* knowledge. Our learning of something, is a recalling something. For Plato, "...what we call learning is in fact the recollection of knowledge that the soul had before." (Scott, 2006: 1) But there are difficulties in his notion about recollection of Forms. It is difficult to digest the notion that learning is a kind of recollection. There is uncertainty regarding whether he intends all learning or a specific learning about a specific object of knowledge. But this position assumes that the enquirer knows what is real. Here we can see that Plato's epistemology is completely dependent on his notion of real. But the other side of Plato's philosophy is that his metaphysics is also in a certain sense dependent on his epistemological position. "Certainly in Plato there is no such [epistemology and metaphysics] divide. His views about what there is are largely controlled by ideas about how knowledge can be accounted for, and his thinking about what knowledge is takes its character from convictions about what there is that is knowable. As a result his doctrines have a different shape from characteristically modern ones." (White, Nicholas P. 1992: 277)

Though in *Meno,* Plato discuss about knowledge in detail, the justification part of knowledge is not adequately covered in Meno. But in *Phaedo* he talks about causal or explanatory factors of knowledge.

> Putting *Meno* and *Phaedo* together, we may infer that, in order to have Knowledge, one must have an explanatory account that mentions forms; more precisely, Knowledge-conferring accounts are definitions of forms. His notion of Form or Universals we cannot locate in sensory experience. Plato gives another realm to Form. In *Republic* Plato introduces a kind of two world theory. One is the sensible world, other is the intelligible world**.** (Fine, Gail.1999:1)

Following are Plato's argument for the claim that Form exists. Without Form (universal entity) we cannot explain thinking generally about things of one kind and without Form it would become impossible to attach a meaning to common names. For example, how can we call a particular thing a horse unless it has specific essence, which means horseness? This horseness can be seen in each and every horse. We cannot say 'This is a horse' if there is no horseness at all. Here horseness stands for universal entity.

The timelessness of the Forms is more than just a matter of their being the same through all time. So the unchangebality and timelessness are the characteristics of Reality for Plato. Such an account is based on our intuitive notion of Reality. That is, Plato's account of Reality is not unrelated to the cognitive power of the human. Certainly, he is making an appearance/reality distinction. But certain cognitive powers can have access to Reality. It is true that through perception, a subject cannot have access to Reality but through reason a subject can have access

to Reality. Here it is evident that Plato is not endorsing the strict subject-object dichotomy, which modern Epistemology advocates.

Before we close our discussion of Plato's epistemological stance it is necessary to point out that his whole enterprise was directed against the sophist view that knowledge is what we as human beings decide it to be- a view, which follows from their first principle, namely, man, is the measure of things. Plato's central contention is that is that only that is knowledge, which is independent of, not only culture and context even the human situation. Secondly, since the Forms or ideal entities genuine knowledge is about ideal entities. According to Aleander Koyre, Plato's view is encoded by modern science which seeks to explain what we observe in terms of certain theoretical/unobservable/ideal entities. Thus, according to Historians of science like Koyre the pre-modern science was Aristotelian, modern science in important sense is Platonic.

I.2B Aristotle's Epistemology

Aristotle's Epistemology is worked in his theory of science and in his theory of mind and its faculties. Aristotle has comparatively little to say directly about knowledge. But it is clear he too construes knowledge as involving systematic understanding. Like Plato, Aristotle also argues that knowledge is always of Universals. Even though Aristotle accepts Plato's assumptions about knowledge, he has certain disagreements about Plato's notion of Universals or Forms. According to Aristotle, Plato sought to build a bridge between the intelligible world, that is, Universals or Forms and the sensible world or Particulars. In his Epistemology Aristotle tries to reconsider the transcendental notion of Form. He argues that Forms are not transcendent but immanent. Unlike Plato, Aristotle's claim is that Universals inhere in particulars. Both Plato and Aristotle agree that the objects of Knowledge are Forms and not the objects of the sensible world. Plato

concludes that Form must be unchanging and it should be separate from sensible world. But Aristotle denies that Forms of the sensible can be separate from particulars and insists that they exist with matter in the sensible world. The problem is how can Aristotle treat Forms as inseparable from the sensible? Here we can analyze what is philosophically the most significant problem Aristotle deals with.

Surprisingly, Aristotle never specifically addresses the problem of the possibility of knowledge of nature. Aristotle criticizes Plato's separation of Forms on the ground that they as transcendental entities do not enable us to have knowledge of the sensibles nor do they account for the being and the becoming of the sensible. The important question is: 'How can Aristotle avoid the Platonic contention that there are no Forms of the sensible and that knowledge of what changes is impossible?' While he accepts Plato's unchanging Forms, he criticizes Plato's theory of separate existence of Forms. Aristotle thinks that his own theory of Forms does facilitate the Knowledge of changing sensibles.

As Edward Halper points out "...Aristotle's account of the possibility of knowledge of changing things relies on recognizing regularities in the changes…Aristotle's insight is that even though the sensible world does constantly change, the changes are regular. Constantly changing in the same way, the sensible world is always the same. In a sense it is unchanging." (1984:814) In this way, Aristotle endorses Plato's notion of Forms. In order to resolve the problem of Knowledge, Aristotle introduces the sharp distinction between actualities and motions. We can see that Aristotle's definition of motion is in terms of actuality. Actualities and motions are closely connected. Aristotle describes motion as incomplete because its ends do not belong to it. In contrast, actualities have their ends present within them. While motions are always incomplete until they attain their ends, actualities are complete at any time. The Form of a sensible substance

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is an actuality. Since there is no difficulty in knowing an actuality, there is no difficulty in knowing the essence of a sensible. Because the Forms of the sensible are actualities, the Platonic objection to knowledge of them vanishes. In short, the possibility of knowledge of sensibles rests on the identification of motions that are proper to and characteristic of the nature of each sensible. Aristotle's argument is that since the natures are knowable, their attributes are knowable through them. Aristotle gives justification of our knowledge through the changing sensible world, where the unchanging Forms are situated.

The argument that Aristotle puts forth is that even though the sensible world is in the process of changing, the changes cannot affect the unchanging actualities or Forms. The objects of knowledge contain changeless Forms. Through his claim about motions or changes Aristotle tries to overcome Platonic hurdles. The important contribution of Aristotle to the theory of knowledge is his convincingly established claim that we can have the knowledge of changing things. And he gives a new picture about the very idea of motion.

However, while Aristotle discusses justification, his purpose of epistemic justification is completely different from the epistemic justification of Modern Epistemology. In Modern Epistemology, justification is mainly intended to counter the sceptical challenges. But such challenges were only peripheral concerns of Aristotle's Epistemology though he was aware of the sceptical challenges. "On the whole, he does not seek to *argue* that knowledge is possible, but, assuming its possibility, he seeks to understand how it is realised in different fields of mental activity and how the states in which it is realised in different fields of mental activity and how the states in which it is realized relate to other cognitive states of agent." (Taylor, C.C.W.1990:116) Though Aristotle often talks only about scientific knowledge, his account includes knowledge in general. In the *Posterior Analytics* Aristotle provides explicit conditions

for knowledge. This is Aristotle's major work on the structure of scientific knowledge. A scientific theory that expresses genuine knowledge must be demonstrative. A demonstrative science has a rigorously deductive structure; it is arranged in terms of demonstrative syllogisms which present the theorems of the science as deductions from first principles that are necessarily true and that are prior to and better known than the conclusions. They explain the conclusions derived from them.

Though Aristotle enquired into the nature of various kinds of knowledge theoretical, and practical, he considers scientific knowledge as paradigmatic. Though he did not use the word 'Science' which came into parlance only in the ninetieth century, his reference is to that field of paradigmatic knowledge that we start with observation on the basis of which we arrive at definitions using what we call the 'method of induction'. Definitions according to Aristotle are descriptions of the essential nature of things and induction is the method of arriving at them. (Thus definitions were not stipulative definitions but what he called 'Real' definitions).However, arriving at a definition using the method of induction was only one half of the arc of knowledge. The other half is made up of demonstrations, which tell us why things must be what they are as given to us in observation. These demonstrations are arrived at by the method of deduction from definitions, which constitute the first principles. Thus, the paradigmatic knowledge has the shape of an arc whose initial point is observation and end point is demonstration. Hence, the epistemic journey is from 'is' to 'must' via definitions that describe the essential nature of things. Therefore the paradigmatic knowledge which we today call 'Science' has definition-cum demonstration as its aim and induction-cum-deduction as its method. It is clear that his theory of knowledge which has its locus in his idea of the paradigmatic knowledge is normativist, and foundationalist. Aristotle continues with the normativist notion of knowledge which he inherited

from Plato though he altered the connotations of the term 'normativity'. The normative character of knowledge that Aristotle construes is reinforced by the centrality he accords to deductive demonstrability. Also he located the foundation in what he called definition which being descriptions of the essential nature of things functioned as the first principle or foundation. Similarly, knowledge, according to him, is about the real but reality is not exclusively changeless. This brief account of Aristotelian Epistemology can be ended by reiterating the normativist dimension of his account of knowledge.

As Irwin points out, "Aristotle assumes that if I know that *p*, then (1) I can justify my belief that *p*, and (2) I know the justification *q*. He insists on (2) because it does not seem satisfactory if I can simply *state q*; it seems reasonable to demand that I should also know why *q* is true and why *q* justifies *p*" (2010: 241) The justification q must be on the basis of first principles. Aristotle's account of the nature of axioms is based upon his conception of the nature of knowledge; for a science is meant to systematize our knowledge of its subject-matter, and its component axioms and theorems must therefore be propositions which are known and which satisfy the conditions set upon knowledge. "According to Aristotle, 'we think we know a thing (in the unqualified sense, and not in the sophistical sense or accidentally) when we think we know both the cause because of which the thing is (and know that it is its cause) and also that it is not possible for it to be otherwise'." (Barnes, 2000:53) This first condition set upon knowledge is the condition of causality. The word 'cause' must be taken in a broad sense. Some scholars prefer to invoke the concept of explanation. To cite a 'cause' of something is to explain why it is so. "It is the final condition in Aristotle's list, that the axioms be 'prior to and causes of the conclusion', which is linked most directly to his account of what knowledge is. Our knowledge of the theorems rests upon the axioms, and knowledge involves a grasp of causes: hence the

axioms must state the ultimate causes which account for the facts expressed by the theorems."
(Ibid :54). The foundationalist orientation of Aristotle's Epistemology is self evident.

As we have seen above, Aristotelian epistemology is foundationalist and also normativist though scholars hold that his linking an explanation with cause and his characterization of one condition of knowledge in terms of causality dilutes the normativistic character of his epistemology. Even his naturalistic bend of mind, unlike that of Plato such a dilution of normativism is not surprising. However, the representationalist thesis of the received tradition of epistemology is absent or at least has a weak presence. According to Aristotle, as Taylor points out,

> When, we come to know something, the mind (*nous*) becomes one with the objects
>
> of thought. Of course this is not to say that they become materially the same thing;
>
> rather, mind and object are informed by the same *eidos*. Here was a conception quite
>
> different from the representational model, even though some of the things Aristotle
>
> said could be construed as supporting the latter. The basic bent of Aristotle's model
>
> could much better be described as participational: being informed by the same *eidos,*
>
> the mind participates in the being of the known object, rather than simply depicting it
>
> (1995:3)

Modern Epistemology

I.2C. Descartes' Epistemology

Descartes is widely regarded as the father of Modern Philosophy. The radical change, which he brought about in philosophy, gave the epistemological questions an unprecedented primacy. Though his metaphysical theories are often used in support of his epistemological claims, his

general approach is that any philosophical theory or investigation must be based on sound epistemological foundations. A sound or valid metaphysical theory is determined on the basis of epistemic criteria or norms. Thus, epistemology works as bedrock of all philosophical inquiries.

Descartes' Epistemological enquiry is also primarily concerned about justification of knowledge. Like his predecessors, he sought to answer the question 'How can knowledge be qualified as valid or justified'. Undoubtedly, Descartes is a normativist as his concern is with the question of justification. For Descartes the primary and absolute criterion of justification is that the truth of the knowledge claim must be beyond any doubt. That is, indubitablity emerges as the absolute criterion of justification. Thus, he employed the method of doubt. He analysed all our knowledge claims and found them to be dubious. In the First Meditation he says, "It is now some years since I detected how many were the false beliefs that I had from my earliest youth admitted as true, and how doubtful was everything I had since constructed on this basis; and from that time I was convinced that I must once for all seriously undertake to rid myself of all the opinions which I had formerly accepted, and commence to build a new from the foundation, if I wanted to establish any firm and permanent structure in sciences"(Descartes, R. 2007:7) For Descartes knowledge should be indubitable and certain. To attain genuine knowledge one needs to bring in a new method. Then only we can establish foundations for our knowledge. That is why he brings in a method in philosophy, which he calls the 'method of doubt'. In common sense, what we regard as certain is what we get through our sense organs. Descartes argues that it is reasonable to have doubt on the knowledge claims of sense experience. His argument about the unreliability of sensuous knowledge is known as 'argument from illusion'. And through the demon argument he claims that there is no legitimate distinction between what we acquire through sense perception and through hallucination or imagination or dreams.

Thus through his method of doubt, Descartes excluded almost all propositions from the realm of knowledge. He too knew that the criterion of absolute justification (indubitability) is too stringent to be considered as a criterion of knowledge. Indubitability is not a general criterion of Descartes' Epistemology. He employs the stringent criterion (i.e. method of doubt) in search of an epistemological foundation.

By employing his method of doubt, he finds that the knowledge claim 'I think' is an indubitable one. This is the proposition, which he considers as foundation / basic belief of the epistemological enterprise. Thus, he introduces a version of foundationalism. His foundationalistic approach can be considered as normativist in the following way: Only if a claim can be deducible from a basic belief it can be considered as a justified one. The criterion/norm propounded by his foundationalism is the deducibility from the basic belief. His foundational enterprise is primarily inspired by this methodology and conceptual rigor of mathematics. So he thought that it was good to bring in the same kind of approach in philosophy which prompted him to take mathematics as a model for all his thinking. Descartes desired that philosophy and science should have foundations as firm as those of mathematics. In mathematics we can see each problem being solved step by step. And each step is guided by theorems. And all such theorems are derived from axioms. Descartes applies this procedure to philosophical thinking and takes our previous beliefs and reformulates them step by step. This is a kind of sceptical technique. This was a new and very radical move ever seen before.

Descartes proceeds, in effect, to mount a challenge regarding whether we are justified in asserting the real, extra-mental, existence of any particular object, which we perceive via senses. He believes that, a norm like clarity and distinctness can distinguish knowledge from mere beliefs. We cannot doubt clear and distinct knowledge. This led Descartes to argue that the

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requirement of knowledge is perfect certainty. In many cases, the grasp of the senses is obscure and confused. In order to achieve a reliable grasp of the nature of physical reality Descartes urges that we must systematically disregard the confused deliverances of the senses, and rely instead on the 'clear and distinct' concepts of pure mathematics. The world of the senses, the qualitative world of smells and tastes and colours and sounds, is thus excluded from the domain of knowledge.

Certainly, in specifying norms and thus formulating foundationalism, Descartes' theory is radically different from traditional epistemology. This radical difference is due to the major position which is nowadays known as 'Representationalism'. For Descartes, the foundation of the epistemological enterprise must be beyond any doubt. Descartes finds all knowledge claims regarding the physical world to be vulnerable to the sceptical attack. But knowledge of internal mental states is certain and beyond doubt. But interestingly, even the sceptics too did not challenge the position that knowledge about internal or mental states is not possible. They may not be ready to qualify it as knowledge. It might be just 'awareness' for them. However, there is no sceptical argument to show that my knowledge or awareness about mental states (like, ' I think' or ' I feel pain' or I am sad' or I' see red colour') are wrong or could be wrong.

Descartes takes those operations of the mind to be immediately obvious to the thinker, and the thinker to have immediate access to them. In our terminology, he regards some propositions about such states as both incorrigible and evident, and the states as being necessarily present to consciousness. It may seem artificial to treat matters such as this in the terminology of 'propositions': it may seem more natural merely to speak of the states that he is in, and of the fact that he is certain that he is in

those states, and this is indeed how Descartes puts it in the *Second Meditation*. (Williams, Bernad. 2005:65)

We need to explain how Descartes deduces his knowledge of the external world from the basic beliefs. Along with the belief in God, the knowledge of the external world can be deduced from basic beliefs. Descartes has separate arguments for the existence of God. Once God's existence is assumed, we can claim that God is not a deceiving being since deception is incompatible with divine perfection. Our propensity to believe that many of our ideas have corresponding external objects is a true belief. By using God's existence and His divine perfection, Descartes argues that ideas or sensations provide knowledge of the external world. Otherwise, a divine perfect being would be no better than a deceiving demon.

Irrespective of the point whether the argument in favour of God's existence is valid or not, the point is that, ideas provide knowledge about the external world. Ideas are the representation of the physical world. So, Descartes' attempt was to deduce or infer other knowledge (Knowledge of external world) from self awareness or knowledge of mental states. He deduced knowledge of the external world by arguing that ideas are the representations of the external world.

Descartes' project charted a new course for Epistemology. Normativity, representationality, and foundationality acquire a new connotation and traditional knowledge and knowledge as traditional philosophy construed fell on the roadside. It should also be noted that the valorisation of the mental states in epistemic terms made the subject the epistemic centre of gravity. For the first time a clear cut distinction was made by Descartes between nature and man on the lines of object and subject and subject was construed only as mind with its states as lying

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beyond doubt. This subject centred idea of knowledge was to be challenged by the main actors in the empiricist tradition before Kant resuscitated the subject.

I.2 D. Locke's Epistemology

The major aim of Locke's Epistemology is to establish the fundamental role of experience in the justification of knowledge. He holds that all knowledge is ultimately based on experience. Locke's Empiricism is chiefly characterized by his rejection of innate ideas or innate knowledge which was propounded especially by Descartes. The claim of the theory of innate ideas is that not all knowledge is acquired through experience; instead many ideas are innate to human mind or consciousness. By rejecting the central claim of the innateness theory, Locke holds that all our knowledge is founded on and ultimately derived from experience. In his own words, the 'Fountain of knowledge' is experience. But Locke is very cautious in explaining how knowledge is founded on experience. To say that all knowledge is founded on experience does not mean that all knowledge comes from experience. That means Locke's position is not that experience directly generates Knowledge. He makes it clear in his work *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* that it is not the case that "All Knowledge is made out to us by our senses". (Woolhouse, 1994:149) Here he brings out the crucial distinction between 'Ideas' and 'Knowledge'. What we get directly from experience is not knowledge but ideas, specifically simple ideas. Origin of simple ideas is experience. But ideas are not knowledge. Ideas are only materials of knowledge. Ideas are mental entities and they are the objects of understanding. All simple ideas come from experience and by applying reason on those ideas we get knowledge. Prior to experience, the mind is 'White paper'. Locke calls it as 'Tabula-rasa'. That is, prior to experience the mind is devoid of all ideas.

Thus, for Locke the criterion of knowledge is whether it is derived from ideas or not. If knowledge is derived from ideas then it is a justified knowledge claim. Locke's epistemology is thoroughly normativist as it employs an empiricist criterion to justify knowledge claims. Moreover, it is foundationalist in nature because it holds that the justification of all knowledge claims is derived from the basic beliefs. For Locke, basic beliefs constitute knowledge gained through the senses or introspection.

Experience includes not only sense but also reflection, reflection of our own mental operations. That is, experience has two forms: one is sensory perception of the material world and another is the reflection on the operations of our own minds.

Though what we get from sense experience are only simple ideas, knowledge depends on complex ideas too. The ideas which are given through experience are simple ideas. Simple ideas are unanalysable and indefinable. Complex ideas are mentally constructible out of simple ideas. Complex ideas are of various sorts – substances (e.g. gold, lead, horses) which represent things in the material world, modes (e.g. triangle, gratitude) which are 'dependences on or affections of substances' and relations (e.g. parent of, whiter than). Ideas of relations result from comparing ideas. Simple ideas are necessarily given in experience, whereas complex ideas can be constructed by enlarging or compounding simple ideas. Complex ideas are not directly generated from experience. Through certain operations on simple ideas, complex ideas can be derived. Enlarging, compounding and abstracting are the mental operations. Complex and simple ideas are the materials of knowledge.

The question is 'How does reason produce knowledge from ideas'? "Knowledge is defined as the perception of the connexion and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of

any of our ideas" (Woolhouse, 1994:152).Some ideas are connected with others. And for Locke, knowledge is an act of understanding or perceiving those connections. Consider the following two ideas:

1. Ideas of a triangle.

2. Ideas of right angled triangle.

The knowledge that the three angles of triangle equal to two right angles comes from perceiving the connection between ideas. So, Locke defines knowledge as understanding or comprehending the connection between ideas. Some of the connections can be understood immediately as the connections are much more direct or obvious. Such knowledge is called 'Intuitive Knowledge'. "We have intuitive knowledge when the mind perceives the agreement or disagreement of two ideas immediately by themselves, without the intervention of any other".(Ibid: 153).

But in the case of demonstrative knowledge, the connection between two ideas cannot be understood without the help of other ideas. Comprehension of connection is indirect and mediated by other ideas. Where we can perceive such connections we have certain and universal knowledge; where we cannot, we lack knowledge, and, at best, have belief or opinion. This account fits well with our knowledge in *a priori* subjects such as mathematics and geometry.

While the first two categories of knowledge (intuitive and demonstrative Knowledge) fit well with Locke's definition of knowledge, the third category of knowledge (that is, perceptual knowledge) does not fit well with Locke's definition of knowledge. Perceptual knowledge is the knowledge which we get through sense perception. That is, perceptual knowledge is knowledge of the existence of particular external objects. "Perceptual knowledge is not a knowledge of

some connection between two ideas, but knowledge of the existence of something in the world corresponding to our perception or ideas" (Woolhouse, 1994:154).

Locke developed an account of perception to formulate a theory of perceptual knowledge. Intuitively perception is reliable (being perceived is the criterion of justification) because what we perceive is an external object. That means that through sense perception, we have direct access to reality. Locke rejects such an intuitive theory of perception. For Locke, what we perceive is nothing but our own ideas. What we perceive through sense perception is not the external world. Perception is reliable because perceiving ideas or representations provides a good reason to hold that they are the representations of the external world.

The hypothesis of the external world is the best explanation of the course of our sensory experience. In Hallucination also we perceive a lot of ideas. But we consider sense perception as different from hallucination because what we perceive through sensation is considered as a representation of the external world. The fact that we perceive through our senses, provides a good reason to claim that it is a representation of the external world. Jackson summarizes Locke's theory as follows:

> [Representative theory of perception] is a 'veil of perception' doctrine, in Bennett's phrase. Locke's idea was that the physical world was revealed by science to be in essence colourless, odourless, tasteless and silent, and that we perceive it by to put it metaphorically throwing a veil over it by means of our senses. It is the veil we see, in the strictest sense of 'see'. This does not mean that we do not really see the objects around us. It means that we see an object in virtue of seeing the veil, the sense-data, causally related in the right way to that object. (1992: 446)

In the case of perceptual knowledge Locke faces stiff challenge from the sceptics. He concedes that testimony of eyes or sense organs cannot be considered as certain. He was aware that sensory knowledge cannot be held to be as certain as the knowledge that comes from intuition or demonstration. But yet he holds that it deserves the name of knowledge. Locke's response to scepticism is mainly based on pragmatic grounds.

In this connection, it is necessary to note the fundamental difference between rationalists and empiricists regarding the relation between experience and knowledge. According to empiricists who repudiate the very idea of innate or *a priori* ideas, all knowledge is or ought to be formulated in terms of *a posteriori* ideas which are abstracted from experience. Hence, experience and only experience is constitutive of knowledge. Against such a view the rationalists maintain that ideally all knowledge must be articulated in terms of *a priori* ideas which are independent of experience as they are not derived from experience but are innate to reason, that is, wired into our thinking prior to experience. In that sense it is reason and reason alone which is constitutive of our experience. Do rationalists think that experience is irrelevant to knowledge? Experience, according to them, can provide occasion to produce knowledge but does not *constitute* the content of knowledge. In this sense the rationalists maintain that experience is related to knowledge only externally, whereas the relation is internal according to the empiricists.

As noted earlier, rationalists and empiricists share their commitment to the normativist and foundationalist approach to epistemology though they might differ about what constitutes the foundations. Added to this is their commitment to the same conception of knowledge which one may call the deductive ideal of knowledge. That is to say, all knowledge must exhibit a deductive pattern so as to embody some kind of certainty. This is not surprising in the case of the

rationalists who explicitly stated their commitment to the deductive ideal, thanks to their zeal for mathematics as the paradigm of all knowledge. But it must be noted that such a view was shared by the empiricists also.

I.2 E. Kant's Epistemology

The Epistemological breakthrough in modern philosophy associated with the names of Descartes and Locke is somewhat outdone by the radical transformation that epistemology underwent in the hands of Kant. One of the main planks of Kant's radical departure from the tradition he inherited lies in his attempt to reconcile rationalism and empiricism. The main thrust of Kant's enquiry was to show how 'Though all Knowledge begins experience, all Knowledge does not arises out of experience'. The first half of the quoted remark of Kant namely 'All Knowledge begins with experience' is pro-empiricist and anti-rationalist in its force, whereas the second half of the remark namely, 'All Knowledge does not arise out of experience' is anti-empiricist and pro-rationalist. So is the case with Kant's dictum 'Percepts without concepts are blind; concepts without percepts are empty'. By 'concepts' here Kant means 'non-mathematical' *a priori* concepts called 'categories' whose application is a necessary condition for the objectivity of experience. The first part of the dictum is anti-empiricist and pro-rationalist whereas the second part of the dictum is anti-rationalist and pro-empiricist. However, Kant does not stand equidistant from rationalism and empiricism. The synthesis of the two rival theories of knowledge however tilted towards rationalism. The pro-rationalist tilt of the balance is too obvious to be missed by even a preliminary survey of the critical philosophy of Kant. After all, Kant himself claims that his Epistemology brought about a Copernican revolution in philosophy by replacing the object-centred view of knowledge by a subject-centred view of knowledge. That the former is the core of empiricist epistemology with its idea of mind as tabula-rasa is self-evident. Though the

rationalists did not accept the object-centred view of knowledge by claiming that the mind is equipped with innate ideas that decided the shape of knowledge, they did not elaborate upon the precise mode of such a shaping. It is Kant who came to their rescue. But in the process of rescuing rationalism Kant subjectifies knowledge. However, this subjectfication is sought to be limited by him in a manner which is consequential. If the subject applies the categories to objects not given in experience or indulges in applying ideas to alleged but not genuine objects of experience the subject is guilty of misuse of categories and ideas. Such a misuse or spurious application produces theoretical hallucinations which constitute an illegitimate enquiry called 'Metaphysics' as it is traditionally practiced. In fact, Kant goes one step further. According to him, knowledge in this strict sense constitutes cognitive experience which involves the application of categories whose legitimate employment concerns their application to what is given to us in experience that is, perception or intuition. Hence, moral experience or aesthetic experience cannot be cognitive and moral judgments and aesthetic judgements are not knowledge claims strictly speaking. Though, they may be so in a broad and loose sense. Moral judgements and aesthetic judgements are not purely subjective either in the sense of being expressions of personal likes and dislikes as Hume thought, nor are they objective in a strict sense. Thus the fact-value dichotomy which was erected by the twentieth century movement called 'Positivism' as a philosophical principle has been considered by the critics of such a dichotomy as a product of Kantian or neo-Kantian legacy. Such an accusation against Kant is understandable though it may not be easy to justify it.

