Reflections on the Self: A Comparative Study of Charles Taylor and Michel Foucault

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By

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DECLARATION

I, KESHAV CHANDRA TIWARI, hereby declare that the thesis titled, **Reflections on the Self: A Comparative Study of Charles Taylor and Michel Foucault,** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of ***Doctor of Philosophy*** from Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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Certificate

We recommend that the thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Keshav Chandra Tiwari

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Charles Taylor

HE	Taylor, Charles, *Hegel*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.
HMS	Taylor, Charles, *Hegel and Modern Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
SP	Taylor, Charles, *Social Theory as Practice*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983.
PA	Taylor, Charles, *Philosophical Arguments*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.
HAL	Taylor, Charles, *Philosophical Papers Vol.1*, Human Agency and Language Cambridge, 1985.
PHS	Taylor, Charles, *Philosophical Papers, Vol.2*, Philosophy and Human Sciences, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985.
SS	Taylor, Charles, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.
MPR	Taylor, Charles, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
MSI	Taylor, Charles, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004.
SA	Taylor, Charles, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Michel Foucault

MC	Foucault Michel, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans Richard Howard, New York: Random House, 1965.
BC	Foucault Michel, *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. A. Sheridan New York: Vintage, 1963.
OT	Foucault, M., *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. A. Sheridan, London: Tavistock, 1973.
TP	Foucault, M., *This is not a Pipe*, Tr, J. Harkness, Berkley: University of California Press, 1973, 1983.

DP Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. A Sheridon Tavistock: London, NY: Pantheon 1977.

PK Foucault, Michel, *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon, New York: Pantheon, 1980.

CS Foucault, Michel, *The Care of the Self,* trans. R. Hurley, New York: Pantheon, 1986.

HS Foucault, Michel, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. R. Hurley, New York: Pantheon, 1978.

UP Foucault, Michel, *The Use of Pleasure*, Pantheon, New York, trans. R. Hurley, 1985.

AK Foucault, Michel, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* Trans. A.M. Sheridan-Smith, London, Tavistock, 1972.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis attempts a comparative exposition and evaluation of two modes of enquiries for the study of Politics: hermeneutics as articulated in the works of the Canadian philosopher and political scientist Charles Taylor, and genealogy as expressed in the works of French philosopher Michel Foucault.

The main issue addressed here is whether pursuing interpretation as a mode of enquiry means abandoning the human ability to set standards for judging changes in society/ politics as good or bad, and succumbing to relativism. In mainstream Political Science, dominated by the natural science model, this is not an issue as reality is presumed to be independent of the language used to depict it. This independent reality could act as a standard for theories to be compared. However, in interpretive mode of enquiry, the language is conceived as constitutive of reality. Human sense of reality is internally generated by the language categories they use to grasp that reality. Therefore, different sets of categories to grasp reality generate different senses of reality. The problem of relativism seems to be the default characteristic of interpretive mode of enquiry. Taylor and Foucault have approached this problem of relativism while overcoming naturalism differently. Taylor claims that through his conception of post-Heideggerian hermeneutics, the problem of relativism can be resolved and so as to endorse one way of life as superior to another. On the other hand, in his conception of genealogy, Foucault claims that there is no way of ascribing superiority to one description of reality over another as they are effects of arbitrary power-knowledge strategies. Taylor and Foucault have been conceived as rival thinkers working out two different interpretive orientations in trying to overcome naturalism and resolve the issue of relativism; each having a different implication for the study of society and politics.

This chapter sets out the *problematique* of the study, comparison of Taylor and Foucault, in context and formulates the themes along with which comparison would be made. It begins by showing how the natural science explanation model (nomologicalism) dominated in the field of political enquiry. It then shows how the inadequacies of nomologicalism point towards theoretical orientations that are better dealt by the interpretive orientations. Further, it describes some of the interpretive approaches that emerged as alternatives to nomologicalism especially in the latter half of the twentieth century. Finally, it formulates Taylor and Foucault's theoretical orientations as two of such interpretive approaches, each having a different take off on the issue of how the issue of relativism can be tackled and its implications for the study of politics.

I. Positivism and Behaviouralism

The positivist approach to the study of politics attempts to replicate the success of the 'scientific method' of studying the natural world by applying it to the study of political and social practices. Its roots can be traced to the general empiricist tradition of Francis Bacon, John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which held that all factual knowledge is based on experience and that the truth of factual statements can be established only by the evidence of the human senses.[1] Its modern form emerged in the work of Augustus Comte in the nineteenth century. Comte distinguished scientific knowledge, based on positive facts as given in the world and known by sense experience, from theology, which is based on speculation on fictitious supernatural beings, and from metaphysics, which is speculation on abstract entities. He claimed positive science, based on observation which could provide the necessary basis for control over both nature and society, to be the highest form of human knowledge (Pickering 1993).[2]

In the 1920s and the1930s, this identification with 'science as the highest form of knowledge' took shape as a movement called Logical Positivism. Associated with a group of mathematicians and scientists known as the Vienna Circle, this movement dominated the intellectual scene in the first half of the twentieth century. The movement based itself on the principle of phenomenalism (a radical form of empiricism that limits the basis of science to experiences of sensations alone) and logical analysis. Its aim was to unify science, to integrate all scientific disciplines--natural and social, into a single system of knowledge. According to this conception, natural and social scientific disciplines were essentially the same and varied only in degree, in having different approaches to the ideal of discovering invariable natural laws.

Behaviouralism can be seen as an expression of this extreme scientific attitude towards the study of politics. After a prelude in the form of Chicago School and other empiricist approaches in the 1920s and 1930s, this approach came to dominate the study of politics after the Second World War till about the 1970s.[3] It emphasised that the study of politics should be constructed only on

[1] L Kolakowski, *Positivist Philosophy: From Hume to the Vienna Circle*, (Hamondsworth: Penguin, 1972). Andrew Vincent, *The Nature of Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 56-58. Messica Lane, 'Positivism: reactions and developments' in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought* ed. Terence Ball and Richard Bellamy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 321-343.

[2] Mary Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

[3] David Easton, 'The Current Meaning of Behaviouralism', *Contemporary Political Analysis*, (Ed.), J C Charlesworth (New York: Free Press, 1967), 16-17 and Evron M Kirkpatrick, 'From Past to Present', in *Foundations of Political Science*, (Ed.) D. Freeman, (New York: The Free Press, 1977). David Sanders. 'Behavioural Analysis' in *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (Eds). David Marsh and Gary Stoker (London: Macmillan, 1995), 58-75.

the basis of observable behaviour which involves the collection of quantifiable data (through research surveys), statistical analysis, and construction of empirical theories that have predictive capability. Behavioralists criticised the earlier approaches as pre-paradigmatic and envisaged their own role as an attempt to move the study of politics to paradigmatic stage. Inspired by the works of Kuhn, they debated whether their discipline constituted a 'normal' science or not.[4]

In a retrospective article in 1997, David Easton summarised seven main themes of behaviouralism viz: a concern with discoverable uniformities in political behaviour, to be able to test and verify empirical generalisation to focus on techniques for acquiring and interpreting empirical data (i.e. questionnaires, interviews, sampling, regression analysis, factor analysis, and rational modeling), precise quantification and measurement of empirical data, analytical separation of values or evaluative concerns from factual data, concern to the relation between research and theory and, the aim to engage, as far as possible, in pure science.[5] The main preoccupation of this approach thus became the recording and quantification of political behaviour.

