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**DOUBT AND KNOWLEDGE IN
WESTERN AND INDIAN
PHILOSOPHY**

Editors

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The present issue is dedicated to
Late Professor Rajendra Swaroop Bhatnagar
(1933-2019)

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About 'Doubt and Knowledge In Western And Indian Philosophy'¹

The nature, conditions, limits and validity of knowledge are perennial issues of contemplation in Epistemic Debates. In both Indian and Western Epistemology, epistemologists right since the beginning have deliberated upon 'what knowledge is not' and 'what knowledge is'. As such knowledge and its anti-thesis, both are equally important in epistemic discussions. *Samśaya* or Doubt has been in both East and West, a catalyst to initiate philosophical reflection on the nature of knowledge.

The history of debates regarding the nature of knowledge and its relationship to doubt is a complex one, and one that opens a cascade of related problems. This ordains a threadbare analysis of knowledge and its associate psychosis-doubt. This also mandates an understanding of the various perspectives on the issue which sprouted in the more than two millennia old history of Epistemology. The discussion in Indian Epistemology could be complemented through a cross cultural enquiry by infusing the rich insights available in Greek and Analytical traditions. Similarly the problems as discussed in Western Theory of Knowledge could be better understood, resolved or dissolved by absorbing the Indian perspective.

¹ Several sections in this write-up have been taken from the editorial of the XXVIIth volume of the journal.

In order to delineate the history of debates and dialectic between these two pertinent ideas of Epistemology, namely knowledge and doubt or *pramā* and *saṁśaya*, the idea of a *jñānayajña* (conference) on *Samśaya evam Pramā, Doubt and Knowledge- Indian and Western Perspectives*, was conceived. Attempts were made in the conference to understand the relationship between knowledge and doubt or *pramā* and *saṁśaya*; reflections were also made upon certain other pivotal questions of Epistemology.

The present volume consists of some of the papers presented in the International Conference on *Samśaya evam Pramā, Doubt and Knowledge- Indian and Western Perspectives*, sponsored by Indian Council of Philosophical Research and UGC, organized by Department of Philosophy, University of Rajasthan, from 15th to 17th March 2019. Resource persons/paper-presenters from China, New Zealand, U.S.A. and more than fifteen states of India, participated in the conference. Over 40 papers were read in the conference and more than ten papers were received in addition to the above.

Prof. R. S. Bhatnagar, our patron, in his paper, ‘On Certain Knowledge’, expresses pertinent ideas on certainty, probability and knowledge. He raises vital questions on the search of absoluteness and finality and underscores that we are fated with ‘probable knowledge’. Prof. P. R. Bhat’s paper examines and rejects the ‘rule-following scepticism’ of Kripke. He elaborates with illustrations the responses of subsequent scholars to Kripke and his interpretation of Wittgenstein. Prof. Hari Shankar Upadhyaya discusses

some of the aspects pertaining to ‘certain knowledge’, giving an insightful summary of the views of some of the key thinkers associated with the issue, such as G. E. Moore, Wittgenstein, A. J. Ayer, J. C. Wilson and others. He presents and examines the view of Karl R. Popper and his followers on knowledge as a ‘growing phenomenon’. He advocates ‘openness’, when it comes to criterion, conditions and levels of knowledge. Prof. N. N. Chakraborty in his paper on ‘*Scepticism, Rule-following and Knowledge of Language*’, elaborates the nuances of Kripke’s interpretation of Wittgenstein and also the deeper questions impelled by the notion of rule. Prof. Chakraborty deals with the implications of the skeptical question related to rule-following on arithmetic and language. He establishes that Wittgenstein’s allusion to rule-following was because he wanted to dismantle a frozen view of meaning. Defoliating with rigor the skeptical solution of Kripke, he further makes important corollary assertions regarding semantic irrealism and global projectivism.

Prof. Sreekala Nair, in ‘*Role of Skeptic Hypotheses in Revising Epistemic Presumptions*’, presents a summary of the fresh challenges to the possibility of certain knowledge and recent responses to Scepticism in Western Epistemology. Prof. Gopal Sahu’s paper, ‘*Is Wittgenstein a Rule-Following Skeptic?*’, also examines Kripke’s interpretation of Wittgenstein. Prof. Sahu argues that Kripke’s attribution of rule-following skepticism to Wittgenstein is a misunderstanding of the concept of “rule” and “rule-following” and that Wittgenstein intended no

such paradox. Prof. Abha Singh, makes a textual presentation of Hume's analysis of causation and his views on probability and induction. She also delineates the importance and influence of Hume in Modern Philosophy. The former one of us and Sri Manish Gothwal have tried to make a case for non conceptual knowledge by citing illustrations from Indian Epistemology.

Dr. Ahinpunya Mitra deliberates upon the debate between Moore and Wittgenstein on the notion of certainty and how Wittgenstein dissociates the notes of certainty and knowledge. He gives an in-depth textual exposition of '*On Certainty*' and deals with several nuances of the text, such as 'hinges', 'foundational certainty'. Dr. Mitra tries to establish that 'hinge certainty' is the point of ultimate trust and that a primitive certainty precedes knowledge. Dr. Pratibha Sharma, in her paper tries to show that though in most cases JTB and knowledge are congruent but the two are not necessarily equivalent. Dr. Sharma analyzes in detail the Gettier's problem, his counter-examples and the lines of debate that broke post-Gettier. She emphasizes that knowledge has an independent status and that Gettier did not aspire another definition of knowledge. Dr. Manoj Panda, in his article on, '*Experience, Knowledge and the Space of Reasons*', tries elaborate the notion of 'space of reasons' and its importance in the debate over 'doubt' and 'knowledge'. Dr. Pragyansparmita Mohapatra, in her paper, '*Davidson on Self-Knowledge and Externalism*', presents a summary of Davidson's examination of traditional empiricism and his rejection of subjectivity as foundation

of objective knowledge. She tries to understand the inter-relation amongst 'knowledge about one's own mind', 'knowledge about the minds of others' and 'knowledge about the external world', in Davidson's ideas.

The latter one of us, Sri Bheeshm Narayan Singh and Sri Megh Goswami have tried to develop an idea of 'Appropriative Epistemology' in order to support the notion of Epistemic Justice. Sri Bijoy Sardar in, '*Vaidalyaprakaraṇa and Epistemological Skepticism of Nāgārjuna*', presents some of the rebuttal arguments of Nāgārjuna in the text directed against the Nyāya position on *pramāṇa-prameya*. Ms. Debopama Bose in, '*Jayarāsi's Polemic Against Perception as an Epistemic Tool*', gives a broad overview of Indian Scepticism and certain intricacies of Jayarāsi Bhaṭṭa's *Tattvopaplavasīmha*. She has made a textual presentation of Jayarāsi's arguments against *pratyakṣa* as a valid means of knowledge. Sri Saheb Samanta in '*Śrīharṣa's Rebuttal Arguments Against Pramāṇavādins*' offers a textual exposition of Śrīharṣa's anti-epistemic arguments in *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā* and his take on one of the definitions of *pramā* by Udayana. Sri Pinaki Sarkar in his paper presents some of the aspects of Kantian transcendentalism and shows traces of an alleged skepticism when it comes to 'self', despite his (Kant's) acknowledgement of 'self' as a presupposition of knowledge.

The following papers presented in the conference, are included in the XXVIIth volume of the journal:

1. The Telic Normativity of Epistemology-Ernest Sosa
2. Knowledge and Doubt: Some Contemporary Problems and their Solutions from an Indian Perspective-J. L. Shaw
3. On The Possibility of Philosophy-P. K. Mukhopadhyay
4. Can Doubt be considered as a Witch (*piśācinī*)?-Raghunath Ghosh
5. Critique of *Pramāṇa* and *Samśaya* (Doubt) in *Vaidalyasūtra* of Nāgārjuna-Dilipkumar Mohanta
6. *Samśaya, Jñāna* and *Karma* in the *Bhagavadgītā*-Binod K. Agarwala
7. *Saugata Prāmāṇyavāda*-Ambika Dutta Sharma
8. *Samśaya Sūtra kī Vyākhyā: Tantrāgata Vicalana aur Samānatantṛī Bhinnatā*-Arun Mishra
9. The Nature of *Jñāna* (Knowledge) in Advaita Epistemology with special reference to *Bhāmatī* of Vācaspati Miśra-V.N. Sheshagiri Rao
10. A Case for Indirect Doxastic Voluntarism-Proyash Sarkar
11. Restoring Knowledge-claim: A Dispeller of Nāgārjunian Polemic-Dipayan Pattanayak
12. Nature of Number and Knowledge of Mathematical Truths: a comparison between *Principia Mathematica* and *The Līlāvati*-Arnab Kumar Mukhopadhyay

13. On Nagarjuna's Stance in his Critique of *Samśaya* and
Pramāṇa-Saroj Kanta Kar

It is obligatory for us to register our gratitude to all the people behind the conference and the publication of this issue. We are thankful to the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, MHRD, New Delhi and University Grants Commission for the financial assistance for the conference and digital printing of this issue. We are also indebted to the authorities of University of Rajasthan, Jaipur for their support and cooperation. It is an overwhelming feeling to recall the response from scholars of international repute for the event. Prof. Sosa obliged us by delivering his talk in wee hours of the morning; it was a lifetime experience to have him in our midst. Prof. Shaw has been inspiring and guiding us ever since. Prof. P. K. Mukhopadhyay, Prof. R. N. Ghosh, Prof. D. K. Mahanta, Prof. Rajneesh Kumar Shukla, Prof. N. N. Chakraborty, Prof. Ambika Dutta Sharma, Dr. Arun Mishra and others encouraged and supported in every possible way. We owe an insurmountable debt to all the scholars who participated in the conference; a word on the academic worth of their paper will surely be an act of impudence. The presence of Prof. Biswambhar Pahi, Prof. R. S. Bhatnagar, Dr. K. L. Sharma, Prof. V. S. Shekhawat, Prof. Kusum Jain, Prof. Yogesh Gupta, throughout the conference-from dawn to dusk-was a life-breath of resilience and inspiration for us; their legacy is what we seek to revive. We are also thankful to the faculty members of the department, Dr. R.P. Sharma,

Dr. Manish Sinsinwar, Sri Manish Gothwal, Dr. Vinita Nair and teachers from other departments, for their support and cooperation. A word of gratitude is also due, to the non-teaching staff of the department and the printers of the present volume. We are also full with gratitude towards our family members, Sri Bechan Singh, Smt. Shail Kumari, Smt. Anuradha Singh, Amitesh Singh, Ayushi Singh, Sri Kishore Varshney, Smt. Leena Varshney, Abhinn Varshney, for providing us enough support, energy and leisure, without which the present task could not have been accomplished. In the end it is imperative to put on record that in a way the conference was largely a student organized conference; it was an impossibility for us to have conceived about the event without the tireless support of our students. Megh Goswami, Hemant Sharma, Bheeshm Narayan Singh, Sameer Kumar, Dharmpal Garhwal, Jitendra Chandolia, Uroosa Tanzeem worked day and night for the event; we are thankful to all our students and research scholars.

Any academic worth that is found in the present and the previous volume, is due to the scholars who have made contributions for these and all flaws and imperfections are owned by us.

Arvind Vikram Singh
Anubhav Varshney
Editors

On Certain Knowledge

R.S. Bhatnagar

If I am not certain about something I am in a state of doubt. Being in doubt I cannot take decision. Since I have to act I must decide. To decide I must be of one mind. I should be free from a doubtful state. This simple argument shows what role certain knowledge has in our life.

Unfortunately I am not omniscient. I do not know everything. If I do not know everything I may be knowing at least something. Now an important question is what does it mean to say that I know something. I know that at the moment I or somebody who may be called 'I' is typing these lines. I know the usage of words I am using. I also know that a monitor is before me and I can watch what I type. At least to my mind there seems to be no doubt about these statements. Could it not be a dream, and if that is so, whatever I have stated so far may be fancy or false.

I may pinch my arm and if I feel pain I may assure myself that I am not dreaming. All these things may happen in dream. I may be pinching in a dream. Here I wish make a hypothesis. The sequences and order in things do seem to point a difference between waking and dreaming. If I can assure myself that there is some order and sequence in what I experience then I am not dreaming.

There are certain other things which are happening to me and which to my mind are not part of any dream. For example, I can hear the sound of fan and also feel the air it is producing in the room. I can see books in the almirah in front of me. And just now I hear the bell ringing perhaps someone is at the door and so I'll have to make a break from what I am doing right now and attend to the guest. So there is no doubt in the fact that the bell had rung, someone had come to meet me, we had some conversation over a cup of tea, and came back to my computer table and resumed the task I had undertaken after the guest left.

Unfortunately I am not always in such a fine state of assurance. The gentleman, who had come to see me, gave me a warning about a common acquaintance whose impression that I had was that of a dignified and honest person who could be relied upon. I believed in the principle that unless it is proved beyond doubt that a person is a liar or cheat I should not think so. And now after what I have learnt from my guest I am in a doubt. Should I continue to believe what I did believe about that person or should I change my belief. If I say that I knew the person, what sort of knowledge did I have? Wasn't I under some kind of illusion? Does it not happen that what I take to be certain later turns out to be false?

From these personal experiences let me move into public realm where media and hearsay reign. Long ago Russell had remarked that there was no time when falsehood was prorogated in such a systematic way. That was some

decades back. Didn't we hear recently of fake news and false information widely circulated? How can a lay man be certain as to what someone said or what happened at some place? Most common experience is that we are first duped and later on realize as to what happened; even then one cannot be completely sure about given information.

The consumer is bombarded with all kinds of advertisements about all kinds of products being claimed to be most beneficial and helpful. How can one assure oneself that the product really does what it is claimed to do? Perhaps one way is to go in for it and find out for oneself. When I go to market to purchase vegetables, fruits or some other necessity such as 'ghee' or 'māwā', I am told to be cautious for such things may be adulterated. It is obvious that in day to day life it is not an easy affair to get the thing checked at some laboratory. I get confused about what I hear, what I read, what I consume. To know for certain that what I hear, what I read, and what I consume is free from deception, is a difficult exercise if not impossible.

In relation to my diet or general health or some problem related them, it is possible now, I consult sites on net. I find results of studies carried out in reputed institutes or universities often incompatible with each other. Coffee is good, coffee is harmful; LDL – bad cholesterol should be more than a certain measure, now a recent study says that less of LDL is harmful.

Certain realms of knowledge for example, mathematics and physics are supposed to be by and large presenting a

paradigm of certain knowledge. Other spheres of knowledge yearn to attain that kind of certainty. Yet as some philosophers of science have shown the paradigm of veracity and validity have kept on shifting. We hear of non-Euclidean geometry, Einstein presenting an entirely new perspective and recent news about Einstein being wrong or Einstein being vindicated. No one, of course, can doubt about the scientific contribution to technology which has helped in squeezing both space and time on the one hand and reducing manual labour to great extent. However, there have been debates about such devices and inventions so far as their role in life is concerned. Gandhi's complaint about modern technology can be cited in this connection though it may be held to be an extreme view. The point is what happens to certainty?

Coming to humanities, recent political turbulence in respect of what should be in the text books and what should be taught has put the teacher and students both in a perplexing situation. I taught to the batches of the last year that 'x was great and not y' and now this year I am supposed to teach that 'y is great and not x.' It is ridiculous to play with the facts of history. But history cannot imitate paradigm of science though it may follow scientific reasoning and logic. I cannot be sure as to what has happened in the other part of the city this morning, how can I be sure and certain about something that had happened in past, especially in ancient times. The debate about Aryans being native or foreigners is a case in point. The fact that there different

theories about the same phenomenon both in Economics and Politics renders the case for surety weak.

What would happen with me when I am dead and leave this world? Here we enter a realm of complete uncertainty. Of course those who believe in the other world and continuity of life in some way would be sure about what may happen to a person after death. For those who do not believe in the other world or after-life may not raise such a question at all or think of it as an absurd question. Moreover there seems to be no way to tackle questions like these for they are beyond the ways of acquiring knowledge we are endowed with.

Similarly ‘does God exist?’, has been a controversial question. For a large section the answer is in affirmative. However, a significant minority does not believe in God. This is not an issue which is being debated in present times but it has a long history. But the question about the existence of God involves many other questions. For example, how believers understand ‘God.’ The fact that there are several religious systems, each system taking itself to be only right and superior to any other system, again indicates a realm of uncertainty. Is there one god or more than one, has god created the universe or the universe has originated by itself? If god is perfect and good and if god has created the universe then how is it that so much evil prevails in this world?

There are several other questions the answers to which have been controversial and no final conclusion is in sight.

Am I free to choose? I do make choices but they are contingent on various conditions. Does life has some end or some ultimate excellence to achieve? If these questions admit positions at war with each other what can be said about having certain knowledge? One might retort, but we do act, and if that is so our actions must be based on some rule or on some principles. But this is not in dispute. What is in dispute is the fact that we often debate about these rules or principles. And that shows that there are no certain, final or undisputed rules or principles.

According to one prestigious view what we have been discussing so far is not merely futile but illusory for we are not discussing about knowledge at all. For real knowledge shows us that our beliefs, our actions, our values, and our relations are all illusory. What is real is different. Unless we know or realize that we have no knowledge. Advaita Vedānta questioned the notion of knowledge as we ordinarily understand it. Plato questioned perceptual knowledge. The old debate between empiricism and idealism pointed to different notions of knowledge. Logical positivists admitted only scientific realm as the realm of knowledge. Pragmatism pointed out that what works is real. Different existentialists had this in common that they disregarded the metaphysical tradition. Apart from these philosophical contexts, we have been insisting on the distinction between knowledge and information. There is another significant term which is hard to define 'wisdom.' At the least wisdom is neither so called scientific knowledge nor whatever is conceived as information. Skills

and arts require knowledge but they themselves are not knowledge. So the very term ‘knowledge’ is in question. What to say about knowledge being certain.

We, thus, seem to be fated to do with ‘probable’ knowledge, and be prepared to accept that sometime we are or have been wrong. This should do away with arrogance which often blinds us to our finitude. Moreover we should recognize the multifacetedness of knowledge and infinite relations in which an object of knowledge may be placed. But these comments should not prevent us to continue our knowledge adventure without bothering about finality and absoluteness.

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Skepticism, Doubt and Knowledge

P. R. Bhat

Skepticism, doubt, and knowledge all these three technical terms belong to the domain of epistemology. Philosophers both in India and abroad have studied all the three concepts and have offered different solutions to them. One could claim that in philosophy one is not studying the psychological attitude of doubt, but a philosophical doubt, as opposed to certainty. Skepticism is the perspective emerging from philosophical doubt. Where there is doubt, one cannot consider whatever we know as certain and hence not knowledge. However, where there is knowledge, it is possible sometimes to have a philosophical doubt. If it is possible to doubt irrespective of whether we doubt it or not, the skeptic has a role to play.

Due to the questions raised by skeptics, philosophers have been cornered to study logic specifically deductive logic. It is deductive logic that gives hope to philosophers who are in search of certainty. Philosophers have spoken about deductive, inductive logic; multivalued logic; deontic logic; modal logic and so on. Logic without language is not possible. It is in language that logic operates. One could build a language of logic, that is to say, a specific language that we call deductive logic, inductive logic, etc. A certain part of language is carved out by a logician and a specialized language is created. Each specialized language of this sort is called by a different name, such as modal

logic, multivalued logic, epistemic logic, deontological logic and so on. The technical term in one system of logic may not have the same meaning and significance in another logic. However, a certain principle in logic may not apply to natural language. For instance, consistency is one such principle which any form of logic has to abide by. But strict consistency at a general level may not apply to a natural language. Even inconsistency in the use of words in a language is permissible. Circularity cannot be appreciated in logic, but this need not be true of natural language at a broader level.

Logic is a system developed independently of all users of the system. In contrast, natural language is a system where all users are taken as a necessary part of the system. We can apply the test of completeness, redundancy, consistency, etc. to logical systems. If a system fails to meet these tests, the system is considered to be defective. In contrast, language is an institution where something that is not linguistic is also part of the language. The members of a community who speak the language are also part of that institution of language. The members may be called insiders or outsiders of the institution. All those who speak a natural language form the group of insiders in that community and those who do not understand that language may be called outsiders. Insiders know the institution; its rules and use it for various purposes. Since they are insiders, they have the right to modify the language to the extent they find it necessary. For instance, if there is a need to coin a new word to express their thought, they are

permitted to do so. If the ambiguity is creating trouble, they might resort to the mechanism of giving contextual definition to resolve it. Even temporary measures may be adopted to solve the problem of ambiguity by providing a stipulated definition of a term to be used only in that specific context with that specific meaning. As a user of language, one has the liberty to modify the language. Natural language is an open system. Thus, an insider may modify, overcome the limitation of his language by contributing to the language in some way or the other. Natural language is living language and it can continue to change and grow.

An outsider cannot improve or modify a natural language. He would be at best helpless observer. The same applies to all systems of logic. All human beings are outsiders to a logical system. A system has certain logical properties or lacks them. Logic cannot be improved or modified. If it is done, it would acquire a new name. What is permissible within a system of logic is foreclosed. In this sense, it is not living. A natural language is living in the sense that it changes due to varied reasons; some internal and some external. The poetic purpose might compel a language to coin a new phrase; scientific purpose may necessitate the language to have a new term. Such changes due to the contextual need are not found in any system of logic.

If the above insight is correct, then a non-human computer can use logic very effectively. But a computer cannot be part of the natural language since it cannot participate in the

creative modification or development of the institution of language. The language that a computer operates with is called artificial language. It would be an axiomatic system. A computer is not part of the system of logic like human beings who are the members of the institution of a natural language system. We will make use of this insight in answering the skeptical questions.

The five modes of skepticism attributed to Agrippa of the ancient Greek is still respected by philosophers.¹ Three out of these five are strictly applicable to what is known as axiomatic systems of logic even in the present-day developed system of logic. These three are known as Agrippa Trilemma. The other two modes are slightly different. They do not apply to the systems, but they are external to logical systems.

The three modes that apply to axiomatic systems that Greeks found in logic are the following. Any proof that one tries to give would end up in circularity. Or else, one makes use of an axiomatic system and the proof would be based on unproven axioms. If both these do not take place, one would be giving a proof which will involve infinite regress and the proof will never end. If one or two or all the three possibilities apply to a logical system, then one does not succeed in proving anything. Circularity will involve begging the question. That is to say, what one wants to prove is already assumed to be true. In the axiomatic system, axioms are taken to be true; they are not proved to be true and hence what follows from them too would

depend on these assumptions. In the case of the third alternative, where the process of proving something never ends and hence one would never succeed in proving anything. All these three alternatives are equally hopeless.

The other two modes of Agrippa are the disagreement about something between the ordinary point of view and the philosophical point of view. Given common sense and the expert philosophical opinion, one has to suspend the judgment if there is disagreement and no conclusion can be arrived at. The other mode is the argument from relativity. X only ever appears such and such in relation to the subject judging and the object judged together with it. The consequence would again be suspensions of judgments because nothing can be objectively claimed to be true.

The trilemma the first three mentioned above apply to logical proofs; does not apply to language. Wittgenstein claims that proof has to come to an end somewhere. Wittgenstein takes giving proof as an activity. If it is an activity, it will come to an end somewhere. At one point, one feels satisfied and stops the process of giving proof. Similar is the case when one uses the expression 'and so on.' This is an expression where we stop giving further examples and conclude that the explanation in terms of giving examples is adequate. Even an infinite series can be terminated by giving this expression 'and so on'. Sometimes we use the expression 'etc.,' instead of 'and so on.' And 'and so on' is not an abbreviation for a limited number of cases. Occasionally it can be if there are, say, 50

students in a class one might say that each student should wear uniform calling out the name initially and then the teacher might say 'and so on' to cover the rest of the students in the class. Similarly, the expression 'etc.,' could be used to express a similar idea in a limited sense. If I start counting the books I have, I might start counting books on Indian philosophy, on ethics, on analytic philosophy, etc., and then use the expression 'etc.,' here to stand as an abbreviation to refer to the rest of the books in the bookshelves. The counting would come to an end had I sustained the process. But this is not what Wittgenstein is referring to by these expressions with reference to the applications of rules. We have the way of indicating that the process is infinite and that is what we mean in certain contexts when we use the expression 'and so on' or 'etc.' especially if it is giving the example of the application of rules since rules have infinite application.

Rules have infinite applications and we give some examples to show how to use the rules. No two individuals have to give the same examples to explain the rule. One might show some school books to explain what is meant by 'books' and another might give examples of novels to explain what are 'books.' Yet another person might give books on physics and mathematics to explain what he means by the term 'books.' All of them are explaining equally well what books are and in the end, they use the expression 'and so on' or terminate the sentence with 'etc.'

Rule-Following Skepticism

Saul Kripke introduced a new form of skepticism in his book *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition*.² This form of skepticism is quite deep and hard to answer. It is a different matter whether Kripke misunderstood Wittgenstein while reading *Philosophical Investigations* or not, the skepticism he formulates is very powerful. If Kripke's skeptic has his way, then an agent does not, and cannot know which rule he has followed in the past since there are no traces left based on which he could identify the rule he has followed. Our memory cannot be used because thinking that one has followed a rule would not be following the rule.³ Of course, our thoughts may be remembered and since we thought that we have followed the rule. This memory does not help us since it was only our thought and nothing more. Similarly, many imagined things might be in our memory and one cannot go by our memory at all. Wittgenstein himself has eliminated this possibility thinking that one follows the rule is not following the rule. Similarly, imagining that one is following a rule is not following the rule. Furthermore, the fundamental difficulty lies in identifying the rule followed when multiple similar rules apply to the same context. I suspect that this is what the hermeneutic philosophers exploit in pushing their thesis: meaning is interpretation.

To make the point clear and obvious, Kripke takes an example from arithmetic.⁴ He speaks of plus rule and similar one to plus rule but different in unobserved cases,

he calls such a rule ‘*quus*’ rule. *Quus* rule is different only in the case of unobserved applications. Both appear to be similar rules when considered adding the numbers smaller than 68 and 57. But once we reach these numbers, the logic of addition will change in the case of *quus* rule. Instead of obtaining 125 we would obtain just number 5 if we add 68 and 57. This is not an absurd assumption since rules are arbitrary, one could have such a rule of *quus*. Assuming that we observe only adding smaller numbers, we would not have discovered the difference between plus rule and *quus* rule. We would have got the results of our addition identical and hence we would have even thought that plus means *quus* or vice versa or both these rules can be interchangeably used. Kripke does not make them interchangeable or identical, he would say that *quus* rule is entirely different if you consider the unobserved cases and the meaning of what is *quus* is quite different from the meaning of what plus is. The assumption here is that the rule determines the meaning of the word with which the rule is associated. This is a broad framework of Wittgenstein.

Many skeptical questions will spring from this example. First of all, is there any fact that can indicate which rule one is following while calculating the sum of smaller numbers? Kripke would answer this question in the negative. We cannot claim on any objective ground whether we followed plus rule or *quus* rule since there is no way one could bank on a fact that supports one rule instead of the other. Memory cannot be the ground since memory

can fail us in many ways. We have occasionally noticed that our memory cheats us. For instance, the events that have happened very early in our lives appear to have happened much later. And it is not very uncommon that we have got confused ourselves which one did we really follow when the rules are similar. Secondly, if one is not sure about oneself which rule one has followed in the past, it is much more difficult to know which rule the other person is following based on our observation of his behavior. This amounts to claiming that teaching a rule to others is not simple since we will not know when the other person is deviating from the normal following of the rule. This has serious consequence in the sense that one cannot speak of community and shared rules and hence the language. Third, the existence of other minds cannot be known and hence the intentions of others and what they mean by their sentences, etc., cannot be known. This is because to understand the meaning of a sentence, it may be necessary to know the desire, intention of the speaker. “I want coffee instead of a cold drink”, this sentence cannot be understood if there is no way to understand the intention of the speaker. Fourth, no institution is possible since an agreement is essential among the members of an institution to have such an institution. One cannot know whether others agree with us or disagree with us. We cannot communicate and others cannot understand us. Hence no civilization could exist. This is, in brief, the consequences of rule-following skepticism given the example of Kripke.

Kripke, responds to this skepticism in a manner that is comparable to Hume. Hume, the way Kripke reads him, adopted a strategy of granting the skeptic his point, but approaching the solution after granting the point. This he calls ‘skeptical solution’ to the skeptical problem.⁵ We shall approach the problem differently. We shall analyze the skeptical problem itself and show how such a problem would not arise at all.

First, the claim of Kripke that no fact can show which rule one has followed. Is the fact the basis of following the rule? How do we justify that we have followed the same rule? Justification cannot be based on facts. Facts cannot make up a rule since a rule can have infinite applications and no fact can have this dimension of infinity. The facts could be a natural fact or an institutional fact. A natural fact can be observed using our senses and institutional facts have to be inferred using certain institutional features. For instance, something is an apple that can be verified using sense organs. But whether someone is a student cannot be observed like this even if the person behaves in a certain manner. Only if the person meets certain criteria, one may be considered as a student of an institution. Therefore, one could be clear that Kripke is searching for the wrong justification. Second, Wittgenstein has already negated the possibility of subjective thinking that one is following a rule is what constitutes following the rule since he believes that rule-following is a feature of an institution of language that is public and shared. Third, though rules are arbitrary, to begin with, they are necessary once we accept them as

part of our linguistic use. That is the reason Wittgenstein believes that intrinsic necessity in a language is correlated to arbitrary rules.⁶ This means Kripke's idea that rules are arbitrary though is true, they do not remain arbitrary. While remarking on the way he would use the rule, he claims that he would obey the rule blindly.⁷ Whenever one applies the rule, one does not decide again to apply or not. This, of course, goes against the hermeneutic claim that every understanding is an interpretation. One does not interpret the rule every time one applies it. Interpreting or deciding is a special activity different from routine describing or applying the rules.⁸ Fourth, rules have infinite applications yet we do not say that we cannot learn the rules since we can never reach infinity. This implies that we need not learn all the applications of a rule to learn the rule. Kripke's skeptic assumes that we need to know all the applications of a rule to know the rule and hence he designs his example to make the distinction between the observed application of a rule and the unobserved application of rules in the case of plus and *quus* rules. We grasp the meaning and the rules associated with the meaning in a flash. Wittgenstein emphasizes grasping the meaning as important. It is one like a quantum jump. Till that time, one might wonder as to how to proceed further. Once when a person has grasped the meaning he is in a position to claim that 'now I can go on.' This view of Wittgenstein cannot be true of *quus* rule of Kripke. Anything could be the case when we deal with the *quus* rule of a larger number. One cannot know in advance what would be the next number since rules are arbitrary. Note the difference between Kripke's notions of

arbitrary rule and Wittgenstenian. Kripke would maintain that rules remain arbitrary all through, while for Wittgenstein rules are arbitrary while making the convention, but once the convention is part of the institution, they are no more arbitrary.⁹ They become necessary in the linguistic sense and become predictable.

A general remark on rules and their behavior is needed. Rules are arbitrary in language, in games and culture, etc. Every rule of an institution is arbitrary and they have to be agreed upon by the members of the society and obey those rules whenever they are using those institutions. Clearly, this presupposes that human beings are making use of their freedom in building such an institution. Once an institution is built, it is difficult, but not impossible to change the rules as we do in the case of constitutions of different countries. Again there would be some norm and method of bringing in such a change. But if the rules themselves have exceptions, what should happen would be important to be noted. For instance, consider the example of a calendar. British calendar has either 30 days or 31 days in a month with only one exception. February will have 29 days if it is a leap year or else it will have 28 days. This arbitrariness of having 29 days or 28 days is inbuilt in the very notion of this calendar. When the calendar is known, the procedure to calculate a number of days in a month is also given. A leap year is also defined. A year which is divisible by number 4 would be called a leap year. Thus, there is no unpredictability, or undecidedness about the calendar though it might take some effort to determine the number

of days in February in a given year. No new decision is taken when we take some effort to calculate the number of days in February in a specific year. All that we did was to see whether the rule appropriately applied or not.

In contrast to what we said above, there are genuine cases where rules are not final especially in the domain where the application involves dynamic contexts. For instance, whether a house comes within the limits of the municipality. This definition of the boundary of the municipality can change over the years. A house might be outside the limits of a certain municipality and in the next decade, it may be considered as within the boundary of the municipality. Similarly, if we speak of those who should pay income tax, year on year, application of this notion might change. Depending on the tax proposals, different individuals might be taxpayers. Judiciary is given the responsibility of interpreting the constitution and declare whether a proposed law is constitutionally valid or not. Here, sometimes active interpretation of the constitution can take place. The judges take collective decision one way or the other. This interpretation and decision may be entirely new and every citizen is supposed to be advised by this interpretation. This may not be because the rules are unclear, but because the situation in which they have to be applied are too complex. However, *quus* rule is not one of this kind.

Learning the rules is different than learning a completely exhaustive list of applications. There is always something

that is left out in learning the rules of language for instance. Rules were introduced by someone in the past and would have applications in the future even after a century. Consider, for instance, I could learn what a series of even numbers is without completely learning the members of the series. I begin with 52, 54, 56, 58 ... and so on. I could, if I have learned the series, claim that the next number is 60. Similarly, the prior number to 52 is 50. What becomes evident is that I have learned the series once I learned the gap between three of these consecutive numbers. I can grasp the series and I can produce any number from the series now, and also I can identify several whether that belongs to this series or not. This example works well to explain the rules of our natural language. The natural language exists before our birth. As a baby, I would have hardly known any rules explicitly. But once I have acquired certain competence and terminologies along with the art of using my motor organs and using my senses, I would have learned to use rules in using vocabulary to utter meaningful sentences. May be I use one-word sentences initially and subsequently, I learned to combine words to form sentences.

We cannot claim that someone knows the rule but does not know how to use the rule. Similarly, if someone does not know that $68+57$ makes it 125, then he has not learned the rule of addition at all. We have said that limited freedom has to be exercised by the language user if he has to stipulate a rule, but if every application is arbitrarily stipulated, then there is no rule. Regularity and consistency

in the use of the rules of language are a must even though we may deviate from the norm occasionally. This is one of the reasons why Wittgenstein rejects the possibility of private language because each application is arbitrarily decided by the lone person who has a private experience. Kripke argues wrongly that a rule may differ in unobserved cases of its application. If we know the rule, we know all its applications in advance and if the rule has exceptions, even that we would have known in advance as is the case with our example of the calendar.

If Kripke or his skeptic were correct no one could have become an insider to a language since he would have never learned a rule of any language. Without learning the rule, he could not have used the language. We know that a child is initiated into a language by the users of the language. That means one could enter into the institution of language and be a member of it. There is something wrong in thinking that circularity is not acceptable in language. All the words in a dictionary are defined in terms of other words; still, a dictionary is quite useful! Rule- following skepticism of Kripke is based on the misunderstanding of the way we learn and use rules.

If we know how we learn the language, our understanding of language would be less muddled and may give us some insight into the language-related problems in epistemology or that of logic. We are not here going to discuss the psychological aspects of language learning; we take it for granted that philosophical aspects can be discussed without

getting into the psychological aspects. Of the thinkers who have explicitly discussed the issues of philosophy of language, we find writings of Wittgenstein insightful. The debate about the innateness of the language is relevant to us to the extent that human beings would not have learned a language if they did not possess the ability to learn the language. To say this is to assume the learning of language by a normal child without any serious mental disability. Our discussion would be about normal children who acquire language.

Also what we need to keep in mind is the claim that an alien person visiting us will not be able to understand our language and our culture. This view about strangers has led to skepticism in anthropology and other cultural studies. Though there is some truth in this, it is not insurmountable. With some effort, one could understand the alien language and culture. Some exposure would be required to learn the language and culture, but this is not more than what is needed for an insider to learn the language and culture. May be, it would be infested with difficulties in learning the second language due to the interference of the mother tongue, its vocabulary and grammar, and other phonetic structure, etc.; similarly it is expected that some difficulties due to interferences of the language and culture that we know already in learning a new language and culture would be there. Also, one should not forget that there are some advantages as well in knowing one language before embarking on learning the second language. For instance, the familiarity of all the elements of a language such as

grammar, vocabulary, etc. may be of advantage. Furthermore, if one knows several languages that becomes an advantage in learning the next unknown language. The experts in decoding the coded language of criminals would have known the likely strategy the criminals would use in decoding another secret language.

What should not be undermined is the role played by our sense organs and the surroundings in learning a language whether it is our first language or third language. Non-verbal communication happens without one using any natural language. A human being can understand another human being that he is tired that he is gasping etc., just observing him for a few minutes. It is also possible to know the other person wants to talk to you or wants to relate to you in some way. You also can know without uttering a word that he wants to show you something. The role of non-verbal communication is of immense help in learning a language. Non-verbal communication is what an infant uses to communicate with the elders. If you are holding a child, sometimes it directs you to go in some direction and sometimes using meaningless sounds and indicating the direction. It learns to nod its head to indicate it is agreeable; it tells you what it wants and what it does not want making meaningless sounds. But psychological ability to associate a word and an action or an object is a great boon for human beings. Repeated utterances of a word associated with certain actions can give the child the ability to relate the word and the action. This can lead to learning of action-oriented sentences like give me something or take this, eat

this and so on. Having learned how to use action-oriented words in a perceptual field, the child may learn to talk about past and future actions. This is where the child goes beyond the perceptual field and learns to speak about abstract things. In learning general words other than the proper names, pronouns, logically proper names- this, that, etc., the child learns how to use linguistic rules governing the use of these words. Within 48 months, a child masters the language in the sense that it knows how to use all grammatical rules of the language claimed Chomsky. Of course, the vocabulary is acquired all through one's life: one keeps adding new words to one's vocabulary storehouse.

Another point to be kept in mind is the view that a child knows its sensations whether it can identify its sensation with the right word or not. For instance, if it knows that anything hot would burn and produce pain, then the child stops touching such hot objects. Similarly, a child can distinguish between sweet-mates and toy pieces. When we extend this analysis to every sense organ, we admit that a normal child knows how to use each of its sense organs and understand the sensual objects within the sensual field. Again, it would have also learned how to remember old experiences and expect new experiences it might encounter tomorrow. Extending this further some philosophers argue that we understand every experience in our own terms. If I understand what is sweet from my own experience, extending this view one might say that I also understand what tooth-ache is from my own experience. By extending

this model of explanation, I know the meaning of every experience based on my experience and if I have not experienced something all that I can do is to imagine, maybe correctly or wrongly, and give a sympathetic hearing if it is a painful experience. Expanding this view would be holding the view of a private language. When this is applied to the mystical experience, yogic experience, etc., the conclusion one arrives at is that the normal person who never had such experiences cannot understand the quality, quantity, and significance of such experiences. When a skeptic extends this argument further, it would appear as if one cannot understand the experience of other people since it is obvious that one cannot have sensations of others. This would result in the problem of other minds. Even if the other person is eager to share with you his mind, you cannot understand him. This further implies that you can never know the intention of others. Needless to say that all of us, viewed in this manner, are solipsists having no logical possibility of communicating with each other.

When the above model is pushed in a different direction we arrive at Pyrrhonism. Even within solipsism, if one looks at an object like fruit with our barren eye, it may appear attractive with its color, shape, and fragrance; the same thing if we see using the microscope, it may appear to have hills and valleys; and the same thing if one sees using a telescope, it appears as though it is very near and very big. Obviously, the same object cannot have all these properties at the same time. Should one suspend the judgments about visual perception or should we call one perception more

accurate and other perceptions as inaccurate? Similarly, when we examine a cultural event like Diwali, one might consider it to be a very happy occasion since it is the festival of lights. An agnostic may treat it as a religious festival of Hindus. A critic with an economic angle might find the same event as an extravaganza, waste of money and resources. Thus, the judgment about Diwali could be said to be relative to the perspective since judgment differs depending on the perspective one adopts. A Pyrrhonist might say that it is not possible to conclude whether the cultural event is wasteful or useful; religious or secular; since it, all depends on the perspective. He might conclude claiming that he has no right to hold something as true hence he should withdraw from making any claim.

Public Language

Wittgenstein has ingeniously solved the problem of solipsism. He spoke about the paradox of beetle.¹⁰ Assume that some individuals are engaged in observing a beetle in their exclusive box. Each person can see inside the box and tell others what there is. Each one sees inside and then calls whatever there is or is not as "beetle". In this language-game, it does not matter what is named as "beetle," each one calls whatever there is or even the empty space as "beetle" and the great difference between what is there in one box and another drops out. This would be the picture when we speak about the sensations, perceptions being private. All the differences between different objects drop out and what remains in a language is the perceivable

sound or script "beetle." Similarly, the word "pain" belongs to our natural language and hence it is useful for the speakers of language irrespective of the experiential part that differs from person to person. Thus, human beings can have language regarding their experiences, even if experiences are private.

Solution to the Skeptical Problems

We find three foundations of the solution. All these three help us to build inter-personal relation against the skeptical issues raised so far discussed above. One, the details drop out at the level of language and hence there is no significance to the difference in perception. This is what gives us the perceptual level of commonality. Second, Wittgenstein speaks of grammatical statements which basically are statements about conceptual relations. 'Red is a color' would be such a statement. 'Only living beings have pain' would be another such sentence. If we say that 'one cannot know the sensations of others' this would be yet another example of grammatical sentence. They are all obvious given the fact that one cannot think of their contrary. However, there is not much point in asserting such statements. Anything that can be asserted can also be denied according to Wittgenstein and hence such obvious sentences are not asserted. But as philosophers, we do assert such sentences is a different thing. Third, any rule of language is public and it could be traced by others given sufficient opportunity. Deciphering code language is an example of this kind. Sometimes, even fill in the blanks

questions make use of the ability of mankind to make the right guess. Making editorial corrections and grammatical corrections are possible because we could rightly guess what the other person intends to say through a sentence. The psychological habit of knowing from the beginning could be a block in our understanding of rules. No two individuals would have learned the rules of language in an identical manner unless they are trained in a formal way. One picks up the rules as and when one gets an occasion. Assume that one is learning what a series is. Assume that someone is taught the two series of odd and even numbers. There is no need of starting the series with one and two. One could start explicitly listing 33, 35, 37 ... and the series of even numbers as 66, 68, 70 ... If the person has grasped the series, one could answer the question correctly. For instance, if the question of the number 19 is asked whether it belongs to even or odd series or none of them, one could easily answer the question by claiming that it is a member in the odd series. Similarly, if the question is whether the number ' $n \times 2$ ' is part of any one of the series, one could answer by claiming that it is a member of even number series. What do these two series indicate to us? Very clearly that one could understand a series of odd numbers can be learned at any segment of the series provided at least three consecutive numbers are given. One could work out the series in both the direction in the order of decreasing the values of the numbers and the other side of increasing the value of the numbers of the series. What this example indicates is that if the rules are systematic like series, their applications are necessary. This seems to be the

reason for Wittgenstein to declare that rules are arbitrary but their application is necessary. This is the spirit behind Baker and Hacker's claim that if the rule is given its extension is given.

Considering all the three objective grounds for going beyond subjective experience, solipsistic framework, etc. is very much possible. Our sense experience could be comparable and communicable between many individuals since language has many general terms and concepts at the level of language. Using such terms one can even avoid the laborious task of naming every object in the vicinity. One could call this table and that chair simply and that would make sense perfectly. If individuals had used names for tables and chairs, vocabulary would have been unmanageable. This is a great invention by the language users that they can use what Russell called logically proper names, ostensive names, pronouns and so on and manage with the limited stock of names. Similarly, one also uses terms like one, some and many to minimize the quantification vocabulary. The case of solipsism is very weak when we admit the possibility of such a situation of mixed verbal and non-verbal communication. Effective communication takes place when one is able to use both verbal and non-verbal cues to express oneself.

The grammatical statements express the conceptual relations. When we have all the grammatical statements, then the language game would have evolved. For instance, all the grammatical statements would have shown the

logical ways of showing the relationship among genus terms and species terms. For instance, if red, green, blue, etc. are color terms, and they belong to the language of colors, then these colors are mutually exclusive even though all of them are colors. Thus, they are incompatible terms. One could claim that a red object is not a green object. This would again turn out to be a grammatical sentence. Similarly, if there are binaries such as male and female, it follows that males are not females. If someone is a male, he is not a female will turn out to be a grammatical sentence. If we consider the game of chess, all rules for the movement of pieces of chessboard would consist of only grammatical rules and they are all arbitrary. But having invoked those rules, if one wants to play the chess game, then one ought to follow the rules. Or else, it would not be a chess game.