The normative thrust of Kantian Epistemology is all too palpable as the above discussion shows. However, such a normative thrust is given enormous force by what Kant considers to be the central question of epistemology which is 'How is knowledge possible.' By raising this

question Kant gave a radical turn to epistemology. This question as well as the way Kant articulates it, and consequently the character of his solution constitute the second and major plank of Kant's radical departure from tradition. The novelty and the radical potential of this question can be appreciated better when we compare it with the standard question that epistemology till Kant centred itself around, namely 'What is the source of knowledge.' By the question, 'How is knowledge possible.' Kant means 'What are the *a priori* conditions [that is, conditions distinct from empirical conditions such as physical, physiological and psychological factors necessary for the production of knowledge] of the possibility of knowledge.' The discovery of the *synthetic a priori* principle of pure understanding, Kant claims, ought to facilitate the identification of such *a priori* conditions. Kant's approach to knowledge is normative in a thoroughgoing sense. Our knowledge claims remain genuinely so only if they are the results of the application of categories as dictated by or governed by the *synthetic a priori* principles of pure understanding whose discovery is a task of an *a priori* enquiry or transcendental enquiry. The recognition of the normative character of knowledge on one hand and the recognition of the need for non-psychological and therefore non-empirical, that is, an *a priori* enquiry into knowledge on the other are the two sides of the Kantian approach to knowledge. According to Kant, epistemology prior to Hume lacked sufficient focus on the normative character of knowledge and hence such an epistemology was not pure or *a priori* or transcendental and it compromised with psychologism.

By Kant's assertion that his enquiry into the possibility of knowledge is pure or transcendental or *a priori*, Kant implies that his predecessors in general and empiricists in particular did not adopt a completely non-empirical approach to the nature of knowledge. To that extent, they did not recognize the purely non-natural dimension of knowledge. In short, their

commitment to the normativist ideal of epistemology was a diluted one. In the language of contemporary epistemology, their approach to knowledge tended to be descriptive rather than normative and they willingly adopted a naturalistic perspective towards knowledge. Kant's uncompromising normativism and total refusal to treat knowledge in a naturalistic way is organically related to the very notion of a *critique*. Kant used the locution in the sense of 'Showing the limits of' and even after Kant it carries the same sense. In the hands of Kant 'Critique' concerns showing the limits of reason which has a tendency to trespass the limit and tends to indulge in a spurious enquiry. The task of the critical philosophy was to identify those limits so that the operations of reason remain legitimate. It is this concern with the legitimacy of our knowledge that gives Kant's epistemology a strong normativist dimension. In fact, it does so to such an extent that it can be said that normativist epistemology could never be pre-Kantian.

Equally conspicuous is the foundationalist character of Kantian Epistemology. The *synthetic a priori* principles of pure understanding constitute the foundations of knowledge (apart from providing axioms of a pure science of nature on one hand and Metaphysics of Nature on the other) as they underlie cognitive experience as its presuppositions. They constitute the framework of knowledge as representation. Kant's representationalism is also unprecedented. Though the idea of knowledge as representation is shared by Kant and his predecessors and in that sense he stands within the received view of epistemology, nevertheless he re-works the notion of representation itself in a fundamental way. This is the consequence of his view that what is represented has its locus in the subject itself. But that does not make representation itself subjective. This is the thrust of Kant's transcendental deduction of categories according to which there is an 'It' because there is an 'I'. In Kant's own terms the 'transcendental unity of apperception', that is, self-consciousness is a necessary condition of the application of the

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categories which is the necessary condition for the experience of object, that is, objective experience. However, the application of categories ensures that the condition called 'transcendental unity of apperception' is realized. The distinction between noumenon and phenomenon in no way affects or dilutes the representationalist core of Kant's Epistemology. After all **'**Noumenon**'** according to him, is a limiting concept and a negative concept. It is impossible to represent it. It does not even make sense to attempt to do it. It is only the phenomenon that can be represented because it alone is Knowable. That means, what is knowable is representable. This point is reinforced by Kant when he says that his position is one of empirical realism, that is, the position that objects of knowledge are given to us immediately and he is a transcendentalist idealist only in the sense that according to him what we know are things in themselves. He rejects empirical idealism as either dogmatic or problematic.

The normativist, the foundationalist and the representationalist dimension of Kant's epistemology are seen by some contemporary philosophers to be the height of the intellectual arrogance of philosophy. For instance, according to Rorty Kant only construes knowledge as a product of mind's mirroring of nature but also that only the philosopher with the knowledge of *synthetic a priori* principles can understand the mechanism of such a mirroring. Thus one of the well known critics of the received view of epistemology considers Kant's work to be the climax of the traditional epistemology which took for granted the validity of its normativist, foundationalist and representationalist pretensions.

I.2F. Logical Positivists' Epistemology

The twentieth century philosophical movement called positivism traced its anti-metaphysical stand to Hume. The Positivists explicitly stated their commitment to empiricism. They called

themselves 'neo-empiricists'. And they differentiated their position from the classical empiricists on the ground that, the classical empiricists articulated their epistemological position in terms of psychological locutions like 'sensations', 'impressions', 'ideas', 'judgments' etc. The Positivists instead sought to use neutral or logical locutions to characterize their position such as 'sense data', 'concepts', 'propositions' etc.

So as to avoid both physicalism as well as psychologism, however, they sought to work out a normativist and foundationalist epistemology by working out an organic relation between sense datum statements which they thought indubitable and our empirical claims. Such a relation was supposed to be quasi-deductive and hence with their rationalist and empiricist predecessors they accepted whole heartedly the deductive ideal of knowledge.

It is obvious that the acceptance of the deductive ideal reinforces their normative orientation which they inherited from the tradition. Ironically, notwithstanding their valorisation of science as the paradigm of all knowledge, their perspective in epistemology does not have any relation to the actual practice of science which is anything but normative.

The deductive ideal became a guiding principle in the philosophy of science. Because Positivists are empiricists their theory of scientific method is inductivitist. However, they were acutely aware of the need for solving Hume's problem. That is, the task of providing rational justification of the principle of induction. The Positivists sought to do so by showing that pure observation statements constituting the sub-structure of science are quasi-deductively related to the super-structure of science constituted by scientific theories. It is a different matter that they failed to establish the purity of observations and thus the indubitability of observational statements. And hence, the Positivist project to solve the problem of induction fell like a house of

cards. However, the project itself falls squarely within the normativist, foundationalist and deductivist thrust of the epistemological position of the Positivists.

I.2G. Popper's Epistemology

Karl Popper put forth a widely appreciated epistemological theory which he calls 'Critical Rationalism'. Though critical rationalism is normativist in its orientation, it differs from previous versions of normativism. First of all, he rejects not only traditional empiricism but also traditional rationalism. According to him, both traditional rationalism and traditional empiricism were answers to the time-honoured question in Epistemology namely, 'What is the source of knowledge' -a question, which, according to Popper, is both presumptuous and dangerous. It is presumptuous because it presupposes that there is something called *the* sources of Knowledge such that whatever that emanates from it should be accepted as knowledge -a fallacy which he calls 'Knowledge by pedigree'. It is dangerous because such a view leads to dogmatic acceptance of certain knowledge claims. In its stead epistemology, therefore, must address a new question, namely, 'Given anything to be the source of knowledge, how can we check our mistakes?' According to Popper this change in the character of Epistemology is analogous to the desirable change in political theory. According to Popper, until now political theory has focused on the question 'Which is the best class to rule.' Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle identified the intellectual class and the middle class respectively to be the best class to rule and Marx found the working class to be such a class. However, the question presumes that only one class has been ordained by History or God to be the best class for this purpose. Apart from being questionable such an assumption encourages blind acceptance of the rule of such a class resulting in autocracy. Hence, political theory must reject this question and now onwards must grapple

with the question 'Whoever be the rulers and whichever class be the ruling class; how can the ruled avoid misrule by putting in place institutional checks and balances'.

Thus, Popper's Epistemology is rationalist only in the sense that he is not an empiricist since according to him the mind is not a bucket collecting experiences as empiricists thought but it is more like a search light. Therefore, his rationalism is quite removed from traditional rationalism because unlike the rationalists he does not believe that reason is *the* source of Knowledge (just as he does not accept experience to be *the* source of knowledge).

It is easy to see how Popper's Epistemological approach is different from that of the positivists who, as we have seen, by calling themselves neo-empiricists distinguish their position from that of the traditional empiricists. Though Popper is normativist like the positivists in so far as he believed that there exist abiding norms that must be satisfied by a genuine Knowledge claim, he rejected the foundationalist orientation of the positivists. This is very well brought out in his attacks on the notion of pure observation, which is the corner stone of the positivist philosophy of science. Nor does Popper share the rationalist version of foundationalism which identified foundations with some indubitable *a priori* truths, wired into reason and hence have their locus in the subject. Against such a view Popper claims to have worked out in his epistemology the idea of 'Knowledge without a knowing subject'. Thus, Popper is a normativist without being a foundationalist.

The normativist spirit of the Popperian position in epistemology is well brought out in his idea that the objectivity of our Knowledge consists in its inter-subjective testability/ criticizability. This norm is most perfectly met in the case of scientific knowledge wherein falsifiability acts as the criterion of scientificity. In this connection it must be noted the Popper's

Epistemological canvas is broad. Though according to him, scientific theories are the paradigm cases of genuine Knowledge since they are falsifiable, Metaphysical claims are, nonetheless, cognitively significant. He even goes to the extent of saying that if there was no Metaphysics there would not have been science, since scientific problems are Metaphysical problems transformed in such a way as to provide them falsifiable solutions which are tentative and at best corroborated solutions. Thus Popper does not deny cognitive significance to Metaphysical claims and in this sense he rejects the fundamental contention of the positivists according to whom Metaphysical claims have no cognitive content since they are not verifiable even in principle.

However, the question is 'What is the basis of accepting criticizability/testability/ falsifiability as the norm in epistemic matters?' Popper sometimes suggests that our choice of criticizability /testability/falsifiability is a matter of convention since no deeper epistemic basis can be provided for such a choice. This amounts to accepting conventionalism with its own baggage of problems such as relativism, subjectivism etc. As if to avoid such a predicament Popper sometimes speaks of the acceptance of such a norm as a biological requirement of human species. But such an attempt to anchor the norm in our biological nature weakens the normativist orientation, which Popper himself espouses.

Popper's rejection of foundationalism comes out very effectively in his construal of theory–observation relation in science. As is well known, the positivists construed that relation in terms of a unilateral dependence of observation on theory. As against this, Popper construed the relation in terms of interdependence. To avoid the problem of circular justification he maintains that the observations that justify a theory do not depend upon the very theory they justify but the earlier theory which in turn depends up on a theory which is earlier than that. Thus observations and theories have inter-dependence arranged in a linear way, so that though no

observation is absolutely theory independent, every observation is independent of the theory which is tested in its terms. Popper thus construes our most primitive observation to be dependent upon our primitive theories which are nothing but our inborn beliefs and expectations. But neither inborn beliefs nor the observation based on them can be said to constitute the foundations of our knowledge. That is, they do not perform the test of either pure experience of the empiricists nor the *a priori* tricks of the rationalists. Popper's Epistemology thus has a distinction of being normativist without being foundationalist.

The aim of this chapter was to understand the broad contours of traditional epistemology, which constitute the received tradition in terms of three meta-epistemic concepts, namely, normativity, foundationality, and representationality as they figure in the theories of major philosophers whose works constitute the milestones in the history of epistemology. Such a bird's eye-view facilitates our discussion of the various critiques of traditional epistemology or the received tradition in epistemology which is the theme of the subsequent chapters.

It may be noted that in the thesis following Taylor sometimes we use 'epistemology', 'epistemological tradition', and similar locution. By those locutions, we mean 'modern epistemology', 'modern epistemological tradition', and other cognitive expression, though some concepts, themes, and tenets of modern epistemology might be found in pre-modern epistemology too.

CHAPTER II

PRE-TAYLORIAN CRITIQUES OF THE RECEIVED TRADITION

We may begin our discussion of the critiques of Epistemology with those twentieth century philosophers whose critical reflections on the Epistemological enterprise conducted since at least seventeenth century have been the themes of pervasive significance to such an extent that twentieth century Epistemology displays a plurality of positions unprecedented in the history of the subject. Further, the discussion, however brief, of those critiques can help us to locate the distinctive character of Charles Taylor's critique of Epistemology which is the focus of this thesis. We may begin our discussion of the pre-Taylorian critique of Epistemology with the position of Edmund Husserl. Husserl's point of view is significant because of the depth of his critique and richness of his own alternative to the received tradition in Epistemology. Its significance is heightened by the facts that he relates his critique to what he considered to be the crisis of modern western science.

II.1 Husserl's Critique of Epistemology

Husserl's phenomenological analysis opened up a new vista in the tradition of philosophical analysis. It may not be wrong to characterize the phenomenological shift as the most significant and radical turn in the history of philosophy. *Logical Investigations* is the central work of Husserl, which provides a breakthrough in philosophical analysis. Through this work he aims to

provide a new foundation for pure logic and epistemology. Certainly, the issues of knowledge and theory of knowledge are of prime concern for Husserl's phenomenological analysis.

Before venturing into the analysis of phenomenology, I discuss Husserl's well-known criticism of natural attitude. Husserl introduced phenomenological analysis against this critical background. Husserl characterizes the entire modern epistemological tradition as embodying natural attitude. In his critical analysis according to Husserl the position of natural attitude is that "....We are psychological beings in the world who depend for knowledge on being affected by external objects; this is what Husserl calls the natural attitude, which is exploited in scientific naturalism or physicalism" (Pietersma, Henry.2000: 51). The assumption that there is such a world, 'out there' surrounding me, Husserl calls 'the general thesis of the natural attitude'. Husserl remarks that this natural attitude is correlated with our common sense notion of obviousness. Husserl's primary objection to natural attitude is that in the perspective of natural attitude consciousness too is considered as another object in the world and philosophy/epistemology studies the characteristics of consciousness or the characteristics of conscious experience as any object that physical science studies.

Husserl's primary assertion is that consciousness has a primacy over the physical objects. For him, it is inadequate to view consciousness as mere object. Realm of conscious experience cannot be adequately analysed through the objectification of consciousness. His phenomenological analysis stems from the point that for conscious beings (for human being) conscious experience and experience of objects are two distinct kinds of experience. That is, being conscious of consciousness and being conscious of objects are of two distinct kinds. However, in natural attitude, where consciousness itself is another object, being conscious of consciousness and being conscious of objects are considered as being of the same kind. Husserl's

transcendental phenomenology starts from the basic position that both these conscious experiences are distinct. Objects appear perceptively in consciousness. E.g. From different angles a car is perceived as different one. Objects can never be given their totality, but always in a certain limited way. However, the self-appearance of consciousness is given to us in its totality. That is, if we reflect our own experience, we can know that it appears entirely to us. The experience itself appears immediately in its totality.

As both experiences are distinct, Husserl rejects the naturalistic investigation of consciousness as inadequate one. Therefore, the question is, 'How is a proper inquiry/analysis of consciousness possible?' Husserl comes up with phenomenology as a distinct mode of inquiry, which investigates consciousness on its own terms i.e., investigating consciousness and conscious experience, not in terms of anything else, but as consciousness itself. Thus, he attempts to work out a unique characterization of consciousness.

For Husserl an exploration of unique realm of consciousness is possible only from a first person point of view. Phenomenology is an attempt to analyse consciousness on its own terms.

We practice phenomenology (with or without the name) whenever we pause in reflection and ask, "What do I see?," "How do I feel?," "What am I thinking?," "What do I intend to do?," answering in the first person, specifying the way I experience what I see, feel, think, and so on. We produce a phenomenological description of an experience as we declare, attending to our own experience, "I see that fishing boat in the fog," "I feel angry about what was just said," "I think that Husserl read Hume," "I intend to sweep the patio tomorrow." Phenomenology thus

characterizes a given form of consciousness from the person's own subjective, first-person perspective. (Smith, David Woodruff.2007: 189)

So, Husserl thought that, at the outset, it is necessary to set aside the third person point of view. The primary requirement for a phenomenological inquiry is the suspension of employment of natural attitude. For Husserl, suspension of natural attitude leads us to the transcendental phenomenological analysis.

According to Husserl, the first requirement for any productive phenomenological inquiry is the bracketing (*epoche*) of the natural attitude we usually maintain towards the world around us. Husserl's phenomenological method −'brackets' the object of consciousness − and the surrounding world in general − in order to shift our focus onto the sense or meaning through which the object is experienced. "Suppose I place thesis of the natural attitude in brackets or parentheses. I do not deny the thesis, indeed I continue to accept it, but I do not make any use of it. Then as I look around me, I attend not to the presumably existing things of which I am conscious, but to my consciousness of them. I shift my attention from the *objects* of my consciousness to my *consciousness* of those objects." (Ibid: 241) Husserl declares that our goal in the practice of bracketing is "*the winning of . . . a new region of being,* the region of pure experiences, pure consciousness" (Ibid: 242) Phenomenology studies the experience and its content or meaning, not the object represented by the meaning. Thus we ascend from our first-order experience of things in the world to our higher-order reflection on our ordinary experience.

Investigation of consciousness after performing an *epoche* is often misunderstood. Phenomenology is often misunderstood as an inquiry which focuses on mental content and abstention from the inquiry into the real world. In contrast, phenomenology is very much

concerned with the investigation into the real world. Phenomenological inquiry consists of fundamental change of attitude. Real world is no more considered as an object, which is distinct from conscious or conscious subject. But phenomenology treats real world as it appears to consciousness.

> In short, the *epoche* entails a change of attitude toward reality, and not an exclusion of reality. It is only through such a suspension that we will be able to approach reality in a way that will allow for a disclosure of its true sense.... What must be shown in particular and above all is that through the *epoche* a new way of experiencing, of thinking, of theorizing, is opened to the philosopher; here, situated *above* his own natural being and *above* the natural world, he loses nothing of their being and their objective truths. (Zahavi, Dan.2003:45)

Husserl's criticism of natural attitude is not merely that it does not analyse consciousness adequately. His criticism is that by approaching consciousness inadequately all their projects of inquiry including of real world is misguided one. Husserl's position is that all kinds of adequate inquiry must presuppose the primacy of consciousness. Primacy of consciousness is the basic position of every adequate inquiry. Thus, Husserl thoroughly criticises natural attitude on both counts. Naturalistic investigation of consciousness is faulty because consciousness cannot be considered as an object. Naturalistic investigation into real world is faulty because such investigation is loaded with metaphysical assumptions, which are unexamined. Thus, Phenomenology is characterized as a 'presuppositionless enquiry'.

Husserl attaches great value to the metaphysical presuppositionlessness of phenomenology. "Phenomenology is neither more nor less than a faithful description of that

which appears... and should, as a consequence, avoid metaphysical and scientific postulates or speculations" (Husserl, 1970:248). Therefore, the inquiry should be started by what is actually given. Phenomenology should turn its attention toward the *Givenness* or *appearance* of reality, that is, it should focus on the way in which Reality is given to us in experience. We should, in other words, not let preconceived theories form our experience, but let our experience determine our theories. Husserl describes the phenomenological *principle or principles* in the following manner: we should let the originary intuition be the source of all knowledge, a source that no authority (not even modern science) should be allowed to question. So, the basis of the presuppositionless enquiry is what is actually given. We need to pay attention to its experiential given. That is what is qualified as return to 'things themselves'. Thus, Husserl' inquiry starts by focusing on the structure of conscious experience. Husserl explores the question 'What does it mean to be conscious'. It is in the analysis of the structure of consciousness that Husserl invokes the concept of 'intentionality' so as to challenge the traditional account of consciousness.

According to him, "Consciousness is not one which is confined "in" the mind but rather consciousness is always consciousness of something." (Smith, David Woodruff .2007:167).In his analysis of 'intentionality',

> Husserl pays particular attention to a group of experiences that are all characterized
> by being conscious of something, that is, which all possess an *object-directedness*.
> This is also called intentionality. One does not merely love, fear, see, or judge, one
> loves a beloved, fears something fearful, *sees* an object, and judges a state of affairs.
> Regardless of whether we are talking of a perception, thought, judgment, fantasy,
> doubt, expectation, or recollection, all of these diverse forms of consciousness are
> characterized by intending objects...(Zahavi, Dan.2003:14)

But a widespread position (the traditional view of consciousness) has been that consciousness can be likened to a container. In itself it has no relation to the world, but if it is influenced causally by an external object, that is, if information (so to speak) enters into it, such a relation can be established. Here lies the crux of Husserl's critique of Epistemology including his attacks on representationalism which is according to Husserl, embedded in natural attitude. However, before we look at his attack on representationalism it is necessary to look at his refutation of what he calls psychologism.

By employing his conception of phenomenology Husserl thoroughly criticizes the modern epistemological tradition. According to him, modern epistemology is formulated within the structure of natural attitude. Natural attitude and its relation to knowledge are to be analysed in detail. Natural attitude is primarily viewing everything as objects or objects related properties. Then the question would be that 'Can we have Knowledge about an internal state of human?' or 'Can we have Knowledge about the mental state?' This question arises because mental states do not belong to the external world and natural attitude claims that Knowledge is about external world. But, according natural attitude, we can have Knowledge about the mental state too. But natural attitude may not say that mind / mental states are parts of physical world. However, it approaches mind as an object which exist in the world like any other object. This attitude of naturalism is called psychologism. Psychologism studies mental phenomena from a third person point of view. That means psychologism examines mental state not from the agent's perspective (from the perspective of one who holds the belief) but as an object which exist independently from agent/believer. Suppose, I have depression; then psychiatrists/psychologists studies our mental actions and will find the reason of my depression. Here what they are doing is that they

are studying about internal state of a human being as an object which is in interaction with other mental objects/states. And mental phenomena like depression are the result of the interaction.

Husserl finds that psychologism fails to give an adequate explanation for our Knowledge claims. So, he criticizes psychologism. Husserl's criticism to psychologism is mainly based on the concerns of Epistemology. According to him, psychologism is incapable for accounting for the possibility of Knowledge. Possibility of Knowledge means specifying the conditions under which a belief would be Knowledge. That is specifying how Knowledge would be possible. Husserl's understanding of psychologism in relation to Epistemology can be elucidated as follows:

Epistemology is concerned with the cognitive nature of perceiving, believing, judging, and knowing. All of these phenomena, however, are psychical phenomena, and it is therefore obvious that it must be up to psychology to investigate and explore their structure. This also holds true for our scientific and logical reasoning, and ultimately logic must therefore be regarded as a part of psychology and the laws of logic as psycho-logical regularities, whose nature and validity must be empirically investigated. Thus psychology provides the theoretical foundation for logic. (Zahavi, Dan. 2003: 8)

This is what psychologism amounts to.

According to Husserl, psychologism, at best is only a description of factual nature of mind/consciousness. It shows how a mental phenomenon / belief is formed as a part of interaction with other physical conditions / objects. But such an account cannot explain the validity of laws of logic. For the followers of psychologism concepts like certainty and non-

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empirical validity remains unexplainable. What psychologism basically explains is an act of mind. An act or mental phenomenon is temporal. But why do some a particular acts have a special status than other acts? For example, consider two acts, one is having a belief of the form p v~p and other of the form p (i.e. PratibhaPatil is the president of India). Both beliefs are true but one is necessarily true and other is contingently true. But for psychologism both acts are of same kind.

The fundamental mistake of psychologism is that it does not distinguish correctly between the act of knowing and the object of knowledge. As Husserl points out a statement like 'Delhi is the capital of India' can be repeated by many people at different time. The statement and meaning of it will be identical in all such cases though they are different acts of consciousness. "The very possibility of *repeating* the same meaning in numerically different acts is in itself a sufficient argument to refute psychologism as a confusion of ideality and reality.... Thus, Husserl can argue that psychologism entails a self-refuting skepticism. To attempt a naturalistic and empiricistic reduction of ideality to reality is to undermine the very possibility of any theory, including psychologism itself." (Ibid: 9)

Representationalism can be understood as a novel approach to overcome the difficulties of the psychologism while maintaining the fundamental attitude of psychologism that is natural attitude. The trouble with psychologism is that for psychologism all mental acts are of the same kind. Hence, they could not distinguish between knowledge and mere belief. Psychologism could only describe the acts. Representationalism came up with a distinction between belief and knowledge. That is, representationalism provides an account on the possibility of knowledge. It says that an act/belief which represents the reality is the knowledge. That is, representationalism provides an account on the possibility of knowledge. From naturalistic point of view what we

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have for knowledge is a certain mental phenomenon / act of mind. Representationalism maintains that there is consciousness and reality. Analogically we can say if I look at a mirror the image in the mirror represents the object 'I'. In that way, the reality and our consciousness are related. If I say 'crow is black', and in the outside world there is a black crow, then only Knowledge can said to have been attained. So we can see the dualism in representationalism. But there is a mediator in this duality that is representation. What we can see is that there is an adequate correlation between an object and our consciousness. Whatever comes to our mind (sensations) is caused by an object in the external world, if not, our belief cannot be considered as Knowledge. The part of the claim is that reality cannot be grasped directly because it is available only through perceptions of reality, which are representation of it in the mind. That means there is a real object outside the world, and through perception we are getting the replica or copy or representation of that particular object. Our discussion of Husserl's anti-psychologism clearly paves way for the discussion of his anti-representationalism which we consider in terms of its basic tenets.

1. Representationalist account of perception is unfaithful to experience.

Husserl's position is that representationalist epistemology provides a curious picture of perception, which is counter-intuitive. According to representationalism, object of perception is not the real object but the image of the real object. From this image we are getting the Knowledge of real object of the world. Husserl claims that we mistakenly believe that our sensation is caused by an object in the external world. The description that there are two different entities in perception must be rejected as being unfaithful to experience. "When I perceive a rose, then it is this rose, and nothing else which is the object of my perception. To claim that there is also an immanent rose, namely an intramental picture or representation of the rose, is a pure

postulate that does not explain anything". (Zahavi, Dan. 2003: 18). According to Husserl, what we perceive is not an image or representation of the external world but the real object itself. In Husserl's terminology, object of perception is intentional object. This intentional object / object of perception is not to be identified with some mental construction, but is simply the object of my intention. Husserl claims that in the case of perception we have a direct and unmediated acquaintance with the object in question. By making this claim, Husserl defends a form of direct perceptual realism and rejects representative theory of perception.

2. Representation as a link between object and subject is untenable

Husserl's main criticism of representational theory rests on the point that there is no basis for claiming that mental representation leads us to the object. The relation of representation which is distinct from object of external world can never relate it to subject/consciousness. That is, as long as we maintain the gap between external world and subject, there would be gap between representation and object. It cannot be claimed legitimately that mental images/ideas are the representation of external world. Failure of mental representation to be a true representation of reality is necessary consequence of subject-object dichotomy. And representational epistemology is structured within the frame work of subject- object dichotomy. But Husserl argues that such dichotomy vanishes in first person point of view. That's why he insisted on a first person point of view of experience/consciousness.

3. Representation bound to be partial

In his criticism of modern epistemology, Husserl is not relying solely on the sceptical challenge that images/ideas need not be a representation of an external world. Husserl here makes the point that even if we accept that there is a relation of representation between object and consciousness

it is bound to be partial and incomplete. Once an object is treated as given by the external world instead of as given in experience or consciousness, the images/ideas, which is caused by the external object (as claimed by the representationalist) is bound to be a partial one. It is clear that if perception is considered in the way as representationalism articulated, the image or sense data of the object is partial as we are seeing the object only partially as an external object, e.g. the perception of cube. All sides of the cube do not appear to us in perception. When we see a person from the front side, the left, right, and back side of the person he is not available to our senses. This is the case for each and every perception, if perception is considered as sense data / idea collected/constructed through the senses. The situation is different when we treat the object as given to consciousness. But if we analyse visual perception in reflection, the perception of cube or a person who is standing in front of me is given in its totality.