Associated with logical positivism, the early works of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Bertrand Russell and Gottlob Frege formed much of the philosophical basis for the behaviouralist school in the Anglo-Saxon world.[6] Another philosopher whose work is considered to be pioneering in this context is A. J. Ayer. In *Language, Truth and Logic* (1971), Ayer argues that there are only two types of meaningful propositions that could be made about the world. The first being the analytic *a priori* propositions that are found in the sphere of logic and mathematics and are largely embodied tautologies. Such propositions are true or false not in terms of evidence but in terms of definition and symbol of use. The second kind of propositions are called 'synthetic empirical propositions' which are verifiable by experience. Ayer also suggested the 'principle of verification' to provide means to determine the truth of such propositions. According to the verification principle, propositions are meaningful only if they are empirically verifiable or are tautologous. Any other sort of proposition, being neither true nor false is meaningless. In this third category, he placed ethical/ evaluative judgements of the humanities and the social sciences.[7] Ayer's verification principle, in effect, meant that much of classical political thought involving evaluative statements are indeed meaningless. Such metaphysical statements were

[4] David Truman, 'Disillusion and Regeneration: The Quest for a Discipline', *American Political Science Review*,59 (December,1965), 865-873 and Almond, Gabriel, 'Political Theory and Political Science'
American Political Science Review, 60 (December,1966), 869-879.
[5]David Easton, 'The Future of the Postbehavioural Phase in Political Science', in *Contemporary Empirical Political Theory* (Ed.), K. R. Monroe, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).
[6] Raymond Plant, *Modern Political Thought* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1991).
[7] A. J. Ayer, Language, *Truth and Logic*, second edition, (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1971), 41. See also, A.J. Ayer, 'The Vienna Circle', in A J Ayer et al., *The Revolution in the Philosophy*, (London: Macmillan, 1956), 79.

neither tautologous nor empirically verifiable. Though these statements professed to tell us something about the world, they were not verifiable and were simply the expression of laudatory emotions.

In the logical positivist framework, political philosophy, as suggested by Anthony Quinton and others, was supposed to withdraw itself from the substantive issues such as justice, equality, and so on. It was instead supposed to engage with the 'second order' activity of conceptual clarifications only. Political philosophy was to be analytical in nature. The task of providing first order knowledge of the world was left to the sciences.[8] Similarly, T.D. Weldon, in his book *The Vocabulary of Politics* (1953) and his article 'Political Principles' (1956), claimed that political philosophy should confine itself to the task of analysis and clarification of language and concepts of empirical political study. 'When verbal confusions are tidied up most of the questions of traditional political philosophy are not unanswerable. All of them are confused formulations of purely empirical disciplines'.[9]

This rearrangement of the relationship between political philosophy and the empirical study of politics has been described by some commentators as the 'death of political philosophy' phase in the study of political practices. In 1953, both Alfred Cobban, a noted historian of political thought, and David Easton, described the status of normative political thought as 'the decline of political theory'.[10] In 1956, Peter Laslett, in the introduction to the first series of collected articles titled *Philosophy, Politics and Society* infamously remarked 'For the moment, anyway, political philosophy is dead'.[11] In a similar vein, Leo Strauss in 1955 observed that 'political philosophy is in a state of decay and perhaps putrefaction, if it has not vanished altogether'.[12] He blamed positivism and historicism for this. Thus, by questioning the logical status of all ethical statements and by setting up rigorous criteria of intelligibility, the logical positivist reduced political philosophy to 'assemblages of nonsense.er this as p values, Politics, since it involved [13]' perspective, became a matter of essentially arbitrary choices and non-rational commitments.

The interpretation of events related to the study of politics in the 1950s and 1960s as 'the death of political philosophy' continued to persist in 1990s in the works of thinkers such as Brian Barry,

[8] Anthony Quinton, (Eds), *Political Philosophy*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 1.
[9] T.D. Weldon, *The Vocabulary of Politics*, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1953), 192. T.D Weldon, 'Political Principles', in *Political, Philosophy and Society* (Ed.) P Laslett, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956).
[10] David Easton, *The Political System*, second edition, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1971). Alfred Cobban, 'The Decline of Political Theory', *Political Science Quarterly*, vol.63, no.3 (1953), 321-337.
[11] P. Laslett, (Ed.) *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, First Series, (Blackwell, 1956), vii.
[12] L. Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy?* (Chicago: University of Chicago, reprint, 1988), 17.
[13] P. Lastlett, Op.cit, p. ix.

R. Goodin and Philip Petit.[14] This interpretation has also been countered by a host of other thinkers such as Richard Tuck, Bhikhu Parekh, and others. Richard Tuck, in the same volume of *Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (edited by Petit), observed that:

> 'The period from 1870 to 1970 was a very strange one in the history of thinking about politics in the Anglo-American world (and, to a lesser extent, on the continent also). There are a number of alternative ways of characterising its strangeness. One is to point to the absence of major works on political philosophy...Another is to remind ourselves that serious commentators in the 1950s could believe that for the moment...political philosophy is dead[15]'

Bhikhu Parekh (1996) points out that the claim that the 1950s and 1960s marked the decline or, even the death of political philosophy, and the 1970s and 1980s marked its resurgence, is a myth.[16] According to Parekh, contrary to general impression, the 1950s and the 1960s were quite rich in political philosophy. He quotes Michael Oakeshott's *Rationalism in Politics* (1962); Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1958), *Between Past and Future* (1961), and *On Revolution* (1963); and Isaiah Berlin's essays 'Two concepts of liberty' (1958) and 'Does political theory still exist?' (1962), as some of the important works that do not fit into 'the death of the political philosophy' narrative.[17] Besides these thinkers, significant work during this time also came from Jean Paul Sartre, Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss, Simone Weil, Simone de Beauvoir, Hans Kelsen, Betrand de Jauvenal, Yves Simon, Dante Germino, Giovanni Gentile, Benedetto Corce, G.D.H. Cole, Leon Duguit, Karl Popper, Herbert Marcuse, Theodore Adomo, Eric Vogelin and Fredich Hayek.[18] Even Rawls's Theory of Justice, Parekh points out, was largely an elaboration of the seminal ideas that he had developed in his writings between 1951 and 1963.[19] Whether or not 'death of political philosophy', had occurred, it is now almost an accepted idea that behaviouralism dominated the study of politics during the 1950s and 1960s, and eclipsed all

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[14] See the retrospective introduction to the second edition of his book, *Political Arguments*. Brian Barry, *Political Arguments: A Reissue* (Hempel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), xxxii. R.E. Goodin and Philip Petit Ed. *Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 8.

[15] Richard Tuck, 'The Contribution in History', in *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Eds), R.E. Goodin and P. Pettit, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 72.

[16] Bhikhu Parekh, 'Political Theory: Traditions in Political Philosophy', in *A New Handbook of Political Science* (Eds.) Robert Goodin, and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 503-518.

[17] Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics* (London: Methuen, 1962). Also see M Oakeshott Ed. *Leviathan*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946). Introduction. Pp. v-xviii. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future* (London: Faber and Faber,1961), Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963). Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty'. Reprinted in I. Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 118-72.and Isaiah Berlin, 'Does political theory still exist?' in *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, 2nd Series ed. P. Laslett and W.G. Runciman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962).

[18] Andrew Vincent, *The Nature of Political Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 93-94, See also Dante Germino, 'Some Observations on Recent Political Philosophy and Theory' in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 400, No. 1 (January 1972) 140-148.