We have the vocabulary and we would have also learned to make observation sentences. We could make them accurately or inaccurately, but depending on the context, we are efficient users of the language. Wittgenstein spoke of language as picturing the reality. These empirical statements can be asserted or denied. And we know how to verify such statements or pictures. Use the same sense organ, sometimes even some other sense organ to verify the authenticity of the statement. Since we have taken care of solipsism, intersubjective or objective statements are possible. When there are possibilities of knowing the size of an object visually and also by touch, one may verify the statement using one of these two sense organs. Sometimes,

we enhance the ability of a sense organ by using a technological gadget like telephone or glass to observe an object if it is not clearly visible, etc.

Rule following skepticism seems to be based on certain assumptions which are not well-founded. In the case of formal sciences like mathematics, it is not true that the rules are kept open and could be interpreted in different ways even in the cases of unobserved applications. We do admit the cases of the expression "and so on." We use this expression while explaining the rules because every rule might have infinite applications and we have the mechanism to express this in language by using the expression "and so on" after giving some examples to communicate that the rules can have a large number of applications. This aspect of natural language is important to be noted. Furthermore, others do understand the rules that are used even if they do not know all the applications of rules. This is the reason why Chomsky said that a normal child would be master of language by the time he is 48 months old. Obviously, we do not assume that the child would have acquired all the vocabulary in the language.

Cultural Institutions

In the domain of culture, most of the activities are based on conventions and these conventions are part of our institutions. Our religion plays an important role in the culture. Festivals could be of religious significance or could be social in nature. We also have music, dance, and paintings, etc. as other institutions. We also have

languages, schools, colleagues, banks, other societies which are institutions. We cannot verify a statement about these institutions unless we know the conventions that form these institutions. Having learned the rules, one could, of course, verify social facts. For instance, there are ways to find out whether two individuals are married or not.

Using institutional conventions, one could express oneself non-verbally. For instance, when I present a self-cheque at a bank, the cashier in a bank returns the amount marked in the cheque. All this can happen without uttering a single sentence because there is a banking system as an institution and it is governed by certain rules. That is to say, my behavior expresses my intention in the context of an institution. Similarly, if someone approaches me, I would get the sense that the person wants to interact with me. The problem of the other mind is solved when someone expresses on oath what he claims. Normally, most of the individuals most of the time speak the truth. Occasionally in the context of producing humor, or escaping the responsibility, etc., one finds people telling lies.

The discussion of the solipsistic situation of every human being is philosophically worked out to demonstrate that there is the possibility of misunderstanding the intention of others since intention cannot be directly observed. In fact, what the skeptic here discards is the social institution of ascribing intention to others. What a person says is sometimes not counted at all. Actions are more certain evidence than the verbal expression. Similarly, with

reference to intention, an observer might ascribe intention to the other person. In criminal law, the statement of the witness is given importance. If one cannot know the intention of others since they are not directly observable, how can an eye witness have known the intention of the criminal? This skeptical view of not knowing the intention of others is not quite true to the fact of our social institutions. Eyewitnesses can know the intention of the supposed criminal since he would have observed the actions of the person.

Our understanding of the rule-following would permit an individual entering a language and becoming the insider of the language. We believe that even learning a third language is possible. All that one requires is familiarizing with different institutions of an alien society. The familiarity of the language would help us understand other social institutions quickly. One should live within the tribal institution to facilitate learning about their language and culture. But if there are ways of familiarizing oneself, then any of the things that are thought to be essential seem to be only incidental. It is like saying that no male can understand the feminist movement. We do not find this claim to be an inevitable truth.

A few remarks may be made about language as an institution and logic as a formal institution. One could look at Agrippa as a logician having a certain expectation. The expectation is quite valid if we consider formal systems. In a formal system like logic, we expect the premises to be

self-evident axioms. If they are unproven then one cannot accept them unless they are self-evident. If the argument has an infinite regress then that cannot be taken as useful since a proof or an argument should come to an end. Proving is an activity hence it will come to an end according to Wittgenstein. And further, any circular argument also cannot be admitted in logic because it cannot prove anything because if what one is going to prove is already assumed, it cannot be a proof. Similarly, a pair of contradictory statements or inconsistent statements cannot help us prove anything. From inconsistent premises, one can prove both p and its negation. This means we have proved nothing using inconsistent premises.

When we compare the language with a formal system of logic, we realize that these two systems are different. Logic is a formal system and one cannot understand it in any other way than the one using logical symbols and connectives. Each one of the symbols and connectives has to be strictly defined. All the objections raised by Agrippa are applicable to logical systems. In this kind of system, no one is an insider. That is to say, no two individuals have the freedom to modify any of the definitions and yet have the same system. Everyone is an outsider and has to respect the principle of consistency, completeness, etc. However, we should not be applying these requirements to natural language. Philosophers when they prove something or advance some arguments, they could use logic explicitly. For instance, the foundation of knowledge. Foundation of knowledge is thought to be a problem belonging to logic,

but in fact, it belongs to epistemology involving metaphysics. The skeptical problem of logic need not be a philosophical problem of epistemology. As we noted, a natural language speaker is an insider to his language. He understands the sentences of the problem of other minds. He understands what a rule is and what is involved in rule-following. He does not face the rule-following skepticism. Meaning and rules are related to him and he knows his way out of skeptical problems. He does not think that logic is his philosophy of language. He knows fully well that logic is a specialized language carved out of natural language. Hence he succeeds in avoiding Agrippan problems of the trilemma. He need not face the problem of unproved axioms; no question of arguing infinitely; and circularity would not bother him at all. Since he is an insider, he can understand sentences that belong to his language without getting into axioms. He knows how to learn and teach rules having infinite applications, but with some good examples and using the expressions ‘and so on’ or ‘etc.’ He also knows how effectively to use dictionaries where a word is defined in terms of other words yet he does not find this circularity as a problem. Natural language is ever-growing and living. It is never limited in any normal sense. It can give rise to many language-games to use the technical term of Wittgenstein. We become an insider of a natural language if it is our mother tongue. We have certain liberty to modify the institution of language; we could introduce new terms and new style and other conventions. With this linguistic license, many philosophers have introduced many technical terms like ‘reality’ in their own idiosyncratic

ways. Each one may be capable of acquiring profound meaning, but they all become necessary to express the ideas of philosophers. We could become an insider of any natural language if we put the effort in that direction and understand the institutions including linguistic ones and stop doubting where there is no need to doubt. If Pyrrhonists suspend their judgments thinking that there are many alternative views, the problem is with the expectation, namely, one will have only one correct view and a full understanding of everything will eventually yield us one final view. We should have realized long back that no one of us is such an omniscient person hence the expectation is ill-founded.

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- ⁴ Kripke pp. 7ff.
- ⁵ Kripke pp. 66ff.
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- ⁸ This idea has been discussed in detail in my paper entitled “Rules and Their Interpretations” *Suvidya: Journal of Philosophy and Religion*, Volume V Number 1, June 2011 pp. 1-14.

⁹ PI see § 138, 191, 318, 319 for the discussion on arbitrariness.

¹⁰ PI §293

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On Knowledge And Certainty

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In the Western Epistemology, the English word '*know*' as verb and '*knowledge*' as a noun have been used in various senses and into many contexts. Generally the process of knowledge is initiated by doubt and sustained by inquiry. Indeed, doubt is anti-thesis of knowledge. However, the concept of doubt is different from that of ignorance in the sense that it is constituted by some forms of knowing in the minimal sense.

Some philosophers like G.E. Moore have made a common sense use of knowledge, whereas, sometimes it is used in the sense of acquaintance. Russell has made a distinction between *knowledge by acquaintance* and *knowledge by description*. John Cook Wilson and H.A. Pritchard have tried to furnish a thesis that knowledge is purely *sui-generis*, a *unique* and *infallible mental-state*.¹ But this thesis has been vehemently refuted by a large number of philosophers like, A.J. Ayer, G. Ryle, J.L. Austin and many others. Ryle has termed '*knowing*' as a '*capacity verb*' that is different from '*believing*' which is a '*tendency verb*'. He has made a distinction between '*knowing how*' and '*knowing that*'.² There is an Ordinary Language School of Philosophy associated with J.L. Austin who treats 'know' as a *performative verb*. He has claimed that 'knowing' is closely connected with 'promising' which provides a guarantee of successful performance.³

In some cases the verb 'know' is used to denote a disposition. It is what Ryle calls a '*capacity verb*'. A.J. Ayer has advocated that the dispositions which constitute '*knowing*', must sometimes be actualized. Some English speaking non-British philosophers⁴ (e.g. R.M. Chisolm) have used 'know' in episodic sense, whereas P.T. Geach has used knowing in the sense of *mental act*.⁵ There is another epistemic concept, i.e., 'belief' which has not been used as a mental episode. There is a difference between belief view of knowledge and episodic view of knowing. If knowledge is taken as a justified true belief, the true belief must be justified in the conclusive sense, whereas, if knowing is taken in the episodic sense, it would require attention towards 'causal chain' that gives *coverage* to bring about the cognitive episode. Thus there has been a lot of discussions and debate regarding the nature of knowledge. Consequently the original problem has become more and more complicated. This is why Robert Nozick was evoked to make the ironical remark, "so messy did it all seem that I just stopped reading that literature".

Advocates of skeptical argument have laid emphasis that knowledge is not only dependent on justification, but also closely related to certainty, i.e., whatever is known, must be certain.⁶ In Gettier's counter-examples, Smith's '*justified true belief*' does not yield knowledge because it lacks certainty. Therefore it cannot be treated as a case of knowledge. The problem that requires discussion is, whether knowledge is identical with absolute certainty. According to A.J. Ayer, to say that he knows, is to concede

to him the right to be sure, whereas, to say that he is only guessing is to withhold it. In such cases of knowledge, the knower's certainty is almost psychological, which may be called as a *subjective certainty*. The word 'certain' has been used in various contexts. For example : "*I am certain that p*" and '*I feel certain that p*' may be used truly, in spite of falsity of p. But when some one says '*I know for certain that p*' and '*It is certain that p*', it would 'logically entail that p must be true. The 'psychological certainty is simply synonymous with being 'confident' or 'being completely convinced'⁷. Ayer has used '*certainty*' in the very sense when he claimed that knowing implies '*having right to be sure*', i.e. psychological certainty.⁸

In this regard, views of Wittgenstein are very significant. He says, "with the word '*certain*' we express complete conviction, the total absence of doubt, i.e., subjective certainty. He contrasts it with what he calls '*objective certainty*'.⁹ The objective certainty of a proposition does not depend on the strength of the evidence for it. In this sense objective certainty is different from the 'evidential certainty.' The sceptics have claimed that absolute evidential certainty must be a necessary condition of knowledge, but this condition cannot be fulfilled.¹⁰

The crux of the problem belongs to whether there are any absolutely (evidentially) certain propositions. In this regard, there are two different opinions. According to Unger¹¹ certainty is an absolute term, whereas, Frankfurt¹² has claimed that it is a relative term. Unger has used 'certainty'

as complete absence of doubt which has no degrees, but Frankfurt holds that certainty cannot be used in the absolute sense because it is a relative term. The main problem regarding possibility of knowledge arises, when it is claimed that knowledge must entail absolute evidential certainty. In some cases of knowledge, psychological and evidential certainty are conflated. In this regard, Keith Lehrer points out that if knowledge entails certainty, then scepticism would be inevitable. He says, “the sceptic is correct, we concede, in affirming the chance of error is always genuine....Thus our theory of knowledge is a theory knowledge without certainty. We agree with the sceptic that if a man claims to know for certain, he does not know where of he speaks’’.¹³

Indeed, some of our justifications provide guarantee for beliefs in the actual world, but they do not and cannot provide guarantee for beliefs in all possible worlds. At most absolute evidential certainty entails analytic propositions or the so called basic propositions, i.e., self evident propositions.

However, the main issue regarding definition of knowledge arises due to assumption that *absolute certainty* and *conclusive evidence* can illuminate the nature of knowledge. In Ayer’s view the notion of having *right to be sure* is very close to the concept of a justified true belief because nobody can claim to know a fact reasonably, unless, he is completely sure of it. However, a mere feeling of conviction cannot be a sufficient condition of being

sure, and even a feeling of conviction may co-exist with an unconscious feeling of doubt. It is needless to say that right to be sure may be acquired in various ways. Almost all questions pertaining to claims of knowledge belong to the legitimacy of the title of being sure or having *right to be sure*. These claims must be examined and that is the main concern of epistemology.¹⁴

R.M. Chisholm¹⁵ in a wider sense of knowledge has rejected the phrase '*is sure*' or '*feels sure*' used by Ayer. In place of using 'is sure' Chisholm has used 'A accepts p'. Though Ayer and Chisholm have a difference of opinion on the issue, yet they have some common points to share, i.e. 'A knows that p' implies that p is true. By not using the phrase '*I am sure*' Chisholm has made an attempt to point out that knowledge cannot be taken in the sense of subjective certainty. In several cases of claims of knowing the use of *I am sure* denotes only psychological certainty, or assurance or conviction. But there is a similar problem to be faced further by Chisholm. Our knowledge without certainty would be vitiated by doubt which is anti-thesis of knowledge. Therefore Chisholm's phrase, i.e., 'A accepts ;' cannot be replaced by 'A is sure' or 'A has right to be sure'. Indeed there is no proof to hold that when 'I am sure that p is true', then 'p' is true in fact because there may be only a conviction that p is true.

There is another view attributed to Wittgenstein who makes a distinction between knowledge and certainty. He points that knowledge and certainty are different to each other in

kind, and not merely in degrees. He says, “Knowledge and certainty belong to different categories. They are not two mental states like, say, surmising and being sure”.¹⁶ Further he says in section 504, “Whether I have known something depends on whether the ‘evidence’ backs me up or contradicts me.”¹⁷ Wittgenstein has made attempts to maintain that if some one claims to know that p, he must be in position to provide solid or compelling grounds in support of what he knows. Therefore Wittgenstein says that Moore has rightly claimed that ‘*here is one hand*’, is certain, but he was not correct in claiming that it (here is one hand) is known’.¹⁸ Thus he has made a clear distinction between knowledge and certainty.

Wittgenstein has used ‘*subjective certainty*’ in the sense of psychological conviction which is different from ‘*evidential certainty*’. Ayer’s concept of ‘*right to be sure*’ corresponds to *evidential certainty*, that may be taken as a necessary condition of knowledge. In order to escape from objections of skepticism, Wittgenstein and his followers have delinked knowledge from *subjective certainty*. He claims that *something is objectively certain only when a mistake is logically impossible* because scepticism is against subjective or psychological certainty. He takes a proposition to be certain only when there is no evidence for it because its acceptability depends upon the practices essential to the language game in which the proposition in question is uttered. To say that a proposition is objectively certain would be to claim that it has a particular role in the speaker’s linguistic community.¹⁹

As we have discussed earlier, it is clear that some philosophers have used certainty in the absolute sense, whereas, others have used it in a relative sense. However, most of epistemologists are of opinion that knowledge must entail certainty. It has been claimed that knowledge must be carried out with reference to such notions as being sure and certain or believing.

These considerations have been challenged by a group of philosophers. They have claimed that believing and being sure cannot be taken as a necessary condition of knowledge in all cases. There are some cases in which people consistently get something right without being able to say how and *without being sure*. Even some people claim that they do know things by intuition and they are not supposed to have any evidence. They may know without replying how they do know.²⁰

According to A.D. Woozley²¹, '*being sure*' cannot be taken as a necessary condition of knowledge in cases of inferential knowledge and '*knowing how*'. Woozley has claimed that it is one of the distinguishing marks between '*knowing how*' and '*knowing that*'. Similarly E.J. Lemman, David Annies and Colin Radford have also claimed that at least in some cases of knowledge, it is possible to know without being sure or without believing.²²

With the above discussion, it is clear that, Woozley and some other philosophers hold that some cases of knowledge are possible without belief, without certainty and without being sure. Whereas, advocates of belief view of

knowledge have considered truth, belief and justification (evidence) as necessary conditions of knowledge. In other words, the knower must have 'right to be sure' and he must be in position to hit on truth, with a conclusive evidence.

Unlike Gettier, some philosophers have challenged not only the adequacy, but also even the necessity of these conditions of knowledge. Karl R. Popper²³ and Popperians have claimed that knowledge is a growing phenomenon. Therefore, the quest for certainty is futile. He has claimed that the fundamental problem of epistemology is concerned with an investigation into the nature of the procedures which lead to the growth of scientific theories. He points out that there is no absolute certainty, but we have enough certainty for most of our practical purposes. He does not take certainty, surety and justification as necessary conditions of knowledge.

Popper claims that our knowledge grows by trial and elimination of error. He has treated epistemology as a theory of scientific knowledge. The traditional epistemology has used '*knowledge*' in the *subjective sense*. In this sense, knowledge consists of disposition to behave and believe or to react. Contrary to this, Popper has used knowledge in the objective sense, i.e., consisting of problems, theories and the like. The use of knowledge in the objective sense is independent of anybody's claim of knowing and believing, i.e., it is a knowledge without a knower, i.e. subject. He has named it the *Bucket Theory of knowledge*. He claims that human mind is empty like a

bucket. In western philosophy, this theory is known as *tabula rasa* or an *empty plate theory* of mind. Popper claims that our knowledge grows through conjunctures and refutations. Popper was basically concerned with development of scientific knowledge and he was not interested in the traditional problems of epistemology. The Popperian epistemology is basically Darwinian theory of the growth of knowledge.²⁴

The views of Wittgenstein must be recalled here in the regard. The followers of Wittgenstein have claimed that epistemology is not fundamentally concerned with the explication of the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge. The terms 'know' and other related epistemic concepts have semantic characteristics. It is not required for epistemology to furnish the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge. The question : How do you know?, is more concerned with psychology rather than epistemology. Therefore it is not desirable to apply the same necessary and sufficient conditions for each case of knowledge. There is just a family resemblance amongst the various cases of knowing. That is to say, there cannot be purely identical conditions among various cases and forms of knowledge'.

These perspectives on the conditions of knowledge with special reference to '*certainty*' or '*being sure*' show that almost all views are partial and one sided. The views of Popper are confined to only scientific knowledge. In Popper's *sociology of knowledge*, moral values and other

higher values have not been included. Most of our scientific knowledge is certain in some particular situation or context. We cannot settle permanent boundaries of scientific knowledge. This view is justified in the context of scientific developments, but epistemology must not be confined to only scientific and empirical knowledge.

Similarly the view of the followers of Wittgenstein is mistaken, as these conditions of knowledge are significant to use epistemic terms in various contexts. These conditions are useful to decide whether some epistemic concept is applicable in a particular instance or situation. In this regard, views of Keith Lehrer are very important who rightly says that it is very difficult to explicate whether there is a *family resemblance* among various usage of epistemic words.²⁵

The advocates of the belief view of knowledge have rightly rejected the thesis that knowledge is a *primitive, sui-generis and unique state of mind*'. Even if it is supposed that there are such infallible mental states, it would not be possible to know the existence of such unique mental states. The advocates of traditional conditions of knowledge do not find them sufficient to constitute '*knowledge proper*'. Besides Gettier, Russell, Moore, Meinong and others have given some instances in which the traditional conditions do not obtain.²⁶ The advocates of the fourth condition of *knowledge* have emphasized that means of justification must be free from all defects and no false proposition should be included in the set of justifying propositions. In

Gettier's counter-examples the inductive evidence is in position to justify both true and false propositions. The counter-examples are to be faced by showing that only true propositions should be included in the chain of justification and the means of justification must be non-defective.²⁷

There is a need of moderate form of foundationism as a proper method of justification to eliminate false *propositions* from the set. It requires certain self-evidential statements as grounds of justification. These *intuitively* evident beliefs may be treated as foundational. Besides these beliefs, there must be a coherent system of beliefs as a superstructure of justification. The coherent set of superstructural beliefs must be founded on intuitively evident beliefs. The foundational beliefs are logical presuppositions of superstructural beliefs in our coherent set of justification.²⁸

As per 'Moderate Foundationalism', it is not required that all inferentially justified beliefs should derive their justification from basic beliefs. However they are supposed to derive sufficient justification from intuitive (basic) beliefs. It shows that coherence by itself is not enough for justification, but the role of coherence is to be allowed to raise the level of justification originally drawn from intuitive beliefs and other sources.

Kant and Kantians have tried to defend the possibility of moral knowledge. They have construed moral knowledge as apriori. Kantians have treated moral principles as synthetic apriori. Despite several controversies regarding

possibility of knowledge of higher values, it has been accepted by and large, by the intuitionist school.

With the above discussion, it appears that there are various forms of knowledge which are concerned with levels of rational consciousness. Each level of knowledge, requires to constitute its own criteria of justification. Therefore, it would not be proper to define all forms of knowledge by the same identical conditions. The scientific and empirical knowledge may be included in the set of justified true beliefs. In the contemporary epistemology the place of values has been usurped by empirical and apriori forms of knowledge. Almost all our knowledge of values is based on cultural assumptions with no claim of certainty and genuine truth. They are taken to be true in a qualified (relative) sense that reflects their being anchored in some cultural contexts. They are true for some particular socio-cultural groups that hold them. However, the possibility of knowledge of higher values cannot be ruled out. Even if there is no fool-proof definition of knowledge to define every form of knowledge by the identical conditions, it would not be harmful for our epistemology, rather it advances and encourages our inquiries and investigations into nature and criteria of various levels of knowledge.

It is required to make a distinction amongst various forms and levels of knowledge and thereby a separate criterion would be useful to elucidate the nature of each kind of knowledge. Therefore, it is not required to hold identical standards and conditions to furnish a definition applicable

to all cases of knowledge. The criteria which are applicable to hold certainty of apriori knowledge or empirical knowledge including scientific knowledge, cannot be applied to define knowledge of higher values. Thus thinking and rethinking are basic tools for growth, development and openness of various conditions as well as levels of knowledge. It advances and encourages our inquiry and investigations into the nature of knowledge and thereby philosophical contemplation.

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We claim to know things about the external world, about ourselves and about others. Not only that we know, we also communicate our knowledge to others primarily through language. But do we really understand what the other person talks about? How do I know that the other person means the same by the words that she utters as I do? What does knowing a language consist in? Is it possible to have a private language in the sense that I construct the rules of my own language and only I know what the words mean and nobody has any access to the rules of the language? Could this product of my fancy be regarded as a language? What is the hallmark of a language? What does make a mode of communication linguistic in nature? These questions have been addressed by Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein's views have been commented on by very many philosophers, of whom Saul Kripke is perhaps the most celebrated one. Kripke argues, taking cues from Wittgenstein, that the idea of rule-following is central to the idea of language. This naturally leads one to a discussion on the very idea of rule. Kripke's major contribution lies in deciphering the idea of rule and rule-following and showing how a sceptic could be silenced

through a reconstruction of the idea of rule-following in linguistic understanding.

Among all the commentators the uniqueness of Kripke lies in highlighting the importance of rule in understanding Wittgenstein's critique of private language. Kripke discovers an extremely powerful argument in Wittgenstein's treatment of private language and derives a radical conclusion that follows from this argument. A commonly accepted view is that Wittgenstein's argument against private language deals primarily with what is called 'sensation language', language containing words referring to sensations like pain etc. Many of the commentators treat the idea of rule rather cursorily, looking at it as a minor topic. Others understand the idea of rule as important only for elucidating Wittgenstein's views on mathematics and logical necessity, but not so important for understanding Wittgenstein's private language argument. Kripke thinks that the idea of rule has not been explored enough which is crucial to understanding Wittgenstein's critique of private language. For Kripke, the allusion to sensation words while formulating private language argument is actually a special case of a more general idea of understanding and using a language where Wittgenstein makes use of the idea of obeying a rule. Kripke acknowledges that Wittgenstein formulates the problem in more than one ways and this gives rise to differing commentaries. Moreover, the style of writing in *Philosophical Investigations* involves constant mention of persisting worries expressed by imaginary interlocutor. And often these worries are never

determinately silenced. This accounts for alternate understanding of Wittgenstein's private language argument.

Wittgenstein starts his presentation of private language argument first by formulating a sceptical paradox and then proposing a sceptical solution¹. Wittgenstein presents both the paradoxes and the solution by talking about 1. a mathematical rule and 2. our inner mental states like sensations etc. What ties these two areas is the idea of rule and language. On the basis of explaining these two different areas of discourse Wittgenstein throws light on the general understanding of rule and language. Kripke reads Wittgenstein as suggesting that it is due to lack of adequate understanding of rule and language that we tend to misinterpret both mathematics and mind. So basically the same set of considerations lie beneath both mathematics and mind. It must however be noted that Kripke is not interested in either defending or refuting Wittgenstein's position. Kripke reformulates Wittgenstein's position in such a manner that appears crucially important and problematic to Kripke. The details of Kripke's formulations might be quite foreign to Wittgenstein. This leads people to say that Wittgenstein which Kripke represents is really his own creation who can be called Kripkestein.

Wittgenstein formulates the paradox as follows: No course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made to accord with the rule. For Kripke, this paradox is actually a new form of philosophical scepticism. Kripke presents this scepticism

with the help of an example from mathematics². Like all the English speakers, I use 'plus' and '+' to refer to the function of addition. By referring to external symbolic representation and by mental exercise I grasp the rule of addition. Kripke draws our attention to the notion of grasp. Although I have performed addition to a very large number of cases, the rule can be applied and I can perform addition in countless number of cases that I have never previously performed. So in learning a mathematical function I grasp a rule in the sense that my past intention regarding the meaning of addition determines uniquely the answer for indefinitely many cases in future. Suppose that I have never performed the addition $86+75$. But I have performed many additions in the past. In fact this finite number of additions that I have performed before imply that such an example exists, example exceeding previously performed computations. Thus I perform the addition and get the result '161'. I am confident that this is the correct answer in the mathematical computational sense and also in the sense that I have used the symbol '+' the way I have used it in past.

And precisely here the sceptic comes in. The sceptic questions my being certain about the performance of addition. She might argue that on the basis of the way I used the term 'plus' in past I intended the answer of the present addition to be 10! Of course the gut reaction to the sceptic's suggestion is that she should go back to school and refresh her arithmetical knowledge. But the sceptic drives the point home that how can I be so sure that I have

used the symbol '+' in the present case exactly the way I have used it before. Even if I claim to apply the same function as before, I perform a separate computation in this new instance and I got the result '161'. What function was it that I performed in the past? The numbers that I have dealt with in the past are smaller than 75. The sceptic continues, perhaps in the past I have used the 'plus' to denote a function that may be called 'klus' that may be symbolized as $\dagger O$. One could define this function as $x \dagger O y = \text{if } x, y < 75, = 10 \text{ otherwise}$. May be this is what I meant by 'plus' in the past. I am misinterpreting my previous use of 'plus'. May be I have always meant klus and used the operation accordingly. The sceptic's question might sound bizarre, but it is not logically impossible. In order to silence the sceptic, one has to cite some fact of the matter, fact about my past usage to show that by 'plus' I meant addition and nothing else. What is the guarantee in asserting that I have not misinterpreted my past usage. And on the basis of my understanding of my past usage I perform the present computation. The main thrust of the sceptic is this: When I compute '86+75', I do not do it the way I like. Nor is it a random calculation. I follow directions that I followed in my previous usages of '+' and this precisely determines the result of my present computation where I say, the result is 161. But what are those directions that I followed in my past usages? This direction certainly does not include that I should say 161 as the result of the present computation. This is a new instance of computation. This direction cannot suggest 'do the same thing as you did before', for in the past the rule that I followed could be a rule for plus and

klus as well. This could go on forever backward to trace the history of my past usage.

The sceptic's question could be divided into two sub-questions: 1. Whether there is any fact of the matter that could show that in my past usages I did mean plus and not klus. 2. What is the reason for my being confident that the result of the present computation is 161 and not 10. Needless to say, these two sub-questions are related. I am confident of my present computation because the answer agrees with what I meant by this function in my past usages. It is not the question about my ability to compute, nor is it about the power of my memory. If I meant 'plus' in my earlier usages of the same function, then certainly I am justified in claiming that the result of the present computation is 161 and not 10. So the sceptic could be answered only if we could come up with some fact about my mental state that forms my meaning plus and not klus in my earlier usages. Also it must be shown that such a fact about my mental state must be able to apply itself to any putative case of the relevantly same kind. And this would account for my being confident about the result of my present computation.

Of course for the sceptic to converse with me, we two must have a common language. The sceptic is not questioning my present use of the word 'plus'. The sceptic is questioning whether my present usage of 'plus' conforms to my past usage of 'plus'. The sceptic is not questioning my ability to perform the present computation, nor is he

questioning the result that I arrive at in my present computation. The sceptic is questioning that how do I know that my present computation, where I arrive at 161 as the result, is determined by my past usage of 'plus'. How do I know that in the past I meant addition and not something else by 'plus'? If I meant addition, this would determine the present result as 161, and if I meant something else, then this would determine the present result as 10.

The point to be noted here is that the sceptic is not questioning arithmetical laws. The sceptic is questioning whether the instructions that I gave to myself in my past usages justify my present computation. This is a challenge about the possibility of change in my usage. If the sceptic is right in throwing this challenge, then our meaning one thing and not another thing would not make any sense. If nothing determines what I meant in my past usages, then nothing determines what I mean at present. There is no fact that would compel us to say that I mean this and not that. It is not only about behaviourist limitations. It is not that since there are no behavioural manifestations to show that I meant this and not that, scepticism arises. Even if I take a first person perspective to look into what goes into my own mind, whatever 'looking into my mind' means, or even if God were to peep into my mind, neither I nor God could determine that I meant addition by 'plus'. No fact available warrants either me or God to determine what I meant.

Thus the sceptic argues that my computation in the present case is simply a leap in the dark, for my past usage is

equally compatible with meaning plus and meaning klus. And so in the present case my answer in the computation could well be 10. It won't be of any help to suggest that when in past cases I learnt addition, I internalized a rule. Even if this much cannot be denied, the sceptic argues, this past rule could be a rule of klus and not plus. My present interpretation of my past usage is being doubted by the sceptic. In other words, justifying one rule with the help of another rule will hardly help. So down the road, may be, we are just applying the rule blindly.

What is worth noting is that the sceptical question is applicable not only to mathematical example, the entire language usage is susceptible to it. I learnt the word 'table' in such a manner that the word applies to infinitely many new instances. Thus when I enter Tajmahal for the first time, I do see a table in front of the main gate. But how do I know when I learnt 'table' in the past I meant elbat where an elbat is anything but a table not found in front of the main gate of Tajmahal? Certainly when in past I learnt 'table' I did not think of Tajmahal nor did I give myself any such instructions. The infinite number of future cases of table were not there before my mind when I learnt to use the word 'table'. My future self was not present that time to consult. If one suggests that while learning the word 'table' I also learn a rule of how to add future instances of the relevant kind, then sceptic will raise the same point about our knowing this particular meta-rule so to say. This only pushes back the problem to another level, rather than responding to the problem. Wittgenstein presents this

sceptical argument to explain what is known as ‘private language argument’. The same sceptical question could be raised about our usage of sensation words, visual impressions etc. Kripke emphatically asserts that the underlying issue in Wittgenstein’s philosophy of mathematics and his ‘private language argument’ remains the same and it is the paradox that looms large over the sceptical position³.

If the sceptical challenge remains unanswered, then there can hardly be anything as meaning something by some word. And consequently there cannot be any communication, any agreement or disagreement. Quite alarming indeed! Kripke credits Wittgenstein to introduce one of the most radical and innovative forms of scepticism into philosophical literature. Wittgenstein does respond to the sceptical challenge. And this response takes the form of arguing against private language. For Wittgenstein, embracing scepticism in the present context amounts to accepting private language. Thus, refutation of private language is viewed as a reply to the sceptical challenge. Kripke thinks that irrespective of the success of the Wittgensteinian response to the possibility of private language, the formulation of the sceptical challenge itself is an enormous achievement. Kripke understands Wittgensteinian sceptic as posing the question not only regarding the possibility of private language (containing sensation words etc), but about the possibility of any language at all. Wittgensteinian sceptic seems to have

shown that any language usage, any concept formation is impossible.

Kripke compares Wittgenstein's presentation of the sceptical view with that of Hume. Both Hume and Wittgenstein formulate a sceptical paradox that rests on questioning the leap from past to future. Hume is concerned with the jump that we make from past causal relation to the future causal relation and also the inductive leap from past to future. Wittgenstein is concerned with the relation of the past meaning or intention to future meaning or intention. Following Hume, Kripke talks about two kinds of solutions to the sceptical problem: 1. Straight Solution and 2. Sceptical solution⁴. A straight solution aims at proving that the sceptical position is unwarranted and in fact the conclusion that the sceptic rejects can be proved. A sceptical solution, on the other hand, starts by accepting that the sceptic's assertions are unanswerable, but nonetheless our ordinary practice is defensible and it does not require the kind of justification that the sceptic demands. The value of the sceptical solution consists in showing that our ordinary beliefs can be defended in a certain way. For Kripke, what Wittgenstein offers is a sceptical solution. Wittgenstein accepts the force of the sceptical argument and offers a sceptical account of meaning something. His argument against private language emerges out of this sceptical account of meaning. He does not try to silence the sceptic by pointing out that the sceptic overlooks some fact or some condition that obtains in the world. His sceptical solution does not deny that we all use

language by meaning something and not others. And we are perfectly right in doing so. We follow rules and there is nothing improper about this. Wittgenstein's sceptical solution makes us aware of certain metaphysical absurdities that philosophers tend to attach to our usage of words. And this also explains, according to Kripke, why Wittgenstein's style of writing especially in *Philosophical Investigations* which is home to his private language argument, does not follow the conventional argumentative style.

But if Wittgenstein concedes the sceptical claim, then is not that the end of the matter? How can we account for our ordinary linguistic activities like meaning something etc? Is not Wittgenstein accepting that all language is after all meaningless? Kripke, while responding to this query, draws our attention to the change that one notices from *Tractatus* to *Philosophical Investigations*. One of the fundamental ideas that one finds in *Tractatus* is that a declarative sentence is meaningful by virtue of its truth condition. The meaning of a declarative sentence is explained in terms of the condition that must obtain for the sentence to be true. In *Philosophical Investigations*, however, Wittgenstein replaces the question 'What it is for the sentence to be true?' by two other questions viz. 1. 'Under what condition may the form of words be appropriately asserted (or denied)?' and 2. 'Given an answer to the first question, 'What is the role and utility of our asserting or denying the form of words in our lives'? The examples that Wittgenstein gives certainly shows that he does not accord any primacy to indicative sentences. So instead of talking

about truth condition, Wittgenstein wants us to talk about conditions when a move (producing a linguistic expression) is to be made in the “language game”. Thus instead of talking in terms of truth condition, we should talk about the assertibility or justification condition in a linguistic move within a language game. For Kripke, the second claim of Wittgenstein viz. looking for a role of the move in daily practice is of profound importance. The *raison d’être* of a language is to have such a role for a linguistic move, or else the language game would be an idle act. This picture of language is already present in the beginning of *Philosophical Investigations* where instead of asking ‘what entities are denoted by numerals’? (following Augustine), one should ask ‘what are the circumstances under which sentences containing number words are asserted and what role do these assertions play in our practice. “Don’t think, look” was Wittgenstein’s advice⁵. Instead of indulging in a priori considerations, let us look at the circumstances where sentences with number words are asserted and what we do following these assertions. When, for example, I go to a grocer with a slip ‘five red apples’ written on it, I find the grocer placing red apples before me reciting the numerals till five. This is the circumstance under which numerals are asserted and the role of such an assertion of a sentence with a number word is obvious. When we say ‘the numerical stands for a number’, we are misled into thinking of numbers as entities. We must not go on looking for facts or entities corresponding to numerical statements, we must look for the circumstances under which these statements are made and the utility of making these statements.

If we apply these remarks of *Philosophical Investigations* to the sceptical challenge, all we have to do is to find out under which circumstance the statements that have been made are legitimately assertible and what role do these assertions play in our lives. The question ‘which facts do these statements correspond to?’ does not arise. Looking for corresponding facts simply won’t do. We have to find out the ‘language game’ that licenses a linguistic move under certain condition like when one says one means such-and-such and that his present usage of a word is in consonance with his earlier usage. The sceptic could be replied by arguing that one does not look for facts that correspond to one’s meaning something. One’s assertion that one means something is to be understood in terms of the circumstance under which she makes the assertion and to see what role does this assertion play in her practice. Needless to mention, this whole approach requires the speaker to be placed in a community, in a social set up. Understanding the linguistic move of a private individual taken in isolation is simply out of the question.

Apparently learning a mathematical rule and using sensation words seem to be counter examples to Wittgenteinian conclusion. When I learn a mathematical rule, when I grasp a mathematical concept, I place myself in relation to the rule or the concept in such a way that depends only on my inner mental state and any reference to the community seems to be irrelevant. When I say ‘I am in pain’, in my inner most being I have this feeling and surely I can identify this sensation of mine without any reference

to larger society in general. It is for this reason, Kripke thinks that Wittgenstein discusses both mathematical examples and sensation words. Wittgensteinian conclusion about rule-following is crucial both for his philosophy of mathematics and philosophy of mind.

Remember that Wittgenstein accepts the sceptical point that no ‘corresponding fact’ or ‘truth condition’ could justify that one means addition by plus and nothing else. Wittgenstein urges to look at how these assertions are used, in what circumstances and with what effects in life. The entire point of the sceptic is that we cannot justify our acts, we act blindly. The sceptic does not think that our computation in the present case is wrong. Our action is not wrong, but lacks justification, according to the sceptic. Now it is ordinarily followed in our language game that a speaker could respond in a particular way and not in another way simply because she feels confident about this, without giving any explicit justification. The assertibility condition of our language game licenses a speaker to say that she ought to follow a rule this way and not that way. Thus if we consider a person in isolation, we cannot claim that even if the person is inclined to respond ‘161’, she should have said ‘10’ as a result of her computation. By definition she is licensed to follow her inclination without further justification.

But certainly this is not usually the way we understand the concept of following a rule. We don’t think that just because one thinks one is following a rule, this leaves no

room for judging that she is not really following a rule. A child may think that she is following a rule where actually she is not; someone under the influence of a drug may suddenly change her past plus rule to a plus like rule. And in these cases we could argue that the child is not following any rule or the person's confidence that she is following her past rule is misplaced. If we could not make these judgements, then there would be no substance to the claim that following a rule is binding on us to making future choices. Following a rule amounts to make us compel to respond in a particular way and not in any other way. If we take a person in isolation, then the idea of a rule guiding a person in the sense just mentioned does not simply make any sense. If one can privately follow a rule, one can justify her moves and she is licensed to make moves following the rules as they are understood by her. Once we place the person in the web of society, view her as interacting with other fellow beings, then others will have justification condition for attributing correctly following a rule or failing to do so. And these justification conditions will not be such that over which only the subject has the authority. When, for example, the child learns simple arithmetic, sometimes the child succeeds, sometimes the child fails. In case the child fails, the teacher draws his attention to following the rule. The child's giving the right answer means the teacher would give the same result if the latter followed the rule. The same applies to adults. If I find the adult responding in a different way from mine, I would think that my interlocutor is no longer following the rule.

Following the view of language sketched above, we can take up the example that the sceptic encashes. The assertibility condition of the statement “Tamal means addition by ‘plus’” consists in claiming that Tamal is entitled to say ‘I mean addition by ‘plus’, subject to the assessment by others; whenever he is confident that he can go on, he can give appropriate responses in future cases, again subject to the assessment by others. Tamal’s inclination to his meaning addition by plus and his inclination to give particular responses to future cases are to be regarded as primitive. But others in Tamal’s community need not necessarily accept Tamal’s authority on these matters. If disagreement happens in majority of the cases, then Tamal could be said to violate the rule or change the rule. Tamal’s mastery of the rule will have obvious effects on his interaction with his fellow creatures. Our life depends on endless interactions with our fellow beings on the basis of attributing mastery of many such rules and concepts.

Kripke’s reconstruction of the sceptical challenge and the Wittgensteinian response forms an integral part of theory of knowledge. The sceptical position challenges the very possibility of justification of our knowledge claims, our claims to mean something. The sceptical solution consists in harping on the idea of rule following bringing in the communitarian perspective. The seriousness of the sceptical challenge is recognised. The sharpness of the sceptical challenge gets blunt by reformulating the dynamics of using a language.

On the basis of the above discussion it is evident that Wittgenstein's allusion to rule-following (as reconstructed by Kripke) is aimed at dismantling certain mistaken pictures of meaning and allied ideas. Controversies arise regarding the extent of Wittgenstein's opposition to private language⁶. The conservative reading of Wittgenstein takes Wittgenstein being solely concerned with certain misconceived ideas about meaning etc. and not proposing any revisionary idea about meaning, whereas the radical reading suggests that Wittgenstein is keen on questioning the popular view that meaning is objective in the significant sense of the term. Without getting into the exegetical details, it would be philosophically profiting to harp on the questions that emerge out of this deliberation. As we have seen little earlier, Kripkestein responds to the sceptic in two parts: 1. It is true, as the sceptic holds, that there are no facts that correspond to meaning –ascriptions, but it does not matter for such meaning-ascribing statements are not aimed at stating facts; they have a non-fact stating role. This is implied by Wittgenstein's move from truth-conditional theory of meaning (as one finds in *Tractatus*) to his embracing the idea of meaning as use, incorporating the description of the conditions of its assertibility in the larger context of linguistic and non-linguistic practices. 2. This leads one to bring in the communitarian aspect. Meaning-ascribing statements are to be assessed in terms of other statements that other members of the community are inclined to assent to and thus acknowledging the speaker to be a member of a community. Thus the speaker cannot be expected to come up with bizarre meaning-ascribing

statements. Thus, according to Kripkestein, the role of community is to be encashed in order to account for the normativity of meaning. For a solitary individual the very distinction between what seems to her right and what is right does not make sense. Meaning-ascribing statements lose their significance.

If one buys the sceptical solution as formulated by Kripke, one could see that the aim of the sceptical solution is to rehabilitate the idea of meaning in the face of the sceptical threat. There is no error in our ordinary statements like ‘Tamal believes addition by “plus”’. The advocate of the sceptical solution argues that meaning-ascribing statements are not genuinely fact-describing statements and so do not have genuine truth-conditions. If this is true, then an attempt to locate the facts in order to justify the meaning-ascribing statements is doomed to fail. The sceptic is right on this. But if meaning-ascribing statements are not anchored on facts and so cannot be true/false, then this would threaten the normativity of meaning conceding the sceptical claim. So if the sceptical conclusion is to succeed, the meaning-ascribing statements must invoke some more substantial conception of truth and facts. The sceptical conclusion has to be understood as claiming that meaning-ascribing statements are, though not true in the usual sense, nevertheless are correct.

This way of looking at the sceptical solution implies that the sceptical solution leads to what could be called ‘semantic irrationalism’⁷. Of course there is the apprehension

that semantic irrealism would lead to semantic projectivism, a view which holds that statements of a particular discourse are not genuine statements, properly assessable as true/false. Semantic projectivism is the close cousin of expressivism regarding the nature of moral statements. Expressivism holds that the moral statements are neither true nor false, for they are not designed to state facts. The moral statements are expressive of the speaker's moral attitude to the acts concerned. Problems have been raised with the expressivist account of moral statements. Moral statements are widely used as embedded in disjunctions and conditionals. They are also used as premise or conclusion in deductively valid inference. It is difficult to make sense of these uses of moral statements within the expressivist stance. If the statement 'Lying is wrong' is expressive of attitudes, then the same statement can hardly be said to express an attitude once it is used as an antecedent in the statement 'If lying is wrong, then so is getting others to lie'. If the antecedent is merely expressive of attitude, then given the alternative that the antecedent may or may not be met, the entire conditional is apt to express a truth and not a mere feeling. Also, if 'Lying is wrong' is expressive of an attitude, then the above conditional turns out to be a crude equivocation.

So it seems that we are torn in between semantic irrealism on the one hand and semantic projectivism, on the other. We are led to semantic irrealism by Kripke's sceptical solution and it is a short step to semantic projectivism once we step in semantic irrealism. It is to be noted that

irrealism/projectivism does have votaries in specific areas of discourse. The question that one could raise is whether local projectivism could justifiably carry us to global projectivism. For there is a significant difference between projectivism about statements of a specific area of discourse and projectivism about meaning in general. It could so happen that the projectivist construal of the meaning of ethical statements itself would be compromised once one champions the cause of global expressivism, expressivism about the entire meaning discourse in general. Global projectivism thus suffers from an inherent instability⁸.