4. Representationalism is founded on presuppositions which are unexamined

Husserl's critique is that representationalism is founded on certain presuppositions which are unexamined. Our attempt in modern epistemology starts with the assumption that the subject, the knower, is ontologically distinct from the known, the world of objects. But there is neither a justification nor even an attempt to examine it in representationalist epistemology.

5. Representative reference is parasitic.

According to representationalist theory of perception, the object of our perception is not the real object but the representation of the object. That means perception presupposes representation. However, such an account says that representations formed are through sense perception. That is, representation is simultaneously considered as the object of perception (pre-condition) and the

product of perception. Thus, representation cannot explain perception as it presupposes perception.

6. Representation is not a natural property of object.

For representationalism, which endorses the natural attitude, consciousness is also an object. Husserl asserts that representability, the characteristic of something is being represented, cannot be considered as a natural property of an object. Being red, being metallic, or being round is natural properties of an object. But being representable is not a natural property of an object. For example, usually we consider a photo of a person as representation of that person. But that representative nature of that photo is an attributed one, it is not natural property of the photo like photo's colour, photo's shape etc.

Some may claim that similarity is the basis of the relation of representation. That is, a photo is similar to the person in certain respect and that is why a photo is considered as the representation of the person. Similarity/resemblance cannot be the basis of representation. Similarity between two things does not create representational relation between them. Two copies of the same book may look alike, but that does not make one a representation of the other. Moreover, similarity relation is reciprocal. That is if X (a photo) is similar to Y (the person) then person (Y) is also similar to photo (X). But, representational relation is not reciprocal. That is, when a photo represents the person, it is not the case that person represents the photo. The point is that similarity relation cannot be the basis of representation. Husserl' point is that representational relation is based on interpretation. "If X is to represent Y, X needs to be interpreted as being a representation of Y. It is exactly the interpretation... that confers X with its representative function" (Ibid: 18). Thus, Husserl challenges the claim of the representational

epistemology that representative relation is an objective one. That is, consideration of a mental image as representation of an external world is only an interpretation. If so, it is possible that one could take a different interpretation of a mental image representation of something else. That is, Knowledge of external world which is gained through the representation of the external world is not an objective one.

Through his theory of knowledge, Husserl tries to establish how knowledge is possible for an agent or a subject. Husserl argues that "His task is not to examine whether (and how) consciousness can attain knowledge of mind-independent reality. These very types of questions, as well as all questions as to whether or not there is an external reality, are rejected by Husserl as being metaphysical questions, which have no place in epistemology." (Zahavi, Dan.2003:8). First of all we have to keep in mind that Husserl is not asking us to focus only on the mental content and exclude reality. But as the thesis of intentionality points out intentionality cannot be described without reference to the world. But he radically alters the concept of world or reality. For him, the reality (thing in itself) is not the one which is different from phenomena (thing as appears).If the distinction of realty/appearance is maintained in traditional way, he says that knowledge would never be possible. If the cognitive subject is a mind in possession only of representations of things, then the question of knowledge becomes that of how that mind can know something outside itself. As already noted the problem can be dealt with only by setting it aside or reformulating it.

For Husserl, "The world is not something that simply exists. The world appears, and the structure of this appearance is conditioned and made possible by subjectivity. It is in this context that Husserl would say that it is absurd to speak of the existence of an absolutely mind-independent world, that is, of a world that exists apart from any possible experiential and

conceptual perspective. For Husserl, this notion is simply contradictory." (Ibid: 52) Husserl says that phenomenology solves or dissolves the riddle of knowledge by redefining the relation between 'inner' or 'immanent' subjectivity and 'outer' or transcendent objectivity, such that one attends only to what is transcendent within-immanence. In saying this Husserl is very much influenced by Kantian philosophy, though he treats the concept of immanent and transcendent in a very different manner. It was necessary for Husserl to distance himself from Kant's position because the Kantian framework is very much embedded in the modern epistemology whose gaps Kant sought to fill.

II.2 Heidegger's Critique of Epistemology

The whole philosophical project of Heidegger rests on an attempt to explore the question of 'Being'. The meaning of 'Being' is the key question in Heidegger's pursuit of philosophy. Usually the word 'Being' refers to what exists. One way of interpreting 'Being' is that whatever we are referring to 'is': Rocks, colours, sounds, dreams, numbers etc can be considered as instances of 'Being'. Generally, we can say that 'Being' is something which is referred to by the verb 'to be'. But when using the word 'Being' Heidegger does not mean all existing things. His concern is not with which things represent being but with the *nature* of 'Being'; i.e, what does it mean to say that a thing or relation or property exists or a rock or a colour exists or a dream exists. 'What does existence mean in all these utterances?' 'What is the one thing which is commonly shared by everything when we say that everything exists?' In the Greek language, there are two words to denote 'Being'. One is 'ta onta': which refers to all 'Being' and other is 'Ousia'. The latter represents the abstract noun 'Being' which refers to general concept Existence or 'Being'. By the word, 'Being' Heidegger refers to general concept of existence.

Heidegger claims that the question of 'Being' has been neglected in modern philosophy though there were some serious discussions about this notion in ancient philosophy. More precisely, Heidegger thinks that the neglect of being started more or less immediately after the era of Pre-socratic philosophy. Heidegger considers this as a serious omission. Aristotle is one of the few figures after the pre-socratics who discussed the question of 'Being' seriously. For Aristotle there are different types of 'Being'. "According to Aristotle, the verb 'to be' is ambiguous in several dimensions. When we say something is (such-and such or a so-and-so), we may mean that actually it is or that potentially it is. Again, 'to be' is sometimes equivalent to 'to be true, to be the case'. But most importantly the meaning of 'to be' varies with the category of the entity to which it is applied" (Inwood, Michael. 1997: 12).

Aristotle's doctrine presents different categories of 'Being'. That is, Aristotle was not exactly pursuing the general nature of 'Being' Instead, he classifies 'Being' into different categories and then attempts to explain or define each category of 'Being'. Following are Aristotle's categories of 'Being': quality, quantity, relation, place, time, action, affection, possession, and position. Among the categories, the primary one is substance. Substance is the one which is usually referred as 'thing'. Substance is the one which exists in its own right and which does not depend upon anything else for its existence, that is, has independent existence. All other entities (which means not merely things but properties, relations etc) are attributes of substance. They are either inhering in substance (colour, shape) or standing in relation to substance. All attributes do not have an independent existence. That is, Aristotle defines 'Being' as either to be a substance or to be an attribute of substance. He does not propose a unified sense/meaning for 'Being'. His doctrine does not bring out what is common to existing 'Being's or for both substance and attributes. "Aristotle distinguished as many meanings of "Being" as

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there are categories of entities." (Frede, Dorothea.1993: 44). He did not formulate any unified meaning of 'Being' that could be applied to all categories. His doctrines of 'Being' has dominated the history of western metaphysics.

Though Aristotle assumes the primacy of substance (e.g. Rocks, trees, human) vis-a-vis attributes, he does not say that quantity or quality or other attributes can be reduced to substance. His position is that different categories of 'Being' are irreducibly different. But the primacy Aristotle accords to substance led to a substance-centred ontology. "Since this focus of the conception of 'Being' on *substantiality* determined the future development of metaphysics, not only in later antiquity but through the Middle Ages into the modern age, "substance" remained the central term in traditional ontology, and substances or "things," natural entities with attributes and the capacities to interact causally with one another, remained the building blocks - and became Heidegger's main challenge." (Ibid: 45).

Heidegger finds that the medieval distinction between 'Being' as essence and 'Being' as existence does not emerge clearly in Aristotle. Heidegger agrees with Aristotle that there were different types of Being or we can say different senses of 'Being'. Heidegger introduces in this connection a third term. "The fact *that* something is or exists, and 'what'-"Being'', *what* that thing is: 'how'-"Being'', the mode, manner, or type of entities ''Being''". (Inwood, Michael. 1997: 13) .Heidegger's position is that Aristotle's categories led to a situation where 'Being' is identified with things, or natural entities. And all other existing ones are existing only because they depend upon substance. Heidegger argues that substance oriented ontology is a distortion because it excludes qualities, quantities or relations from the realm of existence. Before Heidegger, philosophers treated individual entities or types of entities and they excluded the context in which these entities figure. So, through his conception of 'Being', Heidegger tries to

give importance to the 'Beings' in their surroundings. He points out that we need to consider not simply the 'Being' of entities within the world, but 'Being' of their surrounding context too. More clearly we have to consider 'Being' of the world as a whole or 'Being' as such.

Heidegger achieved a breakthrough in his pursuit of the meaning of 'Being', when he attempted to use Phenomenological analysis. In Husserlian phenomenology there was drastic change in the understanding of reality. Similarly Heidegger recognized that the question of 'Being' demands a new conception of reality. Husserl considers all objects as objects of consciousness. Every object must be construed as an intentional object of some conscious act. Consciousness is directed towards some object and objects have to be interpreted as to which conscious acts they are directed. An object is something which is seen, thought of, wished for. So knowing an object is analysing the conscious act which intend that object and working out the precise way in which consciousness intends that object. And only the precise examination of intended objects and the way they are intended leads to the revelation of the 'essence' of entities. Normally we think that the reflection on our acts of consciousness reveals the essence of our conscious acts. Husserl's significant step is to point out that phenomenological analysis (reflection from first person point of view) of conscious acts provides us the essence of objects too.

Heidegger agrees with Husserl on the point that 'Being' of all entities lies in acts of consciousness to which the entities appear. 'Being' of an entity lies in how it appears to us. That is, 'Being' lies in our understanding of it. 'Being' of an entity lies in the sense we gain of them in our understanding. That is, Existence is a part of a phenomenal world, not something which is beyond phenomenon. Husserl's position that if all objects are to be understood as objects of consciousness it leads us to think that existence/'Being' depends on the sense/meaning that is

bestowed on them by the subject. That is, pursuing the question of 'Being' is pursuing the sense we gain of them in our conscious acts. The question is how to unearth the meaning/sense we gained of them? Thus, the crucial factor regarding 'Being' is human being. 'Being' of all entities lies in the sense we gain of them. For the further analysis of 'Being', we need to analyse our meaning–giving activity. On this point, Heidegger differs radically from Husserl. Husserl assumed that acts of consciousness or transcendental ego are transparent to our phenomenological reflection.

Heidegger feels that on this point Husserl went back to the Cartesian epistemology. The claim of Cartesian epistemology is that the content of our consciousness is quite transparent to us. That is, the facts about my conscious acts are given to us in readymade format. For example, it assumes that I can know quite clearly and totally as to what now I am thinking of. I know whether I am sad or happy and about what I am sad or happy. So my judgments about my own conscious states are indubitable. In the same way, the precise analysis of my own conscious acts shows me how an object appears to me and what sense I gain of it in my consciousness. Heidegger's point is that our self -understanding of our conscious acts is not at all authentic. "Heidegger's realization that the picture we form of ourselves may be influenced (and even distorted) by our personal interests and propensities, and that it is conditioned by the general historical situation, made it seem questionable whether there is such a neutral transcendental 'I' that underlies all acts of consciousness." (Frede, Dorothea.1993: 53)Heidegger's position is that phenomena (the appearance of entities) or 'Being' of entities cannot be simply read off from the way they are given in acts of consciousness. So the challenge is to unearth the Being/phenomenon which is latent in our acts of consciousness. "…the task of his analysis is to "uncover" the phenomena that have been covered up, buried, or hidden…" (Ibid: 54).

While Husserl thought that a phenomenon can be simply read off from the acts of consciousness, Heidegger maintains that it is implicit in our understanding of it and cannot be hence read off. Instead we have to unearth 'Being'/phenomenon from our understating. And the implicit understanding which we keep in our everyday existence reveals the essence / Being of objects. Phenomenon or 'Being' is something which is covered or buried. The process of uncovering the 'Being' or phenomenon is a more complex process than envisaged by Husserl. For Heidegger, existence or Being is something which is bestowed through a human understanding of it. So revealing the nature of human understanding leads us to the nature of 'Being'.

Knowing the 'Being' of entities is possible only through the analysis of the understanding we have of them. Human understanding is the only key to uncover the nature of 'Being'. For Husserl, phenomenological analysis starts with the reflection of our conscious acts as they are transparent to us. For Heidegger, Being is not given to us in our reflection. Being is implicitly contained in conscious acts and in our understanding. And the implicit understanding is latent in our everyday activities and everyday existence. So, for Heidegger, phenomenological analysis starts with the implicit understanding we have in our everyday existence. The implicit understanding in our everyday existence means implicit understanding of 'Being' which is in our self-awareness and in our world awareness. Heidegger introduced the term *Dasein* to any entity which has self-awareness and world awareness, that is, human being.

So, in our self-awareness and world awareness which we have in our everyday existence, we have a pre-understanding of 'Being'. So the aim is to explicate the basic structure of pre-understanding. Heidegger's analysis of our *everydayness* intends to explicate the basic structure of our pre-understating. Analysis of *Dasein* itself is not the aim of Heidegger's project. But the

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analysis of *Dasein* is the key to the understanding of 'Being'. Heidegger assumes that enquiry into the nature of Being has to start with an analysis of human existence. So the analysis of *Dasein* is a prerequisite to the analysis of the 'nature of 'Being'/meaning of 'Being'. Heidegger's phenomenological description of *everydayness* is an analysis of *Dasein*. He is understood as an existential philosopher because of his focus on *everydayness* of human existence. But Heidegger's' primary interest was not in the phenomenological description of human existence. That is the reason for his aversion to the label of an 'existential philosopher'. For Heidegger, the key to the understanding of 'Being' lies *in Dasein's* disclosedness of the world. So only through an analysis of *Dasein,* one can reach at the nature of 'Being'. "An analysis of Dasein must precede a general fundamental ontology" Analysis of human existence / *everydayness* is the celebrated part of the work *'Being' and Time* though he insists that the task of uncovering 'Being' is the project of fundamental ontology.

Heidegger's point is that we have an implicit understanding of 'Being' in our awareness of our focus in everyday existence. Because of our 'forgetfulness of 'Being'', understanding of 'Being' never became explicit before. Heidegger's point is that often we forget our awareness about ourselves and about the world and we accept the standards of awareness prevailing in society. And we do not pay attention to our own understanding and simply adopt the explanations and judgements of society. "For the most part we simply adopt our mode of living and self-understanding in compliance with the general standards."(Frede, 1993: 57).And this Heidegger calls 'inauthentic existence'. Though one cannot lead *authentic* life all the time, certain efforts help us to shed the public standards from us and regain our authentic understanding. Heidegger notes that in moments of anxiety of facing death, one comes out of the

domination of public standards. With this background let us look at Heidegger's critique of modern epistemology.

The important question concerns are the significance of the question of 'Being' especially in the analysis of epistemology. Heidegger often claims that the question of 'Being' is quite fundamental to the all philosophical inquires, especially that of epistemology.

How is the question of 'Being' quite significant to the project of epistemology? From Descartes onwards the philosophical queries are based on the 'I' or 'Ego'. For Descartes, the foundational knowledge is 'I think'. Heidegger simply asks 'what this 'I' means' or 'What does it mean to say that I exist'? The question of 'Being' is exactly concerned with the exploration of 'I' or the exploration of the existence of 'I'. Heidegger desists from using the traditional terms like 'I' or 'ego' or 'consciousness'. All these specific terms of modern epistemology are loaded with lots of naive ideas of human existence.

Modern epistemology characterized 'I' or human being as cognitive subject. This is evident in Descartes' dictum of 'I think, therefore, I am'. Of course, Descartes often specifies that he uses the word 'thinking' in a very wide sense as it includes even non- cognitive aspects like feeling or emotions etc. Heidegger's objection is to the total framework of the project. According to the Cartesian framework, the so called mental phenomena like thinking or feeling can be abstracted from everything and can be analysed independently. They can be delinked or detached from everything, even from my own existence. So 'I' or the subject or the 'ego' of the traditional epistemology is a mental phenomenon or a centre of conscious acts delinked or detached from one's own existence and other objects. Heidegger's point is that such a notion of

'I' or subject is quite problematic. The primary point is that cognitive acts can be analysed only in close relation with existence.

Heidegger's critique of epistemology is mainly based on the point that the notion of subject or 'I' which is the rallying point of modern epistemology is a naively constructed idea. Modern epistemology construes the subject as a thinking thing. That is, subject or 'I' is an entity which primarily forms a belief about objects in the external world. That is, the primordial activity of the subject is forming beliefs about objects in the world. And all other activities can be explained only in relation to this primordial activity. Take for example, perception. Perception of the subject can be explained only by referring to the activity of belief forming. As per modern epistemology (representative theory of perception) what we see in perception is the mental image or representation of the object (generally we can say beliefs formed about the object). Not only perception, but all such everyday activities of human beings can be explained only in relation to the cognitive activity of belief forming. Consider another activity like using language. For the modern philosophical tradition, I am conceptualizing the meaning of a word and then using it. Consider using some objects or tools. I am forming an idea about it (use of the tools) and then putting it into action. Thus, a human being as a cognitive agent in the sense holding beliefs about the external world is the ground of his/her activities or interaction with the world.

Heidegger's fundamental criticism of epistemology lies in the point that a human being is not basically a knower. In other words, knowledge is not a basic/primitive mode of his 'Being' in the world. According to him, the traditional epistemology identifies the subject as truth –seeker. Heidegger's point is that the subject cannot be characterized as primarily a thinking thing. Heidegger considers that our very 'Being' is 'Being- in- the- world'. It is not the case that we first encounter the entities and then form beliefs about them. 'Being- in- the- world' which is our

primary engagement with world is located in practical contexts. That means we are not primarily engaging with an object like a pen as an entity distinct from us on which we focus our cognitive attention but as a tool to write something. "…Heidegger leads us to see that our most primordial encounter with the world is not through the mediation of mere seeing, but is rather through handling, manipulating, producing, and operating - that is, through *dealing* with the ready-to-hand along the guidelines laid out by our social competence in a publicly intelligible world." (Guignon, Charles B.1983: 195).

The most important aspect of traditional epistemology concerns justification. Often the justificatory attempts are to show that certain beliefs or claims or positions are the true ones. So, the claim of true belief is an obsession with and the driving force of modern epistemology. Thus the objectivity of our knowledge claims became important to traditional epistemology. So, the attempt is to capture things or properties as such. In a certain sense, objectivity is the driving idea of representationalism. The subject captures the external world in an objective manner. Representationalism assumes that the subject has the cognitive capacity to capture the world as it is. Such a conception of subject is characterized as a 'disinterested subject '. The activity of capturing the world is not distorted by any other purpose or aim or feature of the subject. And Heidegger's criticism of modern epistemology is mainly based on his interrogation of the notion of a disinterested or detached subject. Heidegger's position is that such a detached point of view is a fictitious notion and that is the critical mistake of both traditional and modern epistemology.

Detached point of view / theorization claims that the inquirer assumes an indifferent attitude or attitudes towards the appearance of objects. Indifferent approach means that the appearance of objects to our consciousness is not influenced/shaped by any other preconceived ideas or conceptions or lineages or frameworks which we already have. That means, appearance

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of an object would be the same for all subjects irrespective of their different pre-understandings. That is the basis of the claim of objectivity and the idea of representing the world.

Heidegger's point is that we neither encounter the objects with a blank conscious state like *tabula-rasa* nor with the uninfluenced, ineffective pre-understanding. Each appearance/phenomenon necessarily requires a pre-understanding of it. Primary understanding is one of the fundamental factors of the 'Being' of the 'there'. And primary understanding decisively shapes the phenomenon. "Heidegger is describing the "primary understanding" that runs through our various ways of existing in and interpreting the world." (Hoy, 1993: 173). And without the pre-understanding it is impossible to gain sense of the phenomenon. Pre-understanding is such a crucial element in the appearance of entities. Hence, Heidegger looks upon such a theoretical stance as a derivative mode of 'Being'. So the theoretical stance is always a special way of viewing the objects of 'Being' in the world and not a 'no-where' point of view.

The other major criticism of Heidegger is that modern epistemology assumes that the content of consciousness is quite transparent to us. We have discussed in the previous sections Heidegger's critique of ready availability of phenomenon or 'Being' to our acts of consciousness. But while claiming that the essence of phenomenon or 'Being' is not something which is obviously available for any viewer, he undermines the basic premise of representationalism that representations are *given* to us. Hence, our judgements cannot be abstracted from existence and from pre-understanding. So, a normative approach itself is impossible as the abstraction assumed us it is impossible.

Heidegger's attack on the detached point of view or view from 'no-where' is precisely the crux of his criticism of normativism. The fundamental premise of normativism is that a general or universal distinction of valid and invalid knowledge is possible. For the normativists, it is improper to claim that a knowledge claim is valid or justified in a particular context. A general claim of validity and justification across the contexts and situations is the crux of the normativist claim. The basic requirement or presupposition or assumption of the normativist approach is that we all hold identical beliefs or claims. That, certain phenomena appear to all of us in an identical manner. Heidegger's position is that since a phenomenon is closely tied to our pre-understanding, the very idea of an identical phenomenon across different contexts is unintelligible. Such an identical phenomenon can be introduced only by a 'detached point of view'. A detached point of view is viewing of a 'Being' which is detached from its own pre-understanding. Heidegger's position is that appearance of objects would be impossible to our consciousness if we delink or detach our pre-understanding from our conscious acts. Pre-understanding of ourselves and of world is a necessary requirement for an appearance of objects through conscious acts.

Practical needs or requirements necessarily consist of an engagement of 'Being' with the world, with human beings and with oneself. Our understanding of entities and ourselves is formed within and is based on interaction. So Heidegger objects to the construal of theoretical stance as detachment from prior understanding. Instead, he interprets a detached view as a special view of 'Being' within the framework of pre-understanding. And this special view ignores the referential totality. So a theoretical stance is neither fundamental nor the sole mode of 'Being'. When modes of 'Being' are operative in our everydayness, "One and the same "thing" can be treated as a piece of equipment with a practical meaning, or as a piece of art, or as

the object of scientific investigation. Other human beings can be treated as "scientific objects" (as ciphers in statistics) or as mere tools (something ready-to-hand) instead of as "Dasein-withs." The context therefore determines their "'Being'."" (Frede, 1993: 59)

The above discussion has brought out how Heidegger rejects normativism, foundationalism, and representationalism which are the three planks of modern epistemology. Though Heidegger seems to be more concerned with the empiricist version of modern epistemology, his critique applies to the rationalist as well as the Kantian version since pre-understanding which emerges out of the prior engagement with the world has nothing to do with and in fact, is antithetical to the system of innate ideas of the rationalists and the categorial framework of Kant.

II.3 Merleau-Ponty's Critique of Epistemology

Phenomenologists commonly agree that when the foundations of knowledge in perception and action are properly characterized, we can undermine the traditional forms of skepticism. Phenomenologists find that traditional epistemologists have committed a great mistake, i.e. they consider phenomena as the content of the mind. For the Phenomenologists, a phenomenon is not a mental content; rather it is the mixture/fusion of experiencing subject and experienced object. Phenomenologists wanted to explicate the importance of our lived experience in the world. That is, they give importance to our actions in the world. Phenomenological enquiry is a shift from knowing *that* to knowing *how*. The phenomenological method was supposed to reveal that practical knowledge is prior to propositional knowledge

Now let us discuss Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological epistemology. He was the first philosopher who gives importance to our actions/experience and body for attaining knowledge.

According to modern epistemologists, all knowledge is mediational. Mediational knowledge is the knowledge of reality achieved through a certain media/medium, that is, the media/medium of representation within ourselves. Descartes onwards epistemologists celebrated this meditational knowledge. Merleau-Ponty argues that this meditational knowledge is a mystery. So he feels the need to unfold/unravel the mystery behind the mediational knowledge. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological pursuit is very radical in the history of epistemological tradition. He can be considered as the true adherent of Husserl regarding the purpose of phenomenology. However, he is highly critical of Husserl regarding the method or means of achieving the purpose of phenomenology.

The aim or purpose of phenomenology is to capture the essence of our consciousness/conscious experience. More clearly, the attempt is to capture the experience as it appears to our consciousness without any medium. Then only we can attain our undistorted experience of consciousness. For attaining this Merleau-Ponty tries to develop Husserl's theory of intentionality

Traditionally, conscious experience was described in terms of objects and their interactions. The challenge of phenomenology is mainly of overcoming the reductionist approach to conscious experience. Phenomenologists seek to find out how experience can be described in its own terms. i.e., reflecting or describing the experience in a way which is true to experiences or describing an experience as the experience prior to any model of analysis/description. The model of description should not be the one which is evolved from anything other than experience itself. "It is important, if we are aiming at a description of experience as it is prior to reflection that the model our reflection brings to the experience comes from the original experience itself, and not from some extraneous source." (Smith, 2002:26)

As we have mentioned, Phenomenological analysis purports to discover the true structure of undistorted experience. So its aim is to develop the model for it. The purpose of Husserl's phenomenological analysis is to   describe experience. In that sense, it comes close to the empiricist position. But the notion of experience which phenomenologists hold is richer and wider than the empiricist one. Not only they have a wider or richer notion about the object of study (experience) but also their method of analysis differs substantially from empiricism. The best part of phenomenology is that it has a radically innovative method of analysis. Merleau-Ponty is especially interested in phenomenology as a method rather as a system: a method which aims to capture the undistorted description of experience. 'What is the peculiarity or significance of the method of analysis of conscious experience?' The uniqueness of phenomenological model/method of analysis of conscious experience is the staunch anti-reductionist method which refuses to reduce conscious experience to anything else (The objects like physical science, or psychology) and thus recognize the uniqueness of experience.

But often it seems that reductionism is an essential part of the analytic framework. If one does not reduce a phenomenon to anything else, often it is characterized as a description of phenomenon rather than an analysis of the phenomenon. I think, analysis necessarily includes drawing a relation between a phenomenon and its more basic elements. Often science is considered as a paradigm of analytical method because it reduces phenomena to more basic elements such as properties or interactions. Plato's analysis of universals is an analysis because it reduces phenomena like commonness or generality to more basic categories like forms. Same is the case with the analysis of knowledge. Knowledge is reduced to the complex of simpler or less corrigible categories like belief, truth and justification. In that sense, phenomenology too consists of minimal reductionism which the analytical method requires. But its main objection to

reductionism is not against reductionism *per se*, but reductionism of conscious experience to another category called 'objects'. That is, the phenomenological method firmly stands on the uniqueness of consciousness and its distinction from the realm of objects. The Anti -reductionist stance is that consciousness is a different category and it cannot be reduced to another category called 'objects'. That is, conscious (intentional)acts should not be considered as the properties or characteristics of objects.

What Phenomenologists want is that conscious experience is to be analyzed in relation to more basic categories of consciousness itself. In other words, the model of analysis or method of reflection of consciousness should evolve from conscious experience itself. So the method does not come from any extraneous source but from the original experience itself. So phenomenological analysis in a sense aims to formulate more basic categories of consciousness.