[19] Bhikhu Parekh, *Political Theory*, Op. cit, p. 504.

other approaches to study politics. Normative theory survived only as an undercurrent to later emerge in the 1970s with great vigour.[20]

Acceptance of the basic tenets of logical positivism meant that to be scientific one had to adopt features that were considered to be essential by its adherents. Science was understood to proceed inductively from observation to laws. In accordance with these tenets, behaviouralism attempted to seek an objective (intrinsic to the object of the study and not dependent on the subject) explanation of political and social practices to be achieved through empirically discoverable statistical correlations and causal laws.[21] This mode of enquiry assumed that there are 'brute sense data' which are empirically identifiable and exist independent of the methods used to grasp them.[22] In other words, language or vocabulary used to explain political/social life represents/ mirrors, or corresponds to the political/social life that exists independent of it. Correspondence theory of language/meaning. The language in itself is transparent and in no way affects or modifies the reality. Its function is merely to designate the reality. This disjunction between language and reality meant that the study of politics was conceived as an attempt to arrive at a set of categories and concepts (i.e., theory) that would capture the 'essence' of the reality. A good explanation, therefore, involved being able to correspond or approximate this reality more and more.[23] The correspondence to the reality was to be achieved by matching the theoretical explanations with the facts gained through observation. As has already been mentioned, evaluative statements, in contrast to the analytic and synthetic statements, could not be verified empirically and therefore were considered 'meaningless 'and were to be expunged out of the vocabulary of the study of politics.[24] The empirical political science was also supposed to purge itself of the ambiguous and value-laden terms of everyday life. Instead, the scientific language exacting scientific terms was to be 'operationalised' in order to eliminate the evaluative dimension and ensure uniformity of measurement amongst researchers.[25]

To summarise, behaviouralism attempted a mechanistic explanation of political/social life.[26] It conceived of man as an object among other natural objects (rather than an expressive being) and

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[20] David Maurrice, *Philosophy, Science and Ideology in Political Thought*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 20-23.
[21] Michael T Gibbons, 'Introduction: The Politics of Interpretation' in *lnterpreting Politics*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 1.
[22] Charles Taylor, 'Interpretation and the Sciences of Man' in *Philosophical Papers Vol.ll: Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1989) 28. (Henceforth *PHS*)
[23] Op.cit, pp 33-34
[24] Evaluative statements are moral imperative statements such as those involving 'ought' or 'to be' and, therefore, cannot be true or false. Analytic or formal statements are propositions that are true or false by virtue of meanings of their constituent terms alone. Synthetic or empirical statements are the propositions that can be shown true or false by observations.
[25] Michael T Gibbons, *Interpreting Politics*, Op.cit,1.
[26] Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Papers Vol.I: Human Agency and Language*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1989) 164-186. Henceforth *HAL*.

made sharp distinction between facts and values. It claimed 'values' to be meaningless and, therefore, dispensable from the study of political life. As a result, significant aspects of political life such as those related to values became 'invisible' in mainstream political science leading to a narrow conception of the discipline. Political systems with input and output functions replaced the study of states; the study of democracy became electoral behaviour, and public opinion quantification surveys; pressure or interest group behaviour took the place of the study of societies.[27]

II. Post-Positivism and Post-Behaviouralism

By the early 1970s doubts began to grow about the efficacy of application of the scientific method to the study of political/social life.[28] Developments in the philosophy of science brought out difficulties pertaining to the natural science explanation method. Neither the logic of induction nor the verification criterion of meaning was enough to guarantee the acquisition of truth.[29] The critique of the methods of natural science developed in a new collective movement called the 'post-empiricist science'.[30] It included the work of thinkers such as Thomas Kuhn, Michael Polanyi, Peter Winch, Paul Feyerabend and Mary Hesse. They raised new questions about the way to view natural science explanation and by default empirical theories. They were skeptical about the projects of verification, covering law theory and hypothetico-deductive methods which formed the core of behavioural and empiricist investigations. These philosophers of science found the notion of 'neutral observation' incompatible with emerging views on the nature of perception and the nature of the world. It was found that human mind is not passive; merely receiving images of the given, rather it imposes order upon the external world through a process of selection, interpretation, and imagination. Observation is always linguistically and

[27] David Easton, 'Political Science in the United States: Past and Present' in *International Political Science Review 1985*; 6; 145.
[28] Bernstein, Richard J, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*, Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1976. See Introduction.
[29] Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, (London: Hutchinson, 1980). Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).
[30] Following works can be said to articulate the Post-positivist presupposition theories of science: M Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). R. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1978. 1983) M. Hesse, *Revolutions and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980.). J. Gunnell, *Between Philosophy and Politics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, J. Gunnell, 'Realizing theory: The Philosophy of Science Revisited', *The Journal of Politics 1986*). Vol.57 (4.) 1995 pp. 923-40.

culturally mediated.[31] Scientific observation too is theory-laden, linked to the scientific tradition that provides frames of references or conceptual schemes to organise reality and shape the problems for further investigations. Based on these findings, it acknowledged science as a human convention rooted in practical judgment of a community of fallible scientists struggling to resolve theory generated problems under specific historical conditions. The picture of science that came out was one that was far less heroic and much more human.[32]

Besides, serious doubts were also raised by thinkers of various persuasions, including conservatives and Marxists, about the epistemological and ontological basis of the positivist movement. These thinkers included Michael Oakeshott, Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, Dante Germino, Herbert Marcuse, Theodore Adomo, Peter Winch, Isaiah Berlin, Charles Taylor amongst others. They claimed that there was nothing 'natural' about scientific epistemology. It was actually a deeply embedded ontology. The basic foundational distinctions such as between facts and values made by natural science epistemology were not categorically true. They could be challenged philosophically.[33] They claimed that empirical political science was narrow in conception and could not raise 'substantive issues'. To some of these critics, the empirical mode of enquiry often ended up being wordy and jargon-laden elaboration of the obvious. The empiricists "failed altogether to address the interesting questions or their practitioners, ended up squandering their talents and ingenuity in an attempt to show that they can after all recapture the insights of ordinary life in their manifestly explanatory language."[34] These emerging critiques led to a decline in the privileged and hegemonic position of empirical political theory.

By the late 1960s, Behaviouralists too were beginning to realize the lacunae in their discipline. Their over emphasis on methods, and techniques and neglect of the pressing social and political issues did not agree with their vision of social change and reform as an integral part of their movement. The belief that increased empirical understanding of politics/ society would result in intelligent formulation of policies and amelioration of social inequalities proved chimerical.[35] Even the staunchest defenders of the objective empirical research admitted that something was amiss with their discipline.[36] A crisis of relevance developed. David Easton recatagorised himself

[31] Mary Hawkesworth, 'Political Science in a New Millennium: Issues of Knowledge and Power' in *Encyclopedia of Government and Politics,* second edition, edited by Mary Hawskesworth and Maurice Kogan, (London: Routledge, 1992), 10.
[32] Mary Hawkesworth, Op.cit 15.
[33] Andrew Vincent, *The Nature* Op.cit p. 60.
[34] Charles Taylor, *HAL* See Preface.
[35] Robert. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 138-39.
[36] Robert Dahl 'The Behavioral Approach to Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to Successful Protest' in *American Political Science Review,* 55 (December. 1961) pp., 766-71.

as 'post-behavioural' in 1969.[37] For Easton, the post-behavioural development was linked to the counter cultural movements of the late 1960s and the inability of the behavioural movement to deal with the complex normative issues arising out of the Vietnam war and the civil rights debates. Meanwhile, influenced by Continental Europe, new orientations for political and social enquiry such as critical theory, hermeneutics, structuralism, post-structuralism, etc. also emerged in opposition to the positivist approach.