But independent of this, meaning irrealism has a problem within its own precinct. Meaning irrealism holds that the meaning-ascribing statements are not directed to facts and so are neither true/false. But surely the votary of meaning irrealism would not treat these meaning-ascribing statements as non-sense. These meaning-ascribing statements are then meaningful and so semantically acceptable, even if factually vacuous. It is to be noted that meaning-ascribing statements are not directed to facts in the external world; they are factually vacuous in so far as the states-of-affairs in the world are concerned. The meaning-ascribing statements are not about the facts in the world; they are about the meaning that the speaker attaches to the words that she uses. In other words, meaning-ascribing statements are about the facts concerning the speaker and her meaning the words that she uses. There has been a semantic ascent in the meaning-ascribing

statements. Of course, there has to be a passage from the semantic fact to the external fact. Otherwise scepticism would raise its head again. So when meaning irrealist advocates non-factuality, she cannot be said to deny semantic factuality; what she could deny is external factuality. And if 'truth' is a predicate of a statement, then the irrealist could very well accommodate 'truth' within her irrealist frame. But we have to construct a passage from the semantic truth to the external truth and if we fail in this construction, the irrealist will be gullible to the charge of global projectivism.

Thus, it seems to me that a meaning irrealist could talk about truth, although in a nuanced manner. And Wittgenstein's argument against private language is actually aimed at repudiating some incorrect idea of truth in meaning in this nuanced sense. The positive aspect of Wittgenstein's argument, as brought forth by the sceptical solution formulated by Kripke, consists in drawing our attention to the communitarian model where meaning-ascribing statements are sieved through the participants of a linguistic community. Let me conclude by proposing that meaning irrealism, on its own, does not necessarily involve a leap to global projectivism. Nor does meaning irrealism have to snap its relation to truth per se. Sceptical solution of Kripkestein has got this important message to convey.

¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Sections 137, 142), Oxford, Blackwell, 1967

- ² Saul Kripke, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1982, p. 7
- ³ Ibid, p. 20
- ⁴ Ibid, pp 66-70
- ⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Section 66
- ⁶ Bob Hale, 'Rule-following, Objectivity and Meaning', *A Companion to Philosophy of Language*, Bob Hale & Crispin Wright (eds.), Oxford, Blackwell, 1997, p. 369
- ⁷ Ibid, p. 374
- ⁸ Ibid, p. 379

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Role of Skeptic Hypotheses in Revising Epistemic Presumptions

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Introduction

It is a cliché that for every noble epistemic initiative that philosophers venture, skeptics cast their evil eye, they habitually come up with impediments, either citing lack of evidential support or laying human limitations before us as an epistemic agent. Skeptical attacks also differ in their force; at times it may be limited to certain beliefs, the skeptic merely pinpointing to either lack of justification, or the possibility of them being false, or absence of complete certainty, or may even extend to more devastating challenge that aims to pull down the very edifice of knowledge structure. In either case, such attempts are evaluated as efforts to abort the epistemic initiatives, and hence charged as negative, and destructive. Little or no efforts are being made in the mainstream philosophy to project the services skeptics habitually perform to the whole clan of philosophers. The present paper tries to bring forth the positive contributions of these skeptical endeavours by highlighting the revisions made by epistemologists in response to the skeptic challenges, by either gathering fresh tools to defend epistemic assertions from the onslaught of skepticism or gearing up towards a faultless epistemic enterprise. The paper gets divided into two: in the first section I shall examine various skeptical

hypotheses down the history, and the second section is devoted to the analysis of major responses to these skeptic challenges in contemporary discussions.

1. Examining Varieties of Sceptical Hypotheses

It is common knowledge that if we choose to take skeptics serious, it would mean that for almost anything one might think, there could be sceptical challenge that threaten to establish that she knows no such thing. Let me fall back on the Moorean tradition, which considers the challenge to my belief that I have hands. Isn't this something that I not only believe strongly, but also a case of knowledge? Will skeptics ever win challenging such solid pieces of knowledge? In what follows I shall examine varieties of sceptical arguments popularly known as sceptical hypotheses¹. To start the story sufficiently early, Descartes in his *First Meditation* is seen lamenting, how he falls victim to the evil genius, who has discredited his entire efforts to arrive at truth. Explaining the epistemic fate fallen on to him, he writes, "The heavens, the air, the earth, colours, shapes, sounds, and all external things are nothing but the deceptive games of my dreams, by which [the evil genius] lays snares for my credulity²." What of the supposition we have chosen as a solid piece of certain knowledge a while ago, namely one's belief that she has hands? Descartes makes clear that his resolution to cast doubt on any belief that he entertains, however strong it is, would force him to discard even some of the basic convictions with which he lives; he says, "I will regard

myself as having no hands, no eyes, no flesh, no blood, no senses, but as nevertheless falsely believing that I possess all these things³.” A contemporary corollary of this sceptical hypothesis would be the notorious BIV, according to which one could very well be a bodiless brain in a vat, made to experience the sensory inputs by electronic stimulation, being plugged to a powerful computer, which feed in appropriate sensory inputs that accounts for your brain outputs, something that seem to effect the same. There are other attempts too that drag our basic convictions to sceptical attack down the history, the major ones being Descartes’ own earlier dream hypothesis in *Meditation I*, something which he comes up with, prior to his famous evil demon hypothesis, according to which we all could be dreaming even as we claim to be awake. Along with these Cartesian sceptical hypothesis we could read a later addition by Russell, the one in which he asks us to presume that earth came into existence only five minutes ago, and needless to say, it was created with spotless perfection, incorporating evidences of history and our apparent memories.

Keith De Rose in an attempt to examine the extension of these early sceptic hypotheses points out that, of the two hypotheses of Descartes, the dream hypothesis undermines only a narrow range of beliefs, while evil genius hypothesis is more devastating. Descartes himself believed it to be so. Russell’s hypothesis, however, has a limited scope, it seems to target only the past knowledge of those who currently live⁴. Now it is for us to see how damaging these

challenges are to our apparent claims on knowledge. All these three hypotheses cited above seem to press us consider whether the situation described in these are our actual situations. An unbiased reasoning would demand our acceptance that these hypotheses can't be dismissed with, and even force us to credit some element of possibility of this in our actual case. To take the minimum, one need to accept that she *doesn't know* this hypothesis to be false. With this confession forthcoming from the side of the knower, the skeptic demand comes back forcefully asking us to suspend our claims on knowledge, "... we don't after all know the thing we originally supposed we did know." Let us rephrase the argument thus: Where p is a proposition one would ordinarily think one knows, and q is a skeptical challenge to this, the argument by Skeptical Hypothesis would be:

1. I don't know that *not-q*.
2. If I don't know that *not-q*, then I don't know that p .
3. Hence I don't know that p ⁵.

One of the most popular responses to this skeptical challenge comes from G.E. Moore, that in a way also provides a manual on how to approach the topic of skepticism. Barry Stroud in his work, *The Significance of Philosophical Skepticism*, observes that the moment the sceptical hypothesis is presented to us on a knowledge claim we are almost sure, we are at once taken aback, being gripped with that possibility. It appeals to something deep in our nature and seems to raise a real problem about the

human condition⁶. Professionals would vouchsafe that when skeptical challenges are presented in class for the first time most of the students exhibit a reaction quite similar to what Stroud describes. But the more pragmatic ones would have the other extreme reaction that might irritate us, "Aw, come on!" They find such arguments farfetched, ridiculously weak and unthreatening⁷. Let the novices think what they may, but we the epistemically matured adults know that they are fairly powerful⁸. However improbable or bizarre it is to presume that you are a brain in a vat, the fact remains that you also do not know that you are not one. If we look at Moore's own reaction to the arguments, even those who exclaimed, "Aw, come on" would care to look at it for a second time. Note that the charge, that the sceptical arguments are weak, emerge from the fact that no argument from the camp of skeptics could be strong enough to challenge a natural and intuitive claim on knowledge. All those who wish to embark upon this intuitive assurance can stay with the Moorean conclusion that it is one of those things that we know better than we know the premises of any philosophical arguments to the contrary.

G.E. Moore's Response to Skepticism

In his paper, "*Four Forms of Skepticism*", Moore considers Russell's skeptical challenge with regard to knowing that "This is a pencil and you are conscious of it⁹." Moore figures out four assumptions upon which Russell's argument rests, and points out that it is more certain to him that "*This is a pencil and you are conscious of it.*" than any

one of those assumptions, let alone all four. He doesn't stop with that, he says, "I do not think it is rational to be as certain of any one of these four propositions, as of the proposition that I do know that this is a pencil¹⁰." This can be considered as a feasible option to ward off scepticism and regain knowledge claims. Instead of virtually challenging one of the premises of the sceptical hypothesis, one may, following the footsteps of Moore, make a lesser and more reasonable claim that however plausible those premises may be, they are not as certain or as plausible as the thought that we do know the things in question, thereby making those premises less probable than our routine knowledge claims.

In fact Moore wrestled with sceptical arguments throughout his career, and among the various types of skeptical hypotheses, it was the dream hypothesis that haunted him most. He says, "I agree, therefore, with that part of the argument which asserts that if I don't know that I'm not dreaming, it follows that I don't know that I'm standing up, even if I both actually am and think that I am¹¹." However, the first part of the argument lends itself to be interpreted in both ways, while it permits the epistemologist to claim that "Since one does know that she is standing up, it follows that she does know that she is not dreaming", the skeptic with equal vigour may argue that "Since you don't know that you're not dreaming, it follows that you don't know that you're standing up." Each argument is just as good as the other, and unless my opponent can give better reasons for asserting that I don't know that I'm not dreaming, than I

can give for asserting that I do know that I'm standing up, she cannot have the last laugh.

It seems that the issue gets bottle down to the following: what should one do if one confronts a rival plausibility of the conclusion of a powerful argument, equally plausible? In fact the present one is a puzzle, a set of statements all of which we find to be true, but they cannot all be true, if we chose to have a consistent set of beliefs. To be logically consistent we will want to reject either p or its negation, as members of our doxastic system. Moore suggests that one is to make a choice, subjective of course, of what seems most certain to us. However, this may not appease many, for, one is made to reject a plausible proposition on the simple ground that its negation happens to be a preferred one. An alternative proposed by Keith De Rose looks more promising, he asks us to trace the causal nexus that prompted us to consider two mutually conflicting premises at the same time, to begin with. If we look into the reason, how premises that together imply a conclusion we find so incredible, can themselves seem so plausible to us, that explanation may help us know why this counter thesis appears to be true, though it's in fact false. To quote De rose, "The game then would not be one of producing more positive support for the aspects of one's position that are already plausible anyway, but of providing a deflationary explanation for why we have the misleading intuition we do have about the plausible statement that one chooses to deny¹²."

II Alternate ways to respond to Scepticism

In what follows, we shall see alternate ways to react to skeptic hypotheses, most of which are developed during the last fifty years or so. An analysis of these, it is hoped would pave way to establish the creative contributions skeptics render to the fraternity of philosophy.

A. Semantic Externalism

It is a theory which claims that though our thoughts are not completely determined by external facts, a causal link with the nature is essential to make us think in a particular way. You cannot think about, say, trees, if you haven't been causally connected with trees in the proper way. Thus, a brain-in-a-vat (henceforth BIV), if it hasn't been in contact in the proper way with real trees, cannot refer to or think about trees. In brief, when a BIV expresses her thoughts in sentences, like say, "There's a tree", or "Here's a hand", or "I'm not a BIV", it is different from we expressing our thoughts in similar sentences (given that we're not BIV's). Since a BIV is not causally connected with trees, hands, vats etc. in the required manner, what could her *tree* might refer to, is a question that emerges now. To this Putnam gives a series of possibilities, "[I]t might refer to trees in the image, or to the electronic impulses that cause tree experiences, or to the features of the program that are responsible for those electronic impulses¹³." But let us also keep in mind that there is a close causal connection between the use of the term *tree* in VAT English and each of these suggested possibilities. This is to assert that BIV

ends up thinking something tree when it thinks “There is a tree”, for it is indeed causally connected to the tree in the image, but that is insufficient to prove the external world and its objects. Arguing along these lines, it seems that semantic externalism provides tools we can effectively use against the skeptics. In a way externalist semantics takes the position of Cartesian God as the slayer of the sceptical arguments.

But this route is available only for those, who traverse on the path of philosophy, the heroes, but what about the normal humans, can't they know that they have hands too – those philosophically naïve ones, who are not familiar with the complicated argument rejecting that one is a BIV? An answer to this perhaps lies not on attempts to show how we can regain knowledge in the face of skeptical challenges, but on those that show, how the skeptical arguments never worked in the first place. But how should such an argument proceed? Let's consider both possibilities of we indeed being BIVs and not: If I am indeed a BIV, then by saying, “I am not a BIV,” what I assert is that I am not the BIV-in-the-image, which is in that case true. On the other hand, if I am not a BIV, then by saying “I am not a BIV,” one means that one is not a BIV, which is indeed true. In brief, presuming either case we arrive at truth. Hence I am not a BIV. But this seems to be a kind of solace for brief period, for soon we are confronted with the question, whether the assurance that we managed to get seems to belong to the world of language or the world of reality. A closer look at the solution would reveal that the conclusion we were

provided with was (a) My utterance of “I am not a BIV” is true, while what deem fit as a solution was that (b) I am not a BIV. With this difference brought to light the skeptic challenge is reinforced with all might¹⁴.

B. Responses from Epistemic Externalism

Quite unlike semantic externalism, epistemic externalism is not a theory dealing with the content of beliefs but on the conditions that which justify one’s beliefs. The second half of the 20th century witnessed the great battle between internalism and externalism in epistemic justification, the latter a daring and innovative attempt opening up fresh routes to evidencing, hitherto unfamiliar to the western mind. To recapitulate the major tenants of internalism and externalism, the former, namely internalism, routinely seek evidence that are within the epistemic purview / limit of the agent, while externalism, takes a revolutionary position releasing justification from the clutches of the subject, and permit it to seek justification adopting either causal or reliable methods for the belief addressed. The paradigm case of an externalist theory is *Process Reliabilism*, according to which the justificatory status of a belief hinges on whether the process by which the belief was formed is reliable. The champion of reliabilism, Alvin Goldman, in whose hands *Process Reliabilism* has been developed through many stages, however, has not made his reliabilism address the problem of skepticism. But many view that an interaction between *Process Reliabilism* on the one hand,

and the concerns of skeptic can be fascinating and even fruitful.

To start with, it is *prima facie* true that if reliabilism took over the sphere of justification, it's difficult to see how most skeptical arguments could even gain a foothold. Consider the BIV argument: arguably, if we were BIVs, then our belief-forming processes would not be very reliable. But we fail to note that there's nothing in the skeptic's argument that go to prove that our belief-forming processes are in fact unreliable. One might conclude from this that externalism promises an antidote to skepticism. If we can establish epistemic externalism, then the skeptic is in trouble, for her arguments can only work if they establish that our beliefs are unreliable, or false, or that they suffer from some other "external" malady. A few shrewd skeptics respond to this externalist defence by hijacking knowing to a higher order: Maybe we know various things, but we might still fall short of epistemic ideals in other ways. Perhaps the lesson skepticism teaches us is that we don't know that we know the things in question, or that we can't show that we know them. This move sets up an interesting dynamic. We know that from an externalist position one cannot secure the primary and secondary knowledge at one stretch. But that does not, from an externalist perspective, prevent us from acquiring knowledge of the higher order. Ernest Sosa feels that it's misguided to want a theory of knowledge to meet first order knowledge and its validation, even as he admits that externalism falls short of meeting certain requirements

some might want a theory of knowledge to meet¹⁵. We can provide legitimating account of limited stretches of our presumed knowledge, because we can appeal to knowledge from outside of that limited stretch to construct our account. But if the demand is for knowledge of higher order in general we will have to start from those beliefs which are already in the process and this would invite circularity. To ask for an account that is at the same time legitimating is to ask for the obviously impossible. However, if you are sceptical about the very venture of externalism you might raise a different question: how could we find skeptical arguments that don't address reliability so powerful, if our concept of knowledge were that of true, reliably formed belief? The persuasiveness of skepticism can in this way be seen as constituting an objection to reliabilism. It is a contest in which the winners, I suppose get declared according to one's individual preference.

C. Relevant Alternatives and Closure principle

It is common knowledge that the "Closure Principle" for knowledge, viz., *if you know some proposition p, and you know that p entails some second proposition q, then you also know that q*, in a way explains how knowledge can be expanded by means of inference: If you know something, you can come to know anything it entails, by coming to know the entailment. But, the skeptic uses this principle to attack the very possibility of our knowledge. According to the skeptics, if closure principle gets accepted into the fold, it implies that the skeptic hypothesis is false,

for you would know the proposition you would ordinarily think you know (e.g., that you have hands). But the fact remains that you do not know that the hypothesis is false, hence you also cannot be credited with your ordinary knowledge claim. Thus, the Closure Principle has come to be seen as underwriting scepticism.

Fred Dretske had proposed an approach to knowledge, which became quite popular in subsequent years as the *Relevant Alternatives theory of knowledge*, that in a way rescues the closure principle from the hands of skeptics¹⁶. According to this theory in order to convert a true belief as a case of knowledge one must be in a position to rule out all relevant alternatives to the belief under consideration. Since some alternatives are not relevant, one could well ignore them and proceed to claim knowledge even if these uneliminated alternatives survive. This also suggests that closure does not hold in general. As De Rose observes, “You can know that p without knowing everything that you know that p entails, for p will entail the falsity of all the contraries or alternatives to p , but you need only know the falsity of the relevant alternatives to p in order to know that p . Just as you can know that p without knowing everything that you know p entails, so can a proposition explain another proposition without explaining everything the second proposition is known to entail.” In brief the argument put forth by Dretske seems to be that, though the skeptic is right in claiming that we don’t know her skeptical hypothesis to be false, since her hypothesis is not a relevant

alternative to our knowledge claim, she is wrong to think that we therefore, fail to know it.

D. Response from Contextualism

Contextualist approach in epistemology has been gaining momentum in recent years, especially in view of the fact that there emerged no consensus among epistemologists to resolve problems raised in the post Gettier scenario. I see two major reasons why contextualism enjoys this status: one, contextualism promises a respectable approach to the closure principle, and another, most people share the intuition that contextual factors are important, when it comes to evaluating whether someone has knowledge.

Among the Gettier stimulated knowledge analyses one proposal was to distinguish between high and low senses of knowledge, or the strong and the weak senses of knowing. Note that the skeptic's argument has induced us to switch over to the "high" sense of "know", which is why the argument is so persuasive. But the truth of our ordinary claims to know, which is at the lower plane, is not threatened by the skeptic's attack. Taking clue from the "Two Senses of *Know*" theories, a group of philosophers argued that they find more variation in knowing instances than can be handled by such "Two Senses" theories. They are commonly known as contextualists. Contextualist theories vary in respect of the different positions the proponents of these theories adopt with regard to the following:

- 1) Whose context is relevant, and
- 2) What it is that changes in accordance with the features of the context.

As far as the first issue is concerned DeRose, Cohen and Lewis all defend that the relevant context is the context of the attributer of knowledge (*Attributer contextualism*), and not that of the subject. However, Williams, and recently Hawthorne have defended what is known as *subject contextualism*. With regard to the second issue, three positions have been defended: The first position popular as *Epistemic strength contextualism* proposed by DeRose holds that the strength of epistemic position changes in accordance with features of the conversational context determining whether the subject knows or not a particular proposition. The second position known as *Relevant alternative contextualism*, defended by Lewis claims that, what changes in accordance with features of the conversational context is the set of relevant alternatives the subject must be able to eliminate in order to count a proposition as a case of knowledge. This leads to an obvious question: what mechanism determines whether an alternative is relevant or irrelevant? Well, Lewis provides a list of seven rules of relevance for our perusal. The third position is called as *Threshold Contextualism*, defended by Cohen. For him what changes in accordance with features of the conversational context is the threshold for justification. Considering the fact that one can be justified in different degrees, the cut-off point between justified and

unjustified beliefs fluctuates in accordance with the context.

Contextualists explain why we find the skeptic challenge difficult to tackle. We find ‘I know that I have a hand’, acceptable because in ordinary contexts the relevant standard of evidence is low. We are entitled to ignore many alternatives. But when skeptical hypothesis enter the stage it transforms the context drastically and the standard of evidence is raised to a higher level. In fact the skeptic conclusion becomes relevant only when we are in this elevated context. In brief, we find the skeptical paradox difficult to resolve because of an unnoticed context shift. A major problem for contextualist solutions, at least in the eyes of many, is that they concede much to the skeptic, as these strategies debar us from knowing many important things since they demand high standards of knowing, while the ordinary claims we usually have are pushed in from below the bar. It is useful to think whether this strategy adopted by contextualists amounts to a concession at all! An answer to this in fact rests on how important one takes the category of “high” knowledge, mentioned a while ago. It is also criticised that the contextualist is willingly surrendering everything of value to the skeptic, and the fact that the contextualist protects our “low” (vulgar?) knowledge is of little importance¹⁷.

Having evaluated these four responses to Skepticism, I don’t find myself stand committed to any one position, but would definitely wish to assert that knowledge analysis has

gone a long way ahead in perfecting its task at hand, improving the nature of arguments, bringing in more credibility to the knowledge claims in view of the possible challenges raised against them. Let me conclude with a significant observation of Matilal, though made in the context of Indian Philosophy, seems quite applicable to any tradition, “A Philosopher has to learn to live with the skeptic, for they are both in the same profession, so to speak. A skeptic is not an intruder into the ‘Temple of truth’, he shares the same concern for truth with the philosopher, and is reluctant to accept anything less. A skeptic is first and foremost an inquirer, and in this regard, all philosophers participate in inquiries and play the role, at least provisionally of a skeptic to varying degrees¹⁸.”

Notes and References

- ¹ This paper has been drafted taking major insights from the paper “Responding to Skepticism” by Keith De Rose,
- ² Descartes, 1980. P. 60.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Keith De Rose, op.cit, p. 2
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Barry Stroud, *The Significance of Philosophical Scepticism*, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1984, p.60
- ⁷ Keith De Rose, op.cit, P. 3
- ⁸ If anyone has doubt read Indian History of Philosophy, how there were joint efforts made by different schools to resist the devastating impact of Buddhist sceptical challenges.
- ⁹ G.E.Moore, *Philosophical Papers*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1956.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 226
- ¹¹ Ibid, p. 247
- ¹² Keith De Rose, op.cit, p.6
- ¹³ As quoted by De Rose in “Responding to Skepticism” p. 6

¹⁴ Keith De Rose, op.cit, p. 8.

¹⁵ Earnest Sosa as referred by Keith De Rose in “Responding to Skepticism” p.12.

¹⁶ Fred Dretske, “Conclusive Reasons”, Australian Journal of Philosophy,49: pp.1-22

¹⁷ Keith De Rose, op.cit, p.17

¹⁸ B.K.Matilal, *Perception*, Clarendon press: Oxford, 1986, p. 46.

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Is Wittgenstein a Rule-Following Skeptic?

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Abstract. Kripke argues that Wittgenstein is a rule-following skeptic because his remarks on rule and rule-following particularly in *Philosophical Investigations* give rise to a paradox in which one and the same rule can be used to explain opposite actions and equivalently, opposite even contradictory behaviors can be made to fit a given rule. The paper argues that Kripke's attribution of rule-following skepticism to Wittgenstein arises due to misunderstanding of the grammar of the concept of "rule" and "rule-following". The paper concludes that Wittgenstein intends no skeptical paradox through these apparent skeptical remarks rather he has used these remarks just to reduce them to their absurd consequences should one doubt the reality of rule-following.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, Kripke, rule, rule-following, rule-following scepticism, philosophical grammar, *reductio-ad-absurdum*

1. Introduction

Wittgenstein's writings may be cryptic, esoteric and mystical, but skepticism is the last "ism" Wittgenstein would propound and argue for, given his anti-theory stand in general and anti-skeptical stand in particular. Yet, his writings, both early and later, are replete with skeptical and

paradoxical remarks and passages. This has been more so in Wittgenstein's discussion on rule and rule-following in his writings of later period particularly in his *Philosophical Investigations*.¹ Based on the interpretation of such remarks, some philosophers, particularly Saul Kripke, have argued that Wittgenstein remarks on rule contains a skepticism what Kripke calls as 'rule-following skepticism'.²

Kripke argues that in following a rule we always go beyond the past following. Our accumulated practice of the rule-following is not enough to keep track of the future applications of the rule, and if we do not have control over the future operation of the rule, it is quite possible that we may not be following the same rule which we used to follow in earlier cases to justify the same action. This possibility will give rise to the problem of multiple interpretations of the rule. On the one hand, there may be more than one contradictory actions fitting to a given rule and on the other hand, the same action can be accounted for by two contradictory rules. The paper argues that Wittgenstein has discussed skepticism to refute it by showing that it is self-defeating to accept skepticism and to offer a diagnosis to the misconceptions that underlie skeptical doubt. He would first entertain the argument of the skeptic to show it later how the skeptic's position implies absurd conclusions. The strategy adopted by Wittgenstein is known as the *reductio-ad-absurdum* method in philosophy parlance.

In what follows, Section 2 will present some of Wittgenstein's so-called sceptical remarks on rule and rule following in *Philosophical Investigations*. Section 3 will discuss how such remarks, at their face value, have misled some philosophers, particularly Saul Kripke to see a Wittgensteinian skepticism on rule what he calls as "Rule-Following Skepticism". Section 4 will discuss how Kripke's rule following is a misunderstanding of the grammar of rule and rule-following. Section 5 will conclude that the sceptical remarks on rule are apparent only because Wittgenstein uses them to bring the absurd consequences if one holds sceptical view regarding rule and rule-following.

2. Wittgenstein on Rule and Rule-following

Philosophical Investigations is a collection of remarks on different subjects/topics set out unsystematically. Neither it propounds a single philosophy nor does it attempt to find out the unity among its remarks. However, according to Wittgenstein himself, it provides a set of tools for drawing the "sketches of landscapes" for us "to travel over a wide field of thoughts"³. The central philosophical tools of *Philosophical Investigations* are family resemblance, language games, use theory, rule and rule-following, philosophical grammar, forms of life etc. The tools used are not to build a philosophy but how to philosophize to resolve different philosophical issues and problems. Throughout the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein returns, again and again, to the concept of language-games,

in which he argues that all human activities, including the use of language, are like playing games. According to Wittgenstein, the standard examples of language-games include reporting an event, speculating about an event, forming and testing a hypothesis, making up a story, reading it, playing acting, singing catches, guessing riddles, making a joke, translating, asking, thanking, and so on. Playing any games requires rules and their following, as Wittgenstein says, “a game is played according to a definite rule.”⁴ These rules are cited to explain our actions and guide our behaviours as “a rule stands there like a sign-post.”⁵ As one masters rules, one says, “now I can go on”⁶ and “so on ad infinitum”⁷ even though applications “...not everywhere bound by the rules.”⁸ Wittgenstein discusses a group of questions regarding rule and rule-following: How do we learn rules? How do we follow them? What are the standards which decide if a rule is followed correctly or not? Are they in the mind or in the world? Do we appeal to intuition in their application? Are they socially and publicly taught and enforced?

According to Wittgenstein almost all our actions and behaviours are rule-governed. The behaviours and actions that are explained on the basis of some rules are the applications of the rules. So my stopping at the red signal, is “being in accord”⁹ with the traffic rule “do not cross the road when there is red signal” and is an application of the rule. The applications of a given rule are the extensions of the rule and can be called as an action-type.¹⁰ The action-type is an open-ended class having infinite members and

“seems to produce all its consequences in advance.”¹¹ Rule acts as a constraint over an indefinite number of cases; therefore, it is relevant for an indefinitely large number of action-types. The employment of the rule presupposes the independent identification of its infinite applications or laying down the conditions of its application in advance. This characterization of rule makes it a normative issue because rule puts evaluative constraints on having unjustified applications and thereby regulates our behaviours. Hence, rule is a “normative-regularity” or “normative-constraint.”¹²

Other features of a normative rule are that it discourages deviant behaviors (e.g. do not kick the football in specific position and place, otherwise your party will be penalized), encourages the desired interpretation of rule as we “make up the rules as we go along”¹³ and there is even one where we alter them as we go along, (e.g. follow the rule of syntax to produce the meaningful sentences) and it helps us to decide our actions in the case of confusions (e.g. in the case of confusion regarding the meaning of a word, we check the dictionary/rule to decide the meaning), helps us to control and predict the event [e.g. if there is black cloud, (it means rain) keep an umbrella with you] or in resolving conflict (e.g. the rule “plus” decides when there is indecision in addition two numbers).

Baker and Hacker¹⁴ have pointed out five aspects of normative rules, such as, the definitory aspect, the explanatory aspect, the justificatory aspect, the evaluative

aspect and the instructional aspect. Rule as a normative regularity to govern and explain our actions has to satisfy two conditions: First, rule should help us to pick up the appropriate and correct action among the available set of behaviors. As Wittgenstein would say, rule "... intimates to me which way I am to go"¹⁵

This condition can be called the *correctness* condition of rule. The explanation of certain action-type by subsuming it under a rule is dependent on the successful identification of the action-type. The correct identification naturally helps us to eliminate the incorrect and inappropriate applications of a rule. Thus for example, the rule "plus" instructs the users not only to select the action-type "2 plus 2 equals to 4", but also it eliminates the action-type "2 + 2 equals to 5". The correctness condition of rules also signifies that the rules are universal in character having open-ended applications. If one follows a given rule, then one always does the same thing when the appropriate occasion arises. However, the correct and successful identification or determination of the applications of rule is not enough. This itself does not provide the reason that whatever is correct is also reasonable or warranted. This is the reason the appropriate and correct chess-move made by the computer cannot provide the adequate explanation as to why it moves the chess piece as it made.

Secondly, rule should provide justification for the action-type so selected. This condition can be called the *adequate*¹⁶ condition of the rule. The adequate criterion of

rule not only helps us to choose the correct action-type, but also it provides the reason as to why a particular action-type is the correct one or is the only one in accordance with the given rule. The adequate condition predetermines in some unique way the application of a rule. Rule does not help us to simply identify objects fall under its scope, but it also compels us to adhere to the norms set by it for our future use. The algebraic formula “plus” should “determine my answer for indefinably many new sums that I have never previously considered... my past intention/use determines a unique answer for indefinably many new cases in the future”.¹⁷ The adequate condition helps one to justify and defend oneself at the time of conflict and criticism and helps one to remove confusion and inconsistency. This condition also explains the necessary change and meaningful deviation of rule whenever required.

Wittgenstein ends his discussion on rule and rule following with a paradoxical remark: “This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict.”¹⁸

3. Kripke’s Rule-Following Skepticism

Wittgenstein's paradoxical remark has given rise to different interpretations. For example Kripke, in one of his

influential readings, has argued that Wittgenstein is here voicing a paradox on rule and rule-following. Kripke poses the problem of rule-following skepticism through a thought experiment, in which he demonstrates that any rule governed behavior of an individual can be interpreted in more than one way since the behavior fits more than one rule.

Let us consider the rule of addition. Let us suppose that I have not computed '68 + 57' previously but obtained the answer '125' by applying the rule of addition. Suppose I meet a skeptic who questions my answer and says that it should have been 5. Despite my insisting that I am correct, the skeptic continues. He says, on what basis did I perform this function? I had previously performed only finite number of cases of addition. All we have done so far involved the numbers less than 57. Kripke invokes at this juncture the notion of *quus*-rule. This new notion is like plus as long as we deal with the number less than 57, but once we reach this number, the behaviour of the *quus*-rule is different. Thus, the skeptic says that the sum should have been 5 instead of 125 following the *quus* function.¹⁹

Kripke now argues that the person cannot provide the reason to choose between plus-rule and *quus*-rule for the future applications of the plus-rule involving number beyond 57. Since the person is used to the plus-rule in the past, the answer he computes for 68+57, should be 125 rather than 5. He follows the rule previously he used to follow to determine the new and unique 125. But by

hypothesis, the person has never told to himself that he should say 125 for this calculation. The hypothesis is true for all cases of the rule for the infinitely large number of the cases. The applications so far made are always limited. Thus, Kripke argues that there is no way one can say whether plus or quus rule the follower is following. It is possible that by plus I always meant quus in the past since all my mathematical calculations involved numbers less than 57, and I misinterpreted all my past uses of the plus-rule. The skeptic is asking “how do we know that 68 plus 57 as we meant “plus” in the past should denote 125 and not “5”? The skeptic argues that there are equally compelling reasons for both plus and *quus* functions having been applied in this case. Kripke poses his skepticism thus:

This, then, is the skeptical paradox. When I respond in one way rather than another to such a problem as ‘68+57’, I can have no justification for one response rather than another. Since the skeptic who supposes that I meant *quus* cannot be answered, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning plus and my meaning *quus*.²⁰

Kripke claims that the rule-following skepticism poses the most ingenious and radical²¹ form of skepticism by doubting the underlying regularities in human behaviours. As rules encompass the whole civilized aspect of human beings, and since thought and language are rule-governed, the rule-following skepticism poses a serious problem to the extent of the impossibility of language and communication. Denying that there are such things as rules

of meaning, it puts in jeopardy some of our most central notions about ourselves. It denies the concept of “meaning the same” by the same words and behaviours, the understanding of the intention of others and the process of generalization from observed to unobserved. It puts question about language as a means of communication and undermines the objective characterization of meaning. In Kripke’s own admission it makes “all languages, all concept formulation, to be impossible, indeed unintelligence.”²²

Kripke’s rule-following skepticism involves three skeptical issues: (1) How does one know that I use a word with certain meaning or with the same meaning?, (2) If multiple interpretation fit the behaviours of a person, how do we know which meaning to be attached to the given behaviour? and (3) How does one know the intention of a person given his behaviours?²³

The rule-following skepticism says that on the basis of the given observational behaviour of the person, we cannot make out which rule the person is following to express the particular behaviour. In other words, the same behaviour can be explained by invoking two or more than two incompatible rules. We cannot ascertain the fact just by associating some verbal and overt behaviours of the person with the following of a particular rule or we cannot know the fact just by asking the person for he may be telling lies. We do not have direct access to the mental processes of the person also and even if we had, the mental events would

have been always finite, and thus would have failed to determine the future step of the calculation according to the +2 rule. None of these would have helped us to resolve the problem of multiple interpretations of rules. As Kripke says, “indeed, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning a definite function by “plus” and my meaning nothing at all.”²⁴

What is important to note here is that I cannot produce any fact to justify that I followed one rule rather than another in terms of either my mental facts of physical behaviour in the past or at present. Kripke adds further saying that, “there is no such thing as meaning by any word...Each new application we make is a leap in the dark, any present intention could be interpreted so to accord with anything which we choose to do.”²⁵ Since there is nothing that can guide us, a skeptic is free to interpret the way he deems fit and we are free to interpret our way. If any interpretation fits the behaviour since there is no fact which goes against any interpretation, then there is no much meaning in saying that I follow one rule instead of the other. Therefore, Kripke says, “meaning one function rather than another will not make sense.”²⁶ The so-called rules governing the meaning ascription to words and expressions are “unjustified stab in the dark, I apply the rule blindly.”²⁷

4. Reality of rule-Following

Wittgenstein would argue that the problem arises out of misunderstanding of what he would call the grammar of

rule. Wittgenstein seems to argue that the puzzle in the following a rule arises due to the mystification of rule. The grammar of rule helps us to demystify uses of rule and provides the necessity of rule-following. The grammar of rule is an investigation to clarify the grammar of the expressions of rule, i.e. what is to act in accord with a rule? How it is possible for a rule to have an open range of applications? What is to understand a rule, and how does such understanding manifest itself? This is to say which expressions of rule make sense and from those which do not. Wittgenstein has used a number of analogies and examples as a part of philosophical grammar to make clear the use of the expression of rule and what it is to be calling an action as a consequence of the rule. He compares the act of following a rule with playing a game in accordance with a definite rule and having an expectation and fulfillment of an expectation.

The philosophical analysis of rule points to two things: first, it does not make sense to presuppose any metaphysical intermediary between rule and its applications, for the grammar of the rule is not grounded in the reality. The relationship between rule and its applications is internal, yet transparent, for we have to acknowledge the use of the rule for using it and we should be willing to cleave to it, otherwise rule cannot act as reason for what one is doing. If a chasm between the rule and its application is created, there is little chance to close the gap by the help of something which operates between the rule and its applications, but is neither. The question of

bridging the gap is unwarranted for the gap is an artificial one and is the result of the misconception of following a rule. Thus Wittgenstein comments: “in our failure to understand the use of a word we take it as the expression of a queer process. (as we think of time as a queer medium, of the mind as queer kind of being.)”²⁸ As we do not encounter such characteristic in a given rule which guide us beyond, we tend to think that rules are metaphysical entities found in the world of forms. Wittgenstein comments, “we do not command a clear view of the use of our words ... hence the importance of finding and investigating intermediate cases”.²⁹ As a result of which there are attempt to determine the scope of rule by positing different mythological explanation, i.e. causal determination, the mental and logical determination of rules.

Second, rule is very much contained in its applications. On this account, there is no place of hidden rule; nothing would be counted as a rule independently of being used as a rule. There is nothing as our following a rule without our being able to explain or justify our actions by reference to them, for the calculus of rule is nothing but the uses of the rule. Wittgenstein comments, “Every sign by itself seems dead. What gives it life? - In use it is alive. Is life breathed into it there? - Or is the use its life.”³⁰ Further he says, “One cannot guess how a word functions, one has to look at its use and learn from that.”³¹ For example, “the signpost is an order - if, under normal circumstances, it fulfills its purpose”³² The grammar of the expression involving rule will render a rule senseless which we cannot use or in

principle it is impossible to violate, for “what is hidden to us is of no interest to us.”³³ Thus Wittgenstein says, “‘obeying a rule’ is a practice. And to think one is obeying a rule is not obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule ‘privately’: otherwise thinking one is obeying a rule would be the same as obeying it.”³⁴

The practice and custom are essential for the understanding of a rule and how to follow it. Wittgenstein validly argues that “a person goes by the sign-post only in so far as there exists a regular use of sign-post, a custom”³⁵ The mastering of the technique is possible because we have a common language and some uniform practices. The other frameworks within which the successful following of the rule is dependent are that, the world is substantially unchanging and uniform in nature, there is harmony between language and reality and human beings have their own limitations. This commonality or framework is what Wittgenstein says the “forms of life”. However, the forms of life don’t define or constitute rule-following, it provides the minimum requirement to conduct our rule-governed activity smoothly. The forms of life provide the frame work thorough which we operate our grammar and achieve the necessary agreement. However, this is “not an agreement in opinions but in the forms of life.”³⁶

How does the rule which is so much depended on the form of life can provide the necessity to its following, since forms of life is conventional and relativistic in nature. A rule heavily dependent on the conventional practice of the

members of the community is whimsical, subjective and is subject to change at will, therefore, it is natural to wonder how such relativistic framework can provide the ground for the justification for meaning and communication. However, rules formulated within this framework provide the necessity for two reasons.

First, rules are stipulated for certain purposes, approved and followed in the community by its members after deliberation. Therefore rules are very much objective and collective in nature and there should be no problem of inter-subjective communication. Though the community view of justification is arbitrary and fallible, this does not force us to embrace relativism, a very common charge leveled against any theory based on convention. This is because, once we invoke a rule, we are committed to follow it; are supposed to be faithful to it. Thus, Wittgenstein would say though rules are arbitrary, their applications are not.³⁷ The application of a rule becomes a social necessity. The community view of rule, and faith to honor it acts as a *normative constraint*. Systematic and consistent use of rule along with commitment to rule gives us the required parameters to judge the epistemic behavior of other members in the community. Rule, thus is predictable, it tells us in advance which behavior would fit which rule. In this sense, a rule determines its extension. On the strength of the knowledge of the rule used in the communities, one member understands the behavior of the others in the society. The commitment to rule is essential part of our very institution of language, this is best exemplified by the

fact that one has no freedom to question the truth of a statement expressing a definition. Having defined a week consisting of seven days, I cannot further ask the question why a week should consist of seven days. This is the implication of Wittgensteinian thesis that rules cannot be justified further though we justify our actions and judgments in terms of rules.³⁸

However, we do not deny the possibility that there can be a rule for instance a time table, totally designed and followed by an individual isolated from the society. But this fact does not make such a rule mysterious. What we object, following Wittgenstein, is that we cannot follow a rule privately. This is because rule is not a mental fact and it is not the case that an individual who possesses this mental state alone is privileged to follow it. The agent can disobey a rule or even can stipulate contradictory rule for there is no right or wrong rule, only convenient or inconvenient to follow, but it makes sense only when it is followed publicly or at least the conditions of the rule should be clear enough for somebody who is willing to follow. Therefore, though rule is merely conventional, that does not license the user to change the agreement unless and otherwise there is a case for either giving up the convention or introduce a new convention which is in some way opposed to the present one, otherwise we do not change the existing conventions as they are already part of our way of life. There is force of a promise attached to every rule because we have committed to the rule and, thus if we are violating it, which we can very much do, it amounts to cheating the society in

a subtle manner by not keeping our promise; and the result would be a conceptual confusion.

Secondly, why rule is not whimsical and private is that it is meant to be followed by cognitively finite and fallible human beings. There is no point in prescribing rule which the agent cannot follow and is not within the cognitive reach of the finite human beings like us. For example, rules are to be formulated keeping fact in the mind that followers have limited information processing ability, finite memory storage capacity, are vulnerable to error in sense and reasoning.³⁹ Therefore, though we can very much stipulate a very arbitrary traffic rule like “jump over the road when there is a red light”, we do not formulate such an impractical rule, because we know that this is not possible on the part of the human beings to follow. For an ideal rule violates the principle of “ought” to imply “can”. It must be possible to follow and violate the rule. Rule which cannot in principle be followed or violated is a pseudo-rule. For example, the rule “you should remember all the results or applications of the algebraic rule ‘+2’ ” is such a rule which cannot be followed nor can be violated in principle. The requirement that rule ought to be followable makes the rules determinable in advance. It should be determinable or identifiable by a finite follower independently of any particular application-condition under which a particular rule is first used. The condition to confirm the rule also incorporates fallible nature of rule. Rule is not absolute, so the possibility of committing a mistake is unavoidable no

matter what and how much precaution we take in advance, for rule is “directly readable and fallibly readable”.⁴⁰

How it is possible that we grasp the whole application of a rule in flash, in an instance which requires laying hold of something which must somehow contains the entire use of the expression in advance of our applying it. The unlimited applications of rule are buried in the use of the rules. Thus the question of the grasping all the applications of the rules appear not to be impossible, though we simply cannot see or experience all the applications of the rules before using it. When you master the technique as how to use a rule, you have known all the steps in advance because you know the condition of the application of the rule is pre-decided. Rules are hypothetical-imperatives: follow a rule this way, its consequences will be like this. Thus, if somebody understands the rule “+2”, there should be no problem for him to go to the next step, e.g. 1002 after the numeral 1000. It is not the special education or training or some mathematical acumen which guides us to go to the next step in the process of adding 2. The rule and how to use it contains all steps in the rule of “add 2”. Thus all the steps are pre-decided even though the chain of the calculation is indefinite and each step is a new step in the chain. There occurs mistake and miscalculation in the process of following the rule of “add 2”, but that does not mean that the rule is not followable or we cannot keep track of all its application well in advances. Thus when you master the technique of rules, your mind flow ahead and took all steps before you physically arrived this or that one.⁴¹ When “you

know what the word stands for, you understood it, you know its whole truth”, comments Wittgenstein.⁴² How do we determine what would constitute the violation of the rule? There is nothing above and over the application to describe the violation of a rule. Somebody understands a rule means he is aware of the conditions under which the rule can be followed and under what condition it can possibly be violated. For “the understanding itself is a state which is the source of the correct use”.⁴³

5. Conclusion

Wittgenstein has variously been held to refute skepticism by showing that it is self-defeating to reveal the truth in skepticism and to offer an accommodation with it and to diagnose the misconceptions that underlie skeptical doubt. Wittgenstein’s method of addressing the skeptical issues is unique. He would first entertain the argument of the skeptic. Develop it to the logical extreme so that every advantage is given to the opponent. Then show how the skeptic’s position implies absurd conclusion. The strategy adopted by Wittgenstein is known as the *reductio-ad-absurdum method* in philosophy parlance. Wittgenstein developed this insight in *On Certainty*,⁴⁴ while dealing with skepticism of the external world. This is a logical insight that it is bound up with the many philosophical tools, conceptual distinctions developed in his later writings for doing philosophy.