Merleau Ponty tries to modify the thesis of intentionality. He notes that Husserl is right in emphasizing that all conscious experience is directed towards something. It is not directed towards some states or situations but to some object, which we call 'intentional objects'. Merleau Ponty's point is that it is not merely that consciousness is directed towards some object. It is not merely that we perceive an object. Instead "we perceive objects or events as 'hiding' others or 'bringing them into view' as being 'in front of' or 'behind others things' or as 'the beginning of' or 'end of' some object or event" (Smith, 2002:27). That is, our precepts or conscious acts refer to things that are not actual or present. For example, when I perceive a screen, it is not merely that I perceive a screen. I am not merely directed towards the screen but directed towards the screen as hiding something else. That is, the screen refers to something which is not present in the phenomenal field. That is, intentional objects refer to something that are not actual or not present. Merleau-Ponty's formulation is that "Whatever is an object of consciousness has

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significance. To say that consciousness is intentional is thus to say more about it than that it is directed towards some object: it implies a relation not just of mere aboutness, but aboutness 'for' something. This interpretation of intentionality - we might call 'intentionality-as-significance'...." (Ibid, 2002:27)

Merleau Ponty is formulating the structure of conscious acts, especially the structure of perceptual acts. Intentionality is the basic nature of perceptual acts. That is, in a perceptual act, we are directed towards something which refers to something else which is not present. For Merleau Ponty, the other crucial component or structure of the perceptual act is the purpose of the perceiver. Suppose we perceive a map. If our purpose is to reach a place, then we consider it as one which provides directions. Otherwise it might be just colourful paper or an abstract drawing. That means "[A] phenomenal object will appear, for example, 'as means to' or 'in the way of' an end desired by perceiving subject. In this sense, perception is closely tied to the way in which perceivers are 'at grips' with their environment. Perception is thus intimately connected with behavior" (Ibid: 27)

Perception is closely linked with how we have situated ourselves in an environment. For example, I can situate myself in a situation as a student or as a girl or as a friend. This affects how I am looking at an object. One who knows the swimming view the swimming pool/lake differs from one who does not know swimming. In one case, it could be associated with fear and in another case it might be associated with joy and freshness. "Merleau-Ponty's intentionality thesis attempts to capture an essential structure of lived experience" (Ibid: 27).

He criticizes both rationalism and empiricism for their naive account of perception. According to empiricism, sensations or qualia are the primitive building blocks of perceptual

experience. Sensations are due, according to that view, to mind sensing a quality or property of an object. e.g. sensation of colour, sensation of shape, sensation of smell etc. So sensations are basically mental effects produced by each sense organ when they are affected by the properties of objects. When the eye is affected by a green coloured object, it produces a particular colour sensation and perceiving or experiencing is what we normally call 'perception of the colour'. According to empiricism, when we perceive an object, we are having different and distinct sensations of colour, shape smell, softness/hardness etc.,. And from these different sensations we infer an object or construct it. Thus perceptual experience is basically about internal/mental sensations.

Merleau Ponty's major criticism against the concept of sensation is a phenomenological one. In a phenomenological reflection (when I am conscious of conscious acts, i.e. when we reflect upon our experience as we experience perception) we are not able to find out anything called sensation. "We find that perceptual experience is not a collection of internal sensations. What we have in perception is not sensations but external things. Concepts of sensation correspond to nothing in our experience." (Carman, 2006:52). That is, an account of perception provided by sensationalism or sense data theory appears to be counterintuitive. Any kind of reflection of our own perceptual experience does not reveal any kind of entities like sensations. In our reflection of our perceptual experience, perception comes as a single and unitary experience.

> Nowhere in our perceptual awareness do we come across discrete qualitative bits of experience, fully abstracted from the external, perceptually coherent environment. Occasionally we might see an after image or hear a ringing in our ears, but typically we see objects and hear noises made by things and events. This is in part just to say

that perceptual experience is intentional, that it is of something, whereas impressions, sensations, and sense data are supposed to be the non intentional stuff from which the mind somehow extracts or constructs an experience of something... Perception is essentially interwoven with the world we perceive, and each feature of the perceptual field is interwoven with others. (Carman, 2006:52).

Merleau Ponty's another criticism is directed towards the atomistic conception of perception. According to which when we perceive an object we get sensations or sense data/impression of colour, shape, size and texture etc.,. Separately, and certain mental processes combine them together. But an object is not mere bundle of sensations. Such an account fails to explain the unity of the object. But, Merleau-Ponty's main trouble with the atomistic picture is that it provides discrete character to perception. The perception of a rose is distinct from the perception of the rose plant. Such an alleged distinctness is provided by the supposedly discrete nature of the basic units of experience like sensations or impressions.

Empiricism assumes that the framework of perception is clearly distinct. That is, left and right side (as well as front and back side) boundaries of a perceptual field can be determined. However, Merleau Ponty's position is that such a definite limit to perceptual field is incongruous. It might be right to say that an object has discrete and determinate boundaries. But perceptual field would not have. Though in our perceptual act, we are directed towards an object, we perceive the object against a background. Obviously, the background of an object which is perceived will not have definite limit. "The perceptual field is not rigidly framed like a tableau. It is bounded more in the manner of horizon: indeterminate, out of focus, shifting with the eye of viewer and never caught up by it."(Smith, 2007:28). In perception, the background of an object is a horizon, not a well-defined boundary.

Merleau Ponty's another point is that objects in perceptual field do not play a passive role. It is not adequate to assume that objects are fully available to our consciousness or fully present themselves. Even if we perceive a single rose a hundred times, we cannot claim that we have fully perceived the intended object. As object appears to us, always with attached meaning it is always open to perceptual exploration. "Each part arouses the expectation of more than it contains, and this elementary perception is therefore already charged with a *meaning*. . . The perceptual "something" is always in the middle of something else; it always forms part of a "field.". . . The pure impression is therefore not just undiscoverable, but imperceptible and thus inconceivable as a moment of perception" (Ponty, Merleau. 1962: 9–10)

We end this chapter with a brief discussion of Merleau Ponty's critique of rationalism. In his critique he mainly focuses on the rationalist theory of Kant. Certainly, the Kantian theory made some improvement in theorising conscious experience and perception over empiricism. For empiricism, concepts are products of perception and perception itself is concept-free and devoid of meaning. However, from the information or sensation which we receive from the outer world, mind generates concepts or meaning through certain mental processes. Kantian school rejects such claims and holds that perception itself is meaningful. It is not the case that after perception, through certain mental process, mind identifies an object as something. Instead, in perception itself we apprehend objects as something. Perceptual process employs our faculty of judgement "a view Kant expressed in the famous formula 'intuitions without concepts are blind'" (Smith, 2002:29)

Merleau Ponty acknowledges that rationalism, and in particular its Kantian version, is a great advance on empiricism. He particularly empathizes with Kant's idea that the meaning of an object is traceable to our conceptualization of it. But Merleau Ponty considers this to be a half

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truth in the sense such a conceptualization cannot account for the fullness of the meaning. Merleau Ponty disagrees with Kantianism on the nature of the faculty of judgement. According to the Kantian theory our faculty of judgement is not something which is accompanied by perception; instead it is prior to perception. And perception possesses meaning because objects of perception are captured within the framework of *a priori* categories. That is, meaning lies in the logical connection between objects of perception. Consequently, judgements of perception are determinate and explicit. "According to this view, a perception has a sense in the same way a proposition does" (Smith, 2002:29). Merleau-Ponty's basic objection against Kantianism is on the point of determinate and explicit meaning of perception. For Merleau Ponty "We often perceive without being able to put what we perceive into words" (Smith, 2002:29) In other words, sense of perception is different from the sense of proposition. A description of perception cannot exhaust or account for the fullness of perception. "...The propositional model of perception like sense- data account fails to appreciate the richness of phenomenal field, a richness, and diversity that no finite series of statements can do justice to. There is always an excess or surplus or remainder to the described content of perception. " (Smith, 2002:29)

According to Merleau Ponty, the notion of background is the one which resists the possibility of an exhaustive and explicit description of perception. For Merleau Ponty, perception can be understood always against a background. But background is not a collection of objects or properties. In perception we may not be aware of each and every part or element of background in the way we are aware of objects of perception. That means the background of perception and objects of perception are different categories which play different roles. Therefore, the background cannot be so reduced to a set of objects or properties and as it cannot be reduced, it cannot be described too. The role of background is to highlight the object of perception in a

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particular fashion. Of course, without taking cognizance of the background we can have a description of perception, but not an exhaustive or complete one. This is because our description of perception is based on factors like background which are not fully describable or can be made explicit. Another related criticism of Merleau Ponty against Kantian theory is that it fails to account for the perspectival nature of perception. According to Merleau Ponty, perception not only provides information of what we perceive but also about how the subject is related to what is perceived. As Nicholas H Smith points out, "...it would seem that prior to any conceptualization of experience, prior to experience assuming the form of a judgement 'that', perception gives us access to a world, a pre-predicative or pre-objective world" Kantian theory rules out the possibility of such an access to the world.

The three philosophers we have considered in this chapter provide a critique of the dominant tradition of epistemology as has been handed over to them since the emergence of modern philosophy. The common leit motif of their distinct critique is that in some way or the other modern epistemology construes knowledge in isolation from a background located either in the subjective world of consciousness or in the objective world of things or both. And this results in an impoverished conception of knowledge itself. As we shall see, Charles Taylor takes this core and develops it in his own way a critique of the very philosophical ethos of modernity.

CHAPTER III

CHARLES TAYLOR'S CRITIQUE OF EPISTEMOLOGY: I

III.1 Preliminaries

Charles Taylor's critique of epistemology can be rightly understood as an intervention in the critical debates of modern epistemology. Taylor's works, however, cannot be characterized merely as a critique of modern epistemology. Rather, his positions are also a critique of present day philosophical critiques to modern epistemology. Certainly his is a thorough critique of modern epistemology, but major portions of his writings are reserved to show how the most of present day critiques are either pointless or not clear. Most importantly, he tries to show us how the various critiques of epistemologies themselves are imprisoned in the Cartesian epistemological picture. That is, even the critiques of Cartesian epistemology employ or widely share the points/crucial assumptions of Cartesian epistemology. Following are the fundamental points of Cartesian epistemology which the critiques too share uncritically.

1. Primacy of the epistemology

2. Ontological view of the Cartesian picture (especially of subject)

Taylor's criticism of modern epistemology is that the crisis of epistemology is not sufficiently and deeply explored in the critiques of modern epistemology. "In some circles it is becoming a new orthodoxy that the whole enterprise from Descartes, through Locke and Kant, and pursued by various nineteenth and twentieth-century succession movements, was a mistake.

What is becoming less and less clear, however, is what exactly it means to overcome the epistemological standpoint or to repudiate the enterprise".(Taylor, Charles 1995: 2)

One of the key points of the Cartesian epistemology is the primacy of epistemology. Primacy of epistemology means, epistemological doctrines are validating points of metaphysical doctrines and ontological views. That means, metaphysics and ontology significantly depend upon epistemology. But epistemology does not depend upon any particular metaphysical and ontological doctrines. It is this contention which is the starting point of Taylor's critique of epistemology.

Taylor is not concerned about whether metaphysics or ontology is dependent upon epistemological foundations. Rather he is concerned about the self-grounding foundation of epistemology. Its self-referential justification is the central feature of pure epistemology. That is, epistemology claims to be an enterprise which does not depended upon anything else. Modern epistemologists may not say that they do not have any kind of ontological or metaphysical basis. Instead they may only say that their epistemological foundation only makes use of minimal ontological commitments. And the minimal ontological commitments come under self-evident knowledge or certain knowledge. So, modern epistemology claims that it is not founded upon certain ontological commitments. It is apt to say that epistemology is founded on certain self-evident propositions, including   self -evident propositions of ontology.

Taylor's position is that ontological knowledge on which epistemology is founded is not at all self-evident. Moreover, the self–evident knowledge presupposes certain ontological commitments. His position is that modern epistemology is founded on mechanistic ontology. According to Taylor, the so called critiques of modern epistemology are premised on the

Cartesian presuppositions and hence their critical stance tends to be merely rhetorical. In fact, it is not so clear what exactly they are trying to deny regarding the epistemological tradition they critique.

III.2 Taylor's Critique of Foundationalism

Taylor acknowledges that there are certain powerful criticisms of modern epistemology which are clear about their main thrust. Taylor finds Richard Rorty's critique as one which paved the way for a concrete attempt to overcome epistemology. Rorty formulates his concrete attempt to overcome the epistemological tradition in his work *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. In this work, he identifies foundationalism as the key thesis of epistemology. For him to overcome epistemology is to overcome foundationalism. We will discuss how and why Rorty tries to overcome epistemology in our fifth chapter.

Taylor finds that the idea of foundationalism emerged and was formulated in an attempt to justify our knowledge systems. It is an attempt to show that our scientific knowledge or commonsensical knowledge are justified because those knowledge systems are built upon certain foundational premises which are self-evident or which do not need any further justification. Taylor finds certain difficulties in the foundationalists' argument. If it is the case that our justifications are self-evident then the question which Taylor raises is: 'What is the guarantee that foundationalism is an adequate justificatory principle?' That is, 'What is the justification of the principle of 'foundationalism' which is used to justify our knowledge claims?' The significant question is 'How did foundationalism emerge as an accepted justificatory principle?' While seeking an answer to the question, critiques find that the edifice of foundationalism stands on pain of circularity. In his work, *A Discourse on Method*, Descartes never concealed his

enthusiasm for the foundationalist principle that emerged from the successful practices of the day. He was highly obsessed with the success of mathematics in achieving certainty. And his analysis identifies the method of mathematics as the core of foundationalism.

The present day enthusiasm for foundationalism is also somehow connected with the tendency to extract epistemic justification for other branches of empirical science (E.g. by reduction of chemistry and biology to physics). In short, from the outset, foundationalism is considered as an accepted principle because it has been a part of the accepted practice of science. Critics like Richard Rorty point out that foundationalism can be justified on pain of circularity because foundationalism is formulated to justify/test the present knowledge system or present practices of knowledge (like science). We will elaborate this point in fifth chapter.

III.3 Taylor's Critique of Normativism

Taylor notes that another major attack on epistemology is from Quine's *Naturalised Epistemology*. Quine tries to see the epistemological problem in a novel way. He tries to shift our focus from normativity to naturality. He claims that earlier epistemologists construed knowledge in terms of a certain essential normative principles. With the help of these norms we ground our beliefs. Quine argues that such foundation/grounding of our knowledge claims will not work. Philosophers wanted to challenge the sceptical position. In doing so the epistemologists felt the need for certain foundations for our knowledge claims. Epistemologists agreed that the success of knowledge claim depended upon this foundation. But Quine argues that the search for such a foundation is itself wrongheaded. He claims that instead of searching for foundation for knowledge, what we have to search for is the way in which our beliefs are formed, i.e., the way

in which our beliefs are formed as a result of psychological processes involving sensory stimulation. So for Quine knowledge is only a psychological phenomenon. As he elaborates:

> Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science. It studies a natural phenomenon, viz., a physical human subject. This human subject is accorded a certain experimentally controlled input - certain patterns of irradiation in assorted frequencies, for instance - and in the fullness of time the subject delivers as output a description of the three-dimensional external world and its history. The relation between the meager input and the torrential output is a relation that we are prompted to study for somewhat the same reasons that always prompted epistemology: namely, in order to see how evidence relates to theory, and in what ways one's theory of nature transcends any available evidence...But a conspicuous difference between old epistemology and the epistemological enterprise in this new psychological setting is that we can now make free use of empirical psychology.(1969: 82-83)

Quine's claim is that it is a waste to spend time searching for norms of our knowledge claims and instead we must analyse the causal connection between our sensory evidence and our knowledge claims. Quine finds that the causal connection of sensory evidence is to our knowledge about nature. For Quine, nature is out there. We can access nature through our psychological processes. Nature is given to us. There is no need for applying any norms for attaining knowledge of the external world. We do not want any mediator to access knowledge. So Quine's attempt is to fill the gap between the subjective world and an objective world. Quine tries to argue that there is no such dichotomy between subject and object. Everything is already given to us. He rejects Cartesian dualism.

Taylor argues that Quine's critique of foundationalism and normativism is not sufficient to be qualified as overcoming epistemology. Taylor says that Quine's naturalized epistemology can be considered as one of the concrete forms of repudiating foundationalism. Taylor notes that Rorty too may accept Quine's critique as concrete and valid though he has certain reservations. Naturalised epistemology rejects the *a priori* status of epistemology and insists that epistemology too is a branch of Natural science. Taylor claims that it is difficult for us to accept that philosophers like Rorty and Quine have overcome the epistemological tradition. For Taylor, the crux of the modern epistemological project lies in the representationalist thesis. Unless one addresses the representationalist view it is pointless to say that we have already overcome the epistemological hurdle. We discuss Taylor's anti-representationalist position a bit later.

Taylor's point is that naturalised epistemology can be considered as a successful programme in abandoning the project of foundationalism. But yet the tradition of naturalised epistemology can hardly be considered as the one which overcomes epistemology. For Taylor overcoming epistemology in a full-fledged sense means a lot of other things. It is not a rejection of one tenet or thesis of traditional epistemology. It also means bringing down many of the consequences which modern epistemology brought inside and outside the philosophical traditions. For Taylor, introduction of modern epistemology cannot be viewed as merely one theoretical exercise whose impacts are quite confined within a particular branch of philosophy. Primarily, he assesses the impacts of modern epistemology brought in the entire tradition of modern philosophy. The most important impact concerns the primacy of epistemology itself as modern epistemology claims. That is to say, the claim of modern epistemology is that epistemological justification is needed for not only for our empirical knowledge but even our philosophical claims.

The other underlying thesis of modern epistemology is the ontological thesis, i.e., the thesis that man is a thinking subject and our knowledge claim depends up on his/her thinking capacity. In this thesis we can see the important role of human agency. The chief characteristic of human agency is that it is posed as an independent entity distinct from all other entities. 'Independent' means that the nature of human agency/subject would remain intact even if all other entities cease to exist. The other chief characteristic is that the human agency is mental. Human agency/subject is a disembodied one in the sense it is independent of the body in which it inheres. At best, the body can be understood as carrier or vehicle of human agency which cannot have any kind of influence in determining or shaping the nature of human agency. That is, the nature of human agency is not dependent upon the kind of body or the nature of body which humans have. Such a thesis is obviously a clear fall out of mind-body dualism which modern philosophy upholds. Another impact which modern epistemology brought in is the importance and superiority ascribed to scientific knowledge. Such a conception arises from the notion of scientific knowledge which modern epistemology adheres to from Descartes to Logical positivism. Modern epistemologists project scientific knowledge as the paradigm of knowledge as science exemplifies the most adequate justificatory principles. Taylor notes that such a conception of human agency and scientific knowledge determines and shapes several moral and spiritual ideas of the modern period.

Taylor Points out that though it is true that the naturalized epistemology abandoned one of the major theses of epistemology, i.e. foundationalism, it cannot be considered as overcoming epistemology as it maintains all the assumptions and consequences of modern epistemology. Naturalized epistemology neither repudiates the primacy of epistemology nor does it refute the conceptions of scientific knowledge and human agency. We can see that in many of the cases,

naturalized epistemology only reaffirms the positions of Cartesian epistemology and its contemporary versions. Taylor argues that what critics like Rorty and Quine attack is not the essentials or fundamentals of modern epistemology, but the foundationalist ambitions of modern epistemology that are ultimately (as Quine has shown) detachable from it. Thus Taylor assumes that overcoming epistemology is possible only by refuting the very fundamental thesis of epistemology. It is representationalism which is the fundamental thesis of modern epistemology. The refutation of that alone can result in the rejection of the basic structure of modern epistemology. How does Taylor proceed doing so?

III.4 Taylor's Critique of Representationalism

One of the key positions of modern epistemology is its claim that it can explain philosophical concepts like knowledge and justification in mechanistic terms as explicitly admitted by many of the philosophers. Obviously, modern epistemology is highly influenced by mechanistic metaphysics inspired by seventeenth century science. According to the mechanistic view we are only passively receiving the objective world. In this mechanical model we cannot see any active role of human beings. If for empiricists man as a cognitive agent is *tabula rasa,* for rationalists he is only a repository of innate ideas. Taylor says "[We are the passive receptors] of impressions from the external world. Knowledge then hangs on a certain relation holding between what is "out there" and certain inner states that this external reality causes in us. This construal, valid for Locke, applies just as much to the latest artificial-intelligence model of thinking. It is one of the mainsprings of the epistemological tradition." (Taylor, Charles. 1995:4)The key aim of science is explanation of natural phenomena in terms of mechanical processes. One of the advantages of such an explanation in mechanical terms is that, it provides/facilitates clear and distinct explanations. Such approach is viable to verification or

justification. That the mechanistic view impacted philosophy is clear from the fact that dominant philosophical theories of perception seek to construe perception as a mechanistic process.

We have already pointed out that modern epistemology works within a representationalist structure/framework. Descartes sought to delineate the structure of representation. Taylor points out that the picture of representation or thesis of representationalism has undergone various changes over a period of time. However the basic structure of representationalism remains intact. Taylor's main aim in his various works is to challenge representationalism. The basic structure of representation is what is called by Taylor 'picture'. Not only that, the 'picture' penetrates into all theoretical constructions and even shapes and structures our commonsensical knowledge. "It was a structuring framework understanding that guided their questioning and reasoning about these matters". (Taylor, Charles. 2004:27-28)Taylor points out that it deeply influences and structures our entire thinking and even the history of thinking or intellectual history. It has held captive both the followers and critics of modern epistemology. For Taylor, the dominant power of the 'picture' is not that a large number of people subscribe to that. Its domination is not in the way of one of dominant epistemological theory but as structuring framework of all epistemological constructions. More importantly, most of the theoretical constructions adopt it as a framework, though not consciously. But the impact of this 'picture' is so powerful that even the most intensive conscious attempt to overcome the structure lands us back in the framework of representationalism.

Taylor elucidates the basic structure of representationalism which hovers around the history of thought. He calls it as the 'representationalist picture' or the 'inside/outside picture' (I/O picture). I/O picture or structure elucidates how we can acquire knowledge and how knowledge claims can be justified. Its basic thrust is that 'our knowledge of reality comes

through the representations we have formed of it within ourselves'. That means knowledge of reality / external world can get only through the representations of the mind. In other words, knowledge of reality can be justified only on the basis of the representations which we have about them. When an agent/subject encounters the world, she/he is forming representations about the world. Through representations, subject can have justified knowledge of the world.

Taylor's position is that, in the course of time, various epistemological theories often differ upon various issue like 'nature of representation' and model of 'acquiring/justifying knowledge through representation'. But they all share the basic thesis of representationalism; we get the knowledge about the world through representations. "The basic idea of a mediational epistemology is expressed by the proposition "through". We grasp the world through something, what is outside through something inner" (Taylor, Charles.2004: 26)

Descartes introduces the representationalist or mediationalist structure into the epistemological debate. One of the major reasons to formulate representationalism is his passion towards foundationalism. Epistemological foundation should be indubitable. For Descartes, only the knowledge of mental states is indubitable. The rest of knowledge should be rested upon the knowledge of mental states or knowledge of ideas. That's why he declares that he is "certain that I can have no knowledge of what is outside me except by means of ideas within me"(Ibid) Descartes is vehemently criticized for a number of reasons and even his representationalist model was rejected. But what is interesting is that the basic structure of his representationalist model remains intact. Descartes' representationalist model largely relied upon the mind-body distinction. And he is criticized for making representation a strictly mental entity.

Descartes' representationalist model was strictly rationalist. He did not agree that all mental images or ideas are representations of external world. For him, some of them are caused by illusions and illusory ideas are not representational. Sensory ideas too are not representational. So he introduced rationalist criteria to determine our ideas as representational. Only the ideas (irrespective of whether they are sensory or not) which are clear and distinct represent the external world. The notion 'clear and distinct' he defines in quantitative terms. Locke criticized Descartes' representationalist model but only on the point that the rationalist criterion is inadequate to determine which ideas are representational. For Locke, all the ideas which are formed or acquired through experience are representational in nature. Though both Descartes and Locke disagree on the point of determining the representation of ideas, they adhere to the basic structure that only through representational ideas we can acquire knowledge. From a representationalist point of view, we can say that there is no substantial difference between Locke and Descartes as both agree on the nature of representation and identifying representational/mediational elements as mental entities called ideas.

Kant disagrees with both rationalists and empiricists on the nature of representation. Kant argues that ideas or sensations are not representational or mediational elements. Kant's major point is, if ideas are representational elements then the unity of the world or self cannot be explained. That means entities like ideas are not capable of adequate representation. For example, no simple or complex ideas can represent an object. All that ideas can represent are only colours, textures, and shape and size of the objects. Object is not a bundle of all these sensations. Unitary nature of object which puts these aspects together (colour, shape, size) cannot be represented through ideas. So Kant argues that categorical forms are the representation of nature. Interestingly by criticizing the representational picture of Locke and Descartes, Kant too

only reaffirms the representational theory of knowledge by holding the basic structure intact. Kant argues for the need of categories for our judgements about the world. For doing so Kant's theory of categories also leads us to the notion of representations of objects. Kant's criticism basically rejects the atomistic notion of the inside picture. Representation is not of atomic elements but rather it is of single unified whole. Though Kant rejects the atomistic nature of representation, he too agrees with the Cartesian model on the point that representations are mental entities.

> The recent trends which do not subscribe to mind- body dualism attack the claim that representational elements are mental entities. For them, mental entities are too mysterious objects to draw a representational relation with the world. Philosophers who took the linguistic turn hold the position that not mental entities but propositions or sentences are the representations. It is naive to say that mind acquires the image of external world like photographs. By shifting from mental to non-mental realm, linguistic philosophers hoped that they can work out a precise nature of representations. Linguistic philosophers achieved a breakthrough in claiming that representation holds between world and mediational elements (sentences) and thus precisely formulating the nature of representation. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein claims that both world and language have a similar structure and hence there is a good reason to hold that language represents the world.

Taylor's contention is that unlike ancient epistemology, modern epistemology is chiefly characterized by the decisive influence of science. For Taylor, overcoming epistemology is pinpointing the decisive influences of science. As the decisive influence of science is the hall mark of modern epistemology, any attempt to overcome epistemology which leaves the impact

of science untouched is incomplete. Foundationalism is not the principle which evolves solely from the influence of science, though the foundationalism of modern epistemology is closely connected with the practices of science. There are several traces of foundationalism in ancient epistemology too. According to Taylor, in a wider and a deeper sense modern epistemology is representationalist epistemology and not a mere foundationalist epistemology.

Taylor articulates how representationalist epistemology can be considered as a formation or a principle which is deeply influenced by modern science. The chief characteristic of modern science is the mechanistic explanation of all phenomena. The framework of mechanistic explanation is an input-output framework. The phenomenon to be explained (for example fire) would be considered as output in the framework. The explanation of a phenomenon is the account which states that phenomenon (output) follows from the input. For example, fire comes from short circuit. The main component of the mechanistic explanation is the process which connects input to output. In modern science often, the process (input/output) is characterized by a series of cause and effect relationships. Whether it is a cause- and-effect relationship or logical relationship, the chief characteristics of mechanistic science is that the relationship is construed as a step- by- step process and it can be shown that steps are connected in a series. Taylor's point is that the adoption of mechanistic explanation has resulted in representationalism. In other words, representationalism in epistemology can be explained in a better way by considering the adoption of mechanistic explanation in science as paradigmatic. Modern epistemology considers knowledge as output which can be explained in terms of certain inputs

Objectivity is the chief characteristic of scientific inquiry. According to Taylor, attainment of objectivity is the driving factor of Cartesian epistemology and specifically of representationalist thesis. Taylor notes that the purpose of the sense data theory of perception is

the attempt to show that agent or subject receives the information which constitutes the objectives representation of external world. Our body or senses only work as a tool or means to capture or record the information which are objective representations of external world. That's why modern epistemologists even resorted to the atomistic picture of perception which is highly counter- intuitive. According to representational theory of perception, when we encounter any object, we receive the shape or size or colour of the object through visual organs and smell through the olfactory organs etc. But our intuitive understanding about perception says that when we perceive an object we do not perceive in terms of bits and pieces of information. We perceive or receive the information of an object as a whole or together as unit. But to explain this modern epistemology has to concede that in the process of perception, what is interacting with the world are not mere senses but an active agent which coordinates all senses in a particular fashion. That is, if we admit that perception or perceptual information is received as unitary whole and not as pieces of information then we concede the role of an active agent. Taylor notes that modern epistemology assumes or adopts the atomistic theory because it wants to reject the role of an active agent. The knower or agent is only a disengaged or a disinterested thinker. Here 'disengaged' is construed in terms of a machine which records the information fed into it. That is, modern epistemology construes the role of agent as that of machine: a machine which has various devices or facilities to record information. Such a conception of disengaged agent is introduced to ensure the objectivity of the representation which the agent acquires. What provides knowledge is the perception by a disengaged agent. We have seen how Heidegger refutes the idea of disengaged agent through his notion of 'Being' which is essentially a 'Being in the world'. He advocates that the epistemic agent be recognized"...as engaged, as embedded in

a culture, a form of life, a "world" of involvements, ultimately to understand the agent as embodied."(Taylor, Charles.1993:318).