In the critical theory school, Habermas claimed that science, regardless of how it perceives itself, is a social interest and cannot be grasped outside sociality or 'life-world.' He conceived positivist reason or instrumental reason as only a particular conception of reason that has come to dominate all spheres of human interests in our times. If seen as the sole dimension of knowledge and reason, such 'objectifying description of society migrates into the life-world, we become alienated from ourselves as communicatively acting subjects'.[38] It is only one knowledge-constitutive interest of the human species, the technical interest in control.[39] For Habermas, then, the positivistic conception of reason undermines the crucial dimensions of reason that underpin human understanding and communications and deal with issues of power, ideology, distortion of ideas and genuine emancipatory concerns.

Influenced by French thinkers such as Levi-Strauss, Althusser, the structuralists rejected the positivistic claim that certain knowledge can be obtained by the efforts of individual subjectivity.[40] Analyses of political and social practices were supposed to be done only at the level of totality; elements, parts, internal relations all should be viewed with reference to totality. Conscious agents do not create the system of meaning in which they live; rather as social subjects they are created by the system and live within it. To understand individual behaviour, therefore, political/ social scientists must attend to the inner logic which orders the various elements comprising the social/ political system as a whole.

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[37] David Easton, *The Political System: An Inquiry into the State of Political Science*, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1953, 1971 2nd Edition). The second edition has a new epilogue.

[38] James Schmidt (ed.), *What is Enlightenment? Eighteenth Century Answers and Twentieth Century Questions*, (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1996) 419.

[39] In his book, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, Habermas isolates three non-reducible human interests as technical, practical and emancipatory. The first is concerned with work, the second with interaction, and the third with power relations, These interests correspond to three major-knowledge-based sciences, the empirical-analytic sciences, focused on technical cognitive interests or technical control; second, the historical-hermeneutic sciences embodying practical interests, communications and symbolic interaction; third, critical oriented social sciences, incorporating emancipatory interests. See Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, (Boston: Beacon, 1971), 308.

[40] Christopher Tilly, (Ed) *Reading Material Culture*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) See Introduction.

Post-structuralism of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan further critiqued positivism by arguing that not only our confidence in scientific method is naïve, but that meaning is always indeterminate.[41] They abandoned the structuralist claim about the possibility of establishing objective knowledge by denying even the stability of the surface structure of a phenomenon and its underlying deep structure. Instead, they emphasised that the assumed difference between surface structure and deep structure is itself a product of signification, not some real or ultimate difference. Hence, the meaning of any text or phenomenon is not to be sought in some dimension of depth or beneath the text itself, but in the constant shifting play of signification of the text's own element. Genuine signification is ever changing and cannot be captured by exclusive attention to stable linguistic structures.[42]

The German influence could be found in the hermeneutical approach to the study of politics that denied the 'unity of science' thesis. Proponents of hermeneutics argued that the nature of human subjectivity is different from the nature of objects accounted for in natural sciences. The human social world prevails by 'meaningfulness' and, therefore, should be interpreted. The first notable argument in favour of an interpretive understanding of social behaviour can be traced to the work of Wilhelm Dilthey and the sociological approach of *verstehen*[43] by Max Weber. All this happened towards the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. With the ascendancy of empiricist political science between 1920s and 1960s, it had receded to the background. Influenced by the existential and phenomenological insights of Heidegger and Gadamer, Taylor in 1970s became the major figure in reviving this tradition.[44]

In the Anglo-Saxon world, new rigorous normative political theory works such as John Rawls's A *Theory of Justice* (1971), Robert Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), Ronald Dworkin's *Taking Rights Seriously* (1977), Bruce Ackerman's *Social Justice in the Liberal State* (1983) among others appeared to reclaim the academic stage.[45] With these developments and the growing dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in the discipline, the earlier confidence in the

[41] David C. Durst, 'The Place of the Political in Derrida and Foucault', *Review Article Political Theory*, Vol 28, No 5 (October 2000): 675-689. Also, see, Alan Finlayson and Jeremy Valentine, (ed.) *Politics and Post Structuralism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002).

[42] Peter Dew, *Logics of Disintegration: Post Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory London*: Verso, 1987) xi.

[43] The German term- verstehen refers to the interpretive understanding of the intended meaning and significance that an action has for an actor performing it.

[44] Michael T. Gibbons, 'Hermeneutics, Political Inquiry, and Practical Reason: An Evolving Challenge to Political Science' in *American Political Science Review* Vol. 100, No. 4 (November 2006): 565.

[45] David Maurrice, *Philosophy, Science and Ideology in Political Thought*, (London: Macmillan Press. 1996), 21-22. However, some thinkers such as Bhikhu Parekh, Op.cit., 503-518, would argue that there is no evidence to argue that there was 'death of philosophy". Nevertheless, most commentators would certainly agree that there was 'neglect' of normative works due to prominence of empirical political theory. See J. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991); R Nozick. *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974); Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously*, (London Duckworth), 1977); B. Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State*, (Yale University Press, 1980): and M. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980).

infallibility associated with scientific method began to recede by mid 1970s. The revival of normative theory in the study of politics led to some serious debates about the nature of social justice, pluralism, nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s, and communitarianism and multiculturalism in the 1990s and the 2000s.[46]

Amongst these critics of positivism, those who claim that our social or political practices are constituted by language practices can be labeled as interpretive modes of enquirers. In the general sense, the term interpretive modes of enquiry include various forms such as hermeneutics, pragmatism, and genealogy, etc. These forms emphasise the different aspects of constitution of social practices by language. The hermeneutical approach underlines the centrality of language in the constitution of social practices, while the genealogical approach claims that this constitution of social practices by language is always 'masked'.[47] Pragmatic approach stresses the practical effects of the constitution of social and political practices by our language. In contrast to the disengaged view of the self and the correspondence theory of language or meaning in positivism, the interpretive approach emphasises the constitutive or coherence theory of language or meaning while rejecting the Cartesian notion of self.

The study of politics in the twentieth century could thus be outlined in terms of the rise of positivism till early 1970s and the subsequent growth of challenge to its narrow conception of politics.[48] By the mid-1970s the challenges to positivism grew strong enough to make the field of political enquiry methodologically plural in nature with alternatives creating niches for themselves. In this pluralist space the differences between positivism and its critics could be found at the philosophical as well as meta-theoretical level. The ontological and epistemological category used by these modes of enquiries (positivists and their critics) for making sense of 'reality' is radically different. The differences are not simply over the aspects of ʻreality' but the very way in which ʻreality' is conceived. In Kuhnian terminology, these orientations for the study of politics and social life are incommensurable. Due to this radical nature of difference between these modes of enquiries, the issues related to explanation of social and political reality such as value-neutrality/ objectivity, notion of subject, nature of reason, role of language in constitution of reality, nature of truth, etc. emerge as significant issues to be taken into account. The manner

[46] Andrew Vincent, Op cit, 108-126. Also see Alan Finlayson, *Contemporary Political Thought: A Reader and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003).
[47] The literal English translation of the German word "hermeneutics" is interpretation, in the twentieth century, the term refers to a specific approach to understanding and explaining in social sciences and humanities which attempts to explain social and political life in terms of the language.
[48] M. Bevir, 'Governance and Interpretation: What Are the Implications of Post-foundationalism?' *Public Administration* 82 (3) (2004): 605-625.

in which a mode of enquiry conceives these categories for explanation of human reality determines what conception of politics it entails.