In the case of rule-following skepticism, through his apparent skeptical remarks Wittgenstein tries to show that

if we presuppose any metaphysical intermediary between rule and its applications, a chasm between the rule and its application will be created, there is little chance to close the gap by the help of something which operates between the rule and its applications. Similarly, if we assume rule as something private and hidden, then we will have to face such a paradoxical situation as Kripke has faced. If memory has failed in some cases, then this does not lead to the logical absurd conclusion that memory cannot be trusted. In the case of rule-following skepticism, Wittgenstein holds that it does not follow that we doubt all the time wherever we can doubt. The skeptic does the same.

Following a rule is like obeying an order to react or do choosing in a particular way and unique way. The *quus*-rule designed by Kripke to show how the arithmetical rule of “plus” can be manipulated is a case of violating the rule of the expression “plus”. Even though, we have not performed the function of “plus” beyond the number involving 57, the addition of two numbers beyond 57 will not be 5, as Kripke’s skeptic holds, so long as we are following the “plus” rule. We do not have to look into our habit of addition to give certainty to the rule of plus, rather it is the definition of the rule “plus” and the commitment to follow it, that determines the meaning of the expression “plus”. Therefore, there is no scope for any confusion in the multiple interpretations of rules and its following.⁴⁵

Notes and References

1. Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations* (henceforth *PI*) (ed.), G. E. M. Anscombe, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1963. *PI* is a collection of remarks on different subjects/topics arranged randomly. Rule and rule-following are discussed in the context of meaning and language mostly and mainly from § 185 - § 243, but also elsewhere in *PI*. See also Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Revised Edition, G.H. von Wright, R. Rhees and G.E.M. Anscombe (eds.), Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956, particularly, Section IV.
2. Kripke, S., 1982, *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (henceforth *WRPL*), Oxford, Blackwell. However, Kripke expresses doubts as to whether Wittgenstein himself would endorse his interpretation of the *Philosophical Investigations*. He says that the work should not be read as an attempt to give an accurate statement of Wittgenstein's views, but rather as an account of “neither Wittgenstein’s nor Kripkean, “rather Wittgensteinian argument as it is struck Kripke.” (*WRPL*, p. 5). The word “Kripkenstein” has been coined as a nickname for a fictional person who holds the views expressed by Kripke's reading of the *Philosophical Investigations*; in this way. However, in this paper, we shall discuss rule-following as Kripke's own interpretation of Wittgenstein.
3. *PI*, Preface, p. ix.
4. *PI* § 54.
5. *PI* § 85.

6. *PI* § 151.
7. *PI* § 151.
8. *PI* § 84:
9. *PI*, § 186.
10. See Pettit, P., “The Reality of Rule-Following”, *Mind*, Vol. 99, 1990, p. 2.
11. *PI* § 236.
12. See Pettit, P., *op. cit.*, p. 4.
13. *PI*, § 83.
14. See Baker, G. P. and Hacker, P. M. S., *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, Vol. 2, Basil Blackwell, London, 1985, pp. 45-49.
15. *PI* § 230.
16. See Boghossian, P.A., “The Rule-Following Consideration”, *Mind*, Vol. 98, 1989, p. 508 ff.
17. *WRPL*, p. 11.
18. *PI*, §201.
19. *WRPL*, pp. 8-9.
20. *WRPL*, p. 21.
21. *WRPL*, p. 60.
22. *WRPL*, p. 62.

23. Mulhall, S. "No Smoke without Fire: The Meaning of 'Grue'", *Philosophical Quarterly*, 39, 1989, p. 185.
24. *WRPL*, p. 21.
25. *WRPL*, p. 55.
26. *WRPL*, p. 3.
27. *WRPL*, p. 17. Compare this with the comment "I obey the rule blindly." *PI*, § 219. The sense Wittgenstein wants to communicate is different here. He wants to indicate that once we accept a rule, we have no freedom to revise it in every case of applying it. It seems to us that applying the rule blindly would not be acceptable to Wittgenstein.
28. *PI*, §196.
29. *PI*, § 122.
30. *PI*, § 432.
31. *PI*, § 340.
32. *PI*, § 87.
33. *PI*, § 126.
34. *PI*, § 202.
35. *PI*, § 198.
36. *PI*, § 241.
37. See *PI*, § 241.
38. See *PI*, § 219.

39. See, Goldman, A. I.: “Epistemic: The Regulative Theory of Cognition” in Kornblith, H. (ed.): *Naturalizing Epistemology*, 1985, pp. 217-230
40. See Pettit, P., *op. cit.*, p 4.
41. See *PI*, § 188.
42. *PI*, § 264.
43. *PI*, § 146.
44. Wittgenstein, L., *On Certainty* (ed.), G. E. M. Anscombe, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1969. Like other works of Wittgenstein, its remarks are not organized into any coherent whole.
45. The paper was presented in the International Conference on “Doubt and Knowledge: Indian and Western Perspectives”, organised by the Department of Philosophy, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur on March 15-17, 2019. I am thankful to the organiser for giving me the opportunity for presentation and the participants for their valuable comments.

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Hume on Probability: A Review

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The word ‘probability’ is often used as synonymous of chance, possibility, contingency, likelihood, likeness, conjectures, prediction, forecast, the field of knowledge between complete ignorance and full certainty, or the quality or state of being that is likely true or likely to happen etc.¹ Thus, on the one hand, its opposite is certainty, whereas on the other hand it is opposite to impossibility.

The theory of probability originated in seventeenth century as a method for calculating chances in gambling. But in philosophical literature Hume seems to be the first important philosopher who tried to develop the view that our knowledge relating to matters of fact can never claim for certainty, it is probable. Hume contributes to the problem of probability in his theory of scientific knowledge and asserts that at best such knowledge can claim only for probability. In this paper I shall discuss different theses pertaining to Hume’s notion of probability, and ascertain its status in Philosophy.

Hume’s epistemology occupies an important place not only in his philosophy but also in the Western philosophical world. His books *A Treatise of Human Nature* and *An*

Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding deal with epistemological problems. Hume deliberates upon human reason from three point-of-views – Knowledge, Proof and Probability.

- (i) **Knowledge:** By ‘knowledge’ Hume means the assurance that arises from comparison of ideas. Under this group he considers every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain. In the *Treatise* he puts the proposition of arithmetic and algebra into this class, and in the *Enquiry* he includes geometry into this category as well. For Hume, true knowledge is limited to the knowledge arising from relations of ideas. But such knowledge can never render factual information.
- (ii) **Proof:** By ‘proof’ Hume opines the arguments which are derived from the relation of causes and effects, and which are entirely free from doubt and uncertainty. For Hume, such reasoning is founded on relation of cause and effect, the knowledge of which is based entirely on experience.
- (iii) **Probability:** By ‘probability’ Hume intends to convey that evidence which is still attended with uncertainty. Under this category he considers all reasoning concerning matters of fact as probable.

Hume opines that the second and third type of knowledge, originating from proofs and probabilities, is derived from experience. It is product of habit and is probable. Only the

probable knowledge is capable of rendering factual information.

Hume advocates that probability is of two kinds:

- (a) that which is founded on chance, and
- (b) that which arises from causes.

Besides the said two species of probability, which are derived from an imperfect experience and from contrary causes Hume refers to a third type of probability that arises from an analogy.

One of the main reasons for Hume's interest in the notion of probability is due to his scepticism with regard to knowledge gained through sense experience. On the basis of sense experience one cannot advance any empirical or rational justification for any event. In the case of causation we do not experience any necessary connection between cause and event and, therefore, it is not tenable for Hume. He argues that probability of chance as well as that of causation is not a rational affair at all. We do not always make a calculation and then base our expectation of the event on it. In his opinion, our expectation is based simply on the habit of establishing a relation between two phenomenon and enjoining them as cause and effect. All our knowledge of physical world or natural sciences, fall into this category and are only probable. Thus, for Hume, probability arises from incomplete experience. In his view reasoning based on probability is simply a conjecture. He writes; "By probability, I mean that evidence which is still

attended with uncertainty”.² Now, we shall discuss the two types of probability.

Probability of Chance

Explaining chance, Hume remarks:

Chance is nothing real in itself, and, properly speaking, is merely the negation of a cause, its influence on the mind is contrary to that of causation, and it is essential to it, to leave the imagination perfectly indifferent, either to consider the existence or non-existence of that object which is regarded as contingent.³

For Hume no chance can possibly be superior to another unless there is some additional factor in favour of some chance. Of course, there is a probability which arises from a superiority of chances on some side. Superiority increases and surpasses the opposite chances. Thereupon, probability gets a proportional increase and becomes still a higher degree of belief or assent to the side in which superiority has been found. Hume explains it with the example of dye. He says that if a dye were marked with one figure or number of spots on four sides, and with another figure or number of spots on the two remaining sides, it would be more probable, that the former would turn up than the latter. This process of thought or reasoning may seem trivial and obvious but to those who consider it more narrowly, it may, perhaps, afford matter for curious speculation.

However, one can never by comparison of mere ideas prove with certainty that an event must fall on that side where there are a superior number of chances. Still one may pronounce with certainty that it is more likely and probable that it will be on that side where there is superior number of chances than on the side which has inferior number of chance. Hume writes:

The likelihood and probability of chances is a superior number of chances; and consequently when we say it is likely the event will fall on the side which is superior, rather than on the inferior, we do no more than affirm, that where there is a superior number of chances there is actually a superior probability, and where there is an inferior number of chances there is actually an inferior probability; which are identical propositions, and of no consequence.⁴

Now the question is: how does the process of chance operate in one's mind and generate belief, since it appears that it cannot be established either by demonstrative arguments or from simple enumeration of probability. In order to clarify this issue Hume refers to the above example of dye, four sides of which is marked with one figure and two with another and to put the dye in a box with the intention to throwing it. It is plain, we must conclude the one figure to be more probable than the other, and give the preference to that which is inscribed on the greatest number of sides. He believes that this will lie upper most, though still with hesitation and doubt, in proportion to the number

of chances, which are contrary. And, accordingly, as contrary chances diminish and the superiority increases on the other side, his belief acquires new degree of stability and assurances. In this connection Hume refers to three circumstances. Firstly certain causes such as gravity and solidity and cubical form which determine it to fall, and to turn up one of its side. Secondly, certain number of sides which are supposed to be indifferent. Thirdly, a certain figure inscribed on each side. When the mind considers the dye is no longer supported by box it cannot suppose it to be suspended in air, but naturally places it on the table and views it turning up on one of its sides. Hume says that though the dye is necessarily determined to fall and turn up one of its sides, yet there is nothing to fix particular side, but that is determined entirely by chance. The very nature and essence of chance is a negation of causes, and leaving the mind in a perfect indifference among those events, which are supposed contingent. Therefore, when the thought is determined by the causes to consider the dye as falling and turning up on its sides, the chances present all these sides as equal and make us consider each of them equally probable. The imagination passes from the cause viz. throwing of the dye to the effect turning up one of the six sides. As all these sides are incompatible and the dye cannot turn above one at once, this principle directs us not to consider all of them at once as lying uppermost; which looks impossible, nor does it direct us with its entire force to any particular side; for, in that case, this side would be considered as certain and inevitable. But it directs us to all the six sides after such a manner as to divide its force

equally among them. Hume asserts; “it is after this manner the original impulse, and consequently the vivacity of thought arising from the causes, is divided and split in pieces by the intermingled chances.”⁵

Thus we have seen how the two circumstances, viz. causes and the number and indifference of the sides, give an impulse to the thought, and divide that impulse into as many parts as there are units in the number of sides. Now Hume considers the effect of the third circumstance, viz. the figures inscribed on each side. He says that in case of question as to: what side it will be turned up?, it may be said that these are all perfectly equal, and no one could ever have advantage over another. But the question is concerning the figure, and the same figure is presented by four sides, it is evident that the impulses belonging to all these sides must reunite in one figure, and become stronger and more forcible by union. Four sides are supposed in the present case to have the same figure inscribed on them, and two to have another figure. The impulse of the former is, therefore, superior to those of the latter. Hume says that here the events are contrary and it is the nature of contraries to annihilate one another. In this case four images combine in one case and two in the other. As the impulses of the former are superior to the latter, the inferior destroys the chances of superior. Hume concludes: “The vivacity of the idea is always proportional to the degrees of the impulse or tendency to the transition; and belief is the same with the vivacity of the idea, according to the precedent doctrine.”⁶

Probability of Cause

Hume avers that there is a common tendency among philosophers to explain a chance as nothing but a secret and concealed cause,⁷ which leads to the supposition that the relation between cause and effect is as necessary as logical connections. The first serious challenge to this view came from Hume. Hume thoroughly examines the idea of cause and in this connection he begins by searching for impressions from which the idea of cause is derived. He says that objects do not possess any particular quality which can lead to the origin of the idea of cause. So the idea of cause must have been derived from some relations among objects. For Hume these relations are – (a) contiguity, (b) succession and (c) constant conjunction. He opines that whatever matters are considered as cause and effect are nothing but contiguous. Secondly, in the cause and effect series, it is generally observed that cause comes earlier and effect is a succession in terms of time. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Hume lays great emphasis on contiguity and on temporal succession as essential rudiments of that which appears as causal relation. He says that an object may be contiguous and prior to another without being considered as its cause. He points out that sounds and smells, or passions and volitions cannot properly be said to have shapes or positions, but they do appear into causal relationship.

The central theme of Hume's entire argument is: how does experience give rise to the idea of necessary connection? In

this regard Hume examines two questions. Firstly, for what reason we pronounce it necessary that everything whose existence has a beginning should also have a cause?, and, secondly, why do we conclude that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects? He asserts that the idea of necessity cannot be proved either intuitively or demonstratively. He says that as we cannot derive the opinion of the necessity of a cause to every new production from knowledge or scientific reasoning. It must necessarily arise from experience and observation. Explaining the nature of experience, Hume says that we remember to have had frequent instances of existence of one species of objects, and also remember that another species of objects have always attended them and have existed in a regular order of contiguity and succession. The mind understands the constant conjunction as cause and effect in all past instances, and infers the existence of one from the other. Thus, Hume finds a new relation between two events that is commonly known as cause and effect. This relation is their constant conjunction. Hume says that contiguity and succession are not sufficient to make us pronounce any two objects to be cause and effect, unless we perceive that these two relations are preserved in several instances. But he points out that what we do not learn from one instance, we can never learn from many, which were all of the same kind, and so the newly discovered relation of constant conjunction seems to advance us very little in our way. It is clear that constant conjunction cannot by itself be the origin of the idea of necessary connection, but he points out that we make causal inference whenever we experience

constant conjunction of two phenomenon. In order to clarify the issue Hume raises a question: ‘does such experience rest on reason?’ Resolving the doubt he asserts that reason can never show us the connection of one phenomena with another. In transition from impression of one object to an idea of another it is the imagination which is operating on the basis of custom. He says that after observing the constant conjunction in a sufficient number of instances, one immediately feels the determination of the mind to pass from one object to its usual attendant. Necessity, Hume says, is nothing but internal impression of mind or determination to carry out thoughts from one object to the idea of another. So necessity is something which exists in mind, not in objects. For Hume, empirical uniformities or frequent conjunction of objects generate habits. Therefore, habits are the basis of probabilities of causes. Habit acquires more force with each instance. The first instance has little or no force; the second makes some addition to it, the third becomes still more sensible, and “it is by these slow steps, that our judgment arrives at a full assurance.”⁸

Hume contends that even people with advanced knowledge possess only imperfect experience of particular events which naturally produces only an imperfect habit of learning transition, and, thereupon, one quickly concludes the connection between cause and effect as invariable. However, we frequently meet with contrary instances. Common man, who takes things according to their first

appearance, attributes the uncertainty of events to uncertainty in the causes.

But philosophers observe that almost in every part of nature there is a variety of hidden principles and the contrariety of events may not proceed from any contingency in the cause, but from the secret operation of contrary causes. “From the observation of several parallel instances, philosophers form a maxim, that the connection between all causes and effects is equally necessary, and that its seeming uncertainty in some instances proceeds from secret opposition of contrary causes.”⁹ Hume opines that when an object is attended with contrary effects we observe that the supposition that the future resembles the past, is not founded on arguments of any kind, but is derived entirely from habit by which we are determined to expect for the future to be the same series of events to which we have been accustomed. Moreover, while considering past experiments, we find them of a contrary nature. This determination, though full and perfect in itself, presents us no steady situation; but offers a number of disagreeing images in certain order and proportion. In this regard Hume proposes the following considerations:

- Firstly, we may observe that there is no probability so great as to allow a contrary possibility, because otherwise it would cease to be a probability and would become a certainty. That probability of causes depends on a contrariety of experiments; and it is evident that an

experiment in the past proves, at least, a possibility for the future.

- Secondly, the component parts of this possibility and probability are of the same nature, and differ in number only. We have observed that all single chances are entirely equal, and that the circumstance, which can give any contingent event superiority over another, is a superior number of chances. Likewise, as the uncertainty of causes is discovered by experience, which presents us with a view of contrary events, it is plain that when we transfer the past to the future, the known to the unknown, every past experiment has the same weight, and it is only the superior number of chances that can throw the balance on any side. The possibility which enters into every reasoning of this kind is composed of parts, which are of the same nature – both among themselves, and with those that compose the opposite probability.
- Thirdly, we may establish as a certain maxim, that in moral as well as natural phenomena, wherever any cause consists of a number of parts, the effect increases or diminishes according to the variation of that number. The effect, properly speaking, is a compound one, and arises from the union of several effects that proceed from each part of the cause. As the belief, which we have of any event, increases or diminishes according to the number of chances or past experiments, it is to be considered as a compound effect, of which each part

arises from a proportional number of chances or experiments.

Now Hume proceeds to draw conclusion from the above three observations. To every probability there is an opposite possibility. This possibility is composed of parts that are entirely of the same nature with those of the probability; and consequently have the same influence on the mind and understanding. The belief, which attends the probability, is a compound effect that proceeds from each part of the probability. Therefore, since each part of the probability contributes to the production of belief, each part of the possibility must have the same influence on the opposite side – the nature of these parts being entirely the same. The contrary belief, attending the possibility, implies a view of certain object, whereas the probability does an opposite view. In this way, both these degrees of belief are alike. The only manner, then, in which the superior number of similar component parts in the one event can exert its influence and prevail above the inferior in the other, is by producing a stronger and livelier view of the object. Each part presents a particular view; and all these views uniting together produce one general view, which is fuller and more distinct by the greater number of causes or principles, from which it is derived.

Giving almost the same arguments in different light, Hume writes that all reasoning concerning the probabilities of causes are founded on transferring the past and future. The transfer of any past experiment to the future is sufficient to

give us a view of the object – whether that experiment is single, or combined with others of the same kind. When it acquires both these qualities of combination and opposition, the similar views run into each other and unite their forces, so as to produce a stronger and clear view than what arises from one alone. This is the manner in which past experiments concur when they are transferred to any future event. As to the manner of their opposition, it is evident that as the contrary views are incompatible with each other, and it is impossible that the object can at once exist comfortable to both of them, their influence becomes mutually destructive and the mind is determined to the superior only with that force, which remains after subtracting the inferior.

But besides these two kinds of probability, which are derived from an imperfect experience and from contrary causes, Hume refers to a third type of probability which arises from analogy. All kinds of reasoning from causes and effects are founded on two particulars viz. the constant conjunction of any two objects in all past experience, and the resemblance of a past object to any one of them. The effect of these two particulars in the present object invigorates and enlivens the imagination, and the resemblance, along with the constant union, convey this force and vivacity to the related ideas, which we are therefore said to believe or assent to. The vivacity of the first impression cannot be fully conveyed to the related idea, either where the conjunction of their objects is not constant, or when the present impression does not perfectly

resemble any one of these, whose union we are accustomed to observe. In the case of probabilities of chance and causes it is constancy which is diminished and in the probability derived from analogy, it is the resemblances only which is affected. An experiment loses its force, when transferred into instances, which are not exactly resembling, though it is evident; it may still retain as much as may be the foundation of probability as long as any resemblance remains. One may arguably say that Hume's theory on different kinds of truth, as Mac Nab announces, "has become the cornerstone of modern empiricism and its chief weapon against rationalistic metaphysics."¹⁰

Conclusion:

Challenging the traditional concepts of causation as a necessary connection, Hume attempted a re-examination of the very idea of causation. He has endeavoured to prove that causal necessity can neither be known through perception nor through inference, rather it is only the production of imagination and custom. Hume's analysis of causation is quite praiseworthy in the sense that it has evoked philosophers to think the problem afresh. Russell has remarked, quite rightly, that with Hume modern philosophy of causation begins.

The analytic-synthetic dichotomy plays a fundamental role in Hume's system for the reason that his distinction between Deductive and Inductive sciences or knowledge and probability rests upon the contrast between analytic and synthetic judgments, since knowledge is exclusively

conversant with relations of ideas and probability only with matters of fact. Secondly, Hume's argument with regard to denial of necessary connection in the causal axiom or in the bundles of data which constitute our personal identity and also his denial of impossibility of the knowledge of the existence of external world rests upon the analytic synthetic distinction.

Modern empiricism owes much to Hume. Logical empiricist's views regarding apriori knowledge or necessary statements are to a great extent similar to that of Hume. Hume has rightly been regarded as a great ancestor of contemporary empiricists. His views regarding relations of ideas and matters of fact have been endorsed by A.J.Ayer.

The belief of modern empiricism in some fundamental cleavage between truths which are analytic and truths which are synthetic was foreshadowed in Hume's distinction in the Treatise between invariable and variable relations and in Enquiries between "relations of ideas" and "matters of fact". Thus Hume, by "offering criteria for analytic truths as well as for meaning, made himself a true precursor of modern empiricism."¹¹

Hume has focused on human or psychological aspect of probability as it cannot escape the realm of expectation. Definitely it lies in the analogical and inductive reasoning which is deeply psychological.

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Some Cases of Non-Conceptual Knowledge in Indian Epistemology¹²

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The aim of this paper is to register some cases of Non-Conceptual Knowledge, in Indian Epistemology. The authors are aware that ascription of the term, ‘knowledge’ to these cases will be an issue of contention, however settlement of the issue is a separate and complex matter and we forbear to discuss the same here. As for our present purpose, we just seek to enumerate some cases of cognition, in various philosophical systems of Indian Philosophy, which may make a case for non-conceptual knowledge.

1. Certain Cases of Non-Conceptual Knowledge

Foremost acceptance to Non- Conceptual Knowledge comes from Buddhists. In Buddhist Epistemology two *pramāṇas*³ - *pratyakṣa* (perception) and *anumāna* (inference) have been accepted. *Pratyakṣa* yields immediate knowledge of *Swalakṣaṇa* (unique momentary thing-in-itself). The essence of *pratyakṣa* in Buddhism is in its non-conceptuality and immediacy. Dīnnāga defines it as ‘devoid of all thought determinations, names, universals’.⁴ The kind of knowledge sprouting from *pratyakṣa* is absolutely non-mental with no category of understanding

involved; the moment thoughts come into play, it becomes an *anumāna*. One sees the blue but one does not see, 'it is blue.'⁵ Buddhists hold that what is known through the involvement of thought forms (through *anumāna*) is essentially unreal as all such forms are mental while reality is trans-mental.⁶ Since they believe in non-conceptual knowledge, Buddhists hold that a direct knowledge of noumena, which is beyond all concepts, is possible. The moment we think, what we know from *pratyakṣa*, our knowledge becomes a case of *anumāna*; knowledge of *swalakṣaṇa* is converted into *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* (phenomena) as thoughts, names, etc. are foreign to *swalakṣaṇa* and *pratyakṣa*. The Buddhist distinction between *swalakṣaṇa* - *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is a close parallel of Kant's distinction between noumena - phenomena, but while for Kant noumena is thinkable but unknowable, for the Buddhist, *swalakṣaṇa* is knowable but unthinkable.

In the conception of *pratyakṣa* other systems in Indian Epistemology distinguish between two kinds or sometimes stages of *pratyakṣa* - *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpaka*. We shall take the case of Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta only. Gautama defines the knowledge born out of *pratyakṣa* as, 'non - erroneous cognition which is produced by the intercourse of sense organs and objects, which is not associated with a name and which is well - defined.'⁷ 'Which is not, associated with a name' or '*avyapadeśyam*' is a term of varied interpretation by later scholars of Nyāya. Vātsyāyana and Udyotkar held that it refers to knowledge which is unassociated with words, concepts, etc., thus

nodding to non- conceptual knowledge. Vācaspati Miśra regards *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa* or NP to be an indeterminate prior stage of *savikalpaka pratyakṣa* or SP, which invariably culminates into latter. He, thus, denies an independent status to NP and non- conceptual knowledge. Vācaspati Miśra is probably the first scholar of Nyāya who explains the distinction between *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa* and *savikalpaka pratyakṣa* explicitly, nevertheless implicitly it dates back to Gautama.

Of the three sub-schools of Mīmāṃsā, the Bhāṭṭa School of Kumāril Bhāṭṭa is probably the first one in history of epistemology, to have coined the distinction between NP and SP (which came from the founder). Kumāril goes on to accord a separate status to NP, equating it with non-relational ‘knowledge of that.’ For Kumāril, what to say of insane people, animals and children, even in mentally sane adults, NP, sometimes forms the base of practical behavior. Prabhākar is in disagreement with Kumāril on this. For him, one apprehends both universal and particular qualities of an object in NP but the object is not apprehended as a distinct individual as in the moments of NP there is an absence of alike objects and since individuality comes from comparison, the same is missing in NP. Thus Kumāril’s Bhāṭṭa School accepts while Prabhākar’s Guru school rejects non- conceptual knowledge. Murāri Miśra’s third school’s views on this issue are obscure.

In Vedānta, the knowledge coming forth from *Mahāvākyas* like *Tat tvam asi* and other sentences like *So’yaṃ Devaduttaḥ*, is also considered as a case of NP. These are

devoid of related-ness and hence cases of NP or for us non-conceptual knowledge.

Nirvikalpakantu Samsargānavagāhi jñānam.

Yathā So 'ayam Devaduttaḥ,

*Tattvamasi ityādi vākyajanyam jñānam*⁸

Dharmarāja discusses the issue in detail in Pratyakṣa Pariccheda of *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*. An obvious objection to this comes from the interlocutor in Paribhāṣā, that since knowledge ensuing from above examples does not involve organs, it cannot be a case of perception but rather a case of verbal comprehension. The counter-reply is that for us (Vedāntins) the involvement of organs is not the criterion for perception; it becomes a case of NP as *pramāṇa-chaitanya* and *viśaya-chaitanya* become non-different in this case. Thus a non-relational perception that does not involve the intermediary role of mind and its categories could be safely categorized under non-conceptual knowledge. Dharmarāja is unambiguous in recognizing NP as a separate type of cognition than SP. It would be a sheer repetition to state here, that since for Buddhists all cases of perception are indeterminate, they will simply reject such distinction outright; for them SP is but a case of *anumāna*.

2. Some Objections and Further Issues

Some objections *suo moto* ensue from the very conjunction of ‘non-conceptual’ and ‘knowledge’. Inclusion of ‘non-conceptual’ cognition in the ambit of ‘knowledge’, will be objected by a majority of normative epistemologists. Thus the question as to whether a case of Non-conceptual Knowledge, such as a case of NP, should be counted as a case of knowledge or not, leaves disputes and differences of opinion. The defense of ‘non-conceptual knowledge’ is, as hinted above, an issue that demands a separate inquiry; our ad-hoc position at this juncture is with the Buddhist view which agrees to the separate status of non-conceptual apprehension as knowledge. We also leave some other questions at this juncture, for further exploration. The categorizing of *jñāna* born from mahāvākyas under NP, makes one ponder whether all cases of ‘emancipating’ knowledge should be seen as cases of non-conceptual knowledge. It may not be disputed by anyone that it is non-conceptual knowledge which is the ground of behavior in an overwhelmingly large number of our mundane daily life activities. Thus at both the mundane end of life and at its *summum bonum*, it is non-conceptual apprehension that reigns. We submit, therefore, that a proper re-assessment of the importance of non-conceptual knowledge is required in the circles of epistemology, that have so far been hinging around propositional knowledge or ‘knowing that’.

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- ¹ In the course of developing an understanding on the issue, the authors have immensely benefitted from the several writings of B. K. Matilal on Indian Epistemology and Logic.
- ² A pre-caution which is must for the scholars of Western Theory of Knowledge while dealing with Indian Epistemology is that 'cognition' is the locus of discussions here and not 'knowledge.' The term 'jñāna' corresponds to former. If one equates knowledge with 'knowledge proper' then the equivalent term in Indian texts is *pramā*. Thus *pramā*=*jñāna* + something.
- ³ *Pramāṇas* refer to means of valid cognition.
- ⁴ *Pratyakṣam kalpanāpoḍham nāmajātyādyasamūyutam*. Dīnāg, *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, I-3.
- ⁵ *Cakṣur 'Lakṣmi - vijñānasamaṅg, nīlam vijñānatinotu nīlam iti*. Dīnāg, *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Chapter I, *vrtti* under verse 4b. cited in Matilal: Perception
- ⁶ Trans-mental here refers to subjective and finite mind.
- ⁷ *Indriyārthasannikarṣotpannam jñānam avyapadeśyam avyabhicāri vyavasāyatmakam pratyakṣam*, Gautama, *Nyāya - Sūtra*, I, I, 4.
- ⁸ Dharmarāja: *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, P. 32 [Swami Madhavananda (2011): *Vedānta Paribhāṣā* of Dharmarājadhvarindra. Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama]

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The Notion of Primitive Certainty in Ludwig Wittgenstein's 'On Certainty'

Ahinpunya Mitra

I

In reaction to some papers by G. E. Moore on the subject of certainty and scepticism about the existence of external objects, Ludwig Wittgenstein, in the last two years of his life (between 1949 and 1951), took a series of notes that were later collected and edited by G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright and published under the title *Über Gewissheit*, translated into English as *On Certainty*. The momentous achievement of *On Certainty* is the dissociation of primitive certainty from knowledge, and the redefinition of this foundational certainty as a way of acting.

Since the time of Descartes, the major dispute in epistemology centres round the question whether a single contingent proposition can be known for certain to be true. Moore claimed that he knew a great number of such propositions, namely, that he was a human being, that the objects he was now pointing to was his hand, that the earth existed for a long time before he was born, or that he had never been far from earth's surface. The fact that he knew such things to exist adequately established that there existed a world, comprised of such objects, external to his

mind. Such things were not only exposed to Moore alone, but most human beings under normal circumstances can rightly claim to know these items. To the long standing debate raised by the sceptic, a resolution is hereby provided.

Wittgenstein disagrees with what Moore had said. According to him, we may claim to believe that *p* without giving any ground for thinking *p* true. But when we claim to know that *p*, we must provide adequate ground for the truth of the proposition we claim to know. The evidence consists in our ability to tell how we know. The evidence consists of propositions we accept as true. As to the question how these latter propositions are known, further grounds may be offered. But there must be a point beyond which no further grounds can be given. What construes the end-points in the chain of grounds are the Moorean propositions themselves. These propositions may serve as ground for other propositions which someone claims to know, but they themselves are not grounded on anything. Moore's fault lies in the fact that he failed to see that his 'common sense' truths are the most certain of all propositions and hence cannot be founded on more certain evidences; there is no more rudimentary datum to which Moore can point in support (Martin, 1984, p. 594), substantiation comes to an end. Since the grounds that can be given in favour of Moorean assertions are no surer than the assertions, Wittgenstein argues, Moore cannot claim to know the things he asserts.

From the fact that Moore cannot claim to know the things of his assertions, it does not follow that the propositions he claims to know can be made the object of doubt. When we claim to doubt a proposition, the doubt claim requires to be supported by sufficient grounds that must be more certain than the proposition claimed to be doubted. Otherwise, there would be stronger epistemic support for dismissing the ground for doubt than for dismissing the proposition which is the object of doubt. Wittgenstein says in entry 125 of *On Certainty*:

If a blind man were to ask me "Have you got two hands?" I should not make sure by looking. If I were to have any doubt of it, then I don't know why I should trust my eyes. For why shouldn't I test my eyes by looking to find out whether I see my two hands? What is to be tested by what?

What Wittgenstein wants to establish in this passage is that the proposition that one has two hands, in normal circumstances, is the most certain of all things, and that posing a doubt in this proposition must be without any ground, since the ground that may be offered for substantiating the doubt (e.g., that one cannot see one's hands) will itself be as exposed to doubt as the proposition which is the target of doubt. Hence, whatever ground is adduced in favour of doubting a Moorean proposition, it would itself be more susceptible to doubt than the proposition targeted. Therefore, the propositions which we are most certain of, namely, the Moore type propositions, are logically beyond the scope of any rational doubt. Hence, neither Moore's claim to know such propositions,

nor the sceptic's claim to doubt can properly be made. Neither the locution "I know that" nor its polar correlative "I doubt that" makes sense in the situation Moore is depicting.

The peculiarity of the propositions Moore claims to know is that we are perfectly certain about them sans any epistemic ground. Wittgenstein does not disagree with the demand that Moorean assurances are the surest of our beliefs. He only disputes the claim that these assurances can be called knowledge, a claim put forward by Moore and the philosophical tradition. According to Wittgenstein, Moore's certainty is not of an epistemic nature. Epistemic claims are mostly made on the basis of following a rational procedure and are subject to revisions. But Moorean certainty regarding having two hands and the existence of external objects is neither grounded in reasoning, nor by nature defeasible. The traditional attitude views knowledge as the highest point to be reached on the epistemic continuum. At the opposite end lies ignorance. Hence, from the traditional point of view, knowledge expresses the greatest degree of certainty. Being a part of this tradition, Moore refers to his assurances 'knowledge', since they appear to him as most indubitable and beyond any proof. But according to Wittgenstein, our fundamental assurances about our world and ourselves cannot be called knowledge: these assurances constitute a 'bedrock' certainty which is a more fundamental breed than knowledge. Knowledge and certainty belong to two different realms. Knowledge belongs to the language game: it is an epistemic concept.

But the certainty Moore is after is non-epistemic: it grounds the language game. Moore conflated the notions of knowledge and certainty, and herein lies his lacuna. Our knowing something is not our ultimate way of being sure. Knowledge is a part of conceptual scheme whose other members include guessing, hypothesizing, thinking, believing, and doubting. All these notions are intertwined in ways that form a system of our everyday intercourse and interaction. Each of these notions plays its definite role within this system. The system of our everyday activities is what forms the language-game. Moore-type propositions stand outside of this system. They constitute the framework within which the set of activities takes place. Hence, they are the conditions that make possible this set of activities, that is, the language game. Knowledge, therefore, is ultimately based upon recognition of a number of propositions which are themselves a groundless sureness and are fused into the foundations of our language games. These propositions are considered to be certain because of their performing the framework role in normal circumstances. As a primitive sureness these propositions make up the fundamental principles of human enquiry.

We speak so many things about the world, think about it in so many ways. Our fundamental propositions underlie our speech and thought about the world, just like rules of our language which underlie the language. Study of history is poised on the certitude that the earth is existing and has been existing since the time of antiquity. If it is supposed that the earth did not exist for a long time, and that it came

into existence a little ago, say five minutes ago, or even 200 years ago, history as a branch of study would not have been possible. Studying history is playing the language game that involves the activities of doubting the occurrence of some events, believing the occurrence of other events, framing hypotheses in favour of the events believed to have occurred, collecting the evidences to buttress the hypothesis, drawing conclusions, and making knowledge claim finally. The entire game is played on the certainty that the earth is existing and is of very great antiquity. Although the certainty makes the game possible, it does not belong to the game. Rather, it is the condition of playing the game. Whenever scientists go to estimate the age of the world, their enquiry is conducted on the assumption of the rule that 'the world has been existing for a long time'. This belief is assumed in any type of enquiry carried out by the historians, anthropologists, geologists or etymologists.

II

Doubting is a social practice, a game. It must have a point of termination, according to the principle of a game. Doubt can be got rid of, through the presentation of adequate evidences. In entry 115 Wittgenstein says, "The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty." He goes on to say, "Doubting and non-doubting behavior. There is the first only if there is the second" (OC, 354). We cannot doubt everything, if we are to carry on with our practical life smoothly: "The reasonable man does *not have* certain doubts" (OC, 220). Language game is actually played this way. A language game is possible if one trusts something

(OC, 509). Citizens of India generally remain suspicious about the promises made by the candidates of political parties before the commencement of election. It is not the physical existence of the candidates or their origin from the Homo Sapiens genus, that has been put into doubt. Indian voters become sceptical only of the actualization of the promises made by the candidates by drawing lessons from their past experiences. Doubts of these kinds that can be resolved belong to the language game. Wittgenstein does not call into question the authenticity of these doubts. But to ask whether it is possible that politicians do not exist, or, in other words, to ask whether it is possible that all things around us do not exist, is like asking whether we have miscalculated in all our calculations (OC, 55). Our admission of committing a mistake in a calculation makes sense only if a contrasting case has already been met with where no mistake has been committed. But if we extend our doubts further to the contrasting case where no mistake has not been committed and wonder if it possible to miscalculate in all of our calculations, it would not be an acceptable position. Similarly unacceptable will also be the position that holds that all things around us do not exist, a position logically implying the fallibility of every statement we make about physical objects. In suspecting the authenticity of all our calculations and, analogically, in doubting every statement about physical objects, one is not adhering to the rules of the language game that define the concept of doubting, one is not playing the game of doubting rightly.

At a certain stage of development of human knowledge, man doubted the existence of any planet in a certain portion of our galaxy. It was proved later by more accurate observation that a planet existed in that spatial position, which was named "Saturn" at a later time. However, with respect to Moore's hand, never it was doubted by anyone, even when he didn't advance his proof, whether his hand existed, since he was a creature of flesh and blood. The two situations, i.e. the situation pertaining to the existence of Saturn and the situation pertaining to the existence of Moore's hand, are, therefore, palpably different. The more we advance from the case of the planet to that of our hand, lesser becomes the probability of committing mistake. As Wittgenstein writes in entry 56, "Doubt gradually loses its sense. The language-game just *is* like that". In our approximation from the planet case to the case of our hand, mistake becomes inconceivable at some point. Moorean truisms and a vast number of such propositions that count certain for us lie at this point. We have reached the bedrock with respect to certainties like 'The world exists', 'I have a body', 'There are others such as ourselves', 'I am here': no mistake is possible in this realm. These propositions stand fast for us even without testing, and we cannot be mistaken about what stands fast for all of us. For ages after ages, since an unthinkable period, these propositions have constituted the scaffolding of human thought. They are the 'substratum of all my enquiry and asserting' (OC 162), the rock bottom of our conviction underlying the fuss of hesitations and investigations. We must get our start here, a place of resting in content, where there are no questions

and doubts, and our spade is turned. Wittgenstein says in entry 146: "I may indeed calculate the dimension of a bridge, sometimes calculate that here things are more in favour of a bridge than a ferry, etc.etc.,— but somewhere I must begin with an assumption or a decision". Moorean propositions and such others constitute the framework of our discourse on objects of the world. Wittgenstein represents the framework role served by these propositions by means of metaphors. These kinds of propositions are like the beds and banks of a river, down which the stream of ordinary discourse flows freely (OC 97, 99). The alternative metaphor Wittgenstein uses is that of *hinges*. These kinds of certainties are like *hinges* on a door, which must be fixed in order for the door of enquiry, of questions and answers, to function in any significant way (OC 343).

Believing in hinge propositions is not an arbitrary choice. We have to accept that certain things are indeed exempt from epistemic evaluation. There is no option for us to question them. It is our way of life. Wittgenstein says: "My life consists in my being content to accept many things" (OC 344). If we extend our doubts even to these basal certainties, our entire belief system would crumble, and consequently the meaning of words that we use would be called into question. In that case, we would not be able to make sense of doubt itself. Absence of doubt belongs to the essence of the language- game:

If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty. (OC 115)

A doubt that doubted everything would not be a doubt. (OC 450)

In the following passage Wittgenstein describes how scientific investigations turn on hinges:

Think of chemical investigations. Lavoisier makes experiments with substances in his laboratory and now he concludes that this and that takes place when there is burning. He does not say that it might happen otherwise, another time. He has got hold of a definite world-picture—not of course one that he invented: he learned it as a child. I say world-picture and not hypothesis, because it is the matter-of-course foundation for his research and as such also goes unmentioned. (OC, 167)

Lavoisier's findings didn't overturn the world picture he had got hold of. Rather, his chemical investigations were conducted within the framework of certainties that he never thought of tasting: he was possessed of eyes through which he captured the world, he dwelt in earth surrounded by other inhabitants who included scientists and nonscientists, and sooner or later he would need to satisfy the requirements of hunger, thirst and sleep. Any scientific investigation is carried on the background of indubitable foundations that require no proof, justification and revision. Einstein's findings might have modified Newtonian laws of motion; but the investigative activities of both these thinkers could not be carried out had the existence of earth been put into question.

Whatever we think and do in the world, our entire enterprise is hinged on these basic certainties that themselves need no epistemic support. Epistemic evaluations are ultimately grounded on hinges that are not further grounded on reason. Wittgenstein comments that it is difficult to realize the groundlessness of our believing (OC 166).

III

Hinges are the conditions for understanding the sense of descriptive and informative sentences. The hinge “there exist people other than myself”, is a condition necessary for the use and understanding of the sense of such descriptive or informative statement as ‘The world’s population doubled between 1950 and 1990’ (Moyal-Sharrock, 2004, p. 105). Hinges are bounds of sense underpinning our thoughts and actions in the world. The hinge ‘I am alive’ is a bound of sense, the transgression of which manifests in madness, involving us to think and act in the certainty that we might be dead or a dead man might be living. Similarly, posing a doubt on the existence of the world is not merely a mistake; it is an aberration, a drift into nonsense. We cannot doubt some things if we are to make sense of our life and deed. Denial of these bounds of sense amounts to removal of the ground standing on which we make judgements at all.

As *On Certainty* progresses, Wittgenstein gradually arrives at the position that Moore-type propositions are not propositions at all. A proposition must have the character of

bipolarity: it must be either true or false. Moore-type propositions cannot be proved to be false, since they are not subject to doubt. So, the so-called Moore-type propositions are not propositions at all. Basic certainties lack the defining features of propositions: they are neither true nor false, neither known nor unknown, neither justified nor unjustified etc. Basic certainties form a world-picture or *weltbild*. Wittgenstein says that our world-picture is inherited and is part of a kind of mythology. As a mythology, our world-picture does not mirror the world, has nothing to do with truth and falsity. Our world-picture is a kind of mythology in the sense that it is not based on evidence, although it acts as evidence. The world-picture as the inherited background provides the structure within which the true-false game is played.

Wittgenstein compares our *weltbild* or hinge certainties to grammatical rules. Hinge certainties function as grammatical rules or logical insights. They are the unquestionable conditions required to be accepted necessarily for playing the language game. Grammatical rules are proposals to use linguistic terms in specific ways. A sentence referring to physical object actually carries an instruction about how the word "physical object" is to be used. In entry 36 of *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein comments:

"A is a physical object" is a piece of instruction which we give only to someone who doesn't understand either what "A" means, or what "physical object" means.

Such grammatical rules do not give any information about the facts of the world. They regulate certain practices. The proposition 'an external world exists' is articulation of a rule that must be learnt and adopted to participate in the language game of talking about physical objects. Grammatical rules are formulated into sentences only for heuristic purposes, such as grammatical instruction or philosophical discussion. When a child or a foreigner is given linguistic instruction on the use of the word "hand", the sentence 'this is a hand', is uttered before him. Articulation of the grammatical rule is perfectly justified in such contexts, in order to transmit the instruction on usage of the word "hand" to the learners. We formulate these rules for philosophical analysis too. Moore and Wittgenstein formulated these rules while they remained engaged in conceptual investigation. But these rules cannot be articulated as informative or descriptive propositions. In other words, they cannot be said in the stream of language games. In order to be articulated, a string of words must have some use within the language game. The articulation must carry some sense. Suppose I ask a shopkeeper to bring me a shirt that is coloured red. The shopkeeper brings me that particular shirt, which I then purchase from him. The entire language game I am engaged in is supported by the grammatical rule 'Red is darker than pink'. The rule is what makes the game possible. The game played with red colour has been possible since both the parties are aware of what red colour means. But if in the middle of the game, when the shopkeeper brings me the particular shirt demanded by me, I say "This is red colour darker than

pink” by pointing out the shirt to the shopkeeper, at once he will get perplexed. This will create an obstruction in the smooth playing of the game. The saying of the rule within the game is utterly insensible. Let us take another example to clarify Wittgenstein’s position. Suppose I deposit my shoes to the shoe-keeper before entering a temple, and the shoe-keeper gives me a token with a particular number that would help him to identify my shoes later on. After coming out of the temple, while handing over the token to him, if I say, ‘This is a token’, he would get astonished at my unwarranted utterance. All he requires is the number in the token that would enable him to identify my shoes; he is not to be informed that the object I am handing over to him is a token. The entire game – my giving back the token to the shoe-keeper and his finding out the shoes on the basis of the number in the token – is played upon the hinge that ‘this is a token’ which goes unuttered. The certainty which both the parties here share, namely that ‘this is a token’, shows itself in our normal transaction with the token; but it cannot meaningfully be said. Saying a hinge within the language-game arrests the game. As Wittgenstein says in entry 353:

If a forester goes into a wood with his men and says “*This* tree has got to be cut down, and *this* one and *this* one” – what if he then observes “*I know* that that’s a tree”?