Taylor further pursues this point by asking 'How is the notion of disengaged agency to be understood?' Modern epistemology would not have much difficulty to admit that perceived agent is engaged in a particular sense. But modern epistemologist's point might be this: the engagement or embodiment of the knowing agent is insignificant in determining the perceptual content. Suppose we have two agents from different cultures. While perceiving a tree they may associate different cultural values to it. One may consider it as a super-natural entity in accordance with his/her cultural beliefs and knowledge system. The other may consider the tree as an essential entity for sustenance of life as per his/her cultural ethos and knowledge system. Their culture and knowledge system obviously affect their each and every perception. The claim of modern epistemology is not that an agent's culture or belief and knowledge do not affect his/her perception. But its claim is that their impact is very minimal and even insignificant. Their position is that cultural components are ultimately detachable from the perceptual content. When we detach cultural components from perception, we can make room for the notion of the disengaged. It seems modern epistemology may not be specifying ways/methods to detach the cultural components from a particular perception. But it deems it to be possible that the cultural components can be detached from the perceptual content.

In the same way, modern epistemology does not have great difficulty in admitting that perception is embodied in a certain sense. That is, if we are viewing a bus from its front side, we would not be able to perceive its backside. In that sense our perception is constrained and limited by our embodiment. Taylor thinks that modern epistemology does not have any difficulty in accepting that the perceiving agent is embodied in that sense. It is true that embodiment limits

our perception. But if we consider the perception of the front side of bus itself (that is, consider our object of perception is not the bus as a whole but only the front side of the bus) then does our embodiment shape or influence our perception? Suppose human beings and other embodied agents perceive the front side of the bus. Do we have any substantial reason to think that the agents perceive the front side of bus in different ways? In short, modern epistemologists' point is that critics might be right in saying that embodiment and culture shape our perception but only in an insignificant way. That is, shaping or influencing of the culture is ultimately detachable from the perceptual content. Taylor's point is that such a kind of insignificant influences or shaping is not what Heidegger meant when he introduces engaged agency to counter the notion of disengaged agency.

Taylor's point is that cultural or embodiment elements are not something which are attached to perception which is ultimately independent of agent's background. Background shapes perception; it does not mean merely that perception only occurs in the background (cultural background etc.) of the agent. Instead, perception itself occurs only through the background and the body of agent. Independent of such elements perception would be impossible. That is, the relation of culture and body to the perception is not a contingent relation; instead it is a necessary condition of the occurrence of perception. Taylor points out that especially body is a necessary condition of perception, not in the sense that bodily organs are needed in perception but in the more basic sense that the nature of perception is formed by the particular constitution of the body. Taylor uses the following example to argue his point.

> As I sit here and take in the scene before me, this has a complex structure. It is
> oriented vertically, some things are "up," others are "down"; and in depth, some are
> "near," others "far." Some objects "lie to hand," others are "out of reach"; some

constitute "unsurmountable obstacles" to movement, others are "easily displaced." My present position does not give me "good purchase" on the scene; for that I would have to shift farther to the left. And so on. Here is a "world shaped" by embodiment in the sense that the way of experiencing or "living" the world is essentially that of an agent with this kind of body. It is an agent who acts to maintain equilibrium upright, who can deal with things close up immediately and has to move to get to things farther away, who can grasp certain kinds of things easily and others not, can remove certain obstacles and others not, can move to make a scene more perspicuous, and so on. (Taylor, Charles.1993: 318)

Taylor argues that the above example points out that embodiment necessarily shape our perception. To say that this world is essentially that of this agent is to say that the terms in which we describe this experience make sense only against the background of this kind of embodiment. "To understand what it is to "lie to hand" one has to understand what it is to be an agent with the particular bodily capacities that humans have. Some creature from another planet might be unable to grasp this as a projectable term. Of course, the creature might work out some descriptions that were roughly extensionally equivalent. But to project this term the way we do, one has to understand what it is to be human." (Ibid: 319) Taylor's major position is that perception becomes intelligible only if we take the elements of body into account. The conceptual framework and the language through which we experience are crucially dependent upon the embodiment and background. That there is a pen in front of me would not be intelligible for a creature whose body is spherical in shape and has revolving eyes. "The ways in which our world is so shaped define the contours of what I am calling engaged agency - what Heidegger sometimes referred to as the "finitude" of the knowing agent." (Taylor: 1993. 319).

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When an engaged agency captures the world, it captures the world as something. That is the process of perception itself is an 'intelligible one'. That means, while perceiving I ascribe meaning to the perceptual content or to the object of perception. The perception itself is an intelligible process to me. That is, in perception it is not the case that after perceiving something I am identifying it as something. Critics of modern epistemology, including Taylor and Heidegger insist that it is not that we are perceiving something and later identifying it as something intelligible. Instead, while perceiving itself the agent identifies it as something intelligible. Perception itself is perceiving *as* something intelligible. Intelligibility is therefore not an after effect of perception but the pre-condition of perception itself.

Certainly Cartesian epistemology with its representative thesis acknowledges the active role of agent but in a very limited sense. More significantly, the active role of the agent comes only after the reception of the information. That is, till he/she receive the information, the agent does not have a role different from that of a machine. But later, the agent processes the information which it receive to come up with a picture. At the stage of processing, the agent combines all information in a particular fashion. Representative theory assumes that atomistic information, which the agent possesses or receives, is objective and by processing it the agent then forms a picture of the world. "This offers us the picture of an agent who in perceiving the world takes in "bits" of information from his or her surroundings and then "processes" them in some fashion, in order to emerge with the "picture" of the world he or she has; who then acts on the basis of this picture to fulfil his or her goals, through a "calculus" of means and ends." (Ibid: 319).

Thus Cartesian epistemologists combine an atomism of input with a computational picture of mental function. The cognitive process so construed in a certain sense is agent-

dependent as it is related to the nature of the agent but that does not undermine the representative nature of the picture/claim which we have formed through this process. It is because, at the end, the picture which the agent has formed is somehow related to the objective pieces of information which the agent has. So, the picture is the product of the process. To claim that the picture or the propositional claim is representative, it is sufficient to claim that it is related to the objective pieces of information in a particular way, given that the process can be characterized in a systematic and clear manner.

The idea of representation does not imply that mental images which we have are replicas or pictures of the external world. Rather, the idea is that mental images or the agent's propositional claims are somehow related to the external world. The crucial question which the modern epistemologists face in their representative frame work is the question of ensuring the representative character of the mental picture. How can we claim that the picture we have formed about the external world from the 'objective' information is a representative one? In one sense, it is a question about the rationality of human thinking which generates knowledge claims. The question is of rationality because of the following reasons. According to Modern Epistemology, the purpose of the knowledge-generating process concerns forming a picture of external world from the objective information which we have. So, knowledge-generating process would be rational only if it provides optimal chance to attain the purpose. That is, human knowledge-generating activity would be rational only if we can show that the picture which we have formed represents the world. But the question is 'How can we show that the picture which we have formed from 'objective' information is the representation of the external world?'

Taylor argues that the purpose of 'the reflexive turn' in modern epistemology is to show that the images/claims (pictures which we have formed) represent the external world. One of the

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possible ways to ensure that the picture (mental images/propositional claims) which we have represents the world is the following: compare the external world and the 'picture' and based on the similarities conclude that one represents another. According to Modern epistemologists such a way is not feasible. This is because they believe that we do not have any direct access to the world. What we have is only an indirect access to the world through representations. Moreover, even if we have direct access to the external world, the comparison and determination of similarities is not sufficient to support the representationalist claim. That is, the similarity between the mental images and the world is not sufficient to support the representationalist thesis. Similarity relation only shows that there is a contingent representative relation between world and mental states. Modern epistemologists' claim is that there is a necessary representative relation between mental images and external world.

Hence, they focus on the procedure or method of forming mental representation or mental images or claims. Modern epistemologists' claim is that by analyzing the method or procedure, we can claim that mental images are necessarily related to external world.

Reason is not that faculty in us that connects us to an order of things in the universe, which itself can be called rational. Rather, reason is that faculty whereby we think properly. In its theoretical employment, reason serves to build a picture of the world. Rationality requires that we scrutinize this building closely and not let our view of things just form itself distractedly, or self-indulgently, or following the prejudices of our day. Rationality involves a careful scrutiny by thinking of its own processes. This determines the reflexive turn of modern rationalism. (Taylor, Charles.1993: 320)

Taylor notes that, in this sense, modern normative approach is closely linked with representationalism. Here normativism itself is footed upon the representationalist claim. The task of normativist epistemology is to show that the process of forming representation is a reliable process. Normativism attempts to show that reasoning process or knowledge-generating process follows a canonical procedure such that its output (the picture we formed) would be representative in nature. Descartes' criterion of clear and distinct perception and Locke's criterion of rules of evidence are attempts to show that mental images or pictures are the true representations of the external world. "But both views call for reflexive self-policing in the name of a canonical procedure" (Ibid: 321).Through such a criterion or norm, Epistemologists attempt to support the representational claim. The same was the purpose of foundationalism too. "More to the point, both procedures require that we break down our too hastily acquired beliefs into their components and scrutinize their composition to see if they are properly to be trusted. They both require that we treat candidate beliefs in this sense atomistically." (Taylor, Charles. 1993: 321) In that sense, Taylor notes that representationalism is the fundamental element of modern epistemology. In modern epistemology, representationalist thesis has primacy over normativism and foundationalism as both normativism and foundationalism attempt to show that the method of knowledge-forming process is justified and we have a good reason to assume that the output (knowledge/picture) of the knowledge-forming process represents the input (external world). The reflexive turn which is the chief characteristic of modern epistemology is clearly a result of the representationalist framework of modern epistemology.

The important question to be asked is 'Why does Taylor consider representationalism as a problematic thesis?' So far, we have discussed Taylor's point that representationalism is the key thesis of modern epistemology and hence, overcoming epistemology is overcoming

representationalism. We have also seen how the representationalist thesis is based on certain problematic assumptions like dualism. However, though the representationalist model of analysis is based on problematic assumptions, it could provide an insight into a certain kind of understanding, given that we presume that assumptions are right. While we gain a certain understanding of the external world, often it is the case that we grant certain assumptions. So, if we concern ourselves with representation as a model of philosophical analysis, the important question is whether it provides a better understanding of external world. Here comes Taylor's scathing attack against representationalism. Taylor's point is that representationalism is neither a model of analysis nor a model of understanding; it is a model of 'knowledge'. Modern epistemologists consider that knowing is a concept which is substantially different from 'understanding' or 'analysis'. Taylor considers that it is this fateful step of modern epistemology which gave birth to representationalism.

Taylor notes that in ancient epistemology, concept of Knowledge was very close to the notion of Understanding. In Plato's theory, knowledge is about the 'Form' or forming belief about 'Form'. Plato's 'Forms' provide the best explanations of certain phenomena. To explain the world or phenomena, Plato's formulated the theory of 'Form'. In a certain sense, his theory of 'Form' is the best tool for understanding. In that sense, we can see that in ancient philosophy, 'having an understanding' and 'having knowledge' are very close notions.

But when it comes to modern epistemology, Taylor argues, knowledge acquired an entirely different form. Modern epistemologists believe that knowing means capturing the external world as it is. Here knowing becomes synonymous with having an objective belief. That is, objectivity becomes the crux of modern epistemology and the idea of 'Representation' comes from the urge for objectivity i.e. for capturing the world as it is. For Taylor, mechanical

procedure or dualism would not be controversial, if we see it as a model of understanding or analysis. Taylor notes as follows: "The fateful step was not so much its formulation, but rather what I earlier called its ontologizing, that is, the reading of the ideal method into the very constitution of the mind." (Taylor, Charles. 1993:321)

As an understanding model of our belief formulation, we could consider sense-data theory as one of the legitimate theories. But the claim of modem epistemologists is that it is the description of reality. So, Taylor's objection is not to any particular version of the modern account of knowledge. But his objection is to the very idea of knowledge propounded by modern epistemologists. His point is that the notion of knowledge (i.e. having an objective belief) is sensible only within the framework of dualism and certain other assumptions. If we can give up those assumptions, it is not intuitively clear what it means knowing the world, or describing the world as it is. It is this point which makes his position on epistemology a 'critique' in the Kantian and Marxian sense of 'showing the limits of' by uncovering the hidden assumptions.

The notion like knowing or understanding or explanation must be intuitively clear irrespective of the assumptions we hold. To formulate an account of knowledge or understanding, it is legitimate to hold certain assumptions. But, in the case of knowledge to have intuitive idea of knowledge itself, we need to hold some assumptions. Taylor's point is that notion of knowledge is something which is absent in the human discourse. Being disengaged or being mechanical is not a particular feature of an account of knowledge. These are essential characteristics of a knowing agent in any account of knowledge as per modern epistemology. It is not meaningful to assume that we form a belief without engagement. Taylor notes that

There is nothing wrong with this aspiration (capturing the world as they really are) as it stands**...**If we stated it slightly more modestly, as the goal of disengaging from those features of our prereflective outlook that we come to discover are distortive of reality, then it is not only unexceptionable but an indispensable condition of pursuing, say, modern physics. The fateful move was, once again, the ontologizing of this disengaged perspective, reading it into the depth constitution of the mind itself, and relegating the distortions to the periphery, either as a result of error, inattention, mere lapse or as a feature only of the brute preprocessed input, not touching the procedures of processing themselves. (Taylor, Charles. 1993:322)

Taylor's crucial point is that the notion of knowing is a highly distorted one in the modern epistemological scenario which treats the concept of knowledge on par with any other phenomena like 'rain' or 'fire' etc. The phenomenon 'fire' can be explained or understood by relating the phenomenon to its causes. In the same way, modern epistemology too treats knowledge as a phenomenon which can be explained by it causes. Cause is the external world or the sense-data we receive. The crucial mistake is the carelessness in distinguishing the first-order inquiry from second-order inquiry. The phenomena like 'rain' or 'fire' are the objects of first-order inquiry but when we speak of knowledge or understanding or belief they are not phenomenon like rain or fire. They are the concepts about the first-order inquiry. That is why we use the world like 'knowledge of fire' or 'knowledge or rain' or 'understanding of rain' etc. So, knowledge or understanding or belief is *about* the first-order inquiry. In that sense, they belong to second-order inquiry. Taylor's point is that the two modes of inquiry are different. But modern epistemology provides a kind of first-order principle to explain a second-order concept. Representationalism is a kind of first order principle. Taylor comes to the crucial point that the

second-order inquiry is substantially different from the first order inquiry. In other words, the concept of knowledge is substantially different from natural phenomena. It seems the first crucial distinction is that the explanation in first-order enquiry is independent of an agent. If I explain fire it does not matter which agent sees or which agent knows fire. But that kind of independence cannot be sought in the case of second order enquiry since it crucially dependent on the agent. It is about what it means to say that the agent knows something or the agent understands something. So these concepts are not something produced or created or caused. These concepts are about employing my perspective or conditions to make something intelligible. So, it is basically about the enquiry into the conditions of intelligibility.

Taylor distinguishes between natural science and human science. By distinguishing them Taylor wants to show the important role of human beings in constructing knowledge. In natural science, objects of study are things and in human science objects of study are human beings. The point is that the modern epistemologist tries to treat everything as object. Modern epistemologists consider Philosophy too as science. Modern epistemologists consider human beings as objects. Natural science objectifies everything and quantifies it for accurate prediction. Quantification of objects is an important aspect of natural science. Consider a phenomenon like heat; natural science handles the phenomenon in terms of degree of temperature and devises the tools like thermometer to measure the temperature. But Taylor points out that in the case of human beings, prediction is not possible. We do not have anything to measure human beings' behaviour. Taylor aims to show the limitations of natural science. He wants to show the problems faced by human sciences when they objectify the human being.

Reality itself does not have the capacity to provide us knowledge about it. For example, a tree cannot interpret/say that it is a tree. Human being ascribes certain meaning to a

phenomenon and acquires knowledge accordingly. In natural science we can see some kind of prediction of a phenomenon. In natural science once we predict a phenomenon, it has the capacity to survive and meaning of the phenomena will not vary. Human science does not have these kinds of prediction. Prediction is not possible in human science because human beings themselves provide interpretations of things. When they interpret things meaning of a phenomenon will change. There is no absolute meaning of things. It depends upon the person involved in it. Each person comes up with his/her own explanation about a phenomenon in terms of his/her cultural context.

For Taylor, the crucial distinction between human beings and objects concerns the self-interpreting capacity of human beings. Taylor has argued that there is a double hermeneutics at work in human sciences compared to the natural sciences. This is due to one of the ontological features he ascribes to persons. Human beings are self-interpreting animals. So any attempt to explain their behavior must take this into account. Taylor asks 'Who is making the knowledge claim'. Human beings are making knowledge claims. When human beings are making knowledge claims what we have to keep in mind is that human beings are self-interpreting animals. Taylor gives two reasons for this: 1. Understanding themselves and their world is a primary property of their existence, not one that can be bracketed out in the quest to explain them. 2. Humans' self-interpretations influence their actions and behavior; any account that excludes this variable cannot be adequate. So appreciating how the persons under study view their situation is an essential component of understanding them.

Taylor points out that **"**If a group or society change their self-interpretations in the future, then a modified or perhaps markedly different explanation of them will be required; new concepts and

terminology will probably be needed to explain this changed vocabulary" (Smith, Nicholas H.2004:157)

In natural science when we predict something we know the range of that phenomenon. When we predict a phenomenon we can know which variables will remain constant and which ones will change. We have a framework of the phenomena. It is a kind of closed system. Beyond our prediction no meaning will be there for a phenomenon. We can anticipate or assume what forces will be influential in the future and what their effects will be. Taylor argues that, in human science it is difficult to identify the variable which caused the change of the meaning of thing. "Taylor claims that it is difficult to delineate a comparably closed system and to identify what the salient variables will be and how they might interact and affect one another". (Ibid)

One of the criticisms that can be laid against Taylor is that his characterization of natural sciences has been severally called into question by the recent developments in philosophy of science. He rightly questions the positivist construal of human sciences and he convincingly shows that hermeneutical framework is an adequate one for them. According to this framework, to understand human actions is to recover the meanings they embody and the meanings demand hermeneutical interpretation appropriate to a specific piece of conduct. The hermeneutic interpretations differ systematically from culture to culture and the components of the interpretation must emanate from the very cultural context within which the action occurs. The object of human sciences is inextricably related to intentionality, unlike the objects of natural sciences.

In his response to Taylor's celebrated paper "Interpretations and the science of man" Thomas Kuhn questions Taylor's way of drawing the line between natural and human sciences.

No doubt Kuhn too recognizes the line between them but Kuhn's line is different and quite thin. According to Kuhn, Taylor's view that objects of natural science are culture-neutral unlike those of human sciences is highly questionable. According to him, the objects of natural sciences are not independent of the lexicon which specific science at a specific time deploys along with the taxonomy which goes along with the lexicon. When the lexicon changes the objects also undergo change. As Kuhn says the lexicon that is, a "Set of concepts is a historical product embedded in the culture to which current practitioners are initiated by training and it is accessible to non-members only through the hermeneutic technique by which historians and anthropologist come to understand other models of thought" (Kuhn, 2000: 221). Hence it is in the fitness of things that Kuhn calls such a set of concepts "The hermeneutic basis for the science of particular period." (Ibid: 221) Thus though natural sciences, unlike human sciences, are not hermeneutic enterprises they enquire a hermeneutic base. Since " No more in the natural than in the human sciences is there some neutral, culture-independent, set of categories within which the population- whether of objects or actions- can be described" (Ibid: 220) Of course, Kuhn does not seek to dig into the foundations of modern epistemology to show why that hermeneutic base of natural science was blacked out to facilitate the received image of science. Taylor could have taken note of this and related it to certain aspects of modern epistemology in which case his critique of epistemology would have become even deeper.

Taylor's critique of modern epistemology does not imply that natural sciences cannot have major role in our epistemological reflection. What he is questioning is the claim that natural sciences constitute the paradigmatic case of knowledge. By setting themselves as the ideals to which our other epistemic activities must seek to approximate, what is called scientism has been the butt of attack in recent times. But Taylor while attacking it brings in the contention

that scientism has its philosophical moorings in the very framework of modern epistemology with the result of epistemology itself was made to become, to use an expression of Habermas, 'a scientistic self-understanding of the sciences'. This has resulted in a radical shrinking of our epistemological canvas itself and constricted our epistemic practices. In fact, those epistemic practices which do not fit into the model of natural science are considered to be inferior kinds of knowledge or no knowledge at all. Thus modern epistemology questionably starts with the naturalistic assumption that knowledge is a phenomenon and ironically lands up in an equally questionably normative prescription.

As we have seen, one of the major planks of Taylor's Critique of Modern Epistemology is his attack on representationalist thesis. It must be noted that many opponents of representationalism seek to attack it by linking it with realism and realism with correspondence theory of truth. Thus, according to them representationalism/realism is one side of the same coin whose other side is correspondence theory of truth. Hence, they deem that attack on the correspondence theory of truth is sufficient to demolish Representationalism. However, Taylor's repudiation of representationalism does not follow this course. This is because according to Taylor the framework of representationalism is much deeper than what we might often think. We usually consider that the thesis of representationalism is similar to the correspondence theory. Correspondence theory of truth advocates that truth of a proposition or belief lies in the connections we draw between the world and our proposition. A proposition is true if and only if it corresponds to a fact in the world and the thesis of representationalism makes clear what correspondence means. Indeed, correspondence theory of truth includes an obvious manifestation of representationalist thesis. But mere repudiation of correspondence theory does not mean the

end of representationalism. Representationalism is much a deeper thesis than correspondence theory.

Taylor notes that even the coherence theory of truth is also as much representationalist as correspondence theory. As per coherence theory, what justifies a belief or a proposition is another belief or proposition. Taylor notes that for coherence theory, the justification of knowledge claim is dependent upon other knowledge claims. But such a position clearly maintains the dualism of the world and the belief which is the crux of representationalism. That is, coherence theory also claims that our knowledge of things in the external world is based on the belief which we form about them. It only claims that justification for the claim (beliefs are about representations of external world) does not derive from drawing a relation between a belief and world but drawing a relation between the beliefs and already established other beliefs. Thus, coherence theory too states that knowledge is solely based on the beliefs**.** "...the crucial point about the mediational picture (representationalism) is that it sees our knowledge of the outside coming through certain elements, call them "representations," on the inside… To buy into the picture (representationalism) is to hold that our knowledge is grounded exclusively in representations and that our reasoning involves manipulating representations. To speak the language of Sellars and McDowell, it is to hold that the only inhabitants of the space of reason are beliefs." (Taylor, Charles. 2004:28).

In the sense above described, the coherentist claim too is at heart a representationalist claims. Coherentist claim is that what justifies our one particular belief is another set of beliefs or claim. As per the coherence theory, when I am testing a belief, I am comparing the belief with other set of beliefs, and drawing a meta-relation between the beliefs and on the basis on that meta-relation, I justify the knowledge claim. Meta-relation could be coherence relation or

something else, but that meta- relation is what makes a claim justified. Therefore, the comparison between beliefs and the meta- relation, which we form, provide the grounds of justification. Taylor's position is that another belief is not the one which justifies a particular belief. Instead, agent's unmediated touch with the reality justifies my knowledge claim or belief. However, Taylor claims that our justificatory practices never invoke such meta-relation. Taylor cites the following example to elucidate his point. Someone tells Johnny that 'Johnny, go into the room and tell me whether the picture is crooked.' "Johnny does as he is told. He doesn't check the (problematized) belief that the picture is crooked against his own belief." (Ibid: 29).Taylor's point is that here the agent is asked to test or check the belief. However, he/she is not checking the belief or comparing the belief with other sets of beliefs. Instead, he/she checks the belief by forming another belief, which has unmediated link with reality. That is, he/she tests the belief by forming another belief by going and looking on reality, not by comparing, and drawing a meta-relation among beliefs. But the important question to be asked is 'How is a particular belief linked with the reality'. Since they are ontologically, different categories there cannot be any direct link between belief and the outer world. Taylor notes that this is the standard challenge to representationalism. "We can't get outside. This is the basic image of the I/O. We are contained within our own representations and can't stand somehow beyond them to compare them with "reality."" (Ibid: 29). Taylor puts forth the notion of 'embedded knowing' against representationalist thesis. The representationalist position is that knowledge of the external world comes through something which is purely mental. "This means we can understand our grasp of the world as something that is, in principle, separable from what it is a grasp of." (Ibid: 33).

Taylor argues that our grasp of the world or our understanding of the world or our belief about the world cannot be separated from the world or reality. In a sense, Taylor attempts to

formulate a thesis of holism where belief/understanding/meaning cannot be analysed or understood without speaking of what it is about. In other words, a certain holism gets in the way. Taylor realized that our grasp of reality has to be addressed holistically. Taylor's holistic notion is different from Quine's and Davidson's. The thesis of holism of Quine and Davidson is basically about verification. Their claim is that a proposition cannot be verified in isolation. A proposition can be verified only in conjunction with a set of propositions. In that sense, it is the thesis about meaning too. Meaning of a proposition cannot be determined in isolation, but only in relation with other set of propositions. But Taylor notes that the holistic thesis of Quine-Davidson's is not sufficiently radical as it is compatible with the atomistic account of the input we receive from the world. In that sense, it is an account of meaning which works within the framework of Cartesian epistemology. That is, Quine-Davidson holism too admits that beliefs or propositions are aggregate of certain basic elements like sensations. But in order to verify or get meaning of those propositions we need to place it in the context of larger whole. But Taylor claims that holism which he invokes is more radical as it undercuts the atomistic nature of the input. In Cartesian epistemology and in Quine-Davidson thesis meaning is the production of certain basic elements or its aggregate or the collection of such aggregate. That is, in a sense, meaning of a proposition or a belief is defined by a certain aggregate.

However, Taylor argues that meaning defines any element by placing it in the context of a larger whole and the larger whole cannot be divided into simple and basic elements. Taylor elucidates his point that the elements of our belief (which are bits of explicit information) like 'it is red' and 'it is a horse' can be defined or can be meaningful only in the background of world or reality which we have. The elements or bits of information like 'it is a horse' acquire the sense that they have only in the background of the understanding of the world. Suppose we spot an

entity in the sky with exact features of 'a horse'. But we could not call it 'a horse'. At best we would call it an entity which is similar to 'a horse'. This is because a certain entity like a horse acquires the sense of the 'horse' only in the background of certain prior understanding. We are hesitant to call a sky-entity 'horse' because the background of the world which usually accompanies the sense of term 'horse' is not compatible with the background of the sky-entity.