III. Way Ahead: A Critical Engagement

The debate is not settled in favour of any particular mode of enquiry as yet. The 'methodological pluralism 'continues in the discipline of politics. The empiricists, in response to various criticisms, have abandoned their earlier atomistic and analytical style that sought explanations based on correlations, classifications and ahistorical typologies. Instead, now they defend their approach against universal theories and methodological sophistication of behaviouralism and rational choice by claiming that they are sensitive to agency, context, and history. Mainstream political science has broadened its research agenda to themes such as public policy, political economy, governance, devolution of state institutions, public service delivery, and so on.[49] In recent times this has been further expanded with the inclusion of policy network analysis, power-dependence in the core executive, cultural theory, rational choice theories of regulation, transaction cost economics, and historical institutionalism.[50] Mainstream political science now atomises and classifies political science into a set of discreet subfields.

However, despite these efforts, the empiricist school continues to adhere to a disengaged view of the subject, nomological laws for explanation of reality and correspondence theory of language or meaning. The modem empiricists ignore the extent to which their correlations and typologies represent a rejection of interpretive approaches. While trying to be sensitive to agency, context and history, they show little awareness about objectification and scienticism. They fail to acknowledge their approach as one among several possible narratives. There is no attempt to put rival narratives side-by-side.[51]

We can see that mainstream political science is still hesitant to take into account the development of interpretive approaches to politics. This reluctance is partly due to the identification of 'interpretation' with the historicism of the nineteenth century thinkers such as James Bryce, John

[49] A Gamble, 'Theories of British Politics', *Political Studies* 38: (1990) 404-20. And L. Tivey, *Interpretations of British Politics*, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988).
[50] J. Hayward 'British Approaches to Politics: The Dawn of a Self-Deprecating Discipline', in J. Hayward, B. Barry and A. Brown (eds.), *The British Study of Politics in the Twentieth Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
[51] M. Bevir and R. A. W. Rhodes, 'Traditions of Political Science in Contemporary Britain', in *Modern Political Science: Anglo-American Exchanges since 1880* (Eds.) R. Adcock, M. Bevir and S. Stimson, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

Seeley and Max Weber. This notion of interpretation was 'subjective' with focus on the intended meaning and significance that an action had for an actor performing it.[52] However, over the time, as can be seen in the work of Gadamer and Taylor, the notion of interpretive project has changed from historicism and verstehen to a form of inquiry that places language and background social practices at the centre of social explanations (what Clifford Geertz has called depth hermeneutics).[53] Despite these substantial changes, many political scientists continue to frame interpretation in terms of empathy or as a source of insight with only heuristic value.[54] They view the interpretation of meaning as a methodological issue. In addition, there is also great misunderstanding towards the structuralist and post-structuralist theories. Empirical political science polemically dismisses these approaches, especially post-structuralism, as 'irrational'. In these dismissals, mainstream political science misses an important opportunity to engage with other conceptions of study of politics so as to enrich itself.

On the other hand, the interpretive modes of enquiry reject the Cartesian conception of self and the correspondence theory of language or meaning which formed the basis of the positivist framework. They reject the Cartesian conception about the central role played by the individual human consciousness in apprehending the world and the‘ human subject-centered' paradigm of epistemology that attempts to bring the world under the reflective control of individual reason, cognition and will. This philosophical approach dominated the Western thought from Descartes to Husserl. They are also skeptical about the idea of private language and the subjective notion of ‘interiority'.[55] Further, the interpretive theories reject the correspondence theory of language. They deny the idea that language simply pictures or corresponds with or represents an external world, that political reality and the language that is used to grasp this social/ political life are independent of each other. Rather, they believe that political/social practices are expressed and constituted by the language that is used to grasp it. In other words, reality and language are 'enmeshed' in each other, the language is constitutive of reality and is essential to its being the kind of realty it is.[56] Their emphasis is not on understanding the individual subject, but on inter-subjectivity, structure, discourse or dialogue, as the primary medium of understanding reality.

[52] Michael T Gibbons ‘Hermeneutics, Political Inquiry, and Practical Reason: An Evolving Challenge to Political Science’, *American Political Science Review* (November 2006): 563-571.
[53] By depth hermeneutics and depth interpretation means explanation in terms of the language, tacit ideas, inchoate understandings, and historical background and social practices that helped constitute a way of life. (See, e.g., Gadamer 1989; Taylor 1985a).
[54] Michael T Gibbons, ‘Hermeneutics, Political Inquiry, and Practical Reason’ Op.cit, 563.
[55] Caroline Williams, ‘The Subject and Subjectivity’, in *Politics and Post-Structuralism*, Op cit, 23-35.
[56] Charles Taylor, ‘Language and Human Nature’, in *Interpreting Politics* (Ed.) Michael T Gibbons, Op cit 101-131.

Language, therefore, is key to comprehending reality.[57] Meaning is intrinsically tied to intentional activity and has a social dimension. Language or discourse is intimately tied to action.

This constitutive theory of language is significant for the study of politics. The very notion of the term 'political' changes radically with this. Since language does not provide any clear or unambiguous universal foundation and words do not refer to elementary objects in the world, propositions about the world must be grasped in the context of political/ social practices. There is no unmediated reality outside of language. Rather meaning is resident in linguistic conventions. In effect, this means rejection of all conceptual essentialism inspired by logical positivism.[58] Failure of positivism to understand this inter-subjectivity led it to define politics in terms of a finite range of distinct universal or basic issues encapsulated by such terms as power, justice, obligation, state.

Looking from a different perspective, a constitutive theory of language also means abandonment of the notion of independent reality which could act as standard for us to compare our theories. Our sense of reality is now internally generated by the language categories used to grasp that reality. If we have different sets of categories and concepts to apprehend reality, then we would have different versions of reality which may be incommensurable to each other resulting in the problem of relativism. The interpretive approach, hence, seems to be intimately related to the problem of relativism.[59] Several features of the natural science explanation model such as verifiability, value-neutrality, etc. that gave a sense of certitude to our explanations, would no longer be available to the interpretive approach. A problem of validation may emerge in this approach. Several contemporary proponents of the interpretive mode of enquiry - Peter Winch, Steven Lukes, Brian Fay, Clifford Geertz, William Connolly, Jurgen Habermas, Richard Rorty, Michel Foucault, Charles Taylor and others - have tried to address these issues.

Peter Winch, in his famous article 'Understanding a Primitive Society', examines this issue of interpretation and relativism in the context of Azande tribe's crop rites for rains.[60] According to Winch, it would be wrong for Western scholars to judge the Azande crop rites from the Western means-end rationality. These crop rites have a different kind of expressive conception of intelligibility, in operation. It is an expressive, not a technical, activity in which possible misfortunes are symbolically represented and the ability of the tribe to sustain these misfortunes

[57] Richard Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967,1992).
[58] Charles Taylor, 'Language and Human Nature', Op. cit.
[59] Michael T Gibbons, *Interpreting Politics, Introduction*, Op.cit, 6. Brian Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science: A Multicultural Approach*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) 77- 84.
[60]. Peter Winch, *Understanding a Primitive Society, in Interpreting Politics* (Ed.) Michael T Gibbons, Op.cit, 32-63. See also Peter Winch, *The Idea of Social Science,* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958).

is reaffirmed. The notion of intelligibility is neither fixed nor universal here. Assessment of any culture by some objective standard would therefore be inadequate. In fact, Winch claims that our sense of reality and rationality are completely internally generated and are sufficient for evaluating practices. However, he does not explain the issue of how we explain violations of internal standards of rationality when we encounter them.