The kind of observation made by the forester in that particular situation is aberrant. His sanity would be put to question by his men. Formulating hinge certainty within the language game is, therefore, of no use. It only intrudes the

game. A hiatus is produced in the free flow of the stream of language game.

Only in some exceptional cases, sentences like 'Here is a hand' can be meaningfully articulated. However, in such circumstances, they function not as hinges but as empirical propositions. Suppose that while removing the rubble caused by an earthquake, something was exposed to the rescuers. As the digging process further continued, one of the rescuers identified the object and shouted out, "Here is a hand". In this particular situation, saying of the sentence 'Here is a hand' makes sense. It is descriptive and informative. However, in Moorean scenario, the sentence 'Here is a hand' was doing no work. It conveyed no certainty that was previously hidden. Hence in Moore's circumstances the sentence was useless and not making any sense, and accordingly didn't bear any saying.

Hinge certainty is, therefore, ineffable, a silent trust. Within a language game it cannot be said; its only mode of occurrence is that of showing. It shows itself in our normal, basic operating in the world. Our hinge certainty that 'This is a hand' shows itself in our acting with the hand and in our speaking something about the hand, for example, in our cooking, writing, drawing, or in our saying: 'I have injured my forefinger'. But when Moore pronounced, "This is a hand", he didn't show his certainty about having his hand. Moore's pronouncement was only a verbal articulation of certainty; it was not an occurrence of certainty. It didn't convey any certainty that was not already exhibited to his

audience when he was speaking about his hand and ostensibly showing it to them.

IV

As squirrels instinctively gather nuts for the winter, so also we instinctively believe in the certainty that physical objects exist. The latter case does not require more justification than is required in the former. Hinge certainty is 'something animal' (OC 359), not in the sense of a brute impression, but in the sense of something unreflective. Foundational certainty is not a justified or pondered assurance prefaced by a precursory thought or hesitation. We share this non-ratiocinated and unconscious trust with neonates and animals. As unconscious trust, hinge certainty is never experienced as a trust. Rather, it manifests itself in the absence of mistrust, in our thought-less grasp or 'directly taking hold' (OC 511) of something without any hesitation. For example, when in ordinary circumstance we take hold of a towel, we do not have to make sure first that 'the towel is there'. We directly take hold of it instinctively or automatically, without any preliminary hesitation.

This unconscious trust exhibits itself in all our ordinary decisions and actions. When I sit at a table, write on it, put stacks of books on it, fold it, build it, discard it, my activities of these kinds are poised on non-conscious and inarticulate certainties like 'tables will remain solid when I touch them', 'tables are not to become human', and so on. Although these certainties require no conscious attention, they form the ineffable background of thought. The hinge

certainty articulated as 'I have a body' shows itself in my spontaneously acting in the certainty of having a body, for example, in my chewing, swallowing, standing, walking and resisting myself from involving in such absurd activities as trying to penetrate the wall as if I were a disembodied spirit. Hinge certainty manifests itself in the ongoing smoothness of the give-and-take of human existence, in the spontaneous way of acting in the certainty of countless things.

Wittgenstein's opinion is therefore that primarily we take hold of the world non-intellectually. The world is not primitively embraceable in thought. In their efforts to overemphasize the role of reason in gaining understanding of the world, philosophers, losing touch with the spontaneity of our beginnings, have tried to rationalize our every act and thought and sought to trace a reasoning that often was never there. In *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein attempts to release us from the hegemony of the intellect and caution us that we often look for a thought or a reason in affairs where actually a non-reflective unhesitating grasp has occurred. In the beginning, there is spontaneity, automatism, rule, reflex and instinct; no preliminaries, such as proposition, judgment and inference, are there at the origin of knowledge. Here our movement is not from the proposition towards the deed. The process is rather reverse: from doing we pass into thinking. From a non-ratiocinated natural take-hold we get into the domain of sophistication, reflection and hesitating pondering. If we travel in this direction, we will not encounter the road-block which

philosophers taking the other route are still confronted with: the inexplicable gap between our thinking and our acting. In our 'doing to thinking' approach, no epistemic intermediaries, no protocol or observation statements will intervene between our perceiving the world and our grasping it. (Moyal-Sharrock, 2004, p. 10). Sceptics failed to recognize the spontaneity of our beginnings.

V

Wittgenstein opts for believing as best descriptive of the nature of our foundational certainty. But the kind of belief that he opts for is not epistemic, not a belief-that. The kind of belief that best describes our primitive certainty is a belief-in. Belief in here is a kind of sub-cognitive, primitive and basic trust, underlying any cognitive or propositional attitude. It is a trust that is a *counting on* or a *relying on*, a trust that is unself-conscious and non-evaluative, i.e. a trust we are unaware of. This kind of trust is paradigmatic in infants. When I trust a friend without further ado, my attitude is one of unreflective certainty. We trust; only afterwards does it dawn on us that we have been trusting someone all the time. We come to realize what trust involves retrospectively and posthumously. The posthumous character of trust—that is, absence of reflection and awareness in trusting—is constitutive of our notion of primitive trust. The moment I give the object of my trust a thought is the moment I no longer trust. When a dance instructor blurts out: 'Trust your body!', he is precisely instructing the pupil to forget his body, *not to think* about it or be conscious of it, not to control and

evaluate his movements, but to *rely on his body* utterly, without a thought.

Hinge certainty is this unreflective, basic trust. Without a moment's thought, without any evaluation, some things are relied upon, taken to trust instinctively and instantly. There is no possibility of *distrust* or *antitrust*, or indeed of *coming to trust* or *deciding to trust*. Trust as a conscious undertaking is logically secondary to unreflective trust. Entrusting, deciding to trust etc. are second-order trust. It is only in secondary trust, in our *contemplating trust*, that the possibility of distrust enters. Reflexion, awareness, articulation or hesitation ensure that we are not in the position of *primitive trust*, but in the position of a *struggling trust*, that is, a secondary trust.

In our daily life we witness many things: human beings live upon the earth for a number of days and die after some time, most of us spend our lives at or near the surface of the earth, there exist objects in our environment, and so on. We absorb such matters, by observation and also by instruction, in the course of our day to day living. We do not learn them in some explicit manner. We become aware of them unreflectively and un-self-consciously. Wittgenstein describes these foundations in various ways: as "my picture of the world" or "the inherited background". The world picture has not been sketched consciously. We have implicitly assimilated our world picture instinctively without reasoning, taken on as our own like a mythology and unlike a science, "inherited as members of the human community from our parents and environment; from

generations of human life.” (Moyal-Sharrock, 2004, p. 199). Immersion in a human community, that involves repeated training and inculcation of habits, automatically leads to the creation of the substratum, the hinges, upon which is founded the language game.

Since childhood we have been initiated into our form of life, disposed instinctively to trust many things straight off: ‘The schoolboy *believes* his teachers and his schoolbooks’ (OC 263). Here we did not need to be converted. But if a person reared in a different form of life wants to understand our hinge beliefs, he would have to undergo a *conversion*: he would have to be weaned from previous beliefs. We cannot *explain* to him why we hold something fast. His whole world-picture would require to be converted into our way of looking into the world. Conversion in the last resort is to be effected through a kind of ‘*persuasion*’ (OC 262), when at some point all reasons and explanations cease to operate:

...but wouldn't I give him *reasons*? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion*. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives.) (OC 612)

We would have to bring him into our fold, have him live within our form of life. All his actions and expectations would have to be moulded into our way of acting and expecting. The game is to be learnt practically. Outside the scope of such *practice*, any measure taken for conversion is bound to be ineffective, since hinge beliefs can neither be

demonstrated through rational means nor be transmitted through propositions. Certainty here is akin to religious belief. The efficacy of religion lies not in the enrichment of our knowledge, nor in the addition to the conceptions which we owe to science; it resides rather in *acting out* its rites, in making us act, in aiding us to live. Just as one's own ancestors are not something a man can choose, and tradition not a thread a man can pick up when he feels like it, just as cult is formed not simply by the outward translation of faith through a system of signs, but by regularly repeated acts, so also our hinge beliefs, visible in our acting, can be acquired only through emulation, assimilation and performance. Like religious belief, our basic certainty is ultimately an *enacted faith*. As Wittgenstein says of religious belief in *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*: '...an unshakeable belief. It will show, not by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief, but rather by regulating for all in [the believer's] life' (LC 54). Basic trust flourishes much like a faith, like something *mystical* – that cannot be put into words.

Since we cannot live without this simple fundamental trust, the questions of knowledge and doubt appear to be of lesser importance. At the bedrock, our engagement is spontaneous, unquestioned, a fact sceptics failed to notice. Although primitive trust is immovable at the foundations, at the level of instinct and acquired instinct, as soon as we leave bedrock and enter the realm of intellect and knowledge, primitive trust begins to waver, giving way to

gradation and mistrust. Though the quest of the scientist is unending, his entire enquiry rests on certainties which he has never tested and would not think of testing. Hinge certainty is the point of ultimate trust. There is certainty before knowledge, belief before doubt.

Abbreviation of works by Wittgenstein:

OC : *On Certainty*

LC : *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*

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Knowledge as Justified True Belief: Gettier's Problem and his aspirations

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Though disagreement is a necessary feature of philosophy, the history of Western philosophy, as a matter of exception, has witnessed unanimous agreement over 'the definition' of the concept of propositional knowledge in terms of 'Justified True Belief' as a combination of the metaphysical, the psychological and the epistemological elements. The first part of the definition has to do with truth of the proposition in question, the second is concerned with the knower's belief or acceptance of the proposition. The third element includes an external factor, i.e., the justification or the evidence of the belief by some neutral agent. The tradition of defining knowledge in terms of these three factors is supposed to be established by Plato and espoused by number of philosophers, who either nodded for the same or enunciated a definition that shares the common characteristics of truth, belief and justification and comes to be known as the 'traditional definition of knowledge'.

Edmund Gettier, through his paper titled 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?'¹ published in 1963, single handedly changed the course of epistemology by challenging the

adequacy of this universally accepted definition in terms of the set of three conditions with the help of two hypothetical situations. These hypothetical situations are expressed through two thought experiments devalidating this equivalence between the definiendum and the definiens of knowledge. My intention, in this research paper is to analyze the situations presented by Gettier and to highlight the point that there is no necessary connection between 'justified true belief' and 'knowledge' although both are mostly found to be congruent giving an impression of their being identical, such that one may be defined in terms of the other. The entire epoch of Gettier has unwrapped and questioned the silent approval of 'Justified True Belief' thesis by philosophers in the history of Western philosophy.

Gettier has inspired us to examine the triune analysis of knowledge in terms of justified true belief. He refutes the equivalence between the two but the question is, who constructed the equivalence? No doubt, the echo of the modern analysis of knowledge has got inspiration from Plato, but Plato did not accept this as the final definition of knowledge. Plato did bring out the problem of knowledge in some way as it is with recent philosophers. His purpose of doing philosophy was to guide people in following right conduct and to be virtuous. Virtue depended upon knowledge as knowledge and virtue are intimately connected. In order to be virtuous, it is necessary to have right knowledge and in order to have right knowledge, one must know what is knowledge. In his scheme, the soul

eternally possesses knowledge, it has to be recollected. In *Theaetetus*,² he states that belief is incompatible with and falls short of knowledge. The two are different and distinct capabilities. He ascribes knowledge to what is necessarily and indubitably true, what is contingently true could only be an object of opinion or belief. However, as a practical guide to knowledge, true belief is as good as knowledge. Identifying the two is identifying the infallible with the fallible. The so called 'traditional' definition was proposed by Theaetetus during the course of dialogue with his teacher Socrates but was immediately abandoned by Socrates as 'silly'³. It is quite unfortunate that the definition abandoned by its mastermind has become famous as 'the classical definition'.

In recent times, A. J. Ayer has started the trend with explicitly mentioning the tripartite definition of knowledge in his *The Problem of Knowledge*. For him, "the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowing that something is the case are first that what is said to know be true, secondly that one be sure of it and thirdly that one should have the right to be sure."⁴ Following Ayer, R. Chisholm defines knowledge in terms of the triune of three conditions with some changes in its shade. "S knows that h' is true means: (i) S accepts h, (ii) S has adequate evidence for h, and (iii) h is true."⁵

Gettier, in his famous short paper questions the validity of these various formulations of the definition of knowledge. He proposes two 'effective' counterexamples with an

intention to challenge the adequacy of the tripartite thesis. His seemingly convincing counterexamples have brought about a change in the field of epistemological inquiry since the publication of his paper. Along with the three given conditions, he presupposes two conditions about justification condition, first that it is possible to justify a false proposition and second, that justification is preserved in deductive reasoning. With these two assumptions, two thought experiments are conducted in which the three 'conditions' of knowledge are fulfilled yet these are not found to be cases of knowledge. It is important to point out that by considering the possibility of the justification of a false proposition, Gettier is ignoring the 'truth' condition of the triune definition. He is simply attacking the 'justified belief' as the definition of knowledge. Moreover, whether justification can be used as a function in deductive inference in Formal Logic is a matter of debate. It seems to involve the presence of some 'category mistake' as the laws prevailing in Epistemic Logic need not be the same as those used in Formal Logic.

In his first example, Gettier hypothesizes that Smith and Jones have applied for the same job. Smith claims to know that Jones will get the job because he came to 'know' that the man with ten coins in his pocket will get the job and Smith had seen Jones keeping ten coins in his pocket. Now, unknown to himself, he also happens to have ten coins in his pocket and in fact he (Smith) gets the job. His proposition 'The man who has ten coins in his pocket will get the job' is made keeping Jones in mind but it satisfies

the three conditions of truth, belief and justification even when Smith gets the job. Unfortunately, it is not a case of knowledge.

In the second example, Smith has 'strong evidence' that Jones owns a Ford. Thinking it to be true and applying the logical rule of addition, Smith constructs the disjunctive proposition: 'Either Jones owns a Ford or Brown is in Barcelona' although he has no idea regarding the whereabouts of Brown. Coincidentally, Brown happens to be in Barcelona and Jones is found not to possess a Ford. But the disjunctive statement is a case of justified true belief though not a case of knowledge.

Gettier's objection is not against any of the three conditions taken individually, but against all of them together as necessary and sufficient conditions. They may individually be necessary, yet jointly, insufficient for a case of propositional knowledge. It is his dealing with the justification condition that has been the target of maximum criticism of Gettier on account of his understanding it not only as independent of the truth condition but also not directed towards truth. However, the concept of justification, quite vague and confusing a concept, is idiosyncratized by Gettier in the sense of justification in the subjective sense.

A study of the views of post-Gettier epistemologists like M. Clark, R. Almender, J. Margolis, I. M. Thaleberg and others helps us to understand the viability of Gettier's counterexamples in the light of his presuppositions. It is

suggested that because of these presuppositions, Gettier has been successful in framing the counter examples. It seems doubtful that one can have a true and justified belief under the circumstances created by Gettier. Gettier has found to be guilty of presenting the classical definition in a distorted form. Likewise his second presupposition is also under attack in many ways. Later philosophers working on Gettier found that it is possible to construct some counter examples even without these assumptions. Hence, they cannot be counted as cause of the problems that Gettier's counter examples have caused.

Epistemologists were highly influenced by Gettier's attack on the triune definition which resulted in a drastic change in the course of epistemology reflected through an enhancement in the course of epistemological literature. A dense forest of counterexamples was grown immediately after the publication of Gettier's article. Some of these were undoubtedly shady trees but a huge number of mushroom examples, parasitic on these trees can also be found. Some philosophers believed that it is possible to completely justify a belief even if it is false. The element of truth, in such cases becomes superfluous and is ignored⁶. Knowledge is made equivalent to 'justified correct belief'. To this, Linda Zagzebski, straightaway, denies that justification can guarantee the truth. Another group of thinkers, however, tried to save the traditional definition by repairing it or by finding defects in the counterexamples. The situations spoiled by falsehood, neglectful data

collection or the misuse of cognitive equipment may fall short of knowledge.

It was also detected that perhaps Gettier's aim behind the construction of the counterexamples was a demand for a fourth condition. This thought inspired a team of post-Gettier philosophers to put forward a fourth condition in addition to the justification condition. As a result, the so-called 'classical' definition was affected. With their epistemological presuppositions, these post-Gettier philosophers also constructed counter examples in Gettier fashion, namely, cases of justified true belief but not of knowledge and vice versa. The philosophical background of these thinkers has caused idiosyncrasy in their interpretations. As Gettier has been alleged for trapping the tradition, so the responses on Gettier can also be blamed not to retain the senses of the terms exposed by Gettier. Some philosophers suggest that a fourth condition may be added to the three to make it sufficient.

The supplementation of the third condition with a fourth one or the rectification of the third condition has taken place in many ways. There is a set of philosophers who did not directly reject the traditional thesis but rather try to retain the thesis by redefining or restructuring the condition of justification in such a manner that the Gettier effect is neutralized. These philosophers are called revisionists. E. Sosa tries to repair the definition and discusses the grounds for knowledge as to whether these ground are evident or not?⁷ He also points out towards the concept of epistemic

responsibility. An epistemically irresponsible behaviour may hinder the acquisition of knowledge. K. Lehrer's search for the indefeasibility condition is considered a step towards revision of the definition of knowledge.

Another group of philosophers hold the view that it is because Gettier tailored the justification condition to his suitability that it is possible to find counterexamples. These philosophers made Gettier guilty of trapping the tradition and were known as traditionalists. Robert Almeder, for example, argues that if the satisfaction of the justification condition does not entail the satisfaction of the truth condition, the traditional definition is not understood in its original form. H. Kornblith, endorsing Sosa, argues that the belief in Gettier's examples remains unjustified because it results from epistemologically irresponsible behaviour. Chisholm tries to defend the traditional definition by assigning new meanings to the terms used in the original definition.

Yet, another team of epistemologists prefers to discard the original definition by finding new terms and conditions suitable to an analysis of knowledge. These philosophers may be called rejectionists. A statement may appear to be true yet contain indirect falsehood. Removal of defeasibility became an objective of Lehrer, Paxson and many other thinkers. Goldman and Armstrong bolstered the reliability approach through which they emphasized the reliability of reasons. Goldman later adds the causal connection to the traditional definition. P. Unger stresses

the importance of time factor in his non accidentality analysis of knowledge. Accordingly, Gettier examples are failed and their failure is associated with the presence of accidentality. Klein, Unger and Zagzebski have highlighted the presence of accidentality factor in the creation of situations like Gettier. Such justified true belief cases coincide with knowledge only as a matter of luck. But none of the proposed solutions are found to be sufficient and remain open to the possibility of counterexamples in the same manner as the original one. However, in this process, the entire epistemological trend is changed and the search for a definition of knowledge is shifted to 'Gettier immuned' definition.

Usually, ordinary language does not systematically distinguish between propositions, opinions, beliefs etc. A person may use self contradictory statements like 'I don't love him, I adore him' or 'This is not a house, it is a mansion'. But there remains a definite distinction between an apparent informal self contradiction and a recognized formal self contradiction. --Because of human dispositions to say something categorical and decisive rather than in terms of probability, one often does not hesitate to claim knowledge even when what is claimed to be known is only probable. The nature of our colloquial language is such that we don't hesitate to make strongest epistemic claims even in the case of trivial and uncalculated guesswork. For practical purposes, there may be no harm in using the term 'knowledge' in this manner, but for the purpose of philosophical analysis as in the Gettier case, philosophers

like H. H. Price suggest to abandon the use of the term. He asks us to use other terms like 'apprehension'. Cook Wilson calls it 'reasonable assurance'. J. Olen prefers to use 'educated guess'. If one reads in the news paper that Mr. X has won the prize, then the knowledge claim refers to the reading of the paper, and not towards the matter of fact. The situations of Gettier examples are examined in a formal manner. In most cases of ordinary life, people are not well calculated and make good guesses or educated guesses.

In some cases, knowledge is claimed on the basis of coherence with the 'already existent truths'. The traditional epistemology has ignored this aspect of epistemology. This aspect of epistemology cannot be disregarded as in this situation, there is no scope for personal beliefs or 'being justified' in Gettieristic sense. This social aspect of knowledge is more concerned with inter-subjective sharing of knowledge. According to this social dimension of knowledge, 'infallible truth' makes hardly any sense. It is, rather, more appropriate to talk of 'accepted truth' in society. An institution is governed by a set of rules or some sets of rules. Whatever can be accommodated within the paradigm of the social set up is accepted as truth. Such an epistemology has no Cartesian shadow. It is preferable to use 'knowledge claim' than 'knowledge' in this scenario.

Gettier problem also reveals the distinction between 'a knowledge situation' and 'a knowledge claim situation'. With the help of his examples, he clearly shows that the

cases of 'justified true beliefs' can at best be the cases of knowledge claims but their being cases of knowledge would only be a coincidence. Knowledge and justified true belief are neighbouring concepts in the sense that in most of the cases, they are overlapping each other giving an impression of their being one. But it is important to realize that they are conceptually distinct in spite of their simultaneity. The fact of their coincidence has been ignored by previous philosophers and the two have been treated as identical.

However, the 'mysterious gap' between knowledge and knowledge claim does not lead to skepticism. It merely depicts human limitations. Gettier examples also expose that justification under human conditions cannot be complete. We are not merely human beings as knowing agents but also social human beings. Wuketitus⁸ describes a human being as a combination of biopsychosocial factors. For him, "an epistemologist who fails to see this will not be able to contribute anything to an understanding of human knowledge, but rather will build castles in the air."⁹ The knower may be influenced by his own capacities, his presuppositions, his prejudices and his surroundings. All these factors along with factors like temporal and spatial factors in totality constitute the contextual factor. Human communication is possible through interaction with other agents. As a result, an exchange of knowledge is a part of our epistemological inquiry. Epistemology in such a scenario is reflected as a socially testable enterprise.

Gettier problem also brings the fact to light that a philosopher's job is not to be a lexicographer or to supply the definition of concepts. The problem cannot be solved by replacing the word with another set of words. Knowledge has got an independent status. The uniqueness and independent status of knowledge does not make it purely subjective in the sense of being a personal opinion. The aspiration of Gettier problem does not demand another definition of knowledge. It is Gettier's critique that has revealed that knowledge and justified true belief are not equivalent and the former need not be defined in terms of the latter. The concept of knowledge needs to be exonerated from the combination of the three constituent elements and to be looked at from an independent and novel perspective.

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Introduction

Philosophers throughout the ages have struggled to explain the way or ways by which we can acquire knowledge about the external world. With an aim to meet the skeptical challenges regarding the possibility of knowledge, various accounts of knowledge have been developed across philosophical traditions. The worry to meet skeptical challenges is implicitly or explicitly present in almost every philosophical account of knowledge. Many philosophers, while explaining about the nature and the possibility of knowledge, have talked about placing it in the space of reasons or space of justifications. So, I think one of the ways in which we can respond to skeptical challenges is by developing a proper understanding of the space of reasons and justifications where we place our knowledge. When we talk about the space of reasons, it is also important to highlight, in this context, its relationship with the natural world. I would like to emphasize in this regard that there has been a normative turn specifically in the works of John McDowell and Robert Brandom after the naturalistic turn

in epistemology. But one can ask- why is there a need of a normative turn after a seemingly successful naturalistic turn in epistemology? I call them normative epistemologists those who have argued that knowledge should be understood by placing it properly in the space of reasons which is necessarily a normative space. I think John McDowell, Robert Brandom and their philosophical heroes Immanuel Kant and G. W. F. Hegel fall into this category of epistemologists. Normative epistemologists have always argued that a philosophical account of knowledge in order to meet the skeptical challenges has to place our knowledge satisfactorily in the space of reasons and various ways of placing knowledge in the space of reasons have been developed in this regard. The significant questions that have been asked in this context are- what could be the best plausible way to place knowledge in the space of reasons? Is placing knowledge in the space of reasons enough to avoid the skeptical challenges regarding the possibility of knowledge? According to some philosophers, the skeptical problems arise because of a certain misunderstanding of space of reasons i.e. the interiorization of the space of reasons. On the interiorized conception of the space of reasons, there is need of extra elements beyond the space of reasons which are required for our knowledge but are not part of the logical space. In this paper, my aim, following Kant and McDowell, is to propose a critique of interiorized conception of space of reasons and show how this conception leads to various problems regarding the possibility of knowledge. In this context, I will specifically discuss argument from illusion as a skeptical challenge for

the possibility of knowledge and McDowell's response to it. In the second part of my paper, my aim is to discuss the debate between McDowell and Brandom on the nature and extent of the space of reasons.

The Problem

Out of many reasons behind the normative turn in contemporary epistemology, one is to overcome the problems associated with naturalism with regard to epistemology. However, there is a need to understand this normative turn in a proper sense keeping in the background the implications of naturalized epistemology. With an aim to avoid the repercussions of naturalized epistemology, many philosophers who seem to be normative epistemologists have not considered perception which is regarded as natural or causal as having any normative significance. Whatever is considered as natural, according to these philosophers, is not being considered as normative. Against this move, what I will try to argue is that 1. Perception itself is normative and a part of space of reasons. 2. While emphasizing on the point that we understand knowledge by placing it in the space of reasons or emphasizing that knowledge is a kind of normative relation, we are not taking knowledge or the space of reasons away from the natural world. If perception is taken merely as a causal happening, then it will not be possible to justify knowledge in terms of it. But that does not lead to losing perception itself from the normative relations we have with the world. Let us try to understand how perception has not been taken as having normativity and

why it should be having normativity for a better account of knowledge.

Our various kinds of knowledge about the world have different subject matters or contents to which these knowledge-states are directed or are about. These subject matters could be facts, objects, people, state of affairs, etc. The immediate and fundamental question that has been asked in this context is-how are we to ensure the possibility of knowledge about things in the external objective world? For empirical content or knowledge to be possible, it should be in a minimal sense be in relation with and justified by the external world. After all we are talking about the knowledge of the world and it is the same world which gives us the reasons to think about and act in it. This very answerability of thought and knowledge to the world should be understood in a normative context, explaining which McDowell says, “the relation between mind and world is normative... in this sense: thinking that aims at judgment, or at the fixation of belief, is answerable to the world- to how things are...”¹ Our thoughts about the world in particular should be answerable at least to the empirical world or to the way we grasp things or state of affairs empirically. Not only concerning our thoughts but also in the context of our knowledge, justifications for the knowledge episodes we possess are parts of the fabrics of the world. This idea of answerability would not make sense if we do not maintain that the world is independent of our knowledge of it. But if the world is independent of knowledge, then an important question regarding

intentionality arises is- how our thoughts and knowledge are answerable to the world if the world is independent of our knowledge and thought? And in addition to that, if the world is taken as independent of thought and knowledge, it leads to many philosophers to embrace the view that the world is independent and outside of the space of reasons. Hence, the space of reasons could never reach the external world. The idea of “answerability” could be understood in many ways. One way is that our knowledge is answerable to how things are in mere brute disenchanting, pure physical and natural world. This is not what McDowell meant by “answerability” to the world. What he means when he says that the thought is answerable to how things are in the world is that how things are in the world is part of the normative relation that we have with the world. A factual world but nevertheless ingrained with reasons. It is in this sense that the idea of normativity comes to the fore. Whether the world to which our empirical knowledge is answerable is disenchanting or not, it is our experience through which we are answerable to the world. We need to appeal to our experience of the world in order to make our thought and knowledge answerable to the world. It is in this sense we need to accept it as a truism that the content of the world is the content of our experience. The content of the world does not get diluted once it becomes the content of our experience. But the problem that appears is: How can our experience which if taken as merely a natural happening in the world stand in a rational relation to the knowledge about the world? The problem we face here is that the phenomenon of experience as has been dominantly

understood in contemporary philosophy, is the outcome of the way the world affects our sensibility. The very process of the world affecting our sensibility is a happening or event in the natural world which is describable in terms of scientific laws of nature like other natural events. These are understood in terms of the causal connections in the realm of law. However, on this conception of nature, one thing is related to another by means of causal connections, not by means of rational connections. Here one thing merely causes another thing, instead of justifying it and hence devoid of any kind of normative relations. Natural epistemologists thought that our experience of the world merely by being causal and natural can be able to justify our knowledge and thought about world. The problem here is that “experience” on the modern scientific interpretation of the term is in “disenchanted” form and is considered as something purely physical. The natural or physical sphere on this conception is not a proper place for placing meaning, intentionality and normativity. If it is a mere happening in the realm of law, then our experience cannot justify our beliefs about the world, our knowledge cannot be rationally connected to experience and as a consequence, it will not be about the world.

Given the above critical situation², we are left with the intractable problem regarding the very possibility of knowledge about the external world. How to attain a conception of experience, which will be involved in a rational relation to our empirical beliefs and, at the same time, must be able to figure as a real and genuine world

involving constraint to our knowledge? How to attain a conception of knowledge which will retain its normative relation with the world and be natural involving genuine worldly content? Our experience should simultaneously be able to open the world to us and give reasons for holding our beliefs about the world. On one side of the reflection, there is a need for our knowledge to be justified by the world. On the other side of the reflection, we take experience as something in which our knowledge cannot be fully grounded. These two possibilities taken together constitute a difficult situation in the way of realizing that knowledge of the empirical world is possible.

Space of reasons and Empirical Descriptions of Knowledge

Before discussing the relation between space of reasons and our experience of the world, I would like to go back to the significant points of Kantian epistemology as these have serious implications for the former. Moreover, I think that Kant's transcendental account of knowledge is in need of or at least go together with his transcendental account of experience. I will begin with his view on the relation between the faculty of understanding and the faculty of sensibility in the context of our perceptual knowledge of the world. Reflections on Kant's view regarding the relation between faculty of sensibility and faculty of understanding would give us significant insights on the relationship between space of reasons and natural world. The contemporary debate concerning our perceptual knowledge of the world, we can say, centers around the

following well-known passage from Kant's first critique (1929).

“Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind. It is, therefore, just as necessary to make our concepts sensible, that is, to add the object to them in intuition, as to make our intuitions intelligible, that is, to bring them under concepts. These two powers or capacities cannot exchange their functions. The understanding can intuit nothing, the sense can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise. But that is no reason for confounding the contribution of either with that of other; rather it is a strong reason for carefully separating and distinguishing the one from the other.”³

It is not as simple and outdated as it seems to be. Still some philosophers think that a sensible reading of Kant on these lines would give us the best picture of intentionality that we can ever have. The basic problem arises from the above lines regarding the distinction and association between intuitions and concepts. Difficulties that arise in understanding Kant is due to whether he is suggesting that “intuitions without concepts” simply do not exist or are meaningless or is he suggesting that “intuitions without concepts” do exist and are meaningful but is, in a way, sharply distinct in nature from that of concepts.⁴ What is the role of intuitions and concepts in mental representations? Can there be any kind of representation in the context of knowledge without the involvement of

concepts? The problem also arises regarding the role of intuitions and concepts in mental representations when we know something. I believe that when we acquire knowledge and act in the world, there is some kind of mental representation going on in our mind. Taking mental representation to be the fundamental kind of representation on which other modes of engaging with the world depend, we can ask, which of these two, intuitions or concepts, plays a significant role in mental representation? Understanding Kant properly, in this context, would lead to the view that one, while thinking about the relation between intuitions and concepts, should not overemphasize one over and above the other. Non-conceptualists and conceptualists have both responded to these problems in very different ways and that gives rise to the contemporary debate at hand.

According to Kant, knowledge is produced out of the cooperation between sensibility and understanding. Sensibility is responsible for producing intuitions and understanding is responsible for producing concepts and it is one of the higher faculties of knowledge. The transition from intuitions to knowledge via involvement of concepts is open to several interpretations because of the misleading way in which Kant explains the cooperation between these two faculties of knowledge. In Kantian theory of knowledge, the sensibility provides the raw material or sensory representations for our thinking through which we can relate to the object. The faculty of sensibility is the only means through which objects can be given to us. In Kant's

opinion, sensibility is “the capacity (receptivity) for receiving representations through the mode in which we are affected by the objects”⁵ and he describes sensation (*Empfindung*) as “the effect of an object upon the faculty of representations, in so far as we are affected by it.”⁶ However one should not forget that Kant himself made a distinction between sensory representations on the one hand and what he called experience. These sensory representations without having concepts of some kind or the other in their contents cannot be called experience of a subject as Kant himself says “Experience is ... the first product to which our understanding gives rise in working up the raw material of sensible impressions.”⁷ Mere sensory representations would not be intelligible to the subject as her experiences without the faculty of understanding. Hence, the faculty of spontaneity which produces concepts seems to enter into the very constitution of intuitions not only in receiving these intuitions but also to make these as the experiences of the subject. Our cognition is immediately related to the object through intuitions. But our cognition of the external world is not possible without having our higher faculty enter into the very unity of intuitions which Kant calls the manifold of sensory representations. Apart from the involvement of faculty of understanding, sensibility is not capable of producing cognition independently on its own without the involvement of a free standing “I” or “self”. In this context Kant says, “The I think must be able to accompany all my representations; for otherwise something would be represented in me that could not be thought at all, which is

as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing to me.”⁸ Why is it the case that “I” in “I think” in order to accompany all representations, the subject must have to actively exercise and unify them when Kant himself says “all combination-be we conscious of it or not...is an act of the understanding (*verstandeshandlung*).”⁹? Since Kant has kept possibilities open, it seems that the subject does not have to be conscious of the way concepts are drawn into in perception. So is the case with self-consciousness as the condition of experience. Without the presence of self-consciousness, representations remain mere subjective states and could not be called experience.

In Transcendental deduction of the categories, Kant says,

“There can be in us no modes of knowledge, no connection of unity of one mode of knowledge with another, without that unity of consciousness that precedes all data of intuition, and by relation to which representation of objects is alone possible. This pure, original, unchangeable consciousness I shall name transcendental apperception.”¹⁰

From the above points it is clear that, for Kant, the faculty of sensibility by which we get experience of the world is not merely natural or causal since it involves the faculty of understanding and the unity of consciousness. So, our experience of the world is part of the space of reasons or it can be called normative. Since the faculty of understanding

is present in our perception, our perception of the world is conceptual in certain sense.

Both McDowell and Brandom are influenced by Sellars' ground breaking conception of space of reasons. The distinction between naturalist and normative explanation of knowledge can be seen in the following quotation from Wilfrid Sellars. Sellars while making a distinction between two kinds of explanation of knowledge says-

“In characterizing an episode or a state as that of knowing, we are not giving an empirical description of that episode or state; we are placing it in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says.”¹¹

In the above lines, there is a contrast that Sellars seems to have made between “placing knowledge in the space of reasons” and giving an “empirical descriptions” of it. The subject matter of “empirical descriptions” or naturalistic explanation, according to Sellars, includes what is called natural in the modern scientific sense of the term “natural” and it is contrasted with our normative discourse that is constituted by the logical space of reasons where we locate various normative concepts such as knowledge, meaning, value, intentionality and agency etc.. But if the empirical characterization includes the characterization of perception then we cannot appeal to it while grounding agency, thought and knowledge in the world. “Empirical description” here refers to the things that we place in the logical space of nature on a modern scientific conception of

nature and following McDowell's interpretation of Sellars, we can describe it as below-the-line characterization in contrast to the above-the-line characterizations¹² of placing states and episodes in the logical space of reasons. Logical space of nature is the space where modern natural sciences operate. In this domain we describe things by various natural and physical laws. On this notion of nature, to place something in nature on the relevant modern conception is to situate it in the realm of causal and physical laws devoid of normativity, devoid of human value. We cannot say that in this space one thing is justified by another thing. In this realm, only causal relations among things make sense where as in the space of reasons normative relations make sense.

In McDowell's opinion, the contrast is present between the "internal organization of the space of reasons" and the "internal organization of nature". The contrast between logical space of reasons and realm of nature is also reflected in Kant's distinction between "the realm of freedom" and "realm of nature". It is the modern natural science which is responsible for providing resources for the construction of the internal organization of nature. On the conception of modern natural science, it is not possible to find meaning, normativity and rationality in nature, because these are part of the other logical space which is called "the logical space of reasons". The distinction between philosophers' articulation of space of reasons and modern scientific notion of nature need not be conceived as leading the gap between reason and nature as such.

So, if this is what we mean by the phrase “empirical descriptions”, then Sellars would suggest that concepts and categories that belong to our rationality, while characterizing knowledge, cannot be captured or explained with the help of concepts and categories that are parts of logical space of nature. In this context, Sellars notes that epistemology is subject to naturalistic fallacy if we try to explain knowledge in naturalistic terms.

He says,

“The idea that epistemic facts can be analyzed without remainder- even in principle- into non-epistemic facts whether phenomenal or behavioral, public or private, with no matter how lavish a sprinkling of subjunctives and hypotheticals, is I believe, a radical mistake- a mistake of a piece with the so-called “naturalistic fallacy” in ethics.”¹³

We can see that in the above lines that Sellars is making a crucial distinction epistemic and non-epistemic fact in terms of the distinction between “normative” and what is called “natural”. The components of the sphere of normative cannot be analyzed into the items of the natural sphere. Usually facts are considered as natural. However, a significant insight we get from the above discussion is that something which is epistemic on the relevant conception can not only become a fact but also a normative fact.

Nature and Extent of Space of Reasons

For McDowell, the space of reasons is identical to the space of concepts and the conceptual relations. Though it is an autonomous space in the sense of Kantian idea of freedom, it is not a self-contained space because the world is very much part of it.¹⁴ The important point here to be noted is that, according to McDowell, space of reasons cannot be said to have a location in the bare receptivity from the external world which is devoid of conceptual capacities.¹⁵ Does that mean our perception, if it is taken as a bare receptivity, should not be a part of space of reasons? Should the bare receptivity, what so ever it may be, kept outside of the space of reasons? In fact, the bare receptivity is part of the space of reasons in the sense that when we receive it our concepts are operative. So the bare receptivity in the form of perception need not be taken as bare receptivity devoid of concepts. It is difficult to understand whether McDowell wants to reject the bare receptivity as such or is he suggesting that the bare receptivity itself is determined by normative capacities and hence does not remain merely as bare receptivity. It is also equally difficult to include the world within the scope of space of reasons if we exclude the bare receptivity from the scope of the space of reasons.

McDowell defines “the space of reasons” and its scope and nature in the following ways,

“The logical space of reasons...is the logical space in which we place episodes or states when we

describe them in terms of the actualization of conceptual capacities. Now what corresponds in Kant to this image of the logical space of reasons is the image of the realm of freedom.”¹⁶

“...the topography of conceptual is constituted by rational relations. The space of reasons is identified with space of concepts. When Kant described the understanding as a faculty of understanding as a faculty of spontaneity that reflects his view of the relation between reason and freedom: rational necessitation is not just compatible with freedom but constitutive of it... the space of reasons is the realm of freedom.”¹⁷

If the space of reasons is identified with realm of freedom in the Kantian sense, then perception must be part of it rather than being an external element. If perception as a source of knowledge is kept outside of space of reasons, then the latter cannot be a realm of freedom. Freedom in the empirical thinking cannot be realized if perception of the world does not figure in the space of reasons. McDowell agrees on the Sellars’ ground-breaking idea that the epistemic sphere is a normative space and a standing satisfactorily in the space of reasons is crucial to our knowledge of the external world. The satisfactory standing in the space of reasons is the key for characterizing our knowledge-states about the world. There is not much issue about whether our knowledge and thought should stand satisfactorily in the logical space of reasons. Many philosophers in a certain sense would agree that the

knowledge should be placed in a space of reasons and thereby give importance to “reason” and “evidence” in the context of knowledge. But the question that arises is: how to understand this standing in the space of reasons? This is important because as we shall see that due to certain kind of understanding/misunderstanding of the space of reasons, we give room for skeptics to haunt the very possibility of our knowledge.

Argument from Illusion as a case of Skeptical Challenge to the Possibility of Knowledge

Argument from illusion is one of the most important skeptical arguments discussed in contemporary epistemology. Responses to argument from illusion have been formulated in many ways. Arguing against skepticism in the form of argument from illusion¹⁸, McDowell suggests that the space of reasons should not be interiorized. Rebuttal of the argument from illusion cannot be successful if while responding to it, we interiorize the space of reasons. Skeptical problems rather are created instead of solving them by interiorizing space of reasons. Philosophers often interiorize the space of reasons in order to counter the skeptical challenges that arise in the context of the possibility of knowledge. But to the contrary, we realize that the argument of illusion can be an upshot of the interiorized conception of the space of reasons.

Arguments from Illusion formulated in a particular way would take the following form.

1. S is not able to know that she is not in an illusion.

The subject is not able to distinguish between seeing the object and merely seeming to see the object. (Because the subject is fed with the experience of the presence of a chair)

2. If S is not able to know that she is not in an illusion, then she is unable to know that there is a chair in front of her.
3. Hence, she is not able to know that there is a chair in front of her.

It gives rise, according to McDowell, to a “hybrid account of knowledge” based on (Highest Common Factor).

The Highest Common Factor Argument¹⁹ is:

P1. In the bad cases, the supporting reasons for one’s perceptual beliefs maximally can only consist of the way the world appears to one.

P2. The good and bad cases are phenomenologically indistinguishable.

C1. So, the supporting reasons for one’s perceptual beliefs in the good cases can be no better than in the bad cases. (From P2)

C2. So, the supporting reasons for one’s perceptual beliefs can only consist of the way the world appears to one. (From P1 and C1)

According to McDowell, this interiorized conception of space of reasons leads to the hybrid conception of knowledge based on the highest common factor. He writes, “The deformation is an interiorization of the space of reasons, a withdrawal of it from the external world. This happens when we suppose that we ought to be able to achieve flawless standings in the space of reasons by our own unaided resources, without needing the world to do us any favors.”²⁰ This HCF thesis suggests that the veridical knowledge at its best only can have the same content which is there in non-veridical cases. We need to understand why some philosophers thought that there is a need to interiorize the space of reasons in order to avoid arguments from illusion. Since, for them, on many occasions the veridical perceptions at best can have the same content that illusions have, they thought that perception is something that cannot be trusted with giving justifications for our knowledge. To keep the space of reasons safer and uncontaminated, it is better to keep our experience outside of justificatory and normative relations.

One of the important points of McDowell’s argument, according to Pritchard, is that the reason that a subject has for her knowledge is both reflectively accessible and factive.²¹ The reasons for her knowledge are reflectively accessible to the subject. McDowell’s position cannot be easily put in to the category of either internalism or externalism following the traditional conception of the internalism/externalism in traditional epistemology and

philosophy of mind. The reasons for knowledge, according to McDowell, are stressed in the external world which is beyond the scope of the inner. It is also not a form of epistemic externalism in the sense that there is not something extra beyond the space of reasons which would give justification to our knowledge. For McDowell, the world is very much part of the space of reasons but it is independent of our thought and knowledge. Thus, he made a balance between idealism and realism. One can say that the world is part of the space of reasons in the sense that when we experience the world, the space of concepts is at work. But it is not clear in McDowell's account how the world itself is part of space of reasons. If he wants to retain his position of the unboundedness of the conceptual, then not only the experience of the world, but also the world itself must be part of the space of reasons. McDowell's view, in a certain sense, can be called as a form of epistemological disjunctivism²² where it is argued that though veridical case and non-veridical case are not distinguishable phenomenally by the agent who is having experience, each of these cases have different content. What does it mean to say that veridical and non-veridical cases are phenomenologically indistinguishable? This could possibly mean that what it is like for me to have an illusion cannot be differentiated from what it is like for me to have a veridical perception. I think this indistinguishability thesis is undermining the richness of phenomenology of perception. If we accept the phenomenological indistinguishability thesis, then we need to accept the view that the world is not doing to us any

favour when we experience the world. That's a very wrong picture of the perception of the world. I think if we take phenomenology of perception seriously into consideration, our experience of the world through various engagements cannot be just an illusion. The reasons for the conclusion that a different content is there in each case would keep the skeptics at a distance. When the world does a favour to us, we have the veridical perception and when it does not, it leads to illusion.