Taylor's point is that the background information is not some pieces of information like 'Horse is a terrestrial animal' and it cannot be spotted in sky etc. Background is not a piece of certain explicit information. Taylor further argues the point as follows:

> I notice the rabbit, because I pick it out against the stable background of those trees and this open space before them. Without having found my feet in the place, there could be no rabbit sighting. If the whole stage on which the rabbit darts out were uncertain, say, swirling around as it is when I am about to faint, there could be no registering of this explicit bit of information. My having found my feet in this locus, however, is not a matter of my having extra bits of explicit information – that is, it can never just consist in this, although other bits may be playing a role. It is an exercise of my ability to cope, something I have acquired as this bodily being brought up in this culture.(Ibid: 31)

Taylor notes that our ability to cope involves our overall understanding of our world and ourselves. In addition, our understanding of world involves our different abilities. Any particular understanding of our situation blends our explicit knowledge and unarticulated know- how.

What is to be noted is that Taylor's rejection of the standard version of correspondence theory of truth is only one aspect of his attacks on representationalism. Secondly, the former is

not completely grounded in the latter. Taylor has many planks of attacks on representationalism and his attack on the standard correspondence theory of truth is only one among them. Further he attacks even coherence theory of truth which also, according to him is organically linked to representationalism, though; correspondence theory of truth is germane to Realism or representationalism proper whereas coherence theory of truth is germane to Idealism whose commitment to representationalism, at least for a realist, is not so complete. Of course, Taylor need not reject the correspondence theory of truth or coherence theory of truth as false. All that he needs to assert is that these theories of truth as normally construed are too crude to do justice to the richness of our cognitive relation to the world. Attacking the reference theory of meaning at the beginning his *Philosophical Investigation* Wittgenstein says that reference theory of meaning is a crude theory of meaning or a theory of meaning fit for a crude languages / language-games, which have hardly anything to do with our day-to-day cognitive experience. Taylor can say the same thing about correspondence theory of truth or coherence theory of truth or any theory of truth that locates itself in anything like mediation.

A couple of critical points may be made regarding Taylor's otherwise convincing stance. Firstly he is not clear about his attitude towards pragmatic theory of truth which is not linked to representationalism. It is clear that the pragmatic theory of truth is at least consistent with whatever Taylor has said about our cognitive relation to the world. If he is not happy with the pragmatic theory of truth he has not explicitly put forth his own alternative to the standard theories of truth. It is not even clear whether he considers the notion of truth as either redundant or remnant of modern epistemological tradition which is being put on defensive. Finally, Taylor is indifferent to the post-positivist developments regarding scientific knowledge. These developments which are articulated in the works of Kuhn and Feyerabend have called into

question, on the basis of 'Incommensurability Thesis', the idea of one to one correspondence between scientific theory and what they are about. According to philosophers of science like Kuhn the idea that our theories correspond to the world outside perfectly or approximately is a myth. Kuhn and other philosophers like Mary Hesse have argued that the relation between our theories and the world they putatively describe is less like a mirror and the object mirrored than a metaphor and the situation described metaphorically. The relation between a metaphor and the situation is not one of the correspondence but of the aptness.

However, one of the main contributions of Taylor's philosophy is that he tries to combines two well-known traditions of Philosophy called 'Analytic Philosophy' and 'Continental Philosophy'. He is handling both these traditions in a mature way. In the formulation of his critique of Cartesian epistemology, he mainly relies on the works of Heidegger and Merleau Ponty. But their views are formulated in response to the specific questions, which they pursue. So, often such debates do not sound significant beyond the debates on such questions. For example, Heidegger's entire philosophical pursuit revolves around the question of 'being'. In addition, for analytic philosophers who pursue the question of meaning or question of knowledge hardly find such debates of continental philosophy significant. Taylor's significance lies in abstracting out the debates of continental philosophy from the specific contexts from which they evolve. Primarily, he specifically articulates how such questions are clear responses to modern philosophy up to Kant. Then he formulates continental debates as a response to the debates of analytic philosophers like Quine, Davidson, and Rorty etc. And, more importantly he exhibits conceptual clarity which is the hallmark of the debates within analytic tradition. In that sense, Taylor blends analytic approach with the idiom of continental philosophy.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES TAYLOR'S CRITIQUE OF EPISTEMOLOGY: 2

In the last chapter an attempt was made to delineate Charles Taylor's critique of modern epistemology in terms of his critique of normativism, foundationalism and representationalism as the focal points. In this chapter the aim is to further delve into his critical stance towards modern epistemological tradition by placing it in relation to the views of Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau Ponty who preceded Taylor and whose views we have already dealt with in Chapter II. The thesis of representationalism, though is an epistemological thesis, has moulded social, moral and spiritual ideas of modern period. This is because modern epistemology which is worked out within the framework of representationalism has shaped not only the debates in philosophy but also the debates over various aspects of life, individual and collective. As Taylor notes, overcoming representationalism is not mere repudiation of epistemology, but also challenging the moral and the spiritual ideas which constitute the core of modernity as an ideology. In other words, the deeper understanding of representationalism would be possible not only through the analysis of epistemological doctrines but also through the analysis of social, moral and spiritual ideas of modern age.

IV.1 Charles Taylor on Husserl

Taylor's response to the preceding critics of modern epistemology is mainly linked to their understanding of the limitations of Cartesian Epistemology. Among the many critics, Husserl is undoubtedly a tall figure who opened up new vistas of philosophical criticism of Cartesian Epistemology. Phenomenological movement founded by him, undoubtedly, exposes the inadequacies of the received philosophical/epistemological tradition central to which is third-person point of view. In our Chapter II, we discussed in detail how phenomenological movement altogether provides a first-person account of knowledge. Yet, Taylor considers that Husserl's critique of epistemology is insufficient as it still labours within the Cartesian framework. According to him, Husserl's criticisms are wanting because they failed to comprehend the depth and force of the modern epistemological tradition. Taylor considers that any attempt to evaluate Cartesian Epistemology in isolation from other philosophical debates and from the larger social context of the age is bound to be a shallow one. The modern epistemological tradition is closely connected with moral and spiritual ideas of the period. Taylor notes that modern epistemology and the modern moral and spiritual ideas stand in a complex relation of mutual support. And only if we are able to comprehend that complex relation, we would be able to evaluate modern epistemology in depth.

Taylor finds that though Husserl severs his relation with many of the major positions of modern epistemology, he remains a strong advocate of the spiritual and moral implications of the Cartesian framework. According to Taylor, representationalist characterization of human agency is mainly instrumental in shaping the ideas in other fields of the modern age. The powerful ideal of Cartesian Epistemology is the reflexive self-given certainty. In Cartesian Epistemology, certainty is determined by the ordering of our thoughts/beliefs and by examining the relation

between them. Consider a hypothesis like 'Accident is caused by break failure of the vehicle' or 'The disease is caused by infection'. Modern epistemology advocates that certainty of all such hypotheses is determined by showing how such hypotheses are connected with other facts or basic facts or evidence. The link we draw between hypotheses and the facts determines the certainty of that hypothesis. That is why Taylor points out that "...certainty is something we can generate for ourselves, by ordering our thoughts correctly..." (Taylor, Charles.1995:5) And thus "...certainty is the child of reflexive clarity, or the examination of our own ideas in abstraction from what they "represent"…" (Ibid)

So, to be rational in the Cartesian sense is having a better ordering and having a close and strong relation between our thoughts. So, the Cartesian notion of rationality is footed or grounded in the nature of our beliefs and their connections. That is, an agent's rationality is exclusively about one's beliefs and its ordering. An agent's epistemic characteristics like rationality are defined solely in relation to his/her beliefs. Taylor notes that such a notion of rationality and of certainty play a decisive role in shaping the idea of 'human agency' or 'subject' of the modern age.

The picture of the 'disengaged agent' follows from such a picture of the human subject. The subject is ideally disengaged, that is, free and rational to the extent that he fully distinguishes himself from the natural and social worlds so that his identity is no longer to be defined in terms of what lies outside the agent. Such a notion gives rise to the powerful moral ideal of modern period: to be good is to rely on ourselves and on our beliefs and on our judgement. This ideal of self-responsibility is the foundational stone of modern culture.

Taylor notes that many important critics of Cartesian epistemology, remain strong advocates of the implications of Cartesian Epistemology and this is because they failed to comprehend the representational thesis of Cartesian Epistemology in its depth. Taylor point out that Husserl is one of the important figures of the phenomenological movement who gave rise to various unconventional and radical thoughts in philosophical debates, but yet remains a captive of representationalist thesis of modern epistemology. Taylor says that Husserl who delinked himself from many epistemological theses of modern philosophy emerges as strong advocates of its ethical implications. Taylor cites Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* to argue that Husserl holds firmly the Cartesian Moral Ideal.

Cannot the disconsolateness of our philosophical position be traced back ultimately to the fact that the driving forces emanating from the *Meditations* of Descartes have lost their original vitality - lost it because the spirit that characterizes radicalness of philosophical self-responsibility has been lost? Must not the demand for a philosophy aiming at the ultimate conceivable freedom from prejudice, shaping itself with actual autonomy according to ultimate evidences it has itself produced and therefore absolutely self-responsible-must not this demand, instead of being excessive, be part of the fundamental sense of genuine philosophy? (Husserl, Edmund.1982:5-6).

Taylor elaborates the position as follows: "The ideal of self-responsibility is foundational to modern culture. It emerges not only in our picture of the growth of modern science through the heroism of the great scientist, standing against the opinion of his age on the basis of his own self-responsible certainty-Copernicus, Galileo (he wobbled a bit before the Holy Office, but who can blame him?), Darwin, Freud. It is also closely linked to the modern ideal of freedom as self-autonomy." (Taylor, Charles. 1995:7)

Moreover, Taylor considers that though Husserl's phenomenological analysis poses serious threat to many epistemological theses, his mode of philosophy is well within the defined boundaries of Cartesian epistemology. Husserl's formulation of 'Transcendental Subjectivity' and 'Transcendental Reduction' are well inspired by Descartes' methodologies. One of the several ways to 'Transcendental Reduction' is 'Cartesian Way'. Cartesian way of Husserl's 'Transcendental reduction' is inspired by Descartes' methodological doubt. Husserl claims that it is possible to conceive the existence of a worldless subject, whereas it is not possible to conceive the existence of a subjectless world. Thus, Husserl claims that transcendental subjectivity which is basically a worldless subject is the transcendental condition of human experience.

> Whereas the objective world (understood as the coherent and rational organization of our intentional correlates) necessarily presupposes an intentional subject, the reverse is not the case. Whereas the world can only appear for a subject, subjectivity does not need the world in order to be. The world, and more generally, every type of *transcendence,* is relative insofar as the condition for its appearance lies outside itself, namely, in the subject. In contrast the subject, the *immanence,* is absolute and autonomous since its manifestation only depends upon itself. (Zahavi, Dan.2003:48).

Thus, it is clear Husserl holds the position that subjectivity is autonomous. Such a characterization of subjectivity is very well compatible with representationalist framework. Taylor characterizes one of the core tenets of representationalism as follows: "...these states (the ideas) are self-enclosed, in the sense that they can be accurately identified and described in 'abstraction' from the "outside" world (this is of course, essential to the whole rationalist thrust of reflexive testing of the grounds of knowledge)..." (Taylor, Charles.1995:9). Indeed, Husserl never spoke of 'Ideas'. He does not subscribe to Cartesian atomism. He considers phenomena as

indivisible and at the same time he believes that subjective experience can be abstracted from what it is about (i.e. from reality).

Thus, Husserl's phenomenology falls within the boundary of representationalism. According to Taylor, the second core tenet of representationalism is the following: the ideas point towards and represent things in the outside world. Taylor interprets Husserl's theory of intentionality as a version of the second representationalist tenet.

There are various interpretations of Husserl's theory of intentionality. It seems Taylor adopts the interpretation which views Husserl's theory of intentionality as a meditational theory. A conscious experience or act is directed towards an object through an intentional entity which is called '*Noema'*. Here, Husserl's notion of '*Noema'* (the object-as-it is intended) is considered as mental representation. *'Noema '*is the object-as-it-is intended, for example, I can consider 'Pratibha Patil' as the 'President of India' or as 'Mother of a person'. Here I am intending the object called 'Pratibha Patil' as the President of India. That is why often *Noema* is considered as the meaning of the conscious act/experience. But, the much debated question is the relation between 'object-as-it is intended' and the object-that-is intended.

According to West coast interpretation (the interpretations of Follesdal, Dreyfus, Miller Smith and McIntyre)

…the noema must be sharply distinguished from both act and object. It is an ideal meaning or sense which mediates the intentional relation between act and object. Thus, and very importantly, the noema is not taken to be that toward which consciousness is directed, but that by means of which it is directed, and by virtue of which we achieve a reference to the external object. The decisive feature of the Fregean approach is, consequently, that the

intentionality of consciousness is conceived in analogy with the reference of linguistic expressions. In both cases the reference is determined by the sense, that is, in both cases the reference is effectuated *via* the sense. (Zahavi,Dan.2003:58-59)

Indeed Husserl's phenomenology is representationalist as per the above interpretation. But, there are philosophers who counter such an interpretation.

> In contrast, Sokolowski, Drummond, Hart, and Cobb-Stevens (often known as the East Coast interpretation) argue that intentionality is a fundamental feature of conscious experience, and they therefore deny what seems to follow from the mediator theory favoured by the West Coast interpretation, namely that the intentional directedness of the act is a function of the intentional nature of the meaning. In their view, the purpose of the *epoche* and reduction is not to replace the worldly objects with mental representations. After the reduction, we continue to be concerned with the worldly object, but we now no longer consider it naively, rather we focus on it precisely as it is intended and given, that is as a correlate of experience. (Ibid: 59).

Indeed, on the basis of East coast interpretation it is difficult to label Husserl as representationalist. But, it is clear that Taylor continues to hold Husserl as a representationalist. I think Taylor's position can be justified as follows: though in Husserl's writings, there are a number of anti-representationalist remarks, the implication of the Husserl's philosophical articulations does not suggest a way out of the representationalist framework. If we hold the east coast interpretation, then both the realm of consciousness (mental realm) and realm of world/reality are inextricably linked because mental realm is essentially about reality. Taylor's

position might be that the Husserl's notion of intentionality itself is not sufficient to show that mental realm is enclosed. Without having a sufficient argument to claim the mental realm is not enclosed, Husserl's position that mental realm is essentially about reality or world would remain as a slogan.

IV.2 Charles Taylor on Heidegger

Taylor states that Heidegger is the pioneer among philosophers who show a way out of the captivity of representationalism. Taylor notes that the basic form of the argument of Heidegger is the 'argument from transcendental conditions'. Taylor states that Heidegger finds a way out of the Cartesian framework by exploring the conditions for the possibility of experience. Indeed, transcendental arguments originate from Kant, but Taylor notes, Kant's formulations of the conditions of possibility of experience do not go beyond the mental realm. Thus, by formulating the conditions exclusively in mental terms, Kant's approach fails to go beyond Cartesian framework. But Heideggerian formulation of transcendental conditions of human experience goes beyond the mental realm and thus goes beyond the Cartesian doctrine that knowledge is exclusively of mental states and its characteristics are determined by mental states. Thus, Taylor notes that Heidegger's attempt to explore the transcendental conditions of knowledge undermines the entire Cartesian epistemological project. According to Cartesian epistemology, what we call 'knowledge' is our disengaged representation of reality. "Heidegger, for instance, shows-especially in his celebrated analysis of being-in-the-world-that the condition of our forming disengaged representations of reality is that we must be already engaged in coping with our world, dealing with the things in it, at grips with them." (Taylor, Charles.1995:11)

Taylor points out that Heidegger's Being-in-the word is a transcendental condition for our experience and even for disengaged experience. But the perennial question could be whether the condition, i.e, 'being-in-the world' is transcendental condition or only empirical condition of experience. If a particular condition is a transcendental condition of human experience, then we would not be able to conceive of human experience without such a condition. An empirical condition of human experience is a condition which just happens to be a condition of human experience. That is, in a certain sense, empirical conditions are not the necessary conditions of human experience. Human experience is possible even without the empirical conditions but in the current situation, they happen to be conditions of human experience.

The question is whether Heideggerian conditions are empirical or transcendental. If it is only an empirical condition, then it is not a matter of epistemic significance. Of course, phenomenon requires a 'being' since without a 'being' a phenomenon cannot even be conceived. Phenomenon means something which appears. Thus it is pointed out that 'being' is a necessary condition for the possibility of any phenomenon. However, this is what exactly Husserl claims through his transcendental reduction. A transcendental subject is a necessary condition for human experience. But Heidegger's claim is much deeper than that. For Heidegger, it is not the mere 'Being' which is the transcendental condition of human experience, but 'Being-in-the-world', i.e, a being engaging with the world, dealing with things and coping with the world. For Heidegger, a being that is in relentless engagement with the world is the transcendental condition.

And the debating point is that, whether such a being who is in grip with the world is transcendental condition. We may not have much difficulty in accepting that such a being (being-in-the-world) is a part of empirical condition of our human experience or human

knowledge. Because currently we humans have knowledge claims or experience, we are engaged with the world. But the question is can we claim that, without such a being human experience is not possible.

Towards establishing   that Heideggerian'Being-in-the world' is not an empirical condition but a transcendental condition of human experience Taylor takes the first step by construing human experience as meaningful one. He argues that meaning of our experience comes along with the experience. That is, something appears to us as meaningful not that meaning is generated after experience. Taylor claims that experience comes to us as meaningful when one is well equipped with the intuitions about human experience whereas according to Cartesian account in meaningful experience, meaning comes subsequent to the experience and this, according to Heidegger and Taylor is counter intuitive and even inconceivable.

Thus, to uphold Heideggerian position, Taylor primarily argues that experience or appearance is meaningful one. Then Taylor claims the engaged agent (being-in-the-world) is a necessary condition for a meaningful experience. An agent could ascribe meaning to something only on the basis of certain prior understanding of world and ourselves. That pre-understanding of the world and ourselves constitutes the background in ascribing meaning to an experience. And apparently pre-understanding of our world necessarily involves our engagement with the world. And more importantly our body and our language are essential constituents of the pre-understanding realm.

Taylor holds that Heidegger's condition of intelligibility of experience is the major ground of his critique of epistemology. The question is 'How can we find certain experience as intelligible'? Cartesian epistemology's answer is that input is intelligible when it is described in

terms of operations through which the input is processed. An input is unintelligible if it cannot be so processed. Taylor's argument is that even if we adhere to such account of intelligibility, at best the account is only about the way intelligibility works. That is, we are making an experience intelligible through a certain kind of process. But it is hard to claim that the process is generating intelligibility. Taylor finds that such an account of intelligibility maintains the notion of intelligibility as an assumption. So what we need to explore is the conditions of intelligibility.

Taylor notes that the mechanistic account of intelligibility hits a dead end in front of the skeptical attacks. Cartesian epistemology explains the intelligibility in terms of causal relation. Input is causally connected and finally generates the intelligible experience. Causal relation or its process is considered as one which generates intelligibility. Then the question arisen that 'How can causal relation is intelligible to an agent'? Thus, it is revealed that Cartesians do not have an account of intelligibility. Kant is significant in the philosophical tradition because, he attempts to explore the conditions of intelligibility for the first time in modern philosophical tradition. He argues that shaping of an experience by certain categories and faculties of mind generates an intelligible experience. Kant provides an explicit and articulate account of faculties of mind and categories. But a question can be raised: 'How can we have an intelligible account of categories and faculties which are the necessary conditions of intelligibility?' Taylor argues that this brings out the paradoxical nature of intelligibility. Conditions of intelligibility cannot be unearthed in explicit form. In a sense, total explicit formulation or explicit understanding of the conditions of intelligibility is bound to be incoherent one. Hence, Heidegger attempts to explore inexplicit and inarticulate conditions of intelligibility. The experience of an agent is shaped by one's form of life and by bodily existence. That is, experience is essentially of engaged and embodied agent. Engaged agency is an agency whose experience is only made intelligible by being placed in the

context. The context stands as the unexplicited horizon. The background is what makes certain experiences intelligible to us. It makes us capable of grasping experience. "The paradoxical status of the background can then be appreciated. It can be made explicit, because we aren't completely unaware of it. But the expliciting itself supposes a background. The very fashion in which we operate as engaged agents within such a background makes the prospect of total expliciting incoherent. The background can't in this sense be thought of quantitatively at all." (Taylor, Charles. 1995:70)

Taylor clarifies Heidegger's position that even the disengaged stance of an agent to the world necessarily pre-supposes an engaged agent (being-in-the-world). "Even in our theoretical stance to the world, we are agents. Even to find out about the world and formulate disinterested pictures, we have to come to grips with it, experiment, set ourselves to observe, control conditions. But in all this, which forms the indispensable basis of theory, we are engaged as agents coping with things. It is clear that we couldn't form disinterested representations any other way." (Ibid: 11).Thus, Taylor's articulation of Heidegger's view successfully defends the position that an engaged being (being-in-the-world) is transcendental condition of human experience.

Taylor proceeds to show how Heideggerian formulation of transcendental condition of human experience undermines the Cartesian epistemological tradition. Taylor finds that Heidegger's notion of 'Being-in-the-world' primarily under-cuts one of the prestigious thesis of Cartesian epistemology, that is, foundationalism. Roughly the foundationalist position is the following: our belief or hypothesis can be justified by drawing a connection with something called 'basic belief' or 'facts' or 'evidence' etc. So, if we assume that our knowledge system or

belief system as a structured one then at the bottom of the structure is foundational beliefs which support the entire belief system.

The common criticism to foundationalism is against the claim of indubitable nature of basic beliefs. That is, as per foundationalism basic beliefs do not need any further justification. The basic beliefs are self-justificatory or self-evident. Critics of the Cartesian tradition often question that the self-evident nature of our so-called basic beliefs. The problem of foundationalism is that, once the basic beliefs are deprived of self-evident nature then we can see that the basic beliefs themselves have to rely up on some other beliefs. And that belief needs to be dependent up on something else. Thus an infinite-regress is the result of the attempt of justification. Taylor's attack on foundationalism is based on Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world. Taylor tries to attack the very notion of foundation itself in the knowledge system. Taylor's point is that there is no articulated or definite foundation for our knowledge system. Our beliefs about the world or representation of things are basically grounded in the way which we deal with things. When we perceive or when we form a belief, we are crucially dependent up on the way which we are linked with the world. The way which we deal with our world is inarticulate and non-explicit.

> Foundationalism is undermined because you can't go on digging under our ordinary representations to uncover further, more basic representations. What you get underlying our representations of the world-the kinds of things we formulate, for instance, in declarative sentences-is not further representation but rather a certain grasp of the world that we have as agents in it. This shows the whole epistemological construal of knowledge to be mistaken. It doesn't just consist of inner pictures of outer reality, but grounds in something quite other. And in this "foundation," the

crucial move of the epistemological construal - distinguishing states of the subject (our "ideas") from features of the external world - can't be effected. (Taylor, Charles. 1995:11-12).

The crux of Heidegger's critique of epistemology is the conception of engaged and embodied agency. Taylor holds that development of Heideggerian argument is through the deployment of transcendental argument which is ultimately derived from Kant. Taylor characterizes the transcendental argument as follows: "The arguments I want to call "transcendental" start from some feature of our experience which they claim to be indubitable and beyond cavil. They then move to a stronger conclusion, one concerning the nature of the subject or the subject's position in the world." (Ibid: 20). So, the point is that transcendental argument starts from certain indubitable fact about experience. Till Kant from this indubitable fact we attempt to infer forward. That is on the basis of indubitable fact we build other hypothesis or theories; that is the approach of foundationalism. Transcendent argument infer backward from the indubitable facts of experience. In transcendental argument philosophers infer necessary condition of indubitable facts.

Kant's claims that unity of experience, or representation is an indubitable fact. Then Kant explores what should be the necessary characteristics of subject so that the unity of experience is rendered possible. Taylor argues that, transcendental argument plays a crucial role in the construction of the philosophical argument of twentieth century. And certain arguments of later Wittgenstein too can be understood in a better way, if those arguments are constructed in the mould of 'Transcendental arguments'. Taylor notes that such claims could be controversial but understanding of Heidegger's argument in the mould of transcendental philosophy is less controversial and more appropriate.

The conclusion of Heidegger's transcendental argument is that 'the agent or subject of experience or knowledge' is essentially an embodied agent, engaged with the world. We have seen that Taylor's main attempt is to show that 'the embodied and engaged agent' is not mere empirical condition of knowledge. Instead, it is a transcendental condition of knowledge, In order to counter the point that embodied agent is only an empirical condition of knowledge, Taylor analyses the point in detail. Consider the following case: we need an eye for the visual perception of the world. For the knowledge of visually available facts of the world the body part called 'eye' is needed. In that sense, most part of our body is needed for the acquisition of knowledge of the world. But in all above the situation, body is only an empirical condition of knowledge. Suppose I have perception of a tree. With the knowledge of the current situation of my body, I know that one condition for the visual perception of tree is eye. But by analysing the very nature of visual perception, I cannot conclude that 'eye' is a necessary condition of our experience. That is, another situation is conceivable where we have visual perception even without the aid of eye.

So Taylor's point is that such kind of characterization of body as a condition of knowledge does not suggest that body is a transcendental condition. Heideggerian characterization of body and its relation to the world is radically different from the above characterization."It is a claim about the nature of our experience and thought, and of all those functions which are ours qua subject, rather than about the empirically necessary conditions of these functions. To say we are essentially embodied agents is to say that it is essential to our experience and thought that they be those of embodied beings." (Ibid: 22)

Charles Taylor considers that Heidegger's attempts as much worthy initiative as it is the first concrete attempt to get rid of us from the grip of representationalism. The challenge which

Heidegger raises to modern epistemology is a remarkable one. Taylor's critique of epistemology has been much influenced by Heidegger's notion of engaged agency and the background. Of course modern epistemologists also talks about the agency, but, in modern epistemology agent is a thinking agent. The conception that the agent is a thinking agent/subject is one of the dominant concepts of modern era. Taylor comments that Heidegger does not want to deny the fact that we are a thinking being/thinking subject. But the problem arises when treat Human being primarily as thinking agent. Heidegger's position is that the primary mode of being is its engagement with the world and the thinking or rational agent is only a derivative of the primary mode which he called 'Being- in –the- World'.

One of the major problems Heidegger finds in modern epistemology is the ontologisation the rational procedure. Dualism is the ontology of the Cartesian Epistemology. And the whole modern epistemology crumbled under the weight of dualism. Taylor notes that the attempt of modern epistemology is to explain human's engagement with the world. But modern epistemology starts from the basic premise which contradicts its thrust, namely, the human activities are essentially mental which are ontologically distinct from the world or reality. Thus the ontologisation of the modern philosophy's rational procedure implies that there are two worlds: mental and physical world. But Phenomenologists point out that such an idea is highly unintuitive and cannot find any support from experience.

Traditional epistemologists try to avoid the fact that man is an engaged being. Instead of engaged agency traditional epistemologists bring the notion of disengaged agency. Heidegger's whole philosophy is to try to make us aware of the role of engaged agency in producing knowledge and try to rid us of the myth of disengaged agency. The point Heidegger wants to put forward is that when we talks about knowledge claim we should have to consider the agent's

form of life, history and bodily existence. Heidegger holds that our experience and knowledge is shaped by our bodily constitution/ cultural history/ form of life. But Heidegger finds that traditional epistemology is least concerned about this.

IV.3 Charles Taylor on Merleau Ponty

Taylor considers Merleau Ponty's position to be the culmination of the philosophical pursuit to overcome representationalist epistemology. As we have discussed earlier, representationalist position is that we get knowledge through some inner entities called ideas, beliefs or propositions and these inner entities are self-enclosed one and yet point out towards the outer world. Taylor finds that representationalism is an amalgam of two such incoherent positions. Because of their self-enclosed nature, belief system cannot point towards external world. Taylor argues that if our beliefs or claims point or refer towards an outer world then that implies those systems are not enclosed ones. But till Heidegger, it was not clear what it means by saying that our belief system is not self enclosed one. Heidegger's intervention shows that transcendental condition of our beliefs or knowledge is an engaged agent who is in grip with the world.