In the context of non-western pre-modern societies, Clifford Geertz explains how language and symbolic systems available in a culture delimit and express different possibilities of the self. In understanding a different culture, we cannot shed our own language and see things exactly as natives do. Nor can we impose our concepts on the other culture. Inspired by Gilbert Ryle's notion of thin and thick descriptions, he explores the levels of meanings beyond subjective intentions operating in a culture. Geertz describes how depth is acquired through a process of interplay between ‘experience-near' and ‘experience distant' concepts in a hermeneutic circle of part and whole. His work connects small, intense, dense descriptions of individual activities to broader cultural interpretations and generalisations. His work too emphasises the internal coherence, especially various levels, of meanings.[61]

Refuting relativism from a rationalist position, Steven Lukes claims that there exist universal and objective concepts and criteria of truth, logic, rationality, and reality. If it were not so then activities such as comparing, translating, criticising and understanding would not have been possible. These are possible only when one assumes a 'common bridgehead' of beliefs and standards. We can understand/ another belief system only when we are able to translate the other system or language into our own. Thus, the concepts of truth, logic, rationality, and reality are both universal and fundamental. These are universal because they operate in all languages and belief systems. These are fundamental because they set constraints to all thought. If we are to understand another culture, and if that culture "has a language in which it expresses its beliefs”, it must minimally possess criteria of truth (as correspondence to a common and independent reality) and logic, which are not context dependent.[62] Without a correspondence theory of truth and formal logic, we would be unable to communicate with any other culture. Luke's position is able to identify and explain the effects of ideology. He believes that reality is masked in some way and the role of interpretive theory should be to reveal these concealments.

Brian Fay finds that interpretive theory ignores few things: (1) various causal factors (e.g. technological developments) that contribute to the rise of certain meanings, (2) the unintended

[61] Geertz. Clifford, ‘From the Native's Point of View: One Nature of Anthropological Understanding’, *Bulletin of the Academy of Arts and Sciences*, vol.28, no.1 (1974): 26-45.
62 Steven Lukes, 'On the Social Determination of Truth', *Interpreting Politics* (Ed.) Michael T Gibbons 64-81. S. Lukes, 'Some Problems about Rationality', in *Rationality* (Ed.), B. Wilson, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970).

consequences of actions, (3) the structural conflicts, between different aspects of social life, particularly where actors' accounts are inconsistent with their actual practices, and (4) the explanation of social change, i.e. how constitutive meanings change over time. These shortcomings are due to two major flaws in the interpretive theory: first, search for internal standards of rationality and, second, emphasis that all social tensions are located in communicative misunderstandings rather than in social practices and institutions themselves. For these reasons, interpretive theory is not able to account for the resistance of social actors to explanations that are at odds with their self understandings. Hence, it is conservative in orientation.[63] It leads people to reconcile with their social order by demonstrating to them that actual practice is inherently rational.

William Connolly suggests that we should move beyond pure interpretation, that is, emphasis on internal coherence. Pure interpretation cannot account for deep inconsistencies between appearance (to individuals of the reality) and reality (of the structures). Like structuralists, the inter-subjective and subjective meanings should not be treated as mere effects of structures. Instead, we must show that the self-understanding of the individuals partly shapes the structures. Thus, in order to bring out these inconsistencies between appearance and reality/ the self-identity of participants should be linked to the institutional and structural constraints. By doing so we would be able to explain why new interpretations at odds with that of self-understanding might meet considerable resistance. It would show how structural-level features contribute to understanding at the individual level. Hence, it explains the creation and continuation of certain political relationships that remain invisible to the political actors involved. For Connolly, interpretation, due to the linkage of agency and structure, not only does not encourage political conservatism that is attributed to it but it can also engages with inconsistencies.[64]

Hans-Georg Gadamer writes that we should not seek objectivity as it is an impossible ideal. In fact, our prejudices and pre-judgements, rather than being a hindrance, are enabling factors in our understanding.[65] It is wrong for us to consider the authority of tradition as a dogmatic antithesis of reason. That is a misunderstanding created by Enlightenment legacy. It is the language that enables the possibilities of reflective awareness for us. Our everyday language and linguistic competence form the basis upon which all other kinds of understanding and experience

[63] Brian Fay, 'An Alternative View: Interpretive Social Science', in *Social Theory and Political Practice London: Allen and Unwin*, 1975) 70-91. Brian Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science*, pp. 112-116.
[64] William. E, Connolly, *Appearance and Reality in Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press. 1982) 63-89, 202-5. Also reprinted in *Interpreting Politics* (Ed.), Michael T Gibbons, Op.cit, 148-174.
[65] Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1975), 241-267.

ultimately rest.[66] Our critiques take place against a background of shared understanding and meaning. These must be assimilated by everyday understanding and, therefore, be translatable into the language of everyday life. This makes our everyday language the last language of theoretical understanding for social and political theory.[67]

While appreciating the importance of interpretive theory, Habermas finds problem with the hermeneutics' claim to universality. The problem with hermeneutics' emphasis on the role of language in understanding is that it neglects the possibility of non-linguistic human understanding. Second, unlike psychoanalysis and the critique of ideology, it denies the possibility of systematically distorted communication.[68] The linguistic tradition in hermeneutics denies that there could be structural limits to understanding which cannot be identified, explained, or overcome by the communicative competence.[69] It supposes that our inherited linguistic tradition is itself the locus of truth and undistorted agreement. It ignores the role of power or coercion in distortion of inter-subjective communication. In linguistic tradition there is no validation of interpretation outside the self-reflection of all involved participants. Instead, in order to avoid these shortcomings, the process of understanding can be connected to the principle of rational discourse. This involves a notion of truth that is attained by consensus under the idealized conditions of unlimited communication free from domination. Habermas identifies validity claims of truth, appropriateness and sincerity as the conditions of undistorted communication.[70] Hence, he emphasises the critical capacity of methodologically informed understanding.

Richard Rorty claims that interpretive theory, despite its opposition to natural science, could not free itself from the natural science reasoning. As natural science tries to find the most appropriate language for a natural phenomenon, interpretive theory attempts to find the most appropriate language to study human actions. Both are inadequate. Just as the language of science is not the true language of nature, the language and self-understanding of political actors is not the foundational or true language of politics. Science does not give us more objective accounts of the world. Its value and success lie in its pragmatic results; it is simply a better or worse way of

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[66] Op.cit 366-431 pp. Also, Taylor, Charles, 'Language and Human Nature' *Interpreting Politics* (Ed.). Michael T Gibbons, Op.cit, 101-131. See also Joel C Weinsheimer, *Gadamer 's Hermeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1985).

[67] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 57-59 and 71-74. Hence forth *SS*.

[68] Jurgen Habermas, 'The Hermeneutic Claim to Universality', in *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics and Method, Philosophy and Critique*, (Ed.) Josef Bliecher, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980) 181-211.

[69] Jurgen Habermas, 'The Hermeneutic Claim to Universality', in *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics and Method, Philosophy and Critique*, (Ed.) Josef Bliecher, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980)181-211.