In the good cases, the reason for my belief that now the seminar on epistemology is going on is that "I can see that the seminar on epistemology is going on". The reason for one's belief is factive because "I can only see something is going on if it is really going on". The reason for my perceptual knowledge that "the seminar is going on" is justified by my perception "that the seminar is going on". But in the non-veridical cases, the fact is that I seem to see that the seminar is going on due to some illusion. In this case, I am in fact a BIV. Thus, the reasons in these cases have two different forms. The point here, however, to be noted is that the fact that one is in a BIV or undergoing some kind of illusion, according to me, is also reflectively accessible to the subject. Although she does not realize that while she is going through an illusion, but immediately after the world does her a favour in believing that the seminar is going on, she also realizes that she is not in a BIV. It is a bizarre idea that the world never does us a favour to know that we are under the illusion. The world gives us the opportunities to know the world and it also

gives us the opportunities to know that we were under the illusion. One of the virtues of McDowell's view is that the external world itself constitutes the normative or justificatory relation by which it is connected to the thought and knowledge about the world.

Thus he says,

“That things are thus and so is the conceptual content of an experience, but if the subject of the experience is not misled, that very same thing, that things are thus and so, is also a perceptible fact, an aspect of the perceptible world.”²³

The problem of skepticism about the knowledge of external world originates due to the interiorization of the space of reasons. According to McDowell, this interiorization of the space of reasons creates a withdrawal of mind and rationality from the external world and as a result of which the possibility of our knowledge of the external world remains a mystery. The supporters of various forms of epistemological externalism, under the influence of HCF, believe that we can have knowledge about the external world only by making our beliefs standing in relation to the world of external facts. On this conception, we do not require a notion of justification which stands in the logical space of reasons to be made available in the external world. We are justified in having knowledge about the external world by various factors of the external world. But the “entitlement” for having some knowledge is interiorized. McDowell argues that a satisfactory standing in the logical

space of reasons is not only necessary but also sufficient for describing our knowledge. The warrants and justifications for our thoughts about the world have to be conclusive. There is no need to suppose extra elements beyond the space of warrants for giving justification because the world itself can be a part of space of reasons and space of warrants. He argued against the interiorized conception of “the space of reasons,” which is, in his opinion, a hybrid account of knowledge that states the satisfactory standing in the space of reasons is necessary, but not sufficient. Against this claim, He argues that standing satisfactorily in the space of reasons constitutes the whole of our knowledge. We can reformulate the above point by saying that it is not a good idea to suppose that a satisfactory standing in the space of concepts might be part but not the whole of what is thought. We can say that McDowell rejects certain versions of both externalism and internalism about the scope of the space of reasons.

When we have knowledge about the external world, in order to justify ourselves in having such knowledge, McDowell argues that we do not need to interiorize the space of justifications or reasons thinking that it has an outer boundary. If we do so, the external world remains detached to “space of reasons” and the external world remains outside of the “space of reasons”. On the “interiorized conception of the space of reasons,” a statement of our perception for example, “I see that...”²⁴, according to McDowell, cannot have justificatory power in order to give reasons for our knowledge which is in the

form “I know that...” because “I see that...,” on the interiorized conception of space of reasons might not possess reasons to know something to be the case. According to McDowell, the statements like “...I see that...” are actually proper moves in the game of giving and asking for reasons, and their truth fully vindicates entitlement to the embedded propositions.”²⁵ McDowell writes,

“I argue against views according to which knowledge is only partly constituted by standings in the space of reasons, with the requirements that what a knower takes to be so is indeed so conceived as an extra condition, over and above her standing in the space of reasons.”²⁶

Since space of reasons partly constitutes our knowledge of empirical world, “seeing that an object is thus and so” must figure as an extra condition beyond the subject’s standing in the space of reasons. This extra condition present in the form of experience is devoid of concepts. McDowell thinks that if concepts are introduced at the level of perception, then perception need not be considered as the extra condition to the space of reasons and it should not figure outside of the space of reasons. “I see that things are thus and so” is not something which is merely brute impact on the subject who is experiencing the world. First personal givenness of the phenomena in the form of experience to the subject cannot be a mere brute impact of the world.

Space of reasons: McDowell vs Brandom

Though internalizing the space of reasons is the main source of skeptical worries, only by freeing ourselves from such conception may not be enough to avoid the skeptical worries. According to Brandom what McDowell says about the space of reasons is necessary but not enough to explain our knowledge. After getting a reformed version of space of reasons, Brandom argues, we need to supplement it with the social and normative dimension of it. There is a need to concretize the exchanges of justifications in the space of reasons. We need to understand how the space of reasons is socially and normatively constituted involving the concrete practices of individuals and communities. Social articulation of space of reasons must be taken as an important feature of the space of reasons in the context of which we can properly understand our knowledge. In our talk about the content of beliefs and knowledge of ourselves and those of the others, we try to find out or seek for reasons which can be given to others and which can be asked from others. This refers to the concrete practices among individuals and communities. It is in this way we can attribute knowledge to others and can others also attribute knowledge to us.

Disagreeing with McDowell, Brandom argues that the former “makes nothing of the essential social articulation of the space of reasons.”²⁷ In his opinion, standing in the space of reasons is necessary but not sufficient for our knowledge and due to this he seems to be acknowledging that there are extra elements beyond the space of reasons

which are required for having knowledge. By merely placing our knowledge in the space of reasons, it seems, is not enough for a theory of justification because external factors are needed. He says,

“Space of reasons ought to be understood as an abstraction from concrete practices of giving and asking for reasons. The space of reasons is normative space. It is articulated by properties that govern practices of citing one standing as committing or entitling one to another—that is, as a reason for another. What people actually do is adopt, assess, and attribute such standings— and if they did not, there would be no such standings. For in the absence of such normative attitudes of taking or treating people as committed or entitled, there are no commitments or entitlements. They are not part of furniture of the pre-human world.”²⁸

When we talk about the space of reasons in the context of placing knowledge in it, we need to take its social articulation seriously into consideration. Commitments and entitlements for knowledge are not to be understood as a part of the pre-human world. These are very much part of the human world and could not be understood without taking in to consideration the concrete practices of giving and asking for reasons in which human beings are involved in. For humans, natural is normative and vice-versa. Without understanding how actually people adopt, assess and attribute their standings in the space of reasons, there will be no such standings available to us. Understanding

knowledge as the standing in the space of reasons cannot be detached from the concrete practices of human beings in acquiring, attributing and justifying their knowledge.

The way a knower's standing in the space of reasons is assessed consists of three different attitudes.

1. Attributing a commitment
2. Attributing an entitlement
3. Undertaking a commitment²⁹

Placing knowledge in the space of reasons, according to Brandom, “incorporates and depends on the social difference of perspective between attributing a commitment (to another) and undertaking a commitment.”³⁰ If placing knowledge in the space of reasons involves all the above three, then it is not clear why it would take us to outside of the space of reasons as Brandom seems to have suggested. Why is there a need to interiorize the space of reasons in relation to the external world?

According to McDowell, Brandom (many others) has already taken for granted that the “space of reasons” is an interiorized space where the factors of the external world are something extra to the space of reasons. The external world cannot enter into the entitlement which a subject possesses in order to claim something about the external world. Brandom seems to have thought that the entitlement for a claim about the world cannot rule out the falsehood involved in an empirical claim because it cannot reach the

external world. Entitlement for a knowledge claim always stops at the account of experience which has the form “seeming to see”. Factors of the external world cannot construct the entitlement of the subject. On this conception, our perception of the external world is situated beyond the “space of reasons” and thus is considered as an external condition for the knowledge. Therefore our “standing in the space of reasons” is not sufficient because there are other external conditions which are situated beyond “the space of reasons” and “entitlement.” According to McDowell this picture of knowledge is wrong. In his opinion, perceptual experience of a subject can be able to constitute the entitlement of the subject for believing what he saw in the world. One’s perceptual experience is not just an appearance which one can claim following argument from illusion. The interiorized conception of reason and concepts which McDowell rejects makes it impossible for the content of world and experience of it to provide the content and justification to our knowledge.

According to McDowell, Brandom in his account also interiorized the space of reasons in the sense that, for him, space of reasons or justifications cannot guarantee truth. The interiorized conception of space of reasons is present in Brandom’s view when he says

“If you are standing in a darkened room and seem to see a candle ten feet in front of you, I may take you to have good reasons for believing that there is a candle in front of you, and so take you to be entitled to your commitment. But that may be my attitude

even if I know, as you do not, that there is a mirror five feet in front of you, and no candle behind it, so that I am not in a position to endorse or commit myself to what you are committed to.”³¹

The above lines by Brandom seem to suggest that the presence of the candle cannot be part of the entitlement of subject to claim that she knows that there is a candle in front of her. In the case of perceptual knowledge, the entitlement for knowing on the part of a particular subject that there is a candle in front of her, for example, at best can be that she seems to see that there is candle in front of her. She seems to see that there is a candle in front of her is not going to guarantee that there is a candle in front of her. Therefore, the entitlement for subject to have knowledge about the presence of something cannot include the very presence of that thing. In best possible veridical cases, her entitlement is that she seems to see that there is an object in front of her. On the one hand, subject's entitlement to know something cannot guarantee that there is presence of something in the external world. On the other hand, external world cannot become part of the entitlement to know something. The space of reasons is internalized here in the sense that the external world cannot be part of the space of reasons or space of entitlements.

McDowell arguing against this view says that in the case of veridical perception, the subject sees that, that there is a candle in front of her can be part of her entitlement to know that there is a candle in front of her. The presence of candle in the external world enters into space of reasons or space

of entitlements. He, in this context, says, "...the appearance that there is a candle in front of her is the presence of the candle making itself apparent to her."³² Here the presence of the candle in front of the subject is the reason for her entitlement to know that there is a candle in front of her. In the case of veridical perception, the entitlement which the subject has for knowing something is not that she seems to see that thing in front of her. Rather, her entitlement in these cases is that she sees that object which is in front of her.

McDowell works out a Wittgensteinian therapy towards showing that the very idea of thinking that there is something "inside" the conceptual sphere and something "outside" of it is not a coherent and compelling idea and this picture needs to be deconstructed. The severe consequence of getting this picture activated is that it seems under these conditions the 'outside' can never be a part of "inside" and "inside" can never reach to the outside. The concept of "mind," "rationality," "subjectivity," "meaning," etc. are taken as residing in some inside space (either immaterial or material) and the concept of "object," "given," "world," etc. are taken to be situated in outside space. The nature of inside and outside is so conceived that it is a problem for the picture of intentionality. The metaphor of what is "inside" and "outside" is deeply entrenched in our everyday language and also in many cultural practices. Thus, McDowell in "Knowledge and the Internal" writes,

“The space of reasons is the space within which thought moves, and its topography is that of the rational interconnections between conceptual contents; we might equally speak of the space of concepts. So we can see the interiorization of the space of reasons as a form of a familiar tendency in philosophy: the tendency to picture the objective world as set over against a “conceptual scheme” that has withdrawn into a kind of self-sufficiency. The fantasy of a sphere within which reason is in full autonomous control is one element in the complex aetiology of this dualism. The dualism yields a picture in which the realm of matter, which is, in so far as it impinges on us, the given, confronts the realm of forms, which is the realm of thought, the realm in which the subjectivity has its being... the picture is hopeless. It is the source of the basic misconception of modern philosophy, the idea that the task of philosophy is to bridge an ontological and epistemological gulf across which the subjective and objective are supposed to face one another.”³³

In his opinion, Philosophers tend to have a “sideways-on” picture of relationship of conceptual sphere with the external world. It leads them to interiorize the space of reasons and also similarly space of concepts. For them, it is the objective world which impinges on our thought and sensory organs by remaining outside the conceptual boundary. The view that the subjects meet the external

world which is outside of the space of reasons has to be rejected. Making the interiorized space of reasons effective makes the external world stand apart from our thought in dualistic manner. It makes the space of reasons a self-sufficient realm by withdrawing itself from the external world. Philosophers either stand on the side of subjective conceptual realm or on the side of objective external world. There has been a tendency in many theories of modern philosophy to give an account of the relation between subject and object by overemphasizing one over the other.

Conclusion

Though it is true that social articulation of space of reasons is significant for understanding knowledge, it should not go beyond the space of reasons. Items which are responsible for the social articulation of the space of reasons are not extra to the space of reasons and are perfectly within the scope of it. Following the normative turn in epistemology, one can say that knowledge can be understood in a better way by placing it in the space of reasons. It is not possible to respond to skeptics successfully if one in her account of knowledge keeps the external world away from the space of reasons. This happens when one internalizes the space of reasons following normative turn and when one naturalizes the world and our experiences of it on the conception of modern natural science. Internalizing the space of reasons leads to the acknowledgment of the extra element beyond the space of reasons which is said to be required for the possibility of knowledge. It creates an unbridgeable gap between the space of reasons and the external world. The

gap between the subject who is having knowledge and the world which provides reasons for her knowledge is created on the basis of this conception of space of reasons. Internalizing the space of reasons would place external world and our perception of it outside of space of reasons. Anti-skeptical strategy cannot be successful if one operates with this conception of space of reasons. Following a reformed conception of the space of reasons, one can say that our experience of the world can give us genuine content to our thought and knowledge about the world and at the same time it is very much a part of the space of reasons.

Notes and References

- ¹ McDowell, John. *Mind and World, with a new introduction*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996, xii.
- ² This is one of the significant concerns of John McDowell's *Mind and World*.
- ³ Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith, Palgrave Macmillan, 1929/2007: 93. B 76/A 52.
- ⁴ Some philosophers like Robert Hanna have tried to argue that intuitions without concepts exist and can be meaningful to the subject.
- ⁵ Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith, Palgrave Macmillan, 1929/2007, A 19/B 33.
- ⁶ Ibid., A 19-20/B 34.
- ⁷ Ibid., 1929/2007, A 1.
- ⁸ Ibid., B 131-132.
- ⁹ Ibid., B 130.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., A 107.
- ¹¹ Sellars, Wilfrid. *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, with an introduction by Richard Rorty and a study guide by Robert Brandom. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1997, pp. 298-99.

- ¹² McDowell, John. *Having the World in view: Essays on Kant, Hegel and Sellars*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 5.
- ¹³ Sellars, Wilfrid. *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, with an introduction by Richard Rorty and a study guide by Robert Brandom. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press 1997, § 5.
- ¹⁴ McDowell has argued for the unboundedness of the conceptual. I am not here discussing how according McDowell world is already part of space of reasons.
- ¹⁵ I am not going to discuss this claim here.
- ¹⁶ McDowell, John. *Having the World in view: Essays on Kant, Hegel and Sellars*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 5.
- ¹⁷ McDowell, John. *Mind and World, with a new introduction*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 5.
- ¹⁸ McDowell presents the argument from illusion saying, “Seeing, or perhaps having seen, that things are thus and so, I take it that things are thus and so on the basis of having it look to me as if things are thus and so. And it can look to me as if things are thus and so when they are not; appearances do not give me the resources to ensure that I take things to be thus and so, on the basis of appearances, only when things are thus and so. If things are thus and so when they seem be, the world is doing me a favour. So if I want to restrict myself to standings in the space of space of reasons whose flawlessness I can ensure without external help, I must go no further than taking it that it looks to me as if things are thus and so.” See McDowell, *Meaning, Knowledge and Reality*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 396.
- ¹⁹ Here I have followed Duncan Pritchard’s formulation of Highest Common Factor Argument. See Pritchard, Duncan. “McDowellian Neo-Mooreanism”, in *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action and Knowledge*, (eds.) A. Haddock & F. Macpherson, 283-310, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 294.
- ²⁰ McDowell, John. *Meaning, Knowledge and Reality*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998, P. 395.
- ²¹ See Pritchard, Duncan. *Epistemic Angst: Radical Skepticism and the Groundlessness of our Beliefs*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016, p. 124.
- ²² McDowell’s view is generally known as Epistemological Disjunctivism which is different from other forms of disjunctivism.

- ²³ McDowell, John. *Mind and World, with a New Introduction*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1996, p. 26.
- ²⁴ McDowell, John. *The Engaged Intellect: Philosophical Essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 279.
- ²⁵ Ibid., pp. 279-280.
- ²⁶ Ibid., p. 283.
- ²⁷ Brandom, Robert. “Knowledge and the Social Articulation of the Space of Reasons”, in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 55, 1995: 902.
- ²⁸ Ibid., p. 898.
- ²⁹ Ibid., p. 903.
- ³⁰ Ibid., p. 904
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 903.
- ³² McDowell, John. *The Engaged Intellect: Philosophical Essays*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 281.
- ³³ McDowell, John. *Meaning, Knowledge and Reality*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 408-9.

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Introduction:

Our inquiry about knowledge takes us to inquire about-how we acquire knowledge, knowledge so to say, knowledge about the external world, knowledge about other minds and knowledge about oneself. Somehow philosophers belonging to different traditions have engaged themselves in dealing with these aspects of knowledge in various interesting ways. In traditional epistemology, accounts of knowledge have been primarily based on the Cartesian notion of subjectivity. This notion of subjectivity has been considered as the foundation of knowledge of all kinds. This view was predominant for quite a long period because they claim that the knowledge about one's own mind is infallible in nature. In this context it always remains a difficulty to explain our knowledge of the external world as well as to understand and interpret others' knowledge of the world. In contemporary philosophy there have been many philosophers who have tried to get rid of this viewpoint of taking subjectivity as the foundation of knowledge. As opposed to subjective account these philosophers have tried to naturalize and externalize our

knowledge. Davidson's epistemology is significant in this regard. But the question arises- while naturalizing or externalizing epistemology are we completely doing away with the notion of subjectivity? If yes, then the question arises- is it possible to have an account of knowledge without involving the first person perspective of the subject who is having the knowledge? If no, then what is that notion of subjectivity we can retain in our accounts of knowledge? These are the questions I am going to ask and shall try to develop an answer in this paper with reference to Davidson. Considering this, the debate between internalism and externalism is a widely discussed debate in contemporary philosophy of language and philosophy of mind. Internalists hold the subject as the source of knowledge while for externalists, the contents of our thoughts are determined by the external factors.

Davidson's externalism lays its foundation in his rejection of considering subjectivity as the foundation of the objective empirical world knowledge and he claimed that empirical knowledge has no epistemological foundation, and needs none. According to Davidson, right from the time of Descartes, philosophers have been engaged in elucidating knowledge from the basis of subjective view of experience. He takes an anti-empiricist standpoint by rejecting the idea that empiricism can be a foundation for our knowledge. For him there is no empirical ground to have knowledge about other minds and the knowledge about the rest of the world. In other words meaning and knowledge are not subjectively or psychologically

determined. Since this subjectivity or first person authority has a long influential history in philosophy, therefore it becomes necessary to discuss about it.

1.1 First-person Authority

First person knowledge or subjectivity is distinguished by the fact that one is presented to himself in a unique way that no one else can know about it. That means we can legitimately claim a unique sort of authority with respect to what we believe, want, intend, and some other attitudes. Davidson says, “a new explanation of first person authority is offered which traces the source of the authority to a necessary feature of the interpretation of speech”¹. He thus writes,

When a speaker avers that he has a belief, hope, desire or intention, there is a presumption that he is not mistaken, a presumption that does not attach to his ascriptions of similar mental states to others. ... What accounts for the authority accorded first person present tense claims of this sort, and denied second or third person claims?²

The way one knows about his own mental states no one else can know about it in the similar way so there is an asymmetry between the attributions of attitudes to our own selves and attributions of same attitudes to other selves. For Davidson, the special authority a speaker has over his attitudes applies to all sort of propositional attitudes, but, in the case of belief, it is more direct, clear, and simple. As Davidson clarifies, “Special authority attaches directly to

claims about the desire and belief, less directly to claims about the necessary causal connection”³.

Davidson argued that although there is first-person authority with respect to beliefs and other propositional attitudes; error is possible. First-person knowledge is not infallible. He says, “We do not always have indubitable or certain knowledge of our own attitudes. Nor are our claims about our own attitudes incorrigible. It is possible for the evidence available to others to overthrow self-judgments”⁴. According to Davidson knowledge about the self is sometimes non-evidential but this non-evidentiality does not explain why self attributions are privileged.

There are philosophers who have denied the existence of asymmetry between self-knowledge and the knowledge about the world including the knowledge about the minds of others. For them the way we know our mental states is not different from the way we get the knowledge about the world and about other minds. Ryle has strongly discarded the asymmetry. For him the way we know our own mental states in the similar way we know the mental states of others. He views that any attempt to explain the asymmetry between knowing our own minds and knowing the minds of others on the basis of saying that we are privileged to know our own minds, will lead to a sceptical result. Davidson in response to this holds that Ryle neither explains the asymmetry nor accepts it, he simply denies the asymmetry.

Like Ryle, Ayer has provided an explanation to deny the asymmetry. According to Davidson though Ayer has emphasized that the first person ascriptions can be in error, he allows that such ascriptions are privileged as he compares self ascriptions to the authority we sometimes allow an eyewitness when compared with secondhand reports. Against this Davidson has provided two arguments – first, it fails to tell us why a person is like an eyewitness with respect to his own mental states and events while others are not. Second, it fails to give an accurate description of what first person authority is like. For first person attributions are not based on better evidence but often no evidence at all. The authority of the eyewitness is at best based on inductive probabilities easily overridden in particular cases: an eyewitness is discredited and his evidence discounted if he is a notoriously unreliable observer, prejudiced, or myopic.⁵

Davidson has further expressed his dissatisfaction with Strawson who has conceded that there is such a thing as first person authority (or accepts the asymmetry). Strawson's view on first person authority is his response towards the sceptic that is the scepticism about other minds. According to Strawson, if the sceptic understands his own question (How does anyone know what is going on in someone else's mind?), he knows the answer. For if the sceptic knows what a mind is, he knows it must be in a body, and that it has thoughts. He also knows that we attribute thoughts to others on the basis of observed behavior, but to ourselves without such a basis.⁶ That

means the sceptic is aware that the attribution we attach to others is based on their observed behavior while for self-attribution we do not rely on such basis. Davidson against Strawson holds that though he correctly explains the asymmetry but his answer does not seem to satisfy the sceptic. It is ambiguous to state that we attach the same attribute on the basis of some observed behaviors (in case of others) and also in the absence of observed behaviors (in case of ourselves). Strawson has done nothing to explain this. So as a result the sceptic is justified in asking the question.

The sceptical problem originates from the Cartesian or empiricist point of view as both assume that each person knows what is in his mind. Thus problem seemed to be that of supplying a basis for knowledge of other minds.⁷ Thus according to Davidson, saying that there is an asymmetry between first and other person ascription does not solve the problem, he says that steps towards a solution depends on becoming clear about the entities to which first-person authority applies. For Davidson, what we need to do is to explain why there is an asymmetry in the ascriptions of attitudes to ourselves and to others. Davidson has rejected the views in favor of asymmetry based on propositions and meanings as this will lead to the same sceptical problem that is the knowledge of the minds of others. He therefore has suggested to focus on sentences and utterances rather than propositions or meanings. The problem according to Davidson, can be avoided in terms of the relations between agents and utterances. Davidson puts forward his proposal,

which starts with a distinction between two sorts of asymmetry:

We now need to distinguish two related but different asymmetries. On the one hand, there is the familiar difference between self- and other- attributions of the same attitude to the same person: my claim that I believe Wagner died happy and your claim that I believe Wagner died happy. If these claims are put into words, we have the difficulty of deciding what pairs of utterances are suitably related in order to guarantee that the claims have the ‘same content’. On the other hand, we may consider my utterance of the sentence ‘I believe Wagner died happy’, and then contrast my warrant for thinking I have said something true, and your warrant for thinking I have said something true. These two asymmetries are... connected since we are inclined to say your warrant for thinking I speak the truth when I say ‘I believe Wagner died happy’ must be closely related to your warrant for thinking you would be speaking the truth if you said ‘Davidson believes Wagner died happy’. I shall deal with the second versions of the asymmetry.⁸

Davidson is inclined to deal with the second sort of asymmetry, that is, to find an answer to the question: “What explains the difference in the sort of assurance you have that I am right when I say ‘I believe Wagner died happy’ and the sort of assurance I have?”⁹ Davidson has a linguistic explanation of the asymmetry, which is matched with the second characterization of the asymmetry. His

account concerns the process of interpretation, the meaning-belief relation, and holding-true attitudes.

According to Davidson, “if you or I or anyone knows that I hold this sentence true on this occasion of utterance, and she knows what I meant by this sentence on this occasion of utterance, then she knows what I believe – what belief I expressed”¹⁰. For Davidson, however, “we can assume without prejudice that we both know, whatever the source or nature of our knowledge, that on this occasion I do hold the sentence I uttered to be true”¹¹. In other words, Davidson allows that the interpreter, as well as the speaker, knows that when the speaker utters a sentence, he holds it to be true on that occasion. The speaker, according to Davidson, holds a sentence to be true because of what he means by the sentence and what he believes to be the case. Thereby, if the interpreter knows what the speaker means by the sentence, she knows what the speaker believes, and if she knows what the speaker believes, she knows what the speaker means by his words. So far, no asymmetry between the situation occupied by the first-person and the situation occupied by the second-person regarding the first person’s attitudes emerges. According to Davidson, the difference emerges in the following way:

You and I both know that I held the sentence ‘Wagner died happy’ to be a true sentence when I uttered it; and that I knew what that sentence meant on the occasion of its utterance. And now there is this difference between us,

which is what was to be explained: on these assumptions, I know what I believe, while you may not.¹²

The difference has its roots in the interdependence of meaning and belief: “The assumption that I know what I mean necessarily gives me, but not you, knowledge of what belief I expressed by my utterance”¹³. Davidson believes that, at least in the most basic cases, when a speaker utters a sentence, he expresses what he believes. In this way, the process of interpretation and its implications explain the asymmetry we intuitively think there is in the case of attributions of attitudes: meaning and beliefs (as well as intentions) are interrelated, and if I know what I mean, then I know what I believe. But, the interpreter reaches my belief only after engaging in the process of interpreting my utterance; she must first interpret my utterance correctly, by utilizing the available evidences and clues, in order to realize what I believe (by presupposing that I hold my uttered sentence to be true on this occasion).

What remains in order to explain the asymmetry is the claim that the interpreter does not know what the speaker means in the same direct way. When I say “I believe so and so is the case” and when someone else says, “She believes that so and so is the case”, then in order to prove the asymmetry it is assumed that the speaker is not wrong about what she means by her words while the hearer can be wrong what the speaker means and believes. This assumption is questioned by Davidson as he asks- why there must be a presumption

that speakers, but not their interpreters, are not wrong about what their words mean? The presumption is said to be based on the nature of interpretation- “the process by which we understand the utterances of a speaker. This process cannot be same for the utterer and for his hearers”¹⁴. In other words, if speakers were not mostly right about what they mean (and, thereby, about what they believe), then there would be no interpretation at all. If that is true, then the asymmetry is explained. No matter how successfully and clearly a hearer interprets the speaker on the basis of many clues, he is liable to error- “there can be no general guarantee that a hearer is correctly interpreting a speaker”¹⁵. Whereas the speaker is responsible for making himself understandable and cannot wonder whether he generally means what he says. The difference therefore explained in the manner that no question can arise concerning a speaker’s interpretation of his own words. Davidson has questioned this explanation, as he says,

... since what his [speaker’s] words mean depends in part on the clues to interpretation he has given the interpreter, or other evidence that he justifiably believes the interpreter has. The speaker can be wrong about what his own words mean. This is one of the reasons first person authority is not infallible. But the possibility of error does not eliminate the asymmetry. The asymmetry rests on the fact that the interpreter must, while the speaker doesn’t, rely on what, if it were

made explicit, would be a difficult inference in interpreting the speaker.¹⁶

What we have so far considered does not imply that the speaker is always right about what he means and believes. The speaker may commit error, since he may fail to speak in such a way to make his utterance understandable or interpretable to the interpreter. Davidson argued that there is no mysterious way in which both the speaker and the hearer knows what speaker's words mean and they both can be wrong in this process. Davidson claims that the speaker's knowledge of what he means, or of the way he intends his utterance to be interpreted, is by no means mysterious. There is no mystery in knowing what I believe, since I directly know what I believe simply because I know what I mean; and I directly know what I mean because if I don't, there would be no interpretation, and, thereby, no meaning at all.

Davidson further has explained this with an example of supposing two people who belong to different unrelated linguistic community. In that case suppose one is the speaker who is using his native language and the other is trying to interpret the speaker's words. The imagined interpreter now is like someone who is learning the language for the first time where he does not have any reasoning power or the stock of concepts. The speaker does not aim to train the interpreter but what he can do at best is to make himself interpretable by supplying finite number of distinguishable sounds applied consistently to objects and

situations which he believes are apparent to his hearer. And obviously the speaker may fail in this project from time to time and in that case we can say that he does not know what his words mean. In case of the interpreter it is also obvious that, “he has nothing to go on but the pattern of sounds the speaker exhibits in conjunction with further events (including of course, further actions on the part of both speaker and interpreter). It makes no sense in this situation to wonder whether the speaker is getting things wrong. His behavior may simply not be interpretable. But if [speaker’s behavior] is [interpretable], then what his words mean is (generally) what he intends them to mean. Since the ‘language’ he is speaking has no other hearers, the idea of the speaker misusing his language has no application. There is a presumption – an unavoidable presumption built into the nature of interpretation – that the speaker usually knows what he means. So there is a presumption that if he knows that he holds a sentence true, he knows what he believes.”¹⁷ Thus if the speaker’s utterances are uninterpretable then he is misusing the language. If the speaker fails to provide enough evidence and clues for the interpreter to understand what he meant by his words, then there is simply no meaning to be known. According to Davidson meaning emerges as a consequence of successful communication, without which there would be no meaning. The evidence an individual uses in the case of others is open to the public, and there is no reason why he should not attribute thoughts to himself in the same way as he does to others. The solution to the problem of first person authority according to Davidson is: “...attention to how we

attribute thoughts and meanings to others would explain first person authority without inviting skeptical doubt”¹⁸.

Davidson argues that the picture of mind that is depicted in our philosophical tradition is so influential that it is difficult to escape from this even if it is refuted. As he expresses this in the following way:

...the mind is a theater in which the conscious self watches a passing show (the shadows on the wall). The show consists of ‘appearances’, sense data, qualia, what is ‘given’ in experience. What appear on the stage are not the ordinary objects in the world that the outer eye registers and the heart loves, but their purported representatives. Whatever we know about the world outside depends on what we can glean from the inner clues.¹⁹

It says that that the knowledge of the outer or external world comes from the internal psychological state. The place of mind in the world has raised many difficulties and one of the difficulty as marked by Davidson is the distinction between scheme and content.

1.2 Dogma of Scheme and Content

The distinction between uninterpreted experience that is the experience which the experiencer can only realize and an organizing conceptual scheme is a mistake that arises due to the incoherent picture of the mind as a passive but critical spectator of an inner show. Davidson agrees with Quine, in response to the two dogmas of empiricism. He

holds that the analytic-synthetic distinction actually gives rise to the dogma of scheme and content distinction, which is the third dogma of empiricism. For Davidson this distinction leads to support conceptual relativity, which we supposed to avoid. He writes,

The analytic-synthetic distinction is however explained in terms of something that may serve to buttress conceptual relativism, namely the idea of empirical content. The dualism of sentences some of which are true (or false) both because of what they mean and because of their empirical content, while others are true (or false) by virtue of meaning alone, having no empirical content. If we give up the dualism, we abandon the conception of meaning that goes with it, but we do not have to abandon the idea of empirical content: we can hold, if we want, that *all* sentences have empirical content. Empirical content is in turn explained by reference to the facts, the world, experience, sensation, the totality of sensory stimuli or something similar. Meanings gave us a way to talk about categories, the organizing structure of language, and so on; but it is possible, as we have seen, to give up meanings and analyticity while retaining the idea of language as embodying a conceptual scheme. Thus in place of analytic-synthetic we get the dualism of conceptual scheme and empirical content.²⁰

Thus it is said that empiricism is contaminated by various dogmas, which cause trouble to empiricism. Davidson

argues that by abandoning scheme-content dualism we will also abandon empiricism. He writes,

I want to urge that this dualism of scheme and content, of organizing system and something waiting to be organized, cannot be made intelligible and defensible. It is itself a dogma of empiricism, a third dogma. The third, and perhaps the last, for if we give it up it is not clear that there is anything distinctive left to call empiricism.²¹

Once we discard this third dogma, we discard the idea of different points of views and are left only with the empirical content of sentences. This dogma cannot be defended because it creates a gap between concepts and experiences which they are supposed to organize. It leaves open the possibility of an unorganized sense-content which appears to be the very crux of modern empiricism. Davidson believes that nothing can be more wrong-headed than the claim that there are non-conceptualized experiences.

By denouncing empiricism, Davidson is not rejecting the role of experience, he holds that experience can play a causal role to have beliefs about the world but it cannot play any justificatory role, he says that only a belief can play the role of justifying another belief. He holds, "...we can't get outside our skins to find out what is causing the internal happenings of which we are aware."²² As he says,

...although sensation plays a crucial role in the causal process that connects beliefs with the world, it is a mistake

to think it plays an epistemological role in determining the contents of those beliefs. In accepting this conclusion we abandon the key dogma of empiricism,... called the third dogma of empiricism. But that is to be expected: empiricism is the view that the subjective ('experience') is the foundation of objective empirical knowledge. I am suggesting that empirical knowledge has no epistemological foundations, and needs none.²³

The relation between a sensation and belief cannot be logical, since sensations are not beliefs or other propositional attitudes. ...the relation is causal. Sensations cause some beliefs and in *this* sense are the basis or ground of those beliefs. But a causal explanation of a belief does not show how or why the belief is justified.²⁴

According to Davidson belief justifies another belief because of their coherent relation. And experience has only causal role to play, as Davidson says, "No doubt meaning and knowledge depend on experience, and experience ultimately on sensation. But this is the 'depend' of causality, not of evidence or justification."²⁵

Davidson thus maintained that the first person authority or the subjectivity cannot be the foundation of our knowledge about other minds and the knowledge about the world. In order to demean the subjectivity in relation to the determination of meaning philosophers take an externalist position according to which "...contents of a person's propositional attitudes are

partly determined by factors outside the mind of which the person may be ignorant”²⁶. Hilary Putnam and Tyler Burge both are in support of this view. Putnam thus has said meanings ‘just ain’t in the head’. With the emergence of these views, philosophy could now take the objective realm for granted and start questioning the alleged truth of subjective experience. Davidson’s externalism is fascinated by the theory developed by Putnam and Burge. For Davidson those who draw distinction between the contents of the mind as subjectively and internally determined and attribute ordinary beliefs, desires, and intentions on the basis of social and other outward connections have insured that the problem of first-person authority cannot be solved. Before going to discuss about Davidson’s externalism we will briefly discuss Putnam and Burge’s views on the same.

1.3 Putnam and Burge on Externalism:

Both Putnam and Burge have criticized the theory of meaning for being individualistic, subjectivist, narrow that is other than social and collective, and for neglecting the contribution of external reality to meaning. According to Putnam, traditional theory of meaning is grounded in two seemingly infallible assumptions.

- For the subject to know the meaning of a mental state is just a matter of being in a certain psychological state in narrow sense. It is the psychological state in the same

sense in which state of memory and psychological dispositions are psychological states.

- The meaning of a mental state determines its reference.²⁷

The concept of psychological state as expressed in traditional philosophy is based on the assumption called ‘methodological solipsism’²⁸ which states that the psychological state of a subject does not presuppose the existence of any individual or anything other than the subject to whom that state is ascribed. In this sense, it is logically possible to possess the state without even subject’s body. Putnam argues that this sense of psychological state is not only implicitly dominant in philosophy of Descartes; it is also implicit in the whole of traditional philosophical psychology. The scope and nature of psychology has been limited to fit into some mentalistic preconception by this conception of narrow psychological state. To oppose this, Putnam draws a distinction between psychological state in broad sense and psychological state in narrow sense. According to him, wide/broad psychological states are those states which refer to other individuals as well as the subject himself. Putnam writes,

Only if we assume that psychological states in the narrow sense have a significant degree of causal closure (so that restricting ourselves to psychological states in the narrow sense will facilitate the statement of psychological laws) is there any point to engaging in this reconstruction, or in making the assumption of methodological solipsism. But

the three centuries of failure of mentalistic psychology is tremendous evidence against this procedure, in my opinion.²⁹

Putnam argued that narrow psychological states surely exist, but, they do not determine the meaning of the word, when the word is uttered by the speaker. He rather suggests that what determines the meaning of a term or mental state is a psychological state in broad sense which includes person's social and physical environment. Traditional theories of meaning rest on, two seemingly unchallenging assumptions which cannot jointly be satisfied by any theory of meaning. In order to prove this, Putnam has modified the two assumptions mentioned above for our convenience.

- Narrow psychological states of the subject about the term determine the meaning of a term.
- The term's *extension* is determined by the meaning of the term which is earlier fixed by the subject's narrow psychological state.³⁰

Both the assumptions claim that meaning of a term is a narrow psychological state of the subject which determines its extension. That means according to the traditional theory of meaning, if two individuals are in same psychological state (in narrow sense) about a particular term, then they cannot understand the term differently. They claim that the narrow psychological state of the subject determines the intension as well as the extension of the term.

Putnam, on the contrary, argues that these claims cannot be jointly true of any theory of meaning. He suggests that two individuals can be in same narrow psychological state with regard to a particular term, yet they understand or mean the term differently and hence, the meaning of the term differs. Putnam's twin earth thought experiment is a classic example to prove his point. It asks us to imagine that two people who are physically identical and therefore identical with respect to all 'narrow' psychological states. One of the two people, an inhabitant of Earth, has learned to use the word 'water' by being shown water, reading and hearing about it etc. which is composed of H_2O . The other, an inhabitant of Twin Earth, has learned to use the 'water' under conditions not observably different, but the substance to which she has been exposed is not water but look alike a substance we may call 'twater', composed of XYZ. Under the circumstances, Putnam claims, the first speaker refers to water when she uses the word 'water'; her twin refers to 'twater' when she uses the word 'water'. So we seem to have a case where 'narrow' psychological states are identical, and yet the speakers mean different things by the same word.³¹

Davidson interprets Putnam that if the reference of a word is sometimes fixed by the natural history of how the word was acquired, a user of the word may lose first person authority. He provides two reasons for this:

- If a thought is identified by a relation to something outside the head, it isn't wholly in the head. (it ain't in the head)
- If a thought isn't in the head, it can't be 'grasped' by the mind in the way required by first person authority.³²

Thus meanings of words are not determined by the individual's psychological states, since people having same psychological states refer to the different objects by the same word. This is because their causal histories are different.

Burge holds a similar conclusion like Putnam with a different explanation. He claims that Putnam's arguments for social and physical externalism are narrower in scope than his arguments. Putnam argues only in the context of natural kind terms whereas Burge's arguments are directly about the nature of propositional attitudes. Burge begins with attacking the traditional philosophers' view on mind and meaning. He says that two different forms of views have dominated the philosophical discussion on mind. On the one hand, there is Cartesian tradition, and, on the other hand, there is behaviorism which is a critique of Cartesianism. According to Burge, both these traditions, while debating over the nature of mind and the relationship between mind and world, have stressed the importance on individual subject. There are very few instances that we can find in traditional philosophy which suppose to give importance to the environment of the human beings.³³ However, in general the role of social environment has

received less importance in shaping the content of individual's thought. Burge argues that in explaining individual's mental life, the social and linguistic factor of the individual play a key role. He has developed two forms of externalism social externalism and perceptual externalism. Though these two forms of externalism seem independent but are related. What seems to be a causal history of the individual is somehow determined by the social and environmental factors of the individual and individual's environmental and social factors play a crucial role in determining the content of individual's perceptual experience.

The debate between broad and narrow content of mental states can be seen as the debate between methodological solipsism and representational theory of mind, between individualism and anti-individualism, between subjectivism and anti-subjectivism. Burge like Putnam has tried to refute Fodor's methodological solipsism. Methodological solipsism seems to claim that the perceptual states or intentional states of a subject supervene on formal or intrinsic properties of the subject. If the intrinsic properties or internal psychological states of the subject vary then the intentional states of the subject must be different. If the internal brain states of the subject remain the same in a particular situation, then his intentional states must also remain same in that particular situation. Hence, it is claimed that the intentional states of the individual are fixed by the internal properties or non-intentional properties of the individual. Burge on the contrary claims

that intentional perceptual states of the individual do not supervene on the intrinsic properties of the subject and so he argued that there might be different intentional states, while the intrinsic properties of the subject remain same.

Burge, by using some version of Putnam's twin earth thought experiment, has argued against 'individualism'. According to 'individualism', there is no necessary and deep individuating relation between the individual's intentional states and the individual's physical and social environment. On the contrary, Burge holds that there is a necessary connection between subject's thought and his social and environmental factors by means of causal powers. Perceptual experience must be individuated by causal powers. Individual's society, environment and his thought is related to each other by cause and effect relationship. So he says,

To think of something as water, for example, one must be in some causal relation to water – or at least in some causal relation to other particular substances that enable one to theorize accurately about water. In the normal cases, one sees and touches water. Such relations illustrate the sort of conditions that make possible thinking of something as water. To know that such conditions obtain, one must rely on empirical methods. To know that water exists, or that what one is touching is water, one cannot circumvent empirical procedures. But to think that water is liquid, one need not know the complex conditions that must obtain if

one is to think that thought. Such conditions need only be presupposed.³⁴

This suggests that the social and environmental factors of the individual are already involved in individual's thought about anything. He does not have to check whether the empirical factors exist or not. When the subject thinks about anything, the environmental factors of the person or thing are already presupposed.

Burge has discussed about two forms of individualism. The stronger version of individualism claims that the nature of individual's intentional state is fixed by the internal states and events of the concerned individual. It seems to be explicated by the individual's non-intentional factors like sensory stimulations, behavioral dispositions and internal physical and functional states of the individual. The weaker version is implied by the former. It claims that if person's physical, functional, chemical and neural histories are given to be the same then their intentional state must not differ. Burge has argued that both these two forms of individualism are mistaken because mental states and events of the individual vary along with variations in the environment.

Individualistic philosophers have argued against non-individualistic view of mind. They hold firstly that the behavior of the two identical individuals in different situation is same and secondly psychology is the science of behavior. Since the behavior of individuals is same psychology should give the same explanation of different

cases. Hence, it is argued that there is no requirement of explaining their mental states and events differently.

Burge attacks the individualist's argument by saying that it is a mistake to suppose two individuals are behaviorally identical. In psychology, the concept of 'behavior' does not only indicate 'bodily motion' which may appear to be the same. Burge holds that in the true sense, the concept of 'behavior' in psychology is intentional action and they have to be specified non-individualistically. Hence he says; "The problem of providing reasonable specifications of behavior cannot be solved from an armchair. Sanitizing the notion of behavior to meet some antecedently held methodological principle is an old game, never won."³⁵

The relationship between person and his environment seems to motivate non-individualistic principle of individuations and should be taken to be a crucial part of all psychological theory. According to Burge, intentional states of the individual can vary while their non-intentional mental histories remain constant. A person's social environment individuates their mental states. If their social environments differ, then their thought would also differ. Individual's relation to environment is crucial in shaping the content of his thought.

Burge, in his later works, has argued extensively that the content of our perceptual experience is determined by the causal relation between subject and object rather than by subject's internal psychological states. The content of the perception is individuated by the subject's causal relation

with the environment. Burge claims that when we have perceptual knowledge, for example, seeing a cow, the content of our thought is partly determined by the cause of the thought.

Burge's theory may be called as the causal theory of perceptual content. He argues that there are two cases where internal facts about the two subjects are identical but the perceptual content differ and thus establishes that the internal non-intentional states of the subjects do not enter into determining the meaning of perceptual content of the subject, rather it is fixed by the subject's external relations. The theory suggests that experiences come to acquire their content by virtue of regular causal interactions with environmentally instantiated properties. The internal properties of the subject do not affect the causal interaction between the subject and the object of perception. It is neither necessary nor sufficient for non-intentional properties of the subject to be an individuating condition for the content of perceptual experience. What matters is the causal relation between subject's sense-organs and the object. So, according to him,

Most perceptual representations are formed and obtain their content through regular interaction with the environment. They represent what, in some complex sense of 'normally', they normally stem from and are applied to. It makes no sense to attribute systematic perceptual error to a being whose perceptual representations can be explained as the

result of regular interaction with a physical environment...³⁶

Burge has argued against ‘individualism’ about the individual’s perceptual experience particularly in the context of visual presentations. He is of the opinion that a person’s non-intentional dispositions, his non-visual abilities and his bodily states cannot individuate the content of individual’s intentional perceptual states. According to Burge perceptual knowledge is objective. He argues that the object of perception is fundamentally independent of any particular individual’s perception.