Heidegger argues that our beliefs are referring towards the world and the act of referring to the world presupposes that belief system is not a self-enclosed system. Heidegger was exploring the condition of intentionality. Heidegger points out that the necessary condition of an agent is the engagement with the world. Merleau Ponty shows that the embodied agent is a necessary condition for a meaningful experience. Taylor argues that critics like Heidegger and Merleau Ponty shows that features of us as knowing agent provide the justification of our knowledge claim, not some indubitable foundations of knowledge which is only an illusion.

Features of the knowing agent as embodied and engaged one characterizes the conditions of knowing and thus constitute the justification of our knowledge too.

Merleau Ponty's attempt is to show the agent as an embodied one constitutes the conditions of knowing and thus constitute the justification of knowing too. Taylor elucidates Merleau-Ponty's point as follows: Consider the following instruction given to a boy. 'Johnny, go into the room and tell me whether picture is crooked.' He went and checked the belief. Suppose that he formed, a belief that picture is not crooked. What justifies his view of the matter? Merleau Ponty's point is that justification comes from the understanding or awareness of an agent, our awareness of the embodiment of agent. Suppose we ask a person to check whether the line which is drawn on the top of sidewall is straight or not. Suppose that the sidewall is too high and the person whom we assigned is very short and assume that the person reported that the line is straight. But probably we would not consider the claim as justified one. Because, we assume that person does not have the 'Maximum grip' or 'Hold' on the object, that is, precisely because the nature of the agent's embodiment.

Merleau Ponty finds that the embodiment of the agent is crucial factor for belief formation about the world. Agent is not merely recording the world but instead engaging with the world. Engaging here means that the agent is situating himself/herself in the world in a particular fashion. Suppose agent is situated in another way, standing on a ladder or a table. Then the agent is having another kind of engagement with the world. Therefore, obviously our justification of a particular belief crucially considers or takes in to account how the agent is engaged with the world. And the second point is that our engagement with the world is crucially dependent upon our embodiment. So our awareness about agent's embodiment plays crucial role in the justification of the knowledge claim. Agent engages with the world through his/her

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embodiment. The embodiment shapes the engagement. When he talks about embodiment, Merleau Ponty tries to convince us that embodiment involves much more than the size and shapes of the body. Taylor elucidates Merleau Ponty's position with his example as follows:

> What is assumed when we give the order is that Johnny knows, as most of us do, how to form a reliable view of this kind of matter. He knows how to go and stand at the right distance and in the right orientation to get what Merleau Ponty calls a "maximum grip" or "hold" (*prise*) on the object. What justifies Johnny's belief is his knowing how to do this, his being able to deal with objects in this way, which is, of course, inseparable from the other ways he is able to use, manipulate, get around among them, and so on. (Taylor, Charles.2004:30)

So, when we justifies Johnny's claim, it involves our understanding/awareness that Johnny knows how to do the looking or how to stand in front of that. So our awareness of his ability to deal with objects plays a crucial role in our justification of Johnny's beliefs.

Suppose a clock is placed upside down. And we asked a person to check the time. Simply because the clock is placed in upside down manner, we will not disbelieve the person's claim. It is because we assume that the person's ability to look the object right way. Taylor notes that "When he goes and checks he or she uses this multiple ability to cope; his sense of his ability to cope gives him confidence in his judgment as he reports it to us" (Ibid:30)

> "Heidegger has taught us to speak of our ability to get around as a kind of "understanding" of our world, and indeed, drawing a sharp line between this implicit grasp on things and our form articulated, explicit understanding is impossible. It is not only that any frontier is porous, that thing s explicitly form articulated and

understood can "sink down" into unarticulated know-how, in the way that Hubert and Stuart Dreyfus have shown us with learning, that our grasp on things can move as well in the other direction, as we articulate what was previously just lived out. It is also that any particular understanding of our situation blends explicit knowledge and unarticulated know how."(Taylor, Charles.2004:32).

Taylor notes that concrete and articulate argument for the claim of embodied agent as a transcendental condition of knowledge comes from Merleau Ponty. Merleau Ponty's argument for the embodied agent is based on the nature of perception. Perception of the world necessarily implies (through the transcendental method) that agent of perception is of an embodied and engaged agent. Taylor claims that such an argument based on perception is quite valid. That is because perception is most basic to a subject.

...The one way of having a world which is basic to all this is my perceiving it from where I am, with my senses, as we say. This is basic, first because it is always there, as long as I am aware at all; and second because it is the foundation of other ways of having a world. We can ponder distant events, or theoretical perspectives on things, because we are first of all open to a world which can be explored, learned, theorized about, and so on. And our primary opening to this world, the inescapable background to all others, is through perception.(Taylor, Charles. 1995:23)

So, Merleau Ponty's claim is that embodied agent is a necessary condition of the perception which we have. To proceed with his transcendental argument, Merleau Ponty first identifies one of the indubitable facts of our perception: the orientation structure of perceptual field. Merleau Ponty primary point is that our perception is characterized by a field or horizon

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called as perceptual field. Perceptual field is not like a boundary which draws clear end lines to perception. In a sense, perception constitutes an open ended area. His point is that perception has an orientational structure. That is, perceptual field can be characterized as positioned in certain spatial relation. That is the field has foreground, a background and up and down. Suppose, I perceive a tree, in a distant way: one can characterize the road in front of tree as foreground, and bushes and others as its background, and the ground of the tree as down side and the sky as the upside of my perceptual field. Taylor's point is that orientational structure is the essential constituent of the perceptual field; that is, "it cannot lose this structure without ceasing to be a perceptual field in the full sense, our opening onto a world. In those rare moments where we lose orientation, we don't know where we are; and we don't know where or what things are either; we lose the thread of the world, and our perceptual field is no longer our access to the world, but rather the confused debris into which our normal grasp on things crumbles." (Ibid:23)

Merleau Ponty's point is that an embodied agent is a necessary condition for having an orientational structure in our perception. Orientational structure is of an embodied agent and it cannot have orientational structure without an embodied agent. Taylor beautifully elucidates Merleau Ponty's claim that embodied agent is a necessary condition of an orientational structure. One simple way to relate our body to the orientational structure is to say that up side of the field is where my head is and down side is where my feet is. But Taylor is not satisfied by drawing such relation with body and the orientational structure. Suppose I am standing upside down position. Then up side of the perceptual field is not necessarily in the direction of my head. It could be in the direction of my feet and same is the case when I am lying down or in bending position. Moreover, it is not the case that up and down side of perceptual field can be determined by a certain objects like sky, earth (ground) etc, though it could be the case that in certain case

they could be upside field or down side field of perception. But his point is that they are not determining factors. "Rather up and down are related to how one would move and act in the field… it is structured as a field of potential action... our perceptual field has the structure it has because it is experienced as a field of potential action. We perceive the world, in other words, or take it in, through our capacities to act in it." (Taylor, Charles. 1995:23-24) Perception necessarily requires an orientational structure. Orientational structure is the direction of our action and stance. And action and stance of an agent necessarily require an embodied agent.

Taylor finds that Merleau Ponty's theory of perception is a radical departure from sense-data theory of perception in particular and Cartesian epistemology in general. Taylor notes that through his theory of perception Merleau Ponty promoted the agenda of anti-representation set by Heidegger. As we have seen, the key point of Heidegger's critique is that our beliefs, our knowledge claims are firmly rooted in the agent who engages the world in a particular fashion. And the realm of engagement mainly consists of self-awareness and our awareness of the world including the knowledge of how to do. The realm of engaged agent is basically inarticulate and inexplicit. So, Heidegger's point is that explicit and definite knowledge of an agent is based on inarticulate and inexplicit pre-understanding.

Heidegger mainly characterizes the pre-understanding as our ability to do certain things and knowledge of how. Our ability and our knowledge of dealing with the objects basically constitute our pre-understanding. As Taylor notes, Merleau Ponty's main contribution to the critique of epistemology lies in specifying the realm of pre-understanding in a more precise manner. One major point is that his account shows that background (the realm of pre-understanding) is necessarily for any knowledge claim or belief. The necessity of the role of the background is introduced by him through his theory of perception which is linked to his account

of intentionality. According to Husserl's theory of intentionality, our conscious acts or experience or beliefs are directed towards an object. Merleau Ponty states that we are directed towards an object as being in front of something else or as behind of some other objects. So, the point of Merleau Ponty's intentionality doctrine is that in our belief or perception we are directed towards an object against a particular background. But it is not merely that agent perceives an object along with its background, that is, perceive both object and background. Instead we perceive an object with its background. That is, we perceive an object in a very complex relation with its background. So, if the object remains the same and only the background changes, we will have completely different perception or belief about the object. So while drawing the conditions of intentionality, Heidegger formulates 'engaged agent' as a condition. While doing the same, Merleau Ponty characterizes the background of an object as necessary component of it being an intentional object to an agent. That is an agent's directedness towards an object necessarily implies that object is described or portrayed or directed against a particular background. Then Taylor points out that Merleau Ponty's account characterize the 'background' as a necessary condition of human experience. According to Taylor, Merleau Ponty's intentionality thesis captures the essential structure of lived experience. According to Taylor, Merleau Ponty counters modern epistemology mainly by characterizing experience as meaningful not as treating meaning as a derivative of experience, but treating background as field of meaning.

In the Cartesian framework the conscious experience is considered as a natural phenomenon. Like any other phenomenon, conscious experience too is considered as a phenomenon which is causally produced. In a sense, experience is taken to be nothing but a chain of casually related entities called external object, sense organs and neutral system (brain).

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Taylor identifies himself with Merleau Ponty's critique that such an account falsifies the lived experience. He also supports Merleau Ponty's claim that experience is a meaningful phenomenon. It is not that experience derives meaning from some analysis or account, instead it is itself a meaning generating activity. That is, Merleau Ponty's point is that meaning of experience is not derivative. Instead, it is originary or primordial.

Taylor's critique of epistemology is largely based on the argument of Heidegger and Merleau Ponty which is interpreted in the mould of a transcendental argument. But Taylor is very cautious in claiming what these transcendental arguments establish. As we have seen our perception and knowledge claims are essentially of an engaged and embodied agent. Taylor notes that from this point we may be tempted to draw an ontological thesis that 'We are in fact embodied subject'. Taylor notes that such an ontological thesis is not supported by transcendental argument. Such claim evades the caution of Kant that transcendental argument does not establish anything about things-in-themselves. That is, by employing transcendental argument, we cannot claim that there exists an entity called human body. "What is shown is that our thought, our experience, and in general our function as subjects must be described as essentially the thought or experience of embodied agents. This says something about the nature of our life as subjects. It says, for instance, that our experience is constituted by our sense of ourselves as embodied agents." (Taylor, Charles.1995:26)

And the other major question is 'How these arguments establish their conclusions'? Taylor outlines three important features of the transcendental argument. The first point is that it is a chain of indispensability claims. We argue towards conclusion from starting point that the conclusion is necessary condition for the happening of the feature from which we have started. That is, the conclusion is indispensable for starting point. Consider Merleau Ponty's argument,

and assume the perception as starting point. Merleau Ponty argues that orientational structure is indispensable for perception. That orientational structure of perception is thus established and then that is considered as the starting point and from that starting point we argue that, embodied agent is indispensable for the orientational structure.

Kant's transcendental argument too can be shown as string of indispensability claims. For Kant, the primary staring point is the indubitable feature of the experience namely, its unity. For Kant, the indubitable feature of experience is that experience must have an object, and that is experience must be about something. From this starting point, Kant infers experience must be coherent. Then Kant explores necessary conditions of coherence or unity of experience. Thus he concludes coherent experience is possible only if we understand experience as shaped by certain categories. And the applicability of categories is considered as indispensible for coherent experience. The point Taylor attempts to argue is that transcendental argument is a chain of indispensability claims.

The second feature of transcendental argument is that indispensability claim is an *a priori* valid one because in transcendental argument what we are doing is drawing a necessary connection between starting point and a conclusion. Necessary connection cannot be an empirical grounded one; it can be validated only on *a priori* ground. And third important point which Taylor points out is that, the indispensability claims ultimately concerns about experience. What we have pointed out earlier is that transcendental argument is a chain of dispensability claims. One conclusion is dependent upon another position and that position is derived from something else. So, the argument goes like chain. But to be valid, the chain of indispensability claims has to be linked with a point which is indubitable. So ultimately all transcendental

arguments are based on some indubitable feature of experience. So, transcendental arguments are chain of apodictic indispensability claims concerning experience.

Taylor analyses the claim that transcendental arguments are *a priori* grounded or self-evident. Taylor's position is that apodictic claim of transcendental argument need to be analyzed very carefully. He points out that in Kant's transcendental argument the claims are not self-evident or apodictic certain. At best, what can be considered certain is only Kant's starting point "It may seem clear that experience must have an object and must be coherent. But it is not at all clear that this coherence must be that of the applicability of the categories, and even less dear that the particular categories as Kant formulates them are the ones indispensably applicable" (Ibid: 33) So, Taylor's crucial point about transcendental arguments is that the validity of the argument is *a priori* grounded, not empirical so. Taylor maintains that Kant's transcendental argument nevertheless fails to achieve certainty and *a priori* ground. But Merleau Ponty's and Heidegger's transcendental arguments are substantially different from Kant's argument on this count. Taylor's position is that if transcendental arguments are based on articulating an insight or point of an activity, then certainty can be brought back into the picture. The insight of an activity is not a verbal matter, it is not what we talk about an activity. Certain things are essential for the activity and in the absence of them, the activity cannot be made out. Agent must have an understanding about an activity but need not be an exhaustive one. Consider the activity of writing or walking or cycling or swimming. While doing these activities, we have some understanding of these activities, but most part of the activities we are doing without any conscious understanding of it. But still the agent must have some grasp of what he/she is doing. And the grasp that the agent has is not a meta-reflection of the activity.

Taylor's point is that through transcendental argument what we establish is that one factor is a necessary condition of experience. For Example, Kant argues that the application of categories is a necessary for experience. Merleau Ponty argues that orientational structure and being embodied are necessary for perception. While claiming that one factor is necessary for experience, they are basically pointing out that the factor is constitutive of experience. For example, our sense of ourselves as embodied agents is constitutive of experience or as Kant argues categories are constitutive experiences. But Taylor's point is that Kant fails to show with certainty that categories are constitutive experience. But Merleau Ponty is able to show with certainty that embodied agent is constitutive experience.

Merleau Ponty was trying to shed light on an activity, not as a mental phenomenon. Of course, Kant too was trying to make a point about experience. But Kant does not consider experience as a kind of activity as Merleau Ponty and Heidegger envisage. Kant considers experiences as purely a mental phenomenon.

Taylor notes if our transcendental arguments are about an activity, then the point of an activity can be established with certainty through transcendental argument. Activity has certain constituent factors. For example rule of chess are constituent elements of chess playing. Taylor argues that agent's awareness of those constituent factors is also a constituent factor of the activity. Without that awareness, the activity cannot be considered as an activity in its true sense. Taylor cites the example of chess. His point is that without knowing the conditions or constituent factors of chess (that is its rules) one cannot play chess. My awareness of the constituent factors or rule is necessary constituent of that activity. Taylor elucidates it as follows. Suppose two children who are not aware of the rule of the chess are moving pieces in chess board by copying the movements of other two players. Though children move exactly as players move, children's

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moving of chess pieces cannot be considered as chess play because children are not aware of the game and its rules. An agent's grasp of an activity is necessary constituent of that activity. From this point, Taylor argues that here we have a judgment which is certain. When I am playing chess I can claim with certainty that I know the rules of the chess because, my awareness of the rule is the part of the very nature of the game called 'chess'. "Thus, once we are playing chess, we know with unquestionable certainty that this rule is a constitutive rule. Or otherwise put, we couldn't doubt this without doubting that we are playing chess. You can't play chess and not know this" (Taylor, Charles.1995: 29) Taylor's point is that our grasp of an activity while doing that activity is irrefutable. While speaking English, I cannot doubt that whether I speak English. Then Taylor proceeds to claims that the perception is an activity and the grasp we have in the perception is irrefutable. Perception is an activity of being aware of the world and my awareness of reality or world cannot be refuted. Indeed, still we could dispute what we are aware of, in perception- whether it is an external objects or appearance. But Taylor's point is that but my awareness of something cannot be doubted.

The chain of indispensability claims anchors here in something unchallengeable. I may hyperbolically doubt whether my memory of chess playing is not a confused dream, which will turn out incoherent if I dwell on it, as so many dreams do. I may doubt whether I am "truly" aware, of ultimate reality, that is. But I cannot formulate a coherent doubt whether I 'm aware in the sense of conscious, awake, and grasping something. Transcendental arguments articulate indispensability claims concerning experience as such.(Ibid: 31)

Taylor's account of Merleau Ponty's argument is mainly intended to explore the wider scope of Merleau Ponty's positions in the context of a critique of Cartesian Epistemology.

Obviously Merleau Ponty account can be considered as a direct attack against Cartesian account of perception and knowledge, especially of atomistic sense-data theory of perception. But Taylor's interpretation recapitulates Merleau Ponty's argument as a way out of representationalist framework.

However, Taylor's account criticizes Merleau Ponty for carrying over the paradoxical idea of phenomenology, especially of Husserl's phenomenology. Taylor argues that pre-suppositionless description which is the core idea of Phenomenological Philosophy sounds paradoxical in Merleau Ponty's philosophy. The core idea of phenomenological description is the pure description of experience. That is, to describe experience in its own terms. That is, experience cannot be reduced to any other category which is extraneous to experience. And the famous phenomenological method *epoche* is for bracketing out of everything that does not belong to originary experience. Taylor calls the idea of pure description of experience as inherently paradoxical. Taylor points out that the idea of pure-description' of experience implies that experience has a self-authenticating vocabulary. That is experience has its own vocabulary or descriptive tool and the validity of its vocabulary or its description is endorsed by itself. Taylor notes, here arises the paradox. The focus of Merleau Ponty's argument is that, our articulated and explicit experience and knowledge system is necessarily pre-supposes pre-predication, pre-objective world. That is, explicit knowledge system rests on inarticulate pre-predicate world. Taylor noticed that one who endorses the idea that experience is originally inarticulate and inexplicit talks of a description which exhaustively and erroneously captures the experience. That is, what Taylor consider as paradoxical trouble which Merleau Ponty faces. Taylor further argues that "It follows that (from the idea of pure description of experience) no description is ever immune from revision, a point affirmed by Merleau Ponty himself when he

writes that 'no phenomenological description is ever complete'. But if descriptions of original experience are never complete, if they are always revisable in the light of a further phenomenological reduction, then no description of original experience is ever really pure." (Smith, Nicholas H. 2002:32).

Thus, Taylor's response to Merleau Ponty ends with a negative note despite the affinity between the views of the two. However, his response to Merleau Ponty is negative only to the extent Merleau Ponty's analysis of experience remains close to that of Husserl. Taylor has not substantiated his position that Merleau Ponty's idea of inarticulatedness of original experience is not a tangential one. Taylor's criticism of Merleau Ponty gets blunted if Ponty's idea of experience does not necessarily involve the concept of inarticulatedness at least in Husserlian sense. Of course, Husserl's position, irrespective of its being antithetical to modern epistemology, is, for Taylor, a point of departure since Husserl's theory swallows more of modern epistemology, in Taylor's view, than it eschews. However, as we have seen, Taylor's response to Heidegger and Merleau Ponty is by and large positive. This is because, according to Taylor the ideas of engaged subject and embodied subject are two pillars on which an effective critique of modern epistemology can stand. Of course, these two pillars get related in Taylor's hand within his own framework which, as we have seen, in Chapter III is essentially hermeneutical framework whose central element is that the "embodied knowers are...engaged agents who learn about their environment initially through practical experience rather than detached contemplation. The surrounding world appears as a meaningful context in which individuals act, interact, and pursue their purposes (Abbey, Ruth.2004: 3)

This chapter sought to show how Charles Taylor responds to the critiques of modern epistemology put forth by his predecessors while working out his own critique.

CHAPTER V

Responses to Charles Taylor's Critique of Epistemology

In this chapter, we discuss some responses to Charles Taylor's critique of epistemology. Though there are many who have reacted to Charles Taylor's critique of epistemology, we focus on two philosophers Richard Rorty and Hubert Dreyfus whose responses are substantial enough to invite Charles Taylor's reactions. Further, these philosophers with their own critiques have immensely contributed to the development of a tradition, which seeks to replace the core themes of the modern epistemological tradition. Also, Taylor while reacting to their responses has sharpened his own position. We may begin with Richard Rorty's responses to Taylor's critique of epistemology.

V. 1 Richard Rorty's Response to Charles Taylor

Like Taylor, Rorty also attempts to overcome epistemology. While dealing with Rorty's response to Taylor, it is necessary to explain Rorty's own epistemological position. Rorty's critique of epistemology is mainly rooted in his characterization of modern epistemology in a particular fashion. Within modern epistemology, there are various trends, which contradict each other. But for Rorty, all these are various forms of a particular framework called 'foundationalism'. Therefore, Rorty's criticism aims at undermining the thesis of foundationalism. He analyses the history of modern western epistemology to show that the

philosophers of rationalist and empiricist persuasion, including Kant, were working within the framework of foundationalism.

Rorty's critique of epistemology though often criticized as a naive construal of western philosophical tradition is highly significant because he is the pioneer of the critique of epistemology in the Anglo-Saxon world. Rorty's work *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* can be considered as one of the first concrete attack against the whole of modern epistemological tradition in recent years. More significantly, the later critics of epistemology, even while differing with Rorty are substantially indebted to Rorty's analysis for the formulation of their critiques of the Cartesian project.

The key component of Rorty's critique of epistemology which ironically inspires successors and at the same time invites their wrath is his characterization of the history of modern western philosophy. According to Rorty's analysis of modern philosophy, Cartesianism is structured and shaped by two presuppositions: "First, Descartes' assumption that knowledge of external world is a matter of having mental representations that accurately picture that world and second, Locke's assumption that the accuracy of a representation depends on the manner of its causal production." (Gutting, Gary.2003:42)

According to modern epistemology, having knowledge is having mental entities called 'ideas' which represent the external world. The justification of mental representation lies in showing a causal connection between mental entities called the 'ideas' and 'the world'. Undoubtedly, the first assumption is received across the rationalist and empiricist traditions. And the argument for the causal connection as a justification of knowledge is formulated within the empiricist tradition. For the rationalist tradition, often, the justification of knowledge is not solely

the argument from causal connection, but argument for the self-evident nature of knowledge, which can be shown by invoking representation as the reason. For example, Descartes justifies the existence of 'I' not through any causal argument but through the self-evident nature of the claim.

Though Descartes does not admit that 'causal argument' is the sole justification for knowledge claims about the world, he too relies on the causal argument. He establishes the causal connection between mental representation and the external world in a particular fashion. First, Descartes assumes that if there can be any connection between the 'ideas' and the 'world' then that can be only the causal connection. Descartes establishes the causal connection between ideas and the world by claiming that 'causal connection' is the sole credible hypothesis, which can explain the existence of mental representations. He was aware that 'hypothesis of evil demon' too can explain the existence of mental representation. But he counters such a hypothesis by bringing in the notion of God.

Empiricists too argue for the 'causal connection' mainly on the basis of the explanation of the existence of mental representation which for them an indubitable fact. But the trouble with modern epistemology starts with its failure to establish the causal connection. Hume's sceptical analysis puts an end for/to such attempts. Rorty finds this failure as a failure to establish a foundational fact. Rorty notices that what tradition demands is not that all knowledge claims can be justified only on the basis of a causal connection, but that certain foundational knowledge claims can be justified only on the basis of a causal connection.

Another important move for foundationalism in modern epistemology is Kant's strategy. When Kant entered into philosophy, he realized that solution to the epistemological problems

cannot be found in the traditions of rationalism and empiricism. Both the traditions fail to give a satisfactory explanation of our knowledge of extra-mental reality through our mental representations. Through his entirely radical kind of argument called 'Transcendental argument', Kant gave a new life to the modern epistemology's idea of knowledge as mental representation. Rorty's point is that through transcendental arguments, Kant was arguing that causation is necessary condition of human experience. That is Kant too was affirming the point that representationalism is inseparable from the foundationalist conception of knowledge.

The major point of Kant's philosophy is the distinction between conceptual and intuitive elements: "…the conceptual providing the framework of intelligibility without which the object could not be presented and the intuitive providing the content without which the framework would be merely an empty scheme." (Gutting, Gary. 2003: 43)

For accurate representation of external things, Kant brings in certain rules, which can correlate them with objects. In that way we are able to get accurate knowledge. Kant thinks that if we synthesize the rationalist and empiricist assumptions we can have a way of establishing the possibility of the knowledge of the extra-mental reality. But Rorty argues that, "Rather than characterizing human cognition as a synthesis of hypothetically separable components, Kant could simply have noted that to make a judgment is to hold a particular proposition to be true. He could then have cast the empiricism/rationalism dispute not as a conflict between rival reductionist strategies but as a disagreement about whether judgments about "secondary qualities" (i.e., empirical judgments) could be reduced to judgments about 'primary qualities' (i.e., judgments that seem to depend upon reason alone)" (Cutrofello, Andrew. 2005: 15)

The above remarks provide the background for understanding Rorty's critique of epistemology. We may start with his attack on modern epistemology's notion of truth. The

modern epistemologists argue that truth is only the matter of a special relationship called 'representation' between the mind and the world. Rorty rejected this view. He argues that such a concept of truth is a trivial one. Truth is only a matter of social practice. There is no reliable source for attaining truth. The argument is that "There is no way for us to know the truth other than the social practice of giving reasons. We have no reliable source of truth other than our on-going conversation with one another. Perhaps we may or must understand truth as something beyond the best or ultimate outcome of that conversation" (Gutting, Gary.2003: 52) Secondly, he questions the justificationary part of our knowledge claims. The argument is that justification is a matter of special experience, which is grounded normatively. Thirdly, modern epistemologists assert that philosophy can satisfactorily explain the notion of truth and can specify what sort of experience justifies our truth claim.

For him justification is a matter of being able to give good reasons for our beliefs. These good reasons can give adequate support to our propositions. But the goodness of a reason is based on the agreement of an epistemic community. Rorty does not have any problem with our conceptual insight and sensory awareness. He thinks that it is trivial to consider that both our conceptual insight and sensory awareness can give justification to our beliefs. Rorty finds that both these might be able to give causal explanation of why we have these beliefs. The problem arises only when they try to argue that sensory awareness and conceptual insight are the reasons for our belief.

Rorty tries to negate the empiricist claim that the sensory experience is the basis of our justification of knowledge. For instance, University of Hyderabad is situated in Andhra Pradesh. In this case, what we are doing is we are responding to a proposition. If this proposition is not true then the justification will not be possible. This proposition is fruitless unless I actually had

the experience of University of Hyderabad being situated in Andhra Pradesh. If this is the case can we really say that the justification of University of Hyderabad being in Andhra Pradesh is dependent on the experience?

Providing good reason is the justification of our knowledge claims. Good reason is not dependent upon the sort of experience we have. His argument is that to say that something exists in reality doesn't mean that it exists in the space of reason. "The objection to Rorty assumes that the mere fact that a proposition is true can be reason for believing it is true. He denies this, maintaining that just because something exists in reality doesn't mean it exists in the space of reason." (Ibid: 45).