[70] Jurgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, (Boston Mass: Beacon Press, 1978). Also Jurgen Habermas, 'On Systematically Distorted Communication', Inquiry, 13: (1970a): 360-75.

fulfilling some purpose. Similarly, hermeneutics too does not describe human actions more objectively and is not any more epistemologically privileged than empirical political science.[71] In order to escape this relativism, Rorty suggests two ways: first, genealogy as conceived by Foucault and second, like Dewey, to emphasise on the moral importance of social science to deepen our sense of community. Rorty prefers Dewey over Foucault as Dewey is not pessimistic (like Foucault) and gives hope that is not grounded in some truth about the nature of human beings.[72]

Understanding Interpretive Orientations

Different interpretive thinkers deal with the relation between interpretation, objectivity/relativism, rationality, truth, reality and critique in different ways. The debate is still exploratory in nature. In accordance with their orientations, these interpretive thinkers can be broadly divided into two groups: those who pursue, 'hermeneutics of recovery', and others who pursue 'hermeneutics of suspicion'.[73]

Hermeneutics of recovery insists that the goal of interpretation is the recovery of the original meaning of a political or social practice. It primarily aims at uncovering internal coherence amongst ideas, beliefs, intentions, actions, and practice to show how the understanding of participants makes sense in terms of the institutions and relationships within which they are located. The constitutive role of language with respect to the world is emphasised here. The thinkers who could be placed in this category are Peter Winch, Clifford Geertz, Gadamer and Charles Taylor, etc.[74]

In contrast, 'hermeneutics of suspicion' to which Marx, Freud, Nietzsche and Foucault would subscribe, insists that the self-understanding available to political and social actors is basically flawed. Rather than being merely constitutive of social reality, such an understanding actually masks the underlying reality. In other words, the self-understanding of participants hides a more fundamental meaning to texts or practices. As a result, a hermeneutics concerned primarily with the exposition of that self-understanding would only be able to develop a restricted critical perspective on the social life it attempts to explain. It fails to explain the most significant aspects

[71] Richard Rorty, 'Method, Social Science and Social Hope', in *Consequence of Pragmatism*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 191-210.
[72] Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 44-69.
[73] Michael T Gibbons, *Interpreting Politics*, 'Introduction', Op.cit, 4-31. Also See Henrietta Moore, 'Paul Ricouer: Action, Meaning Text' in *Reading Material Culture* (Ed.) Christopher Tilly.
[74] Michael T Gibbons, *Interpreting Politics*, 'Introduction', Op.cit 4. Jurgen Habermas, 'The Hermeneutic Claim to Universality' in *Contemporary Hermeneutics.*

of that polity. Therefore, according to hermeneutics of suspicion, the appropriate goal for interpretive social science is to penetrate the self-understanding of everyday life and uncover meanings (hidden or real, for some) of social and political practices.[75] As the above explication of the two models of hermeneutics shows, 'hermeneutics of recovery', with emphasis on the constitutive role of language, leans towards the 'politics of attunement'. It tends to emphasise integrative aspects more than critical aspects in theory. It seeks internal coherence amongst ideas, beliefs, intentions, actions, and practices to reconcile the understanding of individuals with those of institutions and relationships. This view conceives truth to be socially determined and our perceptions of reality to be totally theory-dependent (no theory-independent objects of perception) with no universal and fundamental criteria of truth. It claims that all standards of rationality and reality are internally generated, thereby confining social theorists and actors to conventional standards of critical evaluation. Thus, hermeneutics of recovery, for its critics, tends to encourage 'politics of accord' and lacks critical thrust.[76] On the other hand, hermeneutics of suspicion links social practices with power/domination/illusion. It tends to discourage identification with social practices and encourages 'a politics of discord'.[77]

Bringing in Taylor and Foucault

A comparison of these two models, 'hermeneutics of recovery and 'hermeneutics of suspicion', would bring out the relation between interpretation, objectivity/relativism, rationality, truth and reality, and possibilities of politics into relief. Such a comparison could make the notion of interpretation clear. It shall examine the appropriateness of interpretation as a kind of explanation in the study of political and social life. Does the interpretative mode of enquiry have the potential to effectively replace the positivist explanation model or does its significance lie as a critique of positivist mode of enquiry? More importantly, is interpretive theory really able to resolve adequately the philosophical and methodological issues related to explanation such as problems of relativism, truth, rationality, etc. that emerge on the acceptance of constitutive theory of meaning? The main problem addressed was whether pursuing interpretation as a mode of enquiry

[75] Michael T Gibbons, *Interpreting Politics,* 'Introduction', Op.cit, 4-31.

[76] Josef Bleicher (Ed.), *Hermeneutics and Method, Philosophy and Critique* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 181-211.

[77] This categorization of interpretive thinkers into these two categories is indicative only. Thinkers such as Taylor, Foucault, Habermas and Rorty would not fit in very neatly into this classification when elaborate details of their interpretive theory are taken into consideration. For instance, despite his emphasis on the role of language in interpretation, Gadamer does not speak simply about recovering meanings but through his notion of 'fusion of horizon' also emphasises on revelation of new meanings. While emphasizing the significance of interpretation, Habermas still believes that interpretive theory could not.

means abandoning our ability to set standards for judging changes in society/ politics as good or bad and succumb to relativism-- an issue that does not arise with naturalism for its assumption of an independent reality.

Taylor and Foucault approach this problem of overcoming naturalism and the issue of relativism in radically different ways through hermeneutics and genealogy respectively. We have here for comparison two rival thinkers with ‘coherence' and 'discontinuity/rupture' as their key themes respectively. Taylor and Foucault can be seen as belonging to hermeneutics of recovery and hermeneutics of suspicion respectively. Each has different implications for the study of politics and society. Both attempt to go beyond the 'essentialist legacy of Enlightenment. They can be seen as trying to overcome the disengaged view of agency and the correspondence theory of knowledge implicit in the natural science explanation model. Both are critical of the idea of a knowing subject with a transparent relationship to the world and removed from history. By accepting the constitutive theory of meaning over the correspondence theory they claim that the study of political/ social life is not restricted to empirically identifiable behaviour and subjective attitudes only. For them, explanation of the political life on the basis of empirical social science is insufficient for explaining important aspects of political and social life. They are too thin to identify and account for the more profound meaning and sense of political life. While Taylor suggests his post-Heideggerian hermeneutics as a solution; Foucault proposes his Nietzsche inspired genealogy as the way to go beyond essentialism.

In order to go beyond empirically identifiable behaviour and subjective intentions, Taylor uses hermeneutics to suggest that we have to delve deeper to uncover meanings (depth-hermeneutics) and practices of language and political life that form the social matrix against which subjective intentions are formed.[78] Taylor calls these meanings inherent in the social practices as 'intersubjective' meanings and 'common’ meanings. These meanings enable us to express not just subjective preferences of the individuals but also possibilities of the self-inherent in the social practices. They also bring out the relationship between the self and society, and the possibilities for a political life in general inherent in social practices. These meanings are expressed in the language of the community. For Taylor, then, language constitutes social reality. In fact, social practices and language are enmeshed in each other. Human beings are constituted by these language practices. Society is much more than the sum of all individuals. Beyond subjective preferences it also inherits possibilities of the self. Language is not something we can create individually; it is necessarily social and inter-subjective.

[78] Clifford Geertz, ‘The term Depth Hermeneutics means explanation in terms of the language, tacit ideas, inchoate understandings, and historical background and social practices that helped constitute a way of life’ (Cited in Gibbons ‘Hermeneutics, Political Inquiry, and Practical Reason: An Evolving Challenge to Political Science’, Op.cit, 563.