1.4 Davidson’s Externalism:

Davidson’s externalism is close to Burge’s perceptual externalism. There are three reasons why Davidson has not accepted the social externalism, as he writes,

First, it seems to me false that our intuitions speak strongly in favor of understanding and interpreting an agent’s speech and thoughts in terms of what others would mean by the same words. For one thing, there is the problem of deciding what group is to determine the norms. But more important, we understand a speaker best when we interpret him as he intended to be interpreted; this will explain his actions far better than if we suppose he means and thinks what someone else might mean and think who used the same words, “correctly”.

Second, I think there is a conflict between Burge's social externalism, which ties speaker's meaning to an elite usage he may not be aware of, and first person authority.

Third, I have a great distrust of thought experiments that pretend to reveal what we would say under conditions that in fact never arise. My version of externalism depends on what I think to be our actual practice.³⁷

According to Davidson though Burge has emphasized that our beliefs are affected by external factors but he does not explain this as a threat to first person authority. Davidson writes, "I agree that what I mean and think is not 'fixed' (exclusively) by what goes on in me, so what I must reject is Burge's account of how social and other external factors control the contents of a person's mind"³⁸. But Davidson thinks,

...social factors do control what a speaker can mean by his words. If a speaker wishes to be understood, he must intend his words to be interpreted in a certain way, and so must intend to provide his audience with the clues they need to arrive at the intended interpretation. This holds whether the hearer is sophisticated in the use of a language the speaker knows or is the learner of a first language. It is the requirement of learnability, interpretability, that provides the irreducible social factor, and that shows why someone can't mean something by his words that can't be correctly deciphered by another. (Burge seems to make this point himself in a later paper).³⁹

Davidson in response to Putnam's externalism holds that there is no reason to limit externalism to one, or few, categories of words rather it is the characteristic of language and thought that their ties to the world accrue from the sort of causal connection.⁴⁰

Davidson along with Burge and Putnam holds, the issue that we are dealing with depends simply on how the basic connection between words and things, or thoughts and things, is established. It is established by causal interactions between people and parts and aspects of the world. The dispositions to react differentially to objects and events thus set up are central to the correct interpretation of a person's thoughts and speech. If this were not the case, we would have no way of discovering what others think, or what they mean by their words.⁴¹

Davidson agrees with Putnam and Burge by saying as Burge puts it, "the intentional content of ordinary propositional attitudes... cannot be accounted for in terms of physical, phenomenal, causal-functional, computational, or syntactical states or processes that are specified non-intentionally and are defined purely on the individual in isolation from his physical and social environment"⁴².

The difference between Davidson and Putnam is that while Putnam holds the physical identity between two persons lead to their mental or psychological identity, Davidson on the other hand holds, "...people who are in all relevant physical respects similar (or 'identical' in necktie sense) can differ in what they mean or think...there is *something*

different about them, even in the physical world; their causal histories are different, and they are discrete physical objects”⁴³.

Davidson thus claimed that Putnam is therefore wrong to view that physical identity between people leads to their identical psychological states. And Burge is also wrong in thinking that he has shown all identity theory implausible. Hence Davidson concludes, “We are therefore free to hold that people can be in all relevant physical respects identical (identical in the ‘necktie sense’) while differing psychologically: this is in fact the position of ‘anomalous monism’...”⁴⁴.

Davidson has argued that so far as the contents of thoughts are identified in terms of external factors, first-person authority necessarily lapses. This he has explained through a thought experiment. Davidson writes,

True, my sunburn, though describable as such only in relation to the sun, is identical with a condition of my skin which can (I assume) be described without reference to such external factors. Still, if, as a scientist skilled in all the physical sciences, I have access only to my skin, and am denied knowledge of the history of its condition, then by hypothesis there is no way for me to tell that I am sunburned. Perhaps, then, someone has first person authority with respect to the contents of his mind only as those contents can be described or discovered without reference to external factors. In so far as the contents of thoughts are identified in terms of external factors, first-

person authority necessarily lapses. I can tell by examining my skin what my private or 'narrow' condition is, but nothing I can learn in this restricted realm will tell me that I am sunburned. The difference between referring to and thinking of water and referring to and thinking of twater, is like the difference between sunburned and one's skin being exactly the same condition through another cause. The semantic difference lies in the outside world, beyond the reach of subjective or sublunar knowledge.⁴⁵

Davidson thus views that to say that people have beliefs, wishes, doubts and so forth does not suggest that these are entities in the mind or before the mind or that being in such states requires there to be corresponding mental objects.⁴⁶ Thus the description of propositional attitudes in relation to objects are not in any sense psychological objects that are to be grasped or being confined to the subject, whose propositional attitudes alone are described.

Davidson further describes that the sentences about attitudes are relational; for semantic reasons there must therefore be objects to which to relate those who have attitudes.⁴⁷ He said that it is a dogma to distinguish between two types of objects: the object which is inner, or the object in or before mind and the objects of thoughts (partly) determined by the external factors as done by philosophers like Putnam and Fodor. Davidson suggests that there is no object which can satisfy these two conditions, that is, it has inner part which can only be grasped by the individual only and it has another part which is determined by the

environment. He claims, “For if the object isn’t connected with the world, we can never learn about the world by having that object before the mind; and for reciprocal reasons, it would be impossible to detect such a thought in another”⁴⁸. He further says, “There are no such objects, public or private, abstract or concrete”⁴⁹.

Davidson holds that his position is similar to Burge’s perceptual externalism. Burge’s perceptual externalism as Davidson puts, “...the contents of utterances thoughts depend on the causal history of the individual, particularly in connection with perception”⁵⁰. Burge has emphasized that there is similarity in our responses towards the use of words by which we make classes of words. Davidson in relation to this holds that “the objectivity which thought and language demand depends on the mutual and simultaneous responses of two or more creatures to common distal stimuli and to one another’s responses. This three-way relation among two speakers and a common world is called ‘triangulation’”⁵¹. He writes,

The identification of the objects of thought rests, then, on a social basis. Without one creature to observe another, the triangulation that locates the relevant objects in a public space could not take place. I do not mean by this that one creature observing another provides either creature with the concept of objectivity; the presence of two or more creatures interacting with each other and with a common environment is at best a necessary condition for such a concept. Only communication can provide the concept, for

to have the concept of objectivity, the concept of objects and events that occupy a shared world, of objects and events whose properties and existence is independent of our thought, requires that we are aware of the fact that we share thoughts and a world with others.⁵²

Thus the triangulation includes the thinker, other creatures with whom he communicates (language speaking beings) and the objective reality. This is a kind of relation that makes it possible to share beliefs regarding the objective reality. This is because, an individual lives in a linguistic space with others that he can make contact with the world which is common to many others with whom he lives. Davidson thus writes,

If I were bolted to the earth, I would have no way of determining the distance from me of my objects. I would only know they were on some line drawn from me towards them. I might interact successfully with objects, but I could have no way of giving content to the question where they were. Not being bolted down, I am free to triangulate. Our sense of objectivity is the consequence of another sort of triangulation, one that requires two creatures. Each interacts with an object, but what gives each the concept of the way things are objectively is the base line formed between the creatures by language. The fact that they share a concept of truth alone makes sense of the claim that they have beliefs, that they are able to assign objects a place in the public world.⁵³

According to Davidson, the belief statements and the statements of other persons' attitude are neither psychological nor epistemological in nature. In this regard he accepts Quine's view that we may use our own sentences to keep the track of thoughts of people who do not know our language. This view of Quine does not say anything psychological and epistemological, it is semantical.⁵⁴ Davidson further explains that the use of words by us and by other persons is caused by social and environmental factors. We are aware of the fact that we share thoughts and a world with others. He writes,

...what a person's words mean depends in the most basic cases on the kind of objects and events that have caused the person to hold the words to be applicable; similarly for what the person's thoughts are about. An interpreter of another's words and thoughts must depend on scattered information, fortunate training, and imaginative surmise, in coming to understand the others...Unless there is a presumption that the speaker knows what she means, i.e. is getting her own language right, there would be nothing for an interpreter to interpret...nothing could count as someone regularly misapplying her own words. First person authority, the social character of language, and the external determinants of thought and meaning go naturally together, once we give up the myth of the subjective, the idea that thoughts require mental objects.⁵⁵

Conclusion:

Thus Davidson holds that the contents of mental states are partly determined by the way we recognize our interaction with other people. Knowledge of one's own mind is personal but what individuates that state at the same time makes it accessible to others, for the state is individuated by causal interplay among three elements: the thinker, others with whom he communicates and an objective world they share.⁵⁶ So that what is called as personal or subjective is always contaminated by the factors of the external world. And since it is the same world that is being shared by the subject and other individuals therefore the contents of their mental states has the underpinning of the world around them.

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¹ Davidson, 2001, p. xiii

² Ibid., p. 3

³ Ibid., p. 4

⁴ Ibid

- ⁵ Ibid., p. 6
- ⁶ Ibid., p. 8
- ⁷ Ibid., 9
- ⁸ Ibid., 11
- ⁹ Ibid
- ¹⁰ Ibid., p. 11
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 12
- ¹² Ibid
- ¹³ Ibid
- ¹⁴ Ibid
- ¹⁵ Ibid
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 13
- ¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 13-14
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 17
- ¹⁹ Davidson, 2001, p. 34
- ²⁰ Davidson, 1984: 189. According to Davidson, “The scheme may be thought of as an ideology, as set of concepts, suited to the task of organizing experience into objects, events, states, and complexes of such; or the scheme may be a language, perhaps with predicates and associated apparatus, interpreted to serve ideology. The contents of the scheme may be objects of a special sort, such as sense data, percepts, impressions, sensations, or appearances; or the objects may dissolve into adverbial modifications of experience: we may be ‘appeared to redly’ ...” (Davidson, 2001., p. 41).
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid., p. 144
- ²³ Davidson, 2001, p. 46
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 143 “Beliefs for me are states of people with intentions, desires, sense organs; they are states that caused by, and cause, events inside and outside the bodies of their entertainers. But even given all these constraints, there are many things people do believe, and many more that they could. For all such cases, the coherence theory applies”. (Ibid., p. 138). “But how can coherence alone supply grounds for belief? Mayhap the best we can do to justify one belief is to appeal to other beliefs”. (Ibid., p. 140)
- ²⁵ Ibid., 146
- ²⁶ Davidson, 1991, p. 196
- ²⁷ Putnam, 1975, p. 219
- ²⁸ Putnam, 1975, p. 220 Fodor argues that psychology should adopt the stance of ‘methodological solipsism’ – that is, it should deal

exclusively with inner states, the truly subjective, psychological states that owe nothing to their relations to the world.

29

Ibid., p. 226

30

Putnam, 1975, p. 219

31

Davidson, 2001, pp. 20-21

32

Ibid., p. 31

33

In Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, social institutions play important role in shaping the content of individual's thought. Secondly, we can find some social considerations in philosophy of Wittgenstein.

34

Burge, 1988, pp. 653-54

35

Burge, 1986a, p.12

36

Burge, 1986b, p. 131

37

Davidson, 1991, p. 197

38

Davidson, 2001, p. 27

39

Ibid. p. 28

40

Davidson, 1991, p. 196

41

Davidson, 2001, p. 29

42

Ibid., p. 30

43

Ibid., pp. 32-33

44

Ibid., p. 33

45

Ibid., p. 34

46

Ibid., p. 36

47

Ibid.

48

Ibid.

49

Ibid., p. 37 The basic difficulty is simple: if to have a thought is to have an object before mind, and the identity of the object determines what the thought is, then it must always be possible to be mistaken about what one is thinking. For unless one knows everything [causal history] about the object, there will always be senses in which one does not know what object it is. (Ibid)

50

Davidson, 1991, p. 197

51

Davidson, 2001, p. xv

52

Davidson, 1991, p. 201

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Davidson, 2001, p. 105

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Ibid. p. 36

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Ibid., pp. 37-38 We cannot begin interpretation without assuming that our beliefs and the speaker's beliefs correspond. We need to assume a "principle of charity," that is we need to assume that most of the speaker's beliefs are true when we want to understand him and we have to assume that these beliefs are similar to ours. Charity thus is a condition (not an option) for having a workable

theory. “Charity is forced on us; whether we like it or not, if we want to understand others, we must count them right in most matters. If we can produce a theory that reconciles charity and the formal conditions for a theory, we have done all that could be done to ensure communication. Nothing more is possible, and nothing more is needed” (Ibid).

⁵⁶ Davidson, 1991, p. 202

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The Notion of ‘Appropriative Epistemology’ and Epistemic Justice

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The aim of this write-up is to support anti-definist view in epistemology by importing Kierkegaardian notion of ‘appropriation’ and building a case for what we term as ‘Appropriative Epistemology’. Further the paper suggests the necessity to subscribe to the idea of ‘appropriative epistemology’ in order to ensure epistemic justice. We have also harped upon the views of J. C. Wilson and H. A. Prichard on uniqueness of knowledge situation, to support our proposal of appropriational dynamics in knowledge situation. It may be mentioned, at the very outset, that the thesis of J. C. Wilson and Prichard has been used in a different sense here, as shall be clear from the lines that follow and that the aim here is not to support their thesis but rather to complement the idea of epistemic justice by bringing in insights from Kierkegaard and Wilson-Prichard.

Keywords: Anti-definism, Sui-generis, appropriation, Appropriative Epistemology, epistemic justice

1. Anti-Definism, Sui-Generis View of Knowledge and Appropriative Epistemology

1.1 Anti-Definism and Scepticism

Anti-definist strategy in epistemology stands for tools and arguments, furnished to challenge attempts made to construct a synchronized theory of knowledge. Ever since Agrippa such challenges to normative epistemology have a long history. It is often an ignored fact that anti-definism has very less to do with skepticism; such confusion between anti-definism and skepticism could be well seen in the traditional criticism of texts like Vaidalya and the hair splitting anti-epistemology of Jairāsi and Śrīharṣa. On this league, we humbly submit that the difference between anti-definism and skepticism must be underscored in the tribe of epistemologists.

1.2 Sui-generis Thesis

In contemporary epistemology several thinkers offer engaging counter-examples to challenge the traditional definitions of knowledge, wherein they dismantle one or more traditional conditions of knowledge. Parallel to the fashionable Gettier's problem and responses to it, thinkers like J. C. Wilson and H. A. Prichard have furnished potent but largely ignored alternative perspectives for analyses of knowledge. Wilson and Prichard offer the sui-generis view of knowledge, where every case of knowledge is seen as a unique mental state which is irreducible in terms of another set of categories. Thus knowledge is a unique category

which mustn't be explicated in terms of other categories. As such every definition of knowledge shall have some loopholes. Wilson asserts that since the experience of knowing is the presupposition of all inquiries, knowing itself cannot be made a subject of inquiry.¹ For Prichard, "knowledge is sui generis and therefore a 'theory' of it is impossible" and any attempt to define it in terms of other entities, shall be a definition of those 'other entities' and not knowledge.²

The import of the thesis by Wilson and Prichard, which is useful for us, then has to do with 'uniqueness' and as such indefinable character of knowledge situation. They have treated knowledge situation as unique and indefinable for different reason than us, but we absorb for our purpose the 'uniqueness' component of their thesis. Their views are sure to get strengthened if they are coupled with the views, on truth and associated notions, absorbed from existentialist literature; all the same their views shall also, in turn add to the strength of the continental view.

1.3 Idea of Appropriative Epistemology

In most of the definitions of knowledge, 'truth' is regarded as an essential condition of knowledge, so much so that false knowledge is regarded as a misnomer in western epistemology. The ingredient of 'truth' is what requires an understanding and it is this which we seek to introspect. In JTB thesis the 'truth' is obviously objective and static truth. Such objective and static view of truth is precisely what most existentialists are uncomfortable with. In

Kierkegaardian view of 'truth', it is an "objective uncertainty maintained through appropriation in the most passionate inwardness"³ as opposed to an outward and fixed fact. Thus truth is truth so far it is my lived and internalized experience; and more importantly, it is something which is a matter of appropriation, or that which is in the process of becoming⁴. In other words, truth should have passed the touchstone of inwardness through an appropriation process; thus it is in simple words, an inward appropriation. A corollary of such a position is that any cognitive category, including knowledge, has to pass on the criterion of lived experience and inwardness. Thus we propose to term a theory of knowledge drawn in accordance to Kierkegaard's brand of existentialism, as 'Appropriative Epistemology'; needless to acknowledge or disclaim, that it would be a perspective and not a theory of knowledge.

We are aware that the term epistemic appropriation has been used in different sense by certain other scholars such as Emmalon Davis, who advance the notion of 'Epistemic Appropriation' to underscore an unjust and harmful epistemic practice⁵. However we have conjoined the terms, 'appropriation' and 'epistemology' to connote a perspective/theory of knowledge wherein every epistemic category draws its force and authenticity from inwardness; therefore our conjunction of the two terms is about devising a therapy to redress epistemic injustice.

The above idea of appropriation and appropriative epistemology could be used as both a destabilizing factor and a savior. It could be used as a destabilizing factor for

obvious reasons against traditional epistemology. However it could be utilized as a savior for subterranean knowledge and theories of knowledge, such as feminist epistemology, depth epistemology⁶ and indigenous knowledge systems etc.

2. Epistemic Justice and Appropriative Epistemology

2.1 Epistemic Injustice

The idea of epistemic injustice refers to an unfair treatment meted to a view of knowledge or to a proposition that might become a case of knowledge. Miranda Fricker⁷ who introduces the notion of epistemic injustice has basically talked about two types of epistemic injustice- testimonial and hermeneutic injustice. The fundamental concern of Fricker has been a “wrong done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower”⁸. For us, an epistemic injustice basically constitutes any unjust dismissal of an epistemic claim; thus an *ex situ* evaluation of an epistemic claim is also an epistemic injustice. We propose that the most fundamental epistemic injustice pertains to existential injustice, which ensues from overlooking the fact that all knowledge is a case of lived experience. In certain theories of knowledge which we believe as subterranean such as the notion of depth epistemology, it is an inward realization that serves as the ultimate epistemic criterion. Progenitor of the term, Prof. S.L. Pandey categorizes Prof. R.D. Ranade, Prof. P.S. Burrell, Prof. R.N. Kaul and Prof. A. C. Mukherji as depth epistemologists⁹, the ultimate criterion of knowledge in first three of these four thinkers is an inward realization. The very idea of depth epistemology might get

ridiculed by those who believe in 'veridical knowledge' as the fundamental concern of epistemology. This ridiculing over, of a knowledge claim is precisely a case of epistemic injustice. However this cannot be categorized as a case of testimonial or hermeneutic injustice. It is this kind of injustice which is quintessential to all cases of epistemic injustice. We term such epistemic injustice as existential or appropriative injustice.

2.2 Appropriative Epistemology as a solution to Epistemic Injustice

To reiterate, situations of epistemic injustice could be addressed by accepting every knowledge situation as a sui-generis case and attending to its appropriative dynamics. Thus in the scheme of what we suggest as appropriative epistemology, knowledge claim has to be adjudged on a 'case to case' basis. Some suggestions to modify the traditional analysis of knowledge, so as to make room for epistemic justice via appropriative epistemology, are in the order. Doing so, we have to see the JTB thesis in an altogether different light.

To start with 'belief', in an appropriative scheme the distinction between 'belief-in' and 'belief-that' has to be demolished or better the distinction has to be softened. The distinction has remained fundamental in JTB thesis and the 'belief' of the belief view is invariably always a matter of belief-that. H. H. Price elaborates the distinction well in his now classic article¹⁰. The argument furnished behind this has been that belief-in is an inward affair or a kind of

psychological belief and not an epistemic belief. However if now, appropriation or a lived experience are to serve as criterion of knowledge affairs then belief-in cannot be excluded from cases of knowledge; nor can there be a watertight demarcation between 'belief-in' and 'belief-that'.

In a similar manner 'truth' will no longer be just an external objective and static affair. It has to be internal and therefore dynamic. This altered view of truth shall exalt certain cases of cognition as fit for an epistemic evaluation. 'Justification', will have to be assessed, yet again on a 'case to case' basis. In the model of appropriative epistemology, inner authentication or a situational or case sensitive authentication, is the source-head of all justification.

Therefore, to summarize the notion of appropriative epistemology, every case of knowledge has to be assessed from its appropriational or subject-sensitive or case-sensitive dynamics. We are aware that one might object, that this shall make epistemic evaluation impossible as there will always be some incommensurable elements left; however we propose that such incommensurable elements may be overcome through an *in situ* and dialectical dialogue or again an appropriation process. This view point has a theoretical coexistence/family resemblance with the thesis of Wilson and Prichard. We submit that in order to ensure a just assessment of all epistemic claims a 'case to case' evaluation or appropriative epistemic analysis is a necessary condition. A dismissal of certain epistemic claims in the light of one formal analysis, which itself

results from subscribing to defnivist strategy of some sort, is the first step towards epistemic injustice. In other words the first prerequisite of epistemic justice is subscription to appropriative epistemology. In the end we humbly propose that a juxtaposition of existentialist ideas and the anti defnivist viewpoints in formal epistemology shall go a long way in resolution or dissolution of some perennial epistemic problems, epistemic injustice being one of the most prominent of such problems.

References:

- ¹ See his views in Wilson, J. C. (1926): *Statement and Inference with other Philosophical Papers*. Oxford: Clarendon
- ² Prichard, H. A. (1909): *Kant's Theory of Knowledge*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 245
- ³ Kierkegaard, Soren (2009): *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*(CUP), ed. Alastair Hannay. Cambridge: CUP, p. 171
- ⁴ CUP, p. 66
- ⁵ Davis, Emmalon (2018): *On Epistemic Appropriation*, Ethics 128, no. 4 (July 2018), pp. 702-727
- ⁶ The notion of Depth Epistemology is developed by Prof. Sangam Lal Pandey to designate a specific type of criteriology that has to do with criterion of ultimate knowledge. For an instance, Pandey cites *Aparokṣānubhūti* as *aśeṣa pramāṇa*.
- ⁷ Fricker, Miranda (2007): *Epistemic Injustice Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: OUP; henceforth EI

⁸ EI, Introduction, p. 1

⁹ Pandey, S. L. (1987): *Problems of Depth Epistemology*. Allahabad: Ram Nath Kaul Library of Philosophy

¹⁰ Price, H. (1965): *Belief 'In' and Belief 'That'*. *Religious Studies*, 1(1), pp. 5-27

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Vaidalyaprakaraṇa and Epistemological Skepticism of
Nāgārjuna

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Skepticism appeared as a threat to epistemology from the time of Greek Philosophy. It claims that no certain or absolute knowledge can be attained by man. This position was advanced by such Greek schools as the Sophists and the Pyrrhonists. The story is not very different in Indian philosophical discourse. In Indian philosophical realm skeptics are mainly known as Vaitanḍikas. Sarvasūnyavādīn and Vaitanḍika skeptics have tried their best to disprove the claim of knowledge. In Indian philosophical literature, knowledge or valid knowledge has been described as *pramā*, and the instrument of valid knowledge as *pramāṇa*. The Vaitanḍikas and Sarvasūnyavādīns tried to point out that there is inconsistency in the notions of *pramā* and *pramāṇa*. Sarvasūnyavādīn like Nāgārjuna used a typical technique to refute the Nyāya categories. In his works like *Viśvavārtanī* and *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa*, Nāgārjuna is mainly concerned with the refutation of *pramāṇa* and *prameya* dichotomy. In *Vaidalyasūtra* Nāgārjuna devoted 20 verses for refuting the validity of *pramāṇa* and *prameya*. Nāgārjuna also refuted validity of *pramāṇa* in

Vigrahavyāvartanī, verses from 31 to 51. But in *Vaidalyasūtra* he has refuted all the sixteen category one by one. In the refutation of *pramāṇa* in *Vigrahavyāvartanī* he has used the same argument as he mentioned in his *Vaidalyasūtra*.

The Nyāya Philosophy of Gautama admits a set of sixteen categories as real. Gautama in the very first aphorism of his *Treatise on Logic (Nyāyasūtra)* states that the right cognition of the sixteen knowables leads to emancipation. Among the sixteen categories *pramāṇa* is the first and *prameya* is the second. *Pramāṇa* is the causal instrument of knowing and *prameya* is the object of knowing. In the *Treatise of Tearing (Vaidalyasūtra)* Nāgārjuna refutes the claims made by *pramāṇavadīn* philosophers. Nāgārjuna is engaged to refute any kind of absolute claim about knowledge. Nāgārjuna has applied dialectics to tear the Nyāya assumption of the sixteen independent categories to pieces. So the main aim of *Vaidalyasūtra* is to demolish logic or the Nyāya philosophy of Gautama. However Nāgārjuna did not mention the name of Akṣapāda Gautama in this *Treatise of Tearing*. Yet from the close reading of the text it is evident that it is Gautama's sixteen categories that are subjected to tearing into pieces one by one. In this present paper I shall analyze the arguments given by Nāgārjuna in his *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* against the *pramāṇa/prameya* dichotomy accepted by the Naiyāyikas.

According to Nāgārjuna *pramāṇa* and *prameya* are inextricably connected with each other. The means of valid

knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and the knowable object (*prameya*) cannot be distinguished, since the existence of *pramāṇa* can be established if and only if *prameya* exists¹. If there is no *prameya*, the existence of *pramāṇa* is not possible. For, one is related to the other, just as a father exists in relation to his son and a son in relation to his father. Hence both *pramāṇa* and *prameya* are described as *bhāvasādhana* of each other. When *prameya* is established by *pramāṇa*, *prameya* is called 'sādhya' and *pramāṇa* is called 'sādhana'. Similarly, when *pramāṇa* is established by *prameya*, *pramāṇa* is called 'sādhya' and *prameya* is called 'sādhana'². Secondly, if *pramāṇa* and *prameya* are taken as relative to each other as shown above, they cannot be self-existent. For, one's existence the other becomes essential. If it is presupposed that *pramāṇa* and *prameya* are really existent or have their own being then one can exist independent of the other. But it has already been shown that they are related to each other - a *pramāṇa* is produced out of *prameya* and vice-versa. It is contradictory to say that *pramāṇa*, though having its existence, is produced out of something else (*prameya*). Such is the case with *prameya* as well. Due to such unwanted consequences like mutual causality and contradiction, the existence of *pramāṇa* and *prameya* cannot be admitted³.

Pramāṇa and *prameya* that are stated to be mutually related are neither existent nor non-existent nor existent and non-existent. a) If something really exists, it cannot depend on something else. For example, if a pot really exists then it does not depend on its constituents like clay, water etc.

Hence, *pramāṇa* and *prameya* are not sacrosanct categories because they are dependent on each other. b) If something is really non-existent like hare's horn then it cannot have any relation to something else. *Pramāṇa* and *prameya* are non-existent because they are related to each other. c) If something endowed with existence depending on something else, it cannot be admitted as existent, nor non-existent nor existent and non-existent. Because both concepts of existent and non-existent are self-contradictory in nature. Hence, due to mutually dependency of *pramāṇa* and *prameya*, it is not possible that they are both existent and non-existent at the same time⁴.

Here the opponent, *Pramāṇavādīns* can argue that *pramāṇa* has to be admitted as an existent category in order to establish *prameya*. Nāgārjuna's way of rejection would be as follows. If a *pramāṇa* is to be established as really existing, there would be a necessity of another *pramāṇa* (*pramāṇāntara*) in order to distinguish a *pramāṇa* from a *pramāṇabhāsa*. But this would lead to the defect of infinite regress (*anavasthā*)⁵.

In response to Nāgārjuna here, opponent *Pramāṇavādīns* could argue that the *pramāṇas* are self-evident (*svayamsiddha*) just as a lamp. A lamp can illumine itself as well as the things around. Similarly, the *pramāṇas* illumine themselves and the *prameyas*. Hence, there is no question of infinite regress⁶.

Nāgārjuna further opines that the analogy of lamp and *pramāṇa* drawn by the *Pramāṇavādīns* is not correct. For,

the lamp cannot illumine darkness due to the lack of connection between them. Darkness, which covers all objects, is to be removed for the revelation of the objects. But the lamp cannot remove it. Either the lamp gets in contact with darkness or it does not. The first possibility is ruled out due to the fact that the lamp and darkness are contradictory in nature. If light is not connected with darkness, it cannot affect darkness just as a sword cannot cut a body untouched by it.

In order to save his thesis of self-evidence of *pramāṇa* (*svayamsiddhi*) the *pramāṇavādīns* would like to argue that without getting into contact with darkness the lamp can affect it, just as planets have influence on men without being connected to them. Nāgārjuna argues that this analogy is not fit for this context. Because in case of planets there is certainly contact with the body of a man like Devadatta. That which is affected by planets, must have a body. But in case of a lamp there is no such contact, as darkness does not have a body. Here the comparison does not match. If it is admitted that the lamp can illumine darkness without being connected to it, it would lead to an absurd consequence contrary to fact. It would happen that the lamp would illumine the darkness existing in far places⁷.

Moreover, to Nāgārjuna darkness does not exist and hence it cannot be illuminated or dispelled. Hence the example provided by the opponent is not valid. Darkness is taken to be an absence of light (*ālokābhāva*). The lamp cannot

illumine or dispel a non-existing thing like darkness or a hare's horn. Hence by this analogy the Pramāṇavādīns cannot say that the *pramāṇas* establish themselves and other existing objects. Further, the lamp cannot illumine itself either due to the absence of darkness in it. In order to illumine itself the light needs some darkness; since without the existence of darkness there is no question of the illumination of light. But the existence of darkness in light is not at all possible due to their opposite nature⁸.

Moreover, the *pramāṇa* and *prameya* cannot exist in the present, past and future. To Nāgārjuna the anteriority, posteriority and simultaneity of the *pramāṇa* in relation to *prameya* are logically unacceptable. If the *pramāṇa* exist before the corresponding *prameya* then it would be assumed that the *prameya* does not exist when *pramāṇa* remains in existence. If this be the case, then what would be ascertained by the *pramāṇa*?

If the *pramāṇa* comes into existence after the *prameya* is originated then it is tantamount to saying that a *prameya* is known as such without being connected with *pramāṇa*. To describe an object as 'knowable' is to presuppose its knowledge through some *pramāṇa*. It is also absurd to think about a non-existent *pramāṇa* and *prameya* coming into existence simultaneously, the cause and effect relation between them that links them with each other is not possible in such a case, as casual relation is not possible between two horns of a cow⁹.

Here Pramāṇavādīns can say that if the existence of *pramāṇa* and *prameya* is not granted in past, present and future then the denial of the *pramāṇa* and *prameya* are not logically possible. Because the denial implies the existence of the denied object. If only the object really exists in this world, its denial will be possible. But it is not possible to deny a non-existent object. Hence the negation of the *pramāṇa* and *prameya* is not possible¹⁰.

Here Nāgārjuna opines against the position of the Pramāṇavādīns in the following way. He thinks that denial of non-existing things is possible. Because negation is only the rejection of the idea or concept of the non-existent object. If someone says that there is no deep river, he is referring to the concept of 'deep river'. That is, he has in mind 'deep river' as a designation and not as a denotation. It is very much reasonable to deny 'deep river' and the *pramāṇa* and *prameya* have to be denied at the conceptual level even if they do not exist at the ontological level¹¹.

In this context perception is analysed from Pramāṇavādīn's perspectives as one of the *pramāṇas*. Initially, there is merely a grasping of the object of perception by the subject. At this level there is nothing that determines truth or falsity of the same. Afterwards through the fulfilment of some pragmatic necessities the knowledge of the object is taken to be correct. The correct knowledge provided by the perception and by the other *pramāṇa* is a proof for the existence of the *pramāṇas*. If *pramāṇa* exists, the existence of *prameyas* automatically follows.

In response to the Pramāṇavādīns, Nāgārjuna can state that even the existence of *pramāṇa*, which provides no valid act of knowledge, does not imply the existence of the corresponding *prameyas*. For example, a pot cannot be the prameya of the *pramāṇa* i.e. perception, since even after perceiving it one can accept that the image of the pot in the mind is a mere fiction. From this one cannot deduce that the perception of a pot is in the mind. From this one cannot deduce that a real external (not internal) pot is the prameya of perception. As perception is a mental process, its object also must be something mental. This has been further substantiated after bringing the question of inference. In the inferential cognition the existence of fire in the mountain is inferred from smoke. In such a case the inferred object (*anumeya*) is fire, which is nothing but the product of the mind due to its imperceptibility through external sense organ. As *anumeya* (or inferred entity) is not something external to mind, the object of perception (i.e., a pot) is also the same. Ultimately we would not get a *prameya*, which is external to the mind. For this reason it is concluded that from the fact of the existence of *pramāṇa* the existence of *prameya* cannot be deduced¹².

Moreover, a pot is neither the cognition nor cognizable object, but a mere determining condition (*pratyaya*). To Nāgārjuna the idea of pot is not a *pramāṇa*, nor is it a *prameya*. As the idea of pot arises in our mind, it is not *pramāṇa*. Had it been so it would have been the *pramāṇa* of the *prameya* i.e. pot. That is, it could provide us a correct knowledge of the pot, but the pot itself is not the *prameya*.

It is one of the determining factors (*pratyaya*) that produces in the mind the idea of pot. The pot itself gives rise to the idea of pot being one of the determining factors. Nāgārjuna has referred to the Nyāya view that the idea is a *prameya* just like self, body, sense organ etc. (NS 1.1.9). In the *Sutra* the Naiyāyika has categorically mentioned that the idea is one among the *prameyas*. If it is so, how can it be described as both *pramāṇa* and *prameya* at the same time¹³? Thus neither *pramāṇas* nor *prameyas* are possible at all as categories.

¹ Trans. by Tola Fernando and Dragonetti Carmen. *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, p.58

² Ibid.p.58

³ Ibid.p.59

⁴ Ibid.p.59

⁵ Ibid.p.60

⁶ Ibid.p.60

⁷ Ibid.p.61

⁸ Ibid.p.62

⁹ Ibid.p.62

¹⁰ Ibid.p.63

¹¹ Ibid.p.63

¹² Ibid.p.64

¹³ Ibid.p.65

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I

Skepticism is a line of thought in philosophy that has been running parallel to the mainstream philosophy of theorizing and argument formulating by the different schools and philosophers since ages. This skeptical trend has put the theorists into challenges they could not ignore, thereby contributing to either the nourishment or the subversion of the theories. Hence the skeptical outlook of the skeptics should be studied not only to understand this mainstream philosophy better but also to develop a critical and analytical mind appropriate for a philosopher. Talking of skepticism, the first thing that readily comes to our mind is the skepticism as maintained in the West since Pyrrho and later carried forward by Agrippa, Sextus Empiricus and others. Indian philosophy also has such skeptical trends in the form of refutation of the opponent's position through arguments without establishing the proponent's own position. This method of skepticism as found in Indian philosophy is called *vitaṇḍā* in Indian philosophical jargon and the person employing this method is called a *vaitaṇḍika*. In this context it should be mentioned that *vitaṇḍā* is one of the three kinds of *kathā* as mentioned in the *Nyāyasūtra* and it is characterized as the *kathā* in which

the aim is to attain victory over the opponent even by employing unfair means in a debate or *vicāra-sthala* by formulating arguments to refute the opponent's position without manifesting or establishing as a *sādhya* the proponent's own position which remains hidden.¹ Now, among the popular three skeptics of Indian philosophy, namely, Nāgārjuna, Śrīharṣa and Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa, my paper is intended to focus on Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa's skepticism, highlighting his refutation of Perception as an epistemic tool or *pramāṇa*. But before entering into that I would like to have a word about the author, Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa and his treatise, *Tattvopaplavasimha*.

Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa, who probably hailed from South India in the 8th century AD², was the author of *Tattvopaplavasimha*. The title of the text can be translated and interpreted either as 'the lion of upsetting of all principles' meaning the main work on the nullification of all principles or 'the uprooting of all principles like a lion' or the nullification of all principles by pouncing upon and attacking the opponents just like a lion pounces upon his prey. A third alternative can also be imagined. The term '*simha*' may stand to indicate the magnitude of the work which took to refuting all the *pramāṇas* with vanity. Jayarāśi's treatise is considered to be the only existing text of the *Lokāyata* system, but not without controversies. Jayarāśi has mentioned the name of another book, *Lakṣaṇasāra* but since the book remains undiscovered till date, it cannot be said with certainty that the book was authored by Jayarāśi himself.

The Indian skeptics are affiliated to some philosophical system like Nāgārjuna was well known as a *Mādhyamika Bauddha*, Śrīharṣa was a *Vedāntin*; similarly Jayarāṣi is loosely affiliated to the *Cārvāka* school although the evidences in support of this claim both from within and without the text are not conclusive. Radhakrishnan and Basham accept *Tattvopaplavasīmha* as belonging to the *Lokāyata* system while Dakshinaranjan Shastri considers Jayarāṣi as representing a sub-community of the *Cārvāka* school which denies all *pramāṇas* even perception since they hold that *prāmāṇya* of the *pramāṇas* is derived from inference and due to the unacceptance of inference, the *prāmāṇya* of perception also remains unestablished. Walter Ruben and Debiprasad Chattopadhyay were however reluctant in calling Jayarāṣi a *Cārvāka*. Because the extreme idealism maintained by Jayarāṣi similar to the *śūnyavādin Bauddha* and *māyāvādin Vedāntin* is totally opposed to the materialism upheld by the *Cārvākas*, Chattopadhyay preferred calling Jayarāṣi an idealist with a hidden agenda.³ While the treatise begins with fragmented sentences stating that actions have no otherworldly fruits like hell, heaven, etc. and both the learned and the fool follow the common way of living life when it comes to practice thus giving the allusion that Jayarāṣi was a *Cārvāka*, the text ends with Jayarāṣi expressing his vanity by calling himself *Devaguru* and intellectually superior to Bṛhaspati himself since Jayarāṣi had addressed even those philosophical issues that remained unattended by the *Suraguru* Bṛhaspati. Hence it is quite conspicuous that

difference in opinion lies regarding the philosophical affiliation of Jayarāṣi.

This incredible work by Jayarāṣi Bhaṭṭa was discovered as a palm-leaf manuscript in 1926 by Pandit Sukhlalji Sanghavi and Pandit Becharadas Dosi and later edited and published in 1940 by Pandit Sukhlalji Sanghavi himself and Prof. Rasiklal C. Parikh in Baroda.⁴ Jayarāṣi intended to showcase in his treatise the implausibility of all the *pramāṇas* leading to the unknowability of the so called knowables. Since knowables can be known validly through the valid sources of knowledge or *pramāṇas*, the theoretical implausibility of the sources if can be proved, will lead to the impossibility of knowing the so called knowables validly. It is interesting to note how Jayarāṣi has carried out the process of refutation. He has maintained a specific uniform method—he has taken each definition of the *pramāṇas*, picked each term and considered all the possible senses in which the term could be taken to mean and has shown the flaws in taking the terms in those senses, thus exhibiting the overall futility of the definition. This may be called the *reductio method* or *prasaṅga*. It is to be kept in mind that the author has refuted the *pramāṇas* only theoretically for even he has admitted that there remains a difference in theory and practice and that no matter what varying definitions philosophers belonging to various schools propose, they follow the one common way of behavior in practice.

The first *pramāṇa* that Jayarāṣi has refuted is *pratyakṣa* or perception. We all shall admit that the commonest way of acquiring knowledge is perception. No man dares to reject it because it is the highest or *jyeṣṭha pramāṇa* for it is not dependent on other *pramāṇas* while the rest have to depend on perception. It is probably Jayarāṣi alone who has refuted perception theoretically by attacking its various definitions. We shall now try to grasp the pattern of refutation of perception by considering how the author has refuted the definition of perception as given by the *Nyāya* school. The author has refuted the definitions of perception as given by the *Bauddha* school, the *Mīmāṃsā* school and the *Sāṃkhya* school also. It is to be noted that the author has refuted the definition of perception as given by the *Naiyāyikas* right at the beginning probably because this definition by Gautama is the most popular and accepted definition of perception by most schools.

Let us first consider the definitions of perception given by the four schools.

Nyāya definition of perception

*“Indriyārthasannikarṣotpannam jñānam avyapadeśyam avyabhicāri vyavasāyātmakam pratyakṣam”*⁵

Perception is the cognition arising out of the sense-object contact and which is unassociated with a name, unerring and determinate.

Bauddha definition of perception

*“Pratyakṣam kalpanāpoḍhamabhrāntam”*⁶

Perception is a non-erroneous cognition of a given sensum in complete isolation from all constructions.

Mīmāṃsā definition of perception

*“Satsamprayoge puruṣasyendriyāṇām buddhijanma tat pratyakṣamanimittam vidyamānopalambhanāt”*⁷

Perception is produced in the self by the sense organs which have the proper contact with the real objects, which apprehends a present object.

Sāṃkhya definition of perception

*“Yat sambandhasiddham tadākārollekhi vijñānam tat pratyakṣam”*⁸

Perception is defined as that discernment which being in conjunction with an object portrays the form thereof.

In the above definitions the *pramātva* or veridicality feature, which is an important fundamental feature of perception in general, is expressed either explicitly through the terms ‘*avyabhicāri*’ or ‘*abhrānta*’ in the *Nyāya* definition and the *Bauddha* definition respectively or implicitly as found in the *Mīmāṃsā* and *Sāṃkhya* definitions of perception. Jayarāṣi started his refutation by refuting this ‘*avyabhicāri*’ term, defying the order in which

the terms occur in the body of the definition of perception as given by Maharṣi Gautama. By the term 'avyabhicari' is meant non-erroneous. A cognition is non-erroneous when it grasps the object as it really is and erroneous when it grasps the object as it is in fact not.⁹ We shall now consider the refutation of the term 'avyabhicāri'.

II

Perception can be called non erroneous due to several senses in which the term 'avyabhicāri' can be taken. There are four senses in which perception can be called non erroneous:

- a) It is produced from a composite of causal factors free from defects (*aduṣṭakāraśandohotpādyā*) [in accordance with the *Mīmāṃsā* and *Nyāya* perspectives].
- b) It is free from contradiction i.e. it is uncontradicted (*bādhārahita*) [in accordance with the *Vedānta* perspective].
- c) It leads to fruitful action (*pravṛttisāmarthyā*) [in accordance with the *Nyāya* perspective].
- d) Because of any other reason.
 - The first alternative is not tenable. How can we know that the set of factors is not defective?
 - It cannot be known by perception because whether the sense organs are defective or not,

that cannot be known by the sense organs themselves.

- It cannot be known by inference due to
 - i. Lack of a proper ground or *hetu* which could be used for inferring.
 - ii. If the perceptual cognition itself is taken as the ground then it will involve the fallacy of mutual dependency since the veridicality of perceptual cognition is established from its non defectiveness of the causal factors and the non defectiveness of the causal factors is established from the veridicality of perceptual cognition.
- Since perception and inference fail to establish that the causal factors are non defective, other *pramāṇas* will by default fail to do the same.
- Moreover, the non erroneousness of perceptual cognition cannot be known from the causal factors. The sense organs are the causal factors in the case of perception. Now the sense organs are the loci of both virtues or *guṇa* and vices or *doṣa*. Hence we cannot say that the non erroneousness of perceptual cognition results from the non defects in the sense organs. So a doubt remains on whether the resulting cognition is veridical or not. This is very similar

to the case where on hearing an uttered sentence by an unknown person one cannot know for certain the intention of the speaker.

- The second alternative is also not tenable.
 - It cannot be said that perceptual cognition is non erroneous because no contradiction has arisen. This will lead to a doubt between the two alternatives:
 - i. Did the contradiction not arise because the perceptual cognition revealed the fact i.e. it was veridical?
 - ii. Were the causal factors responsible for producing the contradictory cognition not present?
 - It is true that sometimes when all the factors are not present the contradictory cognition does not arise. For instance, a traveler traveling in a desert for the first time mistakes a mirage for water. Without checking if that was really water he moved on. So here the contradictory cognition did not arise due to the absence of all the causal factors. But later when the same man visits that place again and cognizes the mirage as water again and moves towards it in thirst and finds only sand, then the contradictory cognition arises, thus falsifying his previous

cognition of water. The contradictory cognition may take a year or more to arise. Or it may never even arise during the entire lifetime of the cognizer. But the non-arising of the contradictory cognition does not testify that the erroneous perceptual cognition was veridical.