Epistemological behaviourism says that for knowledge justification is needed. The justification requires an ability to cite reason for our belief. We identifies out our reason through linguistic our ability. But empiricists deny the claim that linguistic ability is required for providing reason. They claim that there is pre-linguistic awareness of experience. For instance, an infant cries when he/she is hungry. An infant does not have any kind of linguistic ability. Empiricist argument is that the baby is hungry because baby feels hungry. Feeling hungry justifies the claim that baby is hungry. Does baby really know that it is feeling hungry? Rorty's answer is negative. A baby is feeling hungry justifies someone's knowledge claim that it is hungry. But it does not follow that the baby knows that it is hungry because being in a pre-linguistic state it lacks propositional knowledge. Rorty is equally against the rationalist claim that we know that we can justify what we consider to be necessary truth by means of conceptual insights. In addition to Quine's convincing contention that it is highly problematic to draw watertight distinction between analytic and synthetic statements on the basis of experience being involved only in the latter, Rorty claims that the rationalists' resort to conceptual insight is no

better than empiricists' resort to sensory experience. As Gutting points out "In both cases, the key point is that the mere occurrence of an experience (whether sensory or conceptual) has no justificatory force. At best, justification is supplied by a belief that such an experience has occurred. Thus, the case against rationalist conceptual insights is the same as that against empiricist sense experience" (2003:47)

Rorty's aim is to call into the question the very distinction between objective world and the subjective world made on the basis of the claim that we have direct access to only mental representations whether or not these representations match up with the world. "Rorty maintains, to accept this distinction is to endorse the classical modern view that we directly know only mental representations ("things as we describe them"), which may or may not match up with reality outside the mind ("things as they are in themselves")" (Ibid: 49) Rorty argues that knowledge cannot be explained on the basis of such a kind of distinction between the two world. Philosophers try to frame a permanent representational framework in all possible ways. Therefore, according to Rorty, the attempt of modern epistemologists to work out a representational framework that entails a dichotomy between the objective world and the subjective world fails to explain the possibility of knowledge. "The notion that there is a permanent neutral framework whose "structure" philosophy can display is the notion that objects to be confronted by the mind, or the rules which constrain inquiry, are common to all discourse, or at least to every discourse on a given topic. Thus epistemology proceeds on the assumption that all contributions to a given discourse are commensurable" (Rorty, Richard. 1979: 316). Such an attempt overlooks how human beings cope with the world indifferent ways. In his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty shows how there is no privileged representation as Cartesian philosophy claims. Rorty thinks that if we could abandon these representational frameworks then

we do not need to answer the question concerning the distinction between our justified and unjustified claims. To attain knowledge what is needed is that human beings have to be located in an inter-subjective relationship. We were till now talking about the importance of the role of agent/subject. But justification of a claim is inter-subjective. And, hence, justification is a social practice made possible by language. The modern epistemologist treats language as "private" or at least that language is primarily private. Rorty's argument is that language cannot be 'private' because, we are living in a community, we use language within the community, and the community accepts the language. To use a language is to employ certain norms, which are necessarily public.

> It may also happen that the norms of a community are not at all mutually consistent, and an individual may be entitled to assert the claim of one norm against another that everyone else accepts. Of course, enough changes in the views and practices of the members of a community will eventually lead to changes in its norms, since norms have no basis outside of the community itself. But this does not mean that norms are changeable at the whim of a group, even if the group includes everyone. Even if we all say something different, we may not all be able to believe it or to reflect it in our practices. (Gutting, Gary.2003: 49)

In short, justification is not a phenomenon that can be attributed to an individual subject. The locus of objectivity of justification lies in the inter-subjective engagement. Hence, justification is social, that is, a trans-individual process. The question is 'What is the source of such a consensus or inter-subjectivity'. It is neither reason nor a non-rational factor. Undoubtedly, giving and accepting reason is part of wider social practice. Rorty thus seeks to replace the core of traditional epistemology according to which knowledge is an attribute of

individual working according to certain shared norms. It is rather, located in and therefore is an attribute of, a mode of practice of a community.

We have drawn till now the broad contours of Rorty's critique of epistemological tradition and his pragmatist alternative to it. Before dealing with his response to Taylor's critique of modern epistemology let us briefly discuss Taylor's reaction to Rorty's epistemological position.

Taylor (1990) acknowledges that Rorty's position is a radically new departure from the tradition of modern epistemology and in fact, the whole of modern philosophy because it promises us freedom from the host of questions central to philosophy till now. However, according to Taylor, "Rorty offers a great leap into non-realism: where there have hitherto been thought to be facts-or truths-of-the-matter, there turn out to be only rival languages, between which we end up plumping" (Taylor, Charles 1990: 258) and according to Taylor "non-realism is itself one of the recurrently generated aporiai of the tradition we both condemn. To get free of it is to come to an uncompromising realism" (Ibid)

Why does Taylor claim that Rorty is a non-realist? According to Taylor, Rorty's position is that we have only alternative language games none of which can be taken to be uniquely correct. No language is nature's own language. "On this view stubborn differences in representation would be unarbitrable, because no one would ever be able to get behind our pictures into contact with the world out there. This, of course, is the familiar picture of the modern epistemological tradition,…which threw up non-realist doctrines" (Taylor, Charles 1990:260) It is true that Rorty rejects dichotomies like realism- non-realism but mere rejection of such a dichotomy does not warrant the claim that one has overcome such a dichotomy. Rorty has

to say either that there is something like thing-in-itself or there is no such thing as reality as there are as many realities as there are languages.

Unlike Heidegger and Merleau Ponty whom Taylor follows, Rorty accepts "the whole procedure of arriving *ex ante* at some view of what knowledge has to be, and then dictating to reality from that standpoint. The great vice of the tradition is that it allows epistemology to command ontology." (Ibid: 264) What according to Taylor is Rorty's *ex ante* theory? No doubt Rorty rejects the notion of alternative conceptual frameworks and therefore, he rejects the distinction between a single world out there and plurality of conceptual schemes. But by accepting the only internal consistency of each language as the criterion of acceptability he nullified the possibility of arbitrating between various world views which he called 'languages'. Correspondence theory of truth is obviously rejected. In fact, Rorty goes to the extent of eschewing truth-talk itself.

Against Rorty, Taylor maintains that realism is an adequate thesis and truth is a legitimate concept. And he even goes to the extent of saying that correspondence theory of truth should be re-cast and not rejected. Taylor's rejection of representationalism has to be reformulated. Traditional representationalism considered the relation between our ideas/propositions/theories the one hand, and the world, on the other, is as one of representation and this relation of representation can stand in isolation from everything else since, it is a relation between a picture and what is pictured. Taylor is against representationalism in this sense. However, against the modern epistemological tradition he maintains that the relation mentioned above can be located only on the background constituted by our embodiment and our engagement, as Heidegger and Merleau Ponty pointed out. Representation, as Taylor conceives it is not one of picturing but is a function of our endeavour to cope with the world as bodily beings-

in-the-world. Rorty will have none of this. However, correspondence theory of truth in Taylor's scheme gets its content from his idea of representation as elucidated above. In short, Taylor's view can said to be one of representation without representationalism. His version of correspondence theory of truth squares well with his minimalist notion of representation and minimalist notion of the real. Taylor considers his idea of truth as correspondence as a post-epistemological and intra-framework notion of truth. How does Taylor characterize his own version of the correspondence theory of truth, which his rival realist in particular and modern epistemologists in general might dub as highly emaciated? Taylor seeks to provide a content to such a notion of truth, which is apparently jettisoned of all substance, by contrasting it with another kind of truth. If truth as 'correspondence' in Taylor's sense holds for what are usually called facts, the other kind of truth concerns self- understanding. In his own words, "What it contrasts with is the truth of self-understanding. Just because we are partly constituted by our self-understandings, we can't construe them as of an independent object, in the way our descriptions of things are". (Taylor, Charles. 1990: 271)

To sum up, Rorty rejects realism and truth as correspondence because, according to him, if we entertain these notions we will be forced to accept transcendental entities, which make our theories true. By assuming this claim, "Rorty seems to be operating within the logic of the old system that linked us to transcendent reality through a screen of representations, even while distancing himself from it within this logic, he makes the decisive move of rejecting the transcendent; and then all the non-realist conclusions naturally follow". (Ibid) In other words, according to Taylor, Rorty is held captive by a picture which relates realism and truth as correspondence with the notion of our claims/ideas as representing transcendental entities. Correspondence, according to that picture is verification- transcendent as anti-realists like

Dummet have pointed out. In the place of such a picture, Taylor provides an account of correspondence, which relates our claims/ideas/propositions to entities, and the relations which are no way transcendent since they are immanent because they are inseparable from the background constituted by inarticulable elements related to our status as being-in-the-world How does Rorty responds   to Taylor's attack on him?

Rorty begins by formulating the difference between him and Taylor regarding the correspondence theory of truth by saying "believers in the correspondence theory have to claim that some vocabularies (e.g; Newton's) do not just work better than others (e.g; Aristotle's) but do so because they represent reality more adequately. Taylor thinks that good sense can be made of this claim, and I do not." (Rorty, Richard.1998:86). He notices that according to Taylor if a realist does reject the concept of thing-in-itself or *ex ante* explanation then he must grant that the idea of an independent reality should be accepted as unquestionable and therefore, Rorty who rejects those concepts must not find such an idea to be problematic and hence, Rorty is wrong in not doing so. But Rorty replies that what he questions is not the idea of independent reality but only representational independence of reality. Realism, according to Rorty, assumes a distinction between intrinsic features of an object which are non-description–relative and extrinsic features which are description- relative, whereas he rejects that distinction. Taylor claims that statements like, for example, 'There are no chairs in the room' is true, if it is true 'in virtue of the way things are' and this is a truism. But Rorty says the expression 'in virtue of the way things are' can be interpreted in two ways. "One is short for "in virtue of the way our current descriptions of things are used and causal interactions we have with those things." The other is short for "simply in virtue of the way things are, quite apart from how we describe them."" (Ibid). Obviously, Rorty goes for the first interpretation. What is important is that Rorty seeks to show that Taylor by

overlooking the fact that the crucial idea of "in virtue of the way things are" is amenable to two distinct interpretations caricatures Rorty's position by presenting it as violating an obvious truth. Further, Rorty argues that we cannot distinguish between the role of our describing activity and the role of the world in accounting for the truth of our claims/beliefs. If Taylor and those who follow him seek to distinguish the two they can do so only by accepting the distinction between scheme and content, according to which scheme is given by us and the content is given by the world. According to Rorty, the doctrine of scheme-content distinction has been convincingly refuted by Davidson who calls it the 'third dogma of empiricism'. Once we reject the scheme-content dichotomy we are forced to reject both the concepts of thing-in-itself and of intrinsic feature/s and with them truth as correspondence. Rorty contends that Taylor's attempt to keep the latter without the former is doomed to failure.

Rorty rejects Taylor's post-epistemological and intra-framework notion of truth as correspondence by questioning Taylor's attempt to contrast our factual claims which, if true, are true in Taylor's sense of correspondence and the claims about ourselves which, if true, are true in no sense of correspondence. According to Rorty " the only difference between redescribing the solar system and redescribing myself is that I use the redescription to make true statements about the solar system before I redescribed it, whereas, in some cases, I do not use my redescriptions to make true statements about my earlier self" (Rorty, Richard.1998:89)

Rorty ends his attack on Taylor by showing how realism of any sort including that of Taylor is self-destructive. On the one hand "realism becomes interesting only when we supplement plain speech and common sense with the "in itself" versus "to us" distinction". (Ibid: 94). On the other hand, our failure to bridge the gap between "in itself" and "to us" undermines realism. His point is that rejection of realism is therefore, rejection of non-realism too. Hence, if

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he is not a realist, he is not a non-realist either. Taylor claims that we cannot simply walk away from the distinction between realism and non-realism but must deal with it. However, "neither he nor anyone else has explained why we cannot just walk away from it" (Ibid).

Let us now briefly look at Taylor's reaction of Rorty's critical response to his positions. Taylor defends, against Rorty, the distinction between scheme and content. Those who attack the distinction have construed it as a dichotomy. Scheme-content dichotomy cannot be sustained and Davidson as well as Rorty is right in saying so. But, according to Taylor, all that realism needs is only scheme-content distinction and not scheme-content dichotomy. The inference that the distinction in any form is untenable is based on the questionable assumption "that the only way to make sense of the distinction would be disaggregate and isolate somehow a component of pure precategorised reality, which could then somehow be compared or related to language." (Taylor, Charles.1994: 219)

Taylor gives three reasons in favour of scheme-content distinction. First of all, he compares it with the distinction between form and colours. Just because we can distinguish between a colourless form and formless colour, we cannot throw away the distinction itself. Secondly, the distinction is necessary to understand the difference between Aristotle according to whom the sun is a planet and us according to whom the sun is not a planet. "What brings about this change is not reality [the content] but our adopting the different scheme". (Ibid: 220). Similarly, if yesterday there were twelve chairs in a room whereas today there are only ten chairs "the language of the classification [the scheme] is the same, what has changed is the reality [the content] described" (Ibid). Thirdly, we can rank these schemes in terms of their ability to enable us "to grasp, or prevent us from grasping features of reality, including causal features, which we recognise as being independent of us. This is the nub of what I want to call realism". (Ibid)

Finally, the rejection of scheme-content distinction leads to ethnocentrism and prejudiced understanding of the other. If we retain the scheme-content distinction, we can respond to Aztecs' way of looking at nature not in a negative way but in a positive way by saying that, they have different scheme and hence cannot be negatively judged. It allows us to recognize different ways of understanding natural world, human life etc., "somewhere along the line, you need some place in your ontology for something like 'the Aztec way of seeing things', in contrast to 'our way of seeing things'; in short, something like scheme/content distinction. To fail to make this can be, literally, lethal". (Taylor, Charles.1994:221)

We end this section by pointing out some gaps in Taylor's reaction to Rorty. First of all, Taylor's contention that it is only by accepting realism that we can account for our ranking of schemes is questionable. Taylor implies that from the point of view of Rorty, which he calls non-realist, such ranking is not possible. Taylor overlooks the fact that the so-called non-realist can account for ranking in terms of the suitability of a scheme for our purposes, cognitive included, better than other available alternatives rather than in terms of its ability to survive arbitration by reason or sense. Further, his argument is that only the scheme-content distinction saves us from ethnocentrism is unconvincing. Ethnocentrism does not question the invariance of content. It usually undermines the cognitive adequacy of certain schemes entertained by a people who are victims of a dominant culture. Further, Taylor has not convincingly shown that Davidson's 'Principles of Charity' is not needed to promote inter-cultural understanding. (cf Taylor, Charles. 1994:221). This principle asks us to make best sense of what people in another culture believe in terms what we understand as sense. McDowell brings our clearly the utility of this principle when he says "It is not obvious to me that Davidson's principle of charity diverges in the way Taylor suggests from one that is ontologically based, so as to be irrelevant to questions about

intercultural understanding. Davidson's principle, properly understood, surely requires looking for common ground-if necessary engaging in conceptual innovation for the purpose-with candidates for understanding whom we initially find unintelligible" (2002: 284)

Further, his idea that our explanation of change in theory as merely a shift of scheme is most unconvincing because, as Kuhn and later Putnam have pointed out in a very important sense reality changes with a change in our fundamental theory. As Kuhn pointed out, a revolution in science is a shift from one lexicon to another. In that sense, scientific change is language change. This change makes two languages one of which succeeds the other, incommensurable. The two languages/ lexicons have their own taxonomies and hence, divide the world in two different ways and therefore, their locutions stand for different things, even if they commonly figure in both the lexicons according to Kuhn, the shift from one lexicon to another involves meaning change of the common locutions. The meaning of any locutions is determined by the whole of the lexicon or language. Once meaning changes reference also changes. This is precisely the way Kuhn characterizes the transaction from Ptolemic theory to the Copernican theory. Hence, it is a lexicon, which determines what it is about.

Finally, Taylor's contrast between truth about facts and truth about ourselves i.e. our self-understanding which he seeks to bring out to elucidates his version of correspondence theory is not convincing. There is no reason to think that there are only two kinds of truth, which he mentions. There may be truths about our aesthetic experience, moral life and religious understanding etc.,. The truths about these different domains can be viewed as having family resemblance. A watertight distinction between two arbitrarily chosen domains can be questionable enough to render Taylor's elucidation of his version of correspondence theory quite problematic.

In spite of the above mentioned gaps in his reaction against Rorty's responses to his stance Taylor's realist position is quite convincing, provided that we construe his position as one of "real without realism". The same point can be put in a more transparent manner. The kind of realism which Taylor rejects along with non-realism is generally called external or externalist realism- which is the traditional version of realism. As against this we have what may be called internal or internalist realism whose articulation within philosophy of science is provided by Kuhn, Putnam and Feyerabend in the later phases of their philosophical career. According to them, what is real and therefore what is true is internal to our broad theoretical commitments/language or lexicon/ research programme. Taylor also could have called his position 'internal realism'. In fact, his version of internal realism can be broader in its scope than the internal realism in the current philosophy of science due to two reasons. Firstly, Taylor's concern is not only about scientific knowledge but also about knowledge in general which might include scientific knowledge, perceptual knowledge and other kinds of knowledge. Secondly, in Taylor's case the real is internal to not only our language or linguistic framework, which is the case with internal realism in philosophy of science but also such factors as our form of life we live as embodied being-in-the-world, which cannot be completely articulated. It is such an internal realism that fits well with his truncated notion of representation and equally jettisoned concept of truth as correspondence.

V.2 Hubert Dreyfus' response to Charles Taylor

The above remarks provide an entry point to the consideration of the response of Dreyfus to Taylor's epistemological position. Central to Dreyfus' response is that Taylor can maintain a pluralistic and robust realism by agreeing with Rorty, "that there is no *one* language for correctly describing the universe, while holding, contra Rorty, that there could well be *many* languages

each correctly describing a different aspect of reality" (Dreyfus, Hubert.2004: 79). Unlike Rorty, Dreyfus does not attack Taylor's position. Rather he strengthens it by answering two major objections that can be raised against Taylor's positions. However, Dreyfus seeks to show that by accepting Rorty's position, which he calls 'deflationary realism' Taylor can enrich his own position which Dreyfus calls 'Robust Realism' by way of adding a pluralist dimension to his position and Taylor's sympathy for pluralism in social and political philosophy can be extended to his epistemological position.

Dreyfus characterizes Taylor's position as anti- epistemology. This does not mean that Taylor rejects the very possibility of epistemology as a genuine philosophical enquiry. Taylor does not take such a stance towards epistemology in a way akin to the positivist philosophers in particular and analytical philosophers in general regarding the possibility of metaphysics. He rejects a certain kind of epistemology. That is "a discipline that arises along with the subject / object ontology introduced by Descartes." (Dreyfus, 2004:52) In this narrow sense, epistemology deals with problems of Knowledge by presupposing "...a series of mutually reinforcing dualisms such as subject/object, knower/known, mind/world and inside/outside. When the generation of knowledge is considered from within this framework, the key question becomes how the two sides of each pair are linked." (Abbey, Ruth. 2004:5)

Since the possibility of knowledge as representation demands a mediation between two sides of the pairs, the tradition of epistemology as handed down to us since Descartes is called 'mediational epistemology' by Taylor. Epistemology, according to this tradition, is the study of such mediation. To overcome a philosophical thesis such as mediational epistemology is not to simply reject it even on sound reasons. 'Overcoming' is a much more positive endeavour than merely undermining. It involves addressing the concerns, which characterize the motivations that

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propelled the thesis, which is being overcome. It also involves providing an alternative to the theory, which is rejected. According to Dreyfus, Taylor's attempt to overcome the epistemological tradition succeeds in doing both. It may also be mentioned in this connection that Dreyfus and Taylor have a philosophical affinity of a substantial kind. Both of them reject the endeavour of cognitive scientists to provide a map of our cognitive processes as if those processes are akin to natural processes.

However, Dreyfus identifies two important objections that can be raised against Taylor's position. Suppose we accept the knowledge involves the engagement of the cognitive agent as an embodied and engaged being with the world, which the cognitive agent seeks to cope. The question arises whether this coping itself is an illusion. Dreyfus in this connection invokes 'Brain in the Vat' argument. Suppose we keep a brain in a vat and a computer operates on the brain in such a way that the brain is stimulated to experience the coping. In other words, we may think that we are coping with the real world but actually, we may be coping with the matrix world. Dreyfus here refers to a film called 'Matrix' in which some computer scientists produce a kind of experience, which is not one of the real world. If such a possibility is realized, Taylor's position is bedevilled by the same predicament faced by a standard representationalist account of knowledge. However, Dreyfus shows that this objection does not undermine Taylor's position because Taylor does not need to prove that the embodied agents are coping with the real world. All he needs to show is that they experience coping. In other words, Taylor can say that even in the Matrix world one cannot give a description of agents' experience without reference to his world. "The issue for Taylor should not be whether the world is as we *believe* it to be. That is Cartesian doubt. The phenomenological point is that our direct contact with the perceptual world is more basic than belief." (Dreyfus, Hubert L. 2004:63)

Dreyfus comes to the second possible objection against Taylor's position. Taylor advances some kind of representationalism, some kind of realism and some kind of truth as correspondence in the case of our scientific knowledge, which therefore zeroes in towards the world as it is. This stance of Taylor lands his position into a series of objections, which can come from a philosopher like Rorty who can claim that Taylor is caught in the trap of modern epistemology by making a distinction between the world in itself probed by science and the world constituted by us in our attempt of coping with that world. Against Taylor Rorty can claim that his position does not face such a predicament because according to him there is no knowledge of the world–in-itself but only of the world for us. Thus, the second challenge to Taylor's position is that it is guilty of a dualism in spite of the pretention to overcome all dualisms, which are remnants of a discredited tradition.

According to Dreyfus, Taylor can overcome these objections. However, he first tries to find whether there are convicting arguments against these objections in Taylor's writings themselves. In other words, Dreyfus seeks to find out whether Taylor can reconcile his two conflicting views: 1.That all knowledge comes from engaged coping on one hand and 2. And some understanding of the world such as our scientific understanding being truer than the others, on the other

Dreyfus seeks to find out whether Taylor's contention that knowledge involves coping and coping involves finding meaning in what we experience can provide a point of reconciliation. In this connection, he refers to Taylor's contention that when we cope with the world we acquire a sense that there is deeper reality that does not lend itself to our ascription of meanings. Such a deeper and meaning- independent reality sets limits or boundary conditions on our efforts to cope with the world. Therefore, coping is not open to any and every possibility.

The coping takes place within the bounds of structural realties. More we understand them, the better will be our coping. Science gives us the knowledge of these structural realties and therefore it facilitates our coping with <u>our</u> world. Hence, the duality between the world- in- itself and the world for us is, ontologically speaking, to be rejected.

But Rorty might claim that our awareness of those structural realities is nothing more than our acceptance of certain descriptions in the form of scientific theories. And these structural realities do not make sense independent of our description. And our descriptions have their basis in the factors that pertain to our purposes. Hence, Rorty may assert that the qualitative distinction, which Taylor draws, between scientific knowledge and other kinds of knowledge is to be rejected.

But Taylor may insists against Rorty that we confront reality in itself in our act of coping. Dreyfus quotes Taylor in this connection. "The most fundamental, rock-bottom feature of our general take on the world is that it surrounds us, gives us things, but also withholds, threatens to annihilate or hurt us sometimes, allows us to do some things, and resist others." (2004: 67) That is to say, such experiences with the world indicate the way things- are- in- themselves rather than the way we make sense of them. In the context of scientific theory we have such encounters with reality when our theories are falsified. Taylor strengthens his position by saying that in our experience, we encounter aspects of the situation that go beyond our immediate grasp and this evidences the fact that we have a grip on reality. This is-further strengthened by our search for coherence in experience. But as Dreyfus points out deflationary realist such as Rorty do not get impressed by this arguments. None of the things Taylor has said makes the idea of a view from nowhere plausible and even intelligible. Dreyfus acknowledges that Rorty can contend that like the structural realties affordances also are vocabulary dependent.

Those who defend the idea of supersession of scientific theories as descriptions of structural realities might invoke the concept of essential prosperities of things which are the objects of scientific theories. For instance, the atomic weight of gold being 79 is taken as an essential property whereas its shining which may be looked upon by some tribes as reflection of divine radiance is not. They might even claim that those tribes can learn our theories and recognize the essential feature of gold. But Taylor does not and cannot go for this option provided by Kripke since this option implies that the beliefs about nature entertained by people of other cultures are false. As Dreyfus asks "How can Taylor claim that true scientific assertions pick out the essential properties of things as they are in themselves, without accepting the implication of Kripke's scientific realism, that, insofar as our scientific understanding of nature is true, the understanding of nature of cultures that don't share our understanding must be false" (Dreyfus, Hubert L.2004:76) In this connection Dreyfus makes a very important point when he says "ours may well be the only culture that claims that, if true, our theories concerning the kinds of entities in the universe correspond to those kinds as they are in themselves. Other cultures do not ask about the universe as it is in itself, in the sense of modern Western science. They have no notion of a view from nowhere." (Ibid:77). This is the point of Rorty also. There is every reason to claim that Taylor too accepts it. The question then is "how can he maintain realism in connection with scientific knowledge and deem other kinds of knowledge to be mere products of our coping?" According to Dreyfus, Taylor does well if he accepts Rorty's deflationary realism. Taylor can claim that our scientific theories, if true can identify for us, the property or properties that can explain other physical properties, say of gold. But the scientific theories cannot be taken to be the whole story about things. Dreyfus quotes Heidegger in this connection. "The statements of physics are correct. By means of them, science represents something real, by which it is

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objectively controlled. But...science always encounters only what its kind of representation has admitted before hand as an object possible for science." (Dreyfus, Hubert L.2004: 77). In other words, essential properties are those, which things have when they are "disworlded", to use Heidegger's expression. The scientific characterization of things is a characterization of a disenchanted world and therefore of a certain aspect of the objects. In that sense, they fall within in "the view from nowhere." Thus, the validity of scientific knowledge is relative to that aspect of reality, which concerns a way of placing them in a disenchanted world. "The kind of correspondence claim implicit in the practices of pre modern cultures, if spelled out, would then amount to the claim that they have practices for gaining a perspective on reality that corresponds to one aspect of reality without claiming to have a view from nowhere that reveals objective reality as it is in itself." (Ibid:78)

This means that Taylor can continue with his characterization of scientific theories in terms of truth as correspondence, provided that he is sensitive to the following point: since they concern only one aspect of the world related to the disenchantment they cannot claim a privileged status with the sole access to the world. Since the scientific and non-scientific distinction pertains to two distinct aspects there is no contradiction between them. Of course, the non- disenchanted aspect of the world makes its presence in as many ways as there are points of view located in distinct cultures. It is this pluralistic dimension that Taylor's view acquires if the idea of supersession of the scientific theories is construed in a way that is consistent with Rorty's central theses.

An objection might arise that such a plurality gets undermined if somebody asks 'What are the aspects/aspects of' This question can be answered in the following ways: something must be aspect of a specific thing is only a linguistic point, which does not necessarily lead to a

metaphysical stance of a monistic kind. It may even be the case that the expression which stands for a thing that possessing aspects is only a place marker. Suppose someone maintains that there is no such thing as mind but only mental states and mental capacities. For him 'What are the states and capacities <u>of</u>' is a meaningless question or he may say that mind is nothing more than the totality of those states/capacities. Similarly, Taylor might say, if he accepts Dreyfus' advice, that aspects belong to that entity which is the totality of the aspects. Further, "aspects/s" is used by Dreyfus as a metaphor and to ask the question "What are the aspects <u>of</u>" is to deprive this expression of its metaphorical content and treat it as a mere literal expression.

We may end our discussion with the observation that Taylor's position, if Dreyfus' suggestion is incorporated, becomes something more than what it intends to be. Taylor would like his critique of (modern) epistemology enable us to overcome/transcend the modern epistemological tradition and not be satisfied with its mere deconstruction

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