- Again, when we say the contradictory cognition was absent, we presuppose the contradictory cognition because without the cognition of the object of absence, the cognition of absence is not possible.
- The question crops up, does the absence of contradictory cognition occur for everybody or just for the concerned cognizer?
 - i. If the absence occurs for everybody, then all people will have uncontradicted cognitions and they will become omniscient. In that case the word 'non omniscient' will lose its meaning due to no referent.
 - ii. If the absence is said to occur for the cognizer alone, then that will also not be proper since the contradictory cognition will arise once the man, in the case of the mirage, goes and sees that it is only sand.
- It may be that the nature of the erroneous perceptual cognition itself prevents the arising

of the contradictory cognition, thus making the erroneous cognition seem veridical. Now, in this context Jayarāṣi recalls that Śabarsvāmī has said in his *bhāṣya* that a *mithyā* or false cognition is that which arises from causal factors having defects and the cognition itself is non veridical and so misleads the cognizer. But Jayarāṣi points out here that it cannot be said that the cognition arising out of faulty causal factors will be contradicted because here in spite of arising from defective causal factors the erroneous perceptual cognition does not get contradicted.

- The third alternative is not possible either.
 - It is believed by the *Naiyāyikas* that non-erroneousness of a cognition depends on the efficacy of activity. But it cannot be said that the cognition is non erroneous only because it allowed fruitful interaction with the world. Now, since the efficacy of activity is related to fruit, attainment of a beloved lady or a garland or a piece of sandalwood on their respective cognitions shall render those cognitions veridical. But the lady or the garland or the sandalwood are not real fruits but mere means to the attainment of the real fruit viz. pleasure. So these means metaphorically are called fruits and here the activity becomes efficient only in the secondary sense. Hence, activity or volition is a

corporal vibrancy, the efficiency of which makes known the non-erroneousness of cognition. *Pravr̥tti s̥āphalya* is therefore the association of the body with the fruit.

- i. Does the efficiency cause the non erroneousness of cognition without being known or after being known? It means that, does the efficiency cause the non erroneousness all by itself or is it the knowledge of the efficiency that causes the non erroneousness? If the cognition is caused without being known, i.e. if the efficiency of activity itself causes the non erroneousness, then how can we know that the efficiency of activity exists? Also what is the proof that the activity was efficient? And if it causes the cognition after being known, then how can we tell that the perceptual cognition is non erroneous? Here actually the relation between the knowledge of the efficiency of activity and the non erroneousness of cognition is inquired about. This leads to mutual dependency when we ask whether we derive the non erroneousness from the knowledge of the efficiency or we derive the knowledge of the efficiency from the non erroneousness of cognition. Hence the efficiency of activity

cannot be made the ground of proving the non erroneousness of cognition.

- If it is accepted that the efficiency of activity is the association of the body with the fruit, then the non erroneousness of cognition of water will be proved by the attainment of the same water. Now, if it is accepted that the non erroneousness of the cognition of water is derived from obtaining that water, then the question arises:
 - i. Is it established by obtaining the same water that appeared in the cognition? Or
 - ii. Is it established by obtaining water belonging to the same universal or genre as the water that appeared in the cognition? Or
 - iii. Is it established by obtaining water belonging to the same series or family of water as the water that appeared in the cognition?

Alternative (i) is not tenable because the same water cannot be attained due to reasons like:

1. The water, by the time it is attained, becomes a new water due to the change in its parts. The turnings of fish, buffaloes and other marine creatures may destroy the initial configuration of water molecules and may create new waves. According to the

Nyāya theory, a change or destruction of the parts change or destroy the whole. So the same water cannot be attained.

2. Again, the quality of water changes continuously due to chemical interactions in the water and addition of pollutants in the water. So the water does not remain unchanged.
3. Lastly, it can be said that time changes. The water in the moment 1 of perception and the water of moment 2 are not same. The water that appeared in the cognition was qualified by moment 1 and the water attained is qualified by moment 2.

Alternative (ii) is also not tenable.

1. If a false cognition of water arises on seeing the similarity or the same universal, then that cognition too will be rendered veridical on attainment of water belonging to the same universal elsewhere. It can be explained as, suppose one mistakes a colourless liquid as water. The cognition is false. But the cognition may be rendered as veridical if water bearing the property of being a colourless liquid is found somewhere else. This argument arises since there was previously no mention of the fact

that the place with respect to the cognition of an object and the attainment of the object has to be the same.

2. The *Naiyāyikas* however do say that if water is obtained at the very place and time where it was cognized, then the cognition is non erroneous, otherwise not. Now, if the cognition that does not allow its object to be attained becomes erroneous, then the cognitions of things which get destroyed just after their cognition and the cognitions of celestial bodies will become by default erroneous.
3. Again, the cognition of water will be rendered erroneous if it fails to get the object attained by the cognizer due to total destruction of the place. For instance, the cognition of a lake in Hiroshima will become erroneous since the lake cannot be visited due to the total destruction of Hiroshima by bombing.

III

The above is a discussion on the refutation of the term '*avyabhicāri*'. One can easily point out that if we follow the order in which the terms occur in the definition of perception as given by Gautama, we will find that the term '*avyabhicāri*' happens to be the fourth term. Yet Jayarāśi

has preferred to start with it. This term stands for the veridicality or *pramātvā* of perception. We know that the valid source of knowledge is the *pramāṇa*. Hence a *pramāṇa* has to be veridical or non erroneous. When perception is taken as a *pramāṇa* its veridicality or *pramātvā* gets implied by default. No matter how the philosophical schools define perception, they all unanimously agree to this feature. Their respective definitions mainly aim at bringing out the special feature of perception from their respective philosophical standpoints. Hence one who wishes to refute perception as an epistemic tool must show the futility by striking at this basic feature of *pramātvā*.

Moreover, since all other *pramāṇas* are also non-erroneous and they directly or indirectly depend on perception for their working the refutation of the veridicality of perception alone is able to render the invalidity of the other *pramāṇas*.

While discussing the *Mīmāṃsā* and *Sāṃkhya* definitions of perception, Jayarāṣi has clearly stated that the non-erroneousness of perception cannot be established by taking the term to mean in any of the four senses in which the term 'avyabhicāri' has been taken.

It should be noted that perception in general has another basic feature i.e. it is immediate cognition. From the little bit of knowledge I could acquire, I do not think Jayarāṣi has considered refuting this factor separately for he has refuted only the terms comprising the definitions and certain associated concepts. In my opinion since the *pramātvā* of

perception could not be established as shown by Jayarāṣi, it does not matter whether perception as an immediate cognition of an object is accepted by the author or not.

Hence it is established that perception as an epistemic tool does not stand and other epistemic tools being dependent on perception are also implausible theoretically.

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- ⁵ *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.1.4.
- ⁶ *Nyāyabindu*, sutra 4 of Pratyakṣa pariccheda.
- ⁷ *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, 1.1.4.
- ⁸ *Sāṃkhyasūtra*, 1.89.
- ⁹ 'Yadatamistaditi tadvyabhicāri. Yattu tasminstaditi tadavyabhicāri pratyakṣamiti' [*Vātsyāyanabhāṣya*, 1.1.4]. Phaṇibhūṣaṇa Tarkavāgīśa, 2014, p. 127.

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Skepticism, in both the Indian and Western philosophy, is not a mere -ism; rather it is a challenge to the epistemologists who believe in the possibility of knowledge. It is the responsibility of the epistemologists to answer the questions raised by a skeptic to defend or clarify his position. Sometimes the skeptical challenges become so strong that the epistemologists fail to get rid of them. Nevertheless, it's true that skepticism helps the epistemologists to make their theory more concrete and flawless directly or indirectly. Thus skepticism has a great importance in philosophy. It may help indirectly by contributing in theorizing or in developing a theory in a proper way. Skeptical challenges are like the pushing factors to the epistemologists that compel them to rethink. So, we cannot deny the importance of skepticism in philosophy.

In Indian philosophy, the skeptical method is known as *vitaṇḍā* and the person who refutes his opponent's position by following this very method is known as *vaitaṇḍika*. It is in *Kathāprakaraṇa of the Nyāya-sūtra* of Gautama that we witness three kinds or forms of *kathā* or debate; namely

Vāda, *Jalpa* and *Vitaṇḍā*. *Vātsyāyana-bhāṣya* is very relevant in this context.¹ Attainment of truth or *tattvajñāna* is the main goal of the first kind of *kathā*. *Jalpa*, on the other hand, is that variety of debate where victory is the main goal of both the proponent or *vādī* and the opponent or *prativādī* of the debate at issue. Each of them tries to establish his own position by refuting the position of the other. Aspiration is there in both the *vādī* and the *prativādī* to win over the other. *Vitaṇḍā* is a peculiar form of debate where one rejects his opponent's position without holding any position as his own. Śrīharṣa is one of the *vaitaṇḍikas* whose rebuttal arguments confront the *pramāṇavādins* with many difficulties. According to him, there are only two forms of debate, *vāda* and *vitaṇḍā*. *Jalpa* cannot be taken as a distinct type of debate.² In his remarkable work *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*, Śrīharṣa has shown his caliber by refuting the definitions of *pramā* in a polemic way. It is supposed that the time period of Śrīharṣa lies between Udayana and Gaṅgeśopādhyāya for Śrīharṣa has criticized the definitions of *pramā* given by Udayana in his *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*. On the other hand Śrīharṣa's name is mentioned categorically in Gaṅgeśa's *Tarkaprakaraṇa* of *Anumānacintāmaṇi*. He referred to Śrīharṣa's name in this way, "vyāghāto yadi śaṃkāsti.... iti khaṇḍanakāra matamapyapāstam." Hence it is very much clear that Śrīharṣa appeared in between the time of Udayana and Gaṅgeśa. The time period of Udayana and Gaṅgeśa was approximately 11th century and 13th century AD respectively. Thus, the time period of Śrīharṣa was approximately 12th century AD.³

Śrīharṣa has written many texts. Some of his remarkable works are a) *Sthairyavicāraṇa Prakaraṇa*, in which he refuted the theory of momentariness of the Buddhists. b) *Naiṣadha Caritam*, which is basically an epic on the love story of Nala, the king of Naiṣadha, and princess Damayantī. c) *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya*, this is a refutation-text where he has rebutted all the rival views regarding the definitions of *Pramā* by prosecuting his *khaṇḍanayuktins*. That's why the title of the text is *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya*.

The most effective way to refute someone's position or thesis is to show that the assumption of its truth leads to some absurd consequences. Absurdities are like an embarrassment to the philosophers and make them very shaky. Thus, if the opponent in a debate fails to resolve the absurdities of his own position then the debater can claim that the opponent stands refuted.⁴ Śrīharṣa is a champion of this method of refutation. The definitions of *pramā* which have been refuted by Śrīharṣa in his *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya* are-

1. ***Tattvānubhūtiḥ Pramā*** (given in *Lakṣaṇamālā* of Udayana)
2. ***Yathārthānubhūtiḥ Pramā*** (given in *Nyāyakuṣumañjali* of Udayana)
3. ***Samyakparicchittiḥ Pramā*** (given in *Nyāyakuṣumañjali* of Udayana)
4. ***Avisaṃvādyanubhavaḥ Pramā*** (given by Buddhists)

5. *Abādhitānubhūtiḥ Pramā* (this is given in the *Nyāyāvātāra* of Siddhasen Divākara)
6. *Śaktiviśeṣa Pramā* (in *Ślokavārttika* of Kumārila)

In his *Lakṣaṇamālā* Udayana defined *pramā* as ‘*tattvānubhūtiḥ*’ which means that the *pramā* is an experience of the essence of an object. There are two more definitions of *pramā* given by Udayana in another text, namely *Nyāya-kusumāñjali*. In one of them *pramā* is described as- ‘*yathārthānubhavaḥ*’; while in the other it is called ‘*samyakparicchitiḥ*’. Śrīharṣa has refuted each of these definitions given by Udayana by raising his trenchant rebuttal arguments against the definitions and other related concepts. The main concern of this paper is the refutation of the definition ‘*tattvānubhūtiḥ pramā*’. To refute the very definition he has refuted the meaning of the term ‘*tattva*’ and ‘*anubhūtitva*’. To refute the meaning of the term ‘*anubhūtitva*’ he has refuted the Nyāya concept of *pratyabhijñā* or recognition along with the views of other schools and definition of *smṛti* or memory etc. We will now focus on Śrīharṣa’s incisive critique of the definition ‘*tattvānubhūtiḥ pramā*’ given by Udayana and the other related concepts one after another.

- **Refutation of the definition ‘*tattvānubhūtiḥ pramā*’:**

The definition of *pramā* which Śrīharṣa has refuted first in the text *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā* is ‘*tattvānubhūtiḥ pramā*’. This definition is given by Udayana in his *Lakṣaṇamālā*. To refute this definition of *pramā*, Śrīharṣa tried to explore the

various possible meanings of its component words, 'tattva' or 'thisness' and "anubhuti" or 'experience', and after that he tried to show that this definition does not elicit any clear meaning at all.

1. According to the Naiyāyikas the meaning of the term 'tattva' is the essence of an object. The etymology of the term 'tattva' is 'tasyabhāvaḥ' (tat + tva). The Sanskrit term 'tat' is basically a pronoun. Any pronoun generally refers only to that which has been already designated in the previous discussion or to the foresaid object or entity. But it is very difficult to explain 'tattva' in the present case. Here the pronoun 'tat' fails to refer to anything because the definition 'tattvānubhūtiḥ pramā' is the first sentence of the text *Lakṣaṇamālā* and there is no precursory discussion about anything which can be designated as the referent of the term 'tat'. Hence, being devoid of referent the term 'tat' is devoid of meaning also.

Now one might say that the term 'tat' actually refers to the object of knowledge. Thus 'tattva' means the *dharma* or attribute of an object of knowledge and 'tattvānubhūti' means the experience of the *dharma* or attribute of an object. If it means so then—

- 2a.) It is obvious that *bhramajñāna* or erroneous cognition will also have to be considered as *pramā*. Let me explain it with an example; suppose, a person is cognizing a shell as silver and the structure of cognition is 'idam rajatam'. Here the object of

knowledge (*buddhīsthavastu*) of that very person is 'idam'(which is actually a shell) and the *dharma* or attribute which he is experiencing here is silverness. So, silverness is *tattva* here and the experience of that silverness is *tattvānubhūti* here. Hence, if *pramā* is the experience of the *dharma* or attribute of an object of knowledge then the definition will overcover in the case of erroneous cognition or *bhramajñāna*.

- 2b.) There will occur another problem regarding the same issue. If *tattvānubhūti* is *pramā* and *tattva* means the *dharma* or attribute of an object of knowledge (*tat=buddhīsthavastu* or object of knowledge) then *pramā* becomes the experience of the *dharma* and consequently *pramātvā* will reside only in the experience of the *dharma* part of an object, not in the *dharmī* part.
3. Still one might continue the argument by saying that the meaning of the term 'tattva' is *svarūpa* or the natural form of an object and *tattvānubhūti* means the experience of an object in its natural form. The relation between *dharma* and *dharmī* is *svarūpa*. Hence the experience of each of the parts *dharma*, *dharmī* and their relation can be *pramā*. But this answer is also untenable, because in the case of erroneous cognition like 'idam rajatam' a person experiences the attribute *rajatatva* as inhering in the object (*dharmī*) which is in front of him. He has the experience of *dharma*, *dharmī* and the relation

between them. Hence, if *tattvā* means *svarūpa* and *tattvānubhūti* means *svarūpānubhūti* then the definition of *pramā* will overcover the cases of erroneous cognition. The significance of the term 'tattva' in the body of the definition is to differentiate *pramā* from the erroneous cognition, however, it fails to differentiate *pramā* from the erroneous cognition.

4. Now one might clarify the meaning of the term 'tattva' as being characterized by which something is appeared; determination of that character in that thing in reality is called *tattva*.⁵ But this clarification is not tenable too. Because the object may take the form as appeared at a later point of time and that too has to be called *tattva* following the aforesaid principle. For instance, a person suffering from some particular disease perceives a black unburnt pot as red. After some time when the pot attains a red colour, being burnt, should it be called *tattva*? If so, then the cognition should be called *pramā*.

Hence, the term 'tattva' does not elicit a clear meaning at all.

Now we may turn to the discussion about another term of the definition i.e. 'anubhūtitva'. Śrīharṣa has given four alternative meanings of the term 'anubhūtitva' which cover all the possibilities admitted by the Naiyāyikas⁶. The alternatives are-

1. *Anubhūtitva* is a universal or *jāti* pervaded by *jñānatva* (*'jñānatva vyāpya jāti'*) or
2. *Anubhūtitva* is an attribute, "being other than memory" (*'smṛtibhinna jñānatva'*) or
3. *Anubhūtitva* is an attribute, "being devoid of the defining characteristics or marks of memory" (*'smṛti lakṣaṇarahita jñānatva'*) or
4. *Anubhūtitva* is *'abidūraprāk-kālotpattinīyatāsādhāraṇakāraṇaka buddhitva'*

Śrīharṣa has criticized and refuted all the alternatives with his sound caliber.

- 1) The first alternative is not expedient because a universal property or *sāmānya dharma* cannot be *jāti* if there is any *jātibādhaka* as impediment. *Anubhūtitva* cannot be admitted as *jāti* due to the presence of *sāṃkarya jātivādhaka*.⁷ There is a form of cognition where *smṛtitva* and *anubhūtitva* can coincide; i.e. *pratyabhijñā* or recognition. If two universal properties or *sāmānya dharma* coincide in the same locus then none can be considered as *jāti*. Due to the presence of several views about *pratyabhijñā* Śrīharṣa has taken them as the alternatives and refuted those alternatives in a polemic way. These views⁸ are-

- a) **Buddhist view:** *Pratyabhijñā* or recognition is actually two cognitions, one is the memory and another one is experience.

- b) **Mīmāṃsaka view:** It is a single knowledge with two different parts, memory and experience.
- c) **Jain view:** It is a single knowledge and that is *smṛti* only.
- d) **Naiyāyika view:** It is a single knowledge and that is *anubhūti* or experience only.

- Firstly, it is not true that *Pratyabhijñā* is a single knowledge and that is memory only. ‘*Sa eva ayam ghataḥ*’ is an example of *pratyabhijñā*. Here ‘*sa*’ indicates the object (*ghata* here) in the past and ‘*ayam*’ indicates that very object (*ghata* here) in the present. So, through *pratyabhijñā* what we actually get to know is the identity of an object characterized by time-1 and place-1 in the past with that very object at time-2 and place-2 in the present. This identity cannot be grasped by memory. Memory can grasp only that object which has been previously experienced. But in the case of *pratyabhijñā* the identity of the past and present object is not something which is previously experienced; it is something new here. So, the Jain view of *pratyabhijñā* that is, it is a single knowledge and that is memory only, is not tenable.
- Secondly, the Buddhist view that *Pratyabhijñā* is actually two cognitions, memory and experience, is not tenable either. We have

already seen in the above argument that *Pratyabhijñā* is not memory. Now the point is if the Buddhist asserts that the identity of an object at different time and place can be grasped by experience, then, since identity is a relative concept, then it should also be admitted that the past time and the place are grasped by this one experience. Hence, there is no need to assume that memory functions at all in the case of *pratyabhijñā*. Once it has been conceded that experience has the capability to reveal previously known objects, memory becomes superfluous. Thus the Buddhist view of *pratyabhijñā* that it is actually two cognitions, memory and experience, is defeated.

- Thirdly, if we consider the Mīmāṃsaka view that *pratyabhijñā* is a single knowledge, in part *smṛti* or memory and in part *anubhūti* or experience, just like the form of knowledge of *Narasimha*, then there is no doubt that *anubhūtitva*, the main issue of the discussion, cannot be considered as *jāti* due to the *sāṃkaryā jātibādhaka*; two universals, *smṛtitva* and *anubhūtitva*, must coincide in *Pratyabhijñā*.

Thus the conclusion till now is that *pratyabhijñā* cannot be as either the Buddhists or the Jains conceive it. If we take into consideration the Mīmāṃsaka view then *smṛtitva* and *anubhūtitva* exist in the same cognition and hence

sāṃkaryā jātībādhaka is there. So, *anubhūtitva* cannot be a *jāti*.

Now we shall focus on the criticism of Udayana's view. If we consider that *Pratyabhijñā* is a single knowledge and it is *anubhūti* only then we have to consider that the past object would also be grasped through the sense organs. For instance, 'so 'yaṃghaṭa' is an example of *pratyabhijñā* where the term 'sa' indicates the *ghaṭa* characterized by the past time. If *pratyabhijñā* is *anubhavātmaka* then the *ghaṭa* characterized by past time would also be grasped through our sense organs. But this ground is not justifiable.

- One might say that *pratyabhijñā* is a cognition which is different from *smṛti* and *anubhava*. If so then *pratyabhijñā* cannot be a *pramā*. If the Naiyāyikas consider that *pratyabhijñā* is not *pramā* then they will not be justified in refuting the Buddhist theory of momentariness, 'sarvaṃ kṣaṇikam', by proposing *pratyabhijñā* like 'so 'yaṃghaṭa' as *Pramāṇa*.
- Another point is that *pratyabhijñā* cannot be the definiendum of the definition 'tattvānubhūtipramā', if we consider that *pratyabhijñā* is not *pramā*; although it is already established as *pramā*.

Therefore, *anubhavatva-jāti* cannot be established due to the presence of *sāṃkaryā jātībādhaka* and if anyone considers that *Pratabhijñā* is *anubhava* only to avoid *sāṃkaryā-doṣa* then it will lead him into the absurdity.

2) The second alternative that *anubhūtitva* is an attribute, “being other than memory” (*‘smṛtibhinna jñānatva’*) is not a logical one.

i) The term *‘smṛtibhinna’* or *‘smṛtyanya’* can refer to *pratyabhijñā* also as it is not mere *smṛti*; it is a mixture of *smṛti* and *anubhūti*.

ii) What is the meaning of the term *‘smṛtyanya’* – a) *yatkiñcit smṛtyanya* or b) *sarva smṛtyanya*?

First alternative is not tenable because of another *smṛti yatkiñcit smṛtyanya*.

Second alternative is not tenable too because it is not possible for a person to know all those memories belonging to other people; one can know only those memories which belong to him alone.

Thus, *anubhūtitva* is an attribute, “being other than memory” is not tenable.

3) *Anubhūtitva* is an attribute, “being devoid of the defining characteristics or marks of memory” (*‘smṛti lakṣaṇa rahita jñānatva’*)- this alternative is also untenable because definition of *smṛti* is not possible.

Thus, we can see that Śrīharṣa has refuted the definition *‘tattvānubhūtiḥ pramā’* by raising some rebuttal arguments. He has criticized all the other related concepts one by one.

Although some arguments given by Śrīharṣa have been criticized by Śaṃkara Mīśra in his *Ānandavardhanī* or *Śāṃkarī*, nevertheless, Śrīharṣa and his *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā* have a great importance in Indian philosophy. The *Advaitasiddhi* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and *Pratyaktattvapradīpikā* of Citsukhācārya are very much influenced by *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*. This treatise had a great impact even on the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* philosophy. Śrīharṣa's criticism of Nyāya views compelled the Naiyāyikas to think or to develop their theory in a better way. In Navya-Nyāya philosophers like Śāśadhara, Maṇikaṇṭha and Gaṅgeśa and their successors introduced many mystic technicalities in the formation of definitions or in the clarifications of the concepts to avoid such problems. As a result the theories in Navya-Nyāya are more concrete and less fallible than before. In Bimal Krishna Matilal's words, "Through his incisive critique of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika categories of *pramāṇas* in general, and of the definitions of the logical and epistemological concepts of Udayana in particular, Śrīharṣa paved the way for the rise of the Navya-nyāya school..."⁹ Hence, Śrīharṣa as a *Vaiṭaṇḍika* and his remarkable work *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā* hold a very significant place in Indian Philosophy.

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¹ "tisrah kathā bhavanti vādo jalpo vitaṇḍā ceti..."—*Gautamīyanyāyadarśana with Bhāṣya of Vātsyāyana*, Anantalal Thakur (Ed.), New Delhi, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1997, pp. 39(*Kathālakṣaṇaprakaraṇa*).

- ² “*jalpastvekā kathā na sambhavatyevāsāmayikī vitaṇḍādvaya śarīratvāt.*”— Śrīharṣa, *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*, Śrī Śrīmohana Bhaṭṭācārya (Bengali Trans. & Comments), Kolkata, Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2000, pp. 110.
- ³ Ibid, pp. 12 (Introduction).
- ⁴ Granoff, P. E., *Philosophy and Argument in Late Vedānta :Śrī Harṣa's Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*, Dordrecht : Holland/ Boston : U.S.A./ London : England, D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1947. pp. X(Foreword of Bimal Krishna Matilal).
- ⁵ ‘*yadythābhūtaṃ pratīyate tat tathā paramārthatovya vasthitaṃ tattvamucyate*’—Śrīharṣa, *Khaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādyā*, Śrī Śrīmohana Bhaṭṭācārya (Bengali Trans. & Comments), Kolkata, Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2000, pp. 115.
- ⁶ “*kiñcedamanubhūtitvam nāma? Jñānatvāvāntarajātibhedo vā? Smṛtivyatiriktajñānatvam vā?.....vuddhitvam vā?*”—Ibid,pp. 117.
- ⁷ “*Na tābadādyah,.....*”—Ibid, pp. 117.
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Does Skepticism Necessarily Imply the Denial of Certainty?: Reconstructing Kantian Response

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Abstract: Any serious reader of Kant can easily make out that the metaphysical theory of Kant is inseparably blended with his epistemology. If this is true, then one could find skepticism of a different kind in Kant. By Kantian metaphysics I mean his transcendental philosophy and his use of the term ‘transcendental’ is significant. We could talk of Kant’s skepticism about knowledge of noumenal self, as an example. Kant makes a distinction between two kinds of self viz. phenomenal self (or empirical self) and noumenal self (or transcendental self). In Kant, phenomenal self can be the object of knowledge, but not the noumenal self. Noumenal self is beyond our sense perception and thus it is transcendental in nature. For Kant if anything is transcendental in nature, then this is beyond our sensation and it is the ground of the knowledge. So, though it is imperceptible, still one has to accept the noumenal self as the ground of phenomenal self. For Kant, the self that we encounter in inner sense is the phenomenal self. So, in Kant, even if epistemological scepticism is directed to noumenal self, this does not imply the denial of noumenal self. Thus one could claim that if “grounding” means necessary foundation, then skepticism and necessity

are strange comrades in so far as Kant's idea of noumenal self is concerned.

I

Skepticism in its most general sense means to have a kind of negative thesis about any epistemic practice. More precisely skepticism is always directed against the certainty about knowledge and justification. So skepticism would deny any kind of certainty in any knowledge and justification. There are several kinds of skepticism available in both past and recent literature but I shall not put forward any of them in the present piece of writing. The different types of skepticism not only vary in theme and scope but also in strength.¹ As I have said that I am not going to present the classification of the skepticism here, but we should remember the key idea or the common form of skepticism i.e. *skepticism is the denial of certainty*. My aim in this paper is to propose a hypothesis that skepticism is not always denial of certainty. In order to do that I will take the help from Immanuel Kant's writing, more precisely from his notion of self. Thus the paper at first shall discuss the notion of self that one could find in Kant and then I shall point out how the understanding of self as in Kant could lead us to a skepticism which is not the denial of certainty.

Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* argues that Metaphysics is a field where human reason asks questions which arise from its (reason's) own nature, but which cannot be answered i.e. the answers to these questions do

not belong to the realm of empirical test. For Kant “the battle-field of these endless controversies is called metaphysics.”² Kant argues that metaphysics was a much valued practice of knowledge, but at present it (metaphysics) brings only scorn. We need to remember that Kant had great respect for metaphysics. Here he talks about the metaphysics of his time.

For Kant any branch of knowledge must proceed on the secure path of science, otherwise it could not get its highest achievements. If any branch of knowledge is compelled or bound to retrace its steps from the decisions that the members of branch made earlier and if the branch of knowledge does not have any commonly agreed plan or theory, then we could be sure that this branch of knowledge is not on the secure path of science. And if, on the other hand, any branch of knowledge makes continuous progress without eliminating its previous thesis or does not retrace its steps and if there is a commonly agreed theory, then we could claim that the branch is proceeding on the secure path of science.

Thus Kant argues that judged by this standard, metaphysics looks very poor. It makes no progress and there is no commonly accepted method. So for Kant, although metaphysics is older than all the sciences and would survive even if all the systems are swallowed up in the abyss of an all destroying barbarism, still metaphysics has not yet entered the secure path of science.³ Kant declares that he wants to restructure the orientation of doing metaphysics. “The purpose of this critique of pure

speculative reason consists in the attempt to change the old procedure of metaphysics...”⁴

In connection with the above discussion we could claim that transcendental philosophy is one of the most promising ways to serve the above purpose, viz. to change the old procedure of metaphysics and make it more acceptable. Transcendental philosophy of Immanuel Kant is one of his well-established philosophical ideas that we find in his First Critique⁵. Kant in this book uses the term ‘transcendental’ in different chapters and sections of the book viz. Transcendental Aesthetic, Transcendental Logic, Transcendental Analytic, Transcendental Dialectic etc. Thus by considering the different chapters of transcendental philosophy we could claim that if anything is transcendental it is, first, not an object of sense experience i.e. which is not given in intuition or which is beyond sensation. Second which is necessarily presupposed by experience. This concept of transcendental later on become the guiding light of the phenomenology of Husserl.⁶ Self is one such transcendental notion in nature for Kant.

II

This section deals with the idea of self that one could find in Kant. With the detailed analysis of the notion of self we shall find a skepticism of a different kind in Kant. Let us start with the analysis of self that one could arrive at by going through the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* provides a systematic explanation which shows how we acquire knowledge of the external objects. If we want to have a theory of self as advocated by Kant, then we need to go through with Kant's theory of knowledge. So basically here I shall present Kant's theory of knowledge and that shall include the notion of self as well.

It is widely held that Kant as a philosopher is neither a rationalist nor an empiricist in the fullest meaning of the two terms. Kant holds that we need to have sensation or sense data in order to construct the knowledge of an object. These data require some inner concepts, which do not come through sensation, in order to construct knowledge. These inner concepts are transcendental in nature. Thus the first assertion makes Kant a non-rationalist and the second assertion makes him a non-idealist. This is the reason why he is regarded as a critical philosopher. Likewise with regard to the notion of self, Kant's theory is different from both rationalist and empiricist notions. Kant does not accept the rationalist notion of self as a unitary, simple, incorporeal and indestructible substance. On the other hand he does not accept the empiricist theory of self (as Hume does) that self is just a bundle or mere sum of the mental states. Against the empiricist, Kant argues that mere plurality of impressions or mental states, in spite of being connected by the law of association⁷, is not capable of providing the knowledge of self. And against the rationalist, Kant argues that the unity presupposed by the knowledge is far short of an incorporeal, indestructible

substance.⁸ So it is clear that the Kantian notion of self is neither of the rationalist nor of the empiricist type.

Talking about idea of self I need to introduce a phrase called “*transcendental unity of apperception*” used by Kant.⁹ Transcendental unity is the essential or necessary condition of knowledge. Since transcendental unity is the presupposition of knowledge, so in order to understand the meaning of the phrase (transcendental unity) we need to analyze Kantian theory of knowledge. Thus we would be able to know the meaning of the phrase *transcendental unity of apperception*. Once we understand the meaning of the phrase, we would be much clear about the meaning and significance of the idea of self in Kant’s philosophy.

Before talking about Kant’s theory of knowledge we should know the nature of the *Copernican revolution* that Kant claims to bring in philosophy. Pre-Copernican period had the belief that the sun and the stars move around the earth. Copernicus for the first time proposes a hypothesis and declares that it is the earth that moves around the sun. This Copernican hypothesis was a kind of revolution in the field of astronomy, since it was completely opposed to the tradition of his time. Likewise people before Kant believed that intuition has to conform to the constitution of the object. Now as Kant’s intention was to prove a priori proposition which are synthetic as well, Kant proposes a hypothesis which says that objects must conform to the constitution of our faculty of intuition.¹⁰ This hypothesis of Kant facilitates him to show how we could have the a priori knowledge of the objects. Thus we could claim that in the

mechanism of knowing, knowledge is not only a passive picture of the objects that appear in our understanding, it is understanding that has an active role to play in the production of knowledge.

Now we have to understand how the objects conform to the faculty of knowing. And also we have to understand, of course following Kant, how both sensation and understanding work together in order to have knowledge. This understanding requires the exposition of synthesis that Kant provides in his theory of knowledge. Regarding synthesis we should remember that knowledge is possible only through the processes of synthesis and synthesis is possible only through the unity of self-consciousness. Explanation of these claims would take us to an exposition of the notion of self that Kant holds.

For Kant, knowledge is impossible if there is no sensation. But mere sensation is not capable enough to produce knowledge. Kant argues that if all the sensations remain completely unrelated to each other, then nothing will arise as knowledge. For him, there is a case of knowledge, where representations stand compared and connected. Kant says, “as sense contains a manifold in its intuition, I ascribe to it a synopsis. But to such a synopsis a synthesis must always correspond; receptivity can make knowledge possible only when combined with spontaneity.”¹¹ This synthesis is three-fold, there could be a misunderstanding in thinking that three distinct syntheses are responsible for knowledge. Rather it is one single synthesis which is three-fold viz. 1) The synthesis of apprehension in intuition 2) The synthesis

of reproduction in imagination 3) The synthesis of recognition in concept.¹² Let me briefly explain these three aspects of synthesis.

In the synthesis of apprehension in intuition, Kant does not talk about the origin of the representations; he only considers them as modifications of mind which belong to inner sense. All our knowledge is subjected to time in which they are ordered, connected and brought in to relation. Time is the form of the inner sense. Representations always come one after another, in a sequence and not at once in a single moment. “Every intuition contains in itself a manifold which can be represented as a manifold only in so far as the mind distinguishes the time in the sequence of one impression upon another; for each representation, *in so far as it is contained in a single moment*, can never be anything but absolute unity.”¹³ This act of running through the representations and holding them together in a manifold representation given in an intuition is called synthesis of apprehension in intuition.

If we want to hold the manifold of representations in apprehension, then we have to accept that the representations must be brought together. We have to accept that we cannot have all the representations of an object at one moment, rather in a succession, one after another. For example, when I am having the sensation of the blue colour of my room, I do not have the sensation of the size of that very room. If we got all the sensations in one go, then we would not be able to encounter the

different qualities of the object. Thus we could hold, when we are having sensation S1, we are not able to have the sensations S2 or S3, and when we are having S3, S1 and S2 are already past. Here the question that becomes important is: if we cannot get all the sensations of an object in one go, then how could our intellect or understanding make out that all the different sensations belongs to the same object? Here our understanding plays the key role; it (understanding) reproduces the sensations in imagination to bring them together, and make us understand that these sensations belong to the same object. Thus we have to accept that we could hold the past sensations in our imagination. To have all the sensations at a time we need to reproduce it in our imagination. This is called synthesis of reproduction in imagination by Kant.

The two syntheses are necessary but not sufficient to produce knowledge. Reproduction of sensation in imagination would not help us to construct any knowledge if it does not recognize the reproduced sensations. If we are not conscious that the sensation which appears in my thinking (imagination) is same as what we thought or what we got as sensation some time before, all reproduction of sensations in imagination would be useless. Thus the reproduction would seem as a new representation and thus we would not be able to form a whole, because it does not have the unity which only consciousness can import into it.¹⁴

By synthesis, in its most general sense, Kant understands the act of putting different representations together and of

comprehending their manifoldness in one item of knowledge.¹⁵ Now that synthesis is possible only through the unity of self-consciousness in the act of synthesis. Kant also uses the term ‘apperception’ which means self-consciousness, and for Kant apperception is the necessary condition of knowledge.

Self-consciousness means to be aware of self. If one asks why Kant holds that an awareness of self is essential for synthesis, answer would be: as we have seen, synthesis is not possible without reproduction in imagination and recognition of that reproduction. Now this recognition needs to have an awareness of self. Since here ‘recognise’ means that I should be aware that this is the representation that I have already synthesized or apprehended. This understanding of self might be little unclear, but it must be there.¹⁶

When one asserts that the plant is green, she not only reports that in her consciousness the plant is green but also her intention is to report that the plant is green objectively. This means, she is making a distinction between subjective and objective or the subject and the object. So the judgment that she holds would be like this: not only I think that S is P, but S is P as a matter of fact. In the above complex cognitive state an important element is ‘I think’, the form of the awareness of the self.¹⁷

Thus we have understood why Kant holds that self-consciousness is involved in knowledge. Now we have to be clear why Kant talks about the *unity* of self-

consciousness. One could make a distinction between the three senses of unity of self-consciousness.¹⁸

First, unity of self-consciousness means consciousness of the identity of self. In the recognition procedure in synthesis, in order to become aware of the representations I also become aware of my own self. Now the self which is known by me in the recognition of a particular representation R1, and the self which I encounter in order to recognize the representation R2, must be one and identical. Second, the unity of self-consciousness refers to the identity of self-consciousness itself, not to the identity of self revealed in such a self-consciousness. All the representations constituting a unity of experience must be accompanied by self-consciousness so that they might be synthesized. Third, the act of synthesis must be aware of its own unity. For Sen, an item of knowledge is a unitary whole in which different representations are held together. Thus it is evident that for Kant identity of self-consciousness is involved in knowledge. This is the theory where Kant argues that unity of apperception is needed for having knowledge. ‘Apperception’ means self-consciousness for Kant.

Now the point to be underscored is that, the principle of unity of apperception is transcendental in nature. So the actual principle is “transcendental unity of apperception”. Apperception means, as we have seen, consciousness of self. For Kant, this consciousness of self cannot be empirical. There could be two arguments in this connection: first, self-consciousness is a necessary

condition of knowledge. As it is necessary, it must be the ground of experience; this cannot be empirical in nature. So it should be pure and transcendental. Second, there is an element of necessity in the consciousness of self which could be present in it only if it is transcendental. The self we encounter in our empirical consciousness is not identical self. "Consciousness of self according to the determination of our state in inner perception is merely empirical, and always changing. No fixed and abiding self can present itself in this flux of inner appearances. Such consciousness is usually named *inner sense* or *empirical apperception*. What has *necessarily* to be represented as numerically identical cannot be thought as such through empirical data."¹⁹

Now we shall see what Kant denies of self, and thus we shall try to gather Kant's own view on the nature of self. And for this we have to know what is Rational Psychology and its nature. Psychology in its classical sense means doctrine of soul. But in modern days Psychology does not claim to talk about soul, rather it is concerned with the truths of mental states. But a system of Rational Psychology claims to be a system of truth about soul. 'Rational' means that is derived from pure reason, and pure reason is something which does not have any reference to experience, and so a priori. So rational psychology would mean an a priori theory of soul. Now to construct a rational psychology one has to hold at least one proposition which is a priori in nature, which is certain and on the basis of which she could build a system of truths. The rationalist

argues that the proposition 'I think' is such an a priori truth. Thus one could argue that rational psychology is a system of a priori truth about the nature of the soul based upon and deduced from the single proposition 'I think'.

Kant claims that the whole of rational psychology bears four paralogisms. Paralogism in its most general sense means any error or mistake in reasoning. The paralogisms are actually derived from one proposition viz. 'I think'. The paralogisms are:

- 1) The soul is a substance.
- 2) As regards its quality, it is simple.
- 3) As regards the different times in which it exists, it is numerically identical, that is unity.
- 4) It is in relation to possible objects in space.

By refuting these four assertions Kant negatively provides his idea of self or soul in his first Critique. Here I will not provide the details of Kant's ground for rejecting the four claims regarding the nature of self by rational psychologist. All that we should note is that for Kant the arguments that are given for holding the above four claims are not sufficient. By rejecting the above four claims Kant is never rejecting the appearance of the self. Kant's intention is not to doubt the appearance. For him, the external object is the mere appearance and this appearance is not subject to doubt. Kant thinks that the rational psychologist fails to make a distinction between the appearance and reality. Thus Kant denies the empirical idealism of rational

psychologist and defends empirical realism where he does not doubt the existence of external object as an appearance and he does this in order to establish his own idealism what he calls transcendental idealism.²⁰ Though Kant does not accept the claims of rational psychologist but at the same time we should keep it in our mind that there is no doubt that Kant accepts the existence of self. What he argues is that we could not have the experience of self as it is in itself (not even in inner sense).

Understanding self in Kant could be possible as a presupposition of morality. We know that for Kant no action could be called moral unless the action is done from the sense of duty. This means that the action should be done in accordance with a principle and for the sake of that principle. The moral action then would be a ‘duty for the sake of duty’. Thus the moral law is a “categorical imperative” which presupposes or demands that we should free our self completely from all impulses and inclination and direct our will entirely to the performance of duty for its own sake. Kant argues that moral law implies freedom by declaring that freedom of will is the ‘postulate’ of morality i.e. freedom of will is a presupposition without which morality is not possible. Here Kant talks about the self as noumenon, possesses will and this will is free to do action according to the law of morality. Kant holds that in its ultimate and noumenal nature it is a free moral agent.

We should remember that Kant does not want to assert any characteristic of noumenal self, since for him we do not have any knowledge of the noumenal, whatever it is. Kant

would deny that an analysis of moral experience provides us the knowledge of self as free agent or noumenal self. Freedom for Kant, as I said earlier, is postulate of morality and this postulate or presupposition is never an object of knowledge.

III

With the above discussion, viz., the epistemic understanding of self (where he talks about the transcendental unity of apperception), self as denying the paralogisms and self as presupposition of morality, we could easily claim that Kant talks about two different levels of self. I have mentioned earlier that Kant makes a distinction between the empirical apperception and transcendental apperception as well. In empirical apperception we get impermanent or ever- changing self, and in transcendental apperception we get a numerically ‘one self’. Numerically ‘one self’ means the self that I had in my childhood, is the same self that I have now when I am twenty six years old. When Kant believes that empirically we cannot have a permanent self, it goes with the view of David Hume. But we should remember Hume denies the existence of self in its entirety, but Kant does not. For Kant, self which is identical or numerically one is transcendental in nature, and so it is beyond our experience.

Thus by analyzing the phrase ‘transcendental unity of apperception’ we have come to the epistemic idea of self in Kant. And from the above discussion we can easily conclude that Kant makes a distinction between empirical

self and numerically identical self. Empirical self is changing and numerically identical self is unchanging. Empirical self could be named ‘phenomenal self’ and numerically identical self could be named ‘transcendental self’ or noumenal self. Thus, for Kant, though we cannot know one’s self empirically, its existence cannot be denied.

It is at this juncture that traces of skepticism of a specific type in Kant’s notion of self, could be seen. On one hand Kant holds that the experience of self (noumenal self or the self as it is) is not possible, on the other hand he does not deny the existence of self as Hume does. In simple words, the self cannot be an object of knowledge, yet Kant accepts that it exists. Kant would be in agreement with Hume on the idea that we could not encounter self in our consciousness. On the other hand, Kant does not entirely deny the existence of self, though Hume does so. The knowledge of phenomenal self which reveals in our consciousness is only possible since there is a noumenal self. Noumenal self is the ground for the knowledge of the phenomenal self. As it is the ground or presupposition of knowledge, it cannot be the object of experience in so far as Kant’s transcendental philosophy is concerned. We have seen in the first section of the paper that if anything is transcendental it is beyond our sense perception for Kant. Now since the noumenal self is transcendental it is not the object of perceptual knowledge. So from one perspective there lies a kind of skepticism, or better an agnosticism, regarding the knowledge of self. On the other hand the noumenal self is the ground of having the knowledge of

phenomenal self. Since it is the ground of knowledge, there lies a necessity in it.

It follows that regarding the notion of self in Kant, necessity or certainty (of noumenal self) and skepticism/agnosticism are the strange peers, so far as Kant's notion of noumenal self is concerned. Being a Kantian one could claim here that certainty and skepticism are not always contrary rather in some cases they could be supplementary to each other, owing to a difference of perspective. In the end I would like to have a word on the title of the paper. It seems to me that in Kant we have certainty and at the same time some traces of skepticism are also seen. Thus one could claim that skepticism is not necessarily denial of certainty, rather in some cases they could march together, as in Kant. To sum up, the notion of 'transcendental', more specifically when it comes to the idea of self in Kant entails both a skepticism and a certainty, each in a specific sense.

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