According to Taylor, our identities are dialogical products of our interactions with others. Humans are self-interpreting creatures who are partly constituted by their own interpretations. Therefore, human actions cannot be understood simply by observation. These are essentially intentional and involve meanings; therefore, interpretation is needed when there are ‘breeches of subjectivity'. Hermeneutics has to bridge the gap between the familiar and the taken-for-granted world and the strange and unfamiliar meanings that resist easy assimilation and understanding. ‘Coherence', thus, is one of the primary tasks of the interpretation.

Interpretations are based on tacit pre-understanding of the self which can never be made fully explicit. The 'horizon' of interpretation is always hidden. Interpretations are expressed in medium and the articulation of interpretation in a medium is more than a representation of reality. Interpretation expresses our predicament and enables us to take a reflexive stance towards ourselves. By articulating their predicament humans become aware of their intentions, goals, etc. in new ways and become more self-conscious. Consciously directed human action is qualitatively better than unconscious action. The presumptions of humans change as they try to articulate their predicament. In understanding one's own condition or in an attempt to understand the unfamiliar, the self is provoked to reconsider its own presumptions. As a result, the self develops a 'new language of contrast' that takes into account both the interpreter as well as the other's language. A 'fusion of horizon' takes place. This new understanding thus arrived at is richer and clearer than the earlier one. It clarifies what was inchoate or unrealized earlier. However, this articulation is never final but is part of a never-ending process in which prediction of the future is not possible.

Taylor claims that despite the conception of self-changing with interpretation, there is no need to succumb to relativism. Relativism paralyses action by not being able to explain changes adequately. If one does not have some notion of change as advancement one would not be able to judge between two sets of social/ political practices, which would make pursuance of social life impossible. Taylor suggests his notion of practical reason as a way out of this impasse of relativism (It has been explained in detail in Chapter three and Chapter five).

Taylor has been criticised by some scholars as a proponent of the 'politics of attunement' due to his attempts to reconcile seemingly incompatible values and his emphasis on coherence in practices.[79] His hermeneutics emphasises the integration of others with the will of the community rather than giving them social space to pursue their beliefs.

In contrast to Taylor, Foucault suggests his genealogy or discourse-analysis as a way to go beyond empirically identifiable behaviour and subjective intentions. Foucault claims that

[79] William, Connolly ‘Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness’, *Political Theory,* Vol. 1 3 No.3, and (August 1985): 365-376. Also see William E Connolly, *Politics and Ambiguity*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

discursive practices should not be reduced to familiar categories of individual *oeuvre*, academic discipline, books, etc. which are 'unities' created by a number of cross-cutting discourses and practices. If we take into account the 'instability of various differences' that exists in our language practices (e.g., between saying and doing, or seeing and speaking), we would find that regularities are attained by discursive practices only at the level of 'episteme' or 'regime of practice'. Hence, the regularity of the discourse is at the unconscious level of discursive practices and not at the conscious level of the individuals or at the conscious level of the structure. We should therefore analyse society at the broader historical level of 'regimes of practices' than at the level of discipline or individuals.

In these discourses, power is the primary entity that permeates and moulds everything else. All other values such as truth, and rationality are produced by the specific power configuration prevailing in a society. These 'unities' become fixed over time; their metaphorical origins get forgotten as they appear as 'natural or 'true' or 'knowledge'. Knowledge always involves imposition of order on the primeval chaos by vested interests or a 'will to power'. Therefore, there are no 'truths' to be revealed by interpretations. All interpretations are partial and equally valid. Each episteme (epoch) in history has its own 'truth' determined by the discourses shaping it. There are no abstract and universal truths for all times. Rather, truth is relative to episteme which are incommensurable to each other. The success of any particular discourse of knowledge depends on its connections with networks of power. In every society, 'power-knowledge' produces some forms of truth and disqualifies others. The new episteme arises from ruptures in the ordering of experience. Foucault is not interested in finding out the reasons for such ruptures. For him, changes are simply changes, and cannot be judged as gains or losses. The episteme simply changes from one to another without any 'real meaning' lying beneath these changes. In modern society, the production of truth, which is a function of power-knowledge, has a disciplinary, normalising form that requires the 'creation of man', both as subject and object of power-knowledge. The modern episteme operates through the production and reproduction of subjects.

The aim of genealogy is to link the unities existing in any particular epoch to the specific networks of power-knowledge within which they are entangled. These 'unities' are not simply conventions in a society but conventions that also assist in reproducing practices of the discourses. The task of the genealogy is to demystify the 'unities' link to power-knowledge strategies in an episteme. It attempts to reveal that knowledge is not innocent but always an imposition of power on recalcitrant material. Genealogy does not 'grasp the real truth out there' but does 'violence to the discourse' through rhetorical strategies to unsettle the taken-for-granted

conventions. This is done by revealing the historical, contingent, and arbitrary aspects of discourses through rhetorical usage of language. Genealogy shows that our practices of the self are results of accidents, and contingent developments that are presented to us as necessities.

In the context of 'modern' episteme, genealogy attempts to show that practices of the self are productions and reproductions of conventions. It shows how "body is inscribed by practices of power-knowledge; how it is organised, arranged, directed, mobilised; in short, how it is made a disciplined instrument to create the modern subject".[80] It destroys the subject "who seeks knowledge in the endless deployment of the will to knowledge.[81] That closes us from the heterogeneity of human life. Hence, for Foucault, genealogy seeks to explode and dissipate the unities that our discursive practices encourage. It encourages... "the play of discordance between the self and social identities that our discourse produces by deploying the parodical, the farcical, reversal of meanings and strategic exemplars".[82] Foucault's genealogy, thus, encourages, a 'politics of discord'. He supports relativism by not privileging one set of value judgments over another. For him, changes in a society are simply changes; they cannot be evaluated as gains or losses.

It is now evident that Taylor and Foucault have approached the problem of overcoming naturalism and the issue of relativism in radically diverse ways. Their notion of interpretation seems to be moving in different directions. Taylor can broadly be seen as belonging to the 'hermeneutics of recovery' while Foucault to 'hermeneutics of suspicion'. If we place the two interpretive thinkers along the axis of hermeneutics of recovery and hermeneutics of suspicion, we would find Taylor and Foucault to be at the opposite ends of the axis, making a good contrast. Therefore, a comparison between these two thinkers would bring out the possibilities of the notion of interpretation as a mode of explanation.

Taylor claims that despite the sense of reality being internally generated by language we can still determine one interpretation to be superior to another and consequently endorse one way of life as superior to another. On the other hand, Foucault takes a value-neutral stance and claims that there is no way one description of reality can be considered to be superior to another as they are effects of arbitrary power-knowledge strategies. We have two rival thinkers with 'coherence' and 'discontinuity/rupture' respectively as their key themes to compare. Each has different implications for the study of politics and society. Taylor's hermeneutics tends to encourage

[80] M Gibbons, *Interpreting Politics,* 'Introduction', Op.cit, 22.
[81] M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (NY: Pantheon 1977), 30. Gibbons, *Interpreting Politics, Introduction*, Op.cit, 22.
[82] Gibbons, *Interpreting Politics,* 'Introduction', Op.cit,

politics of accord' and lacks critical thrust, while Foucault's genealogy furthers politics of discord.

So, the obvious question emerges which among the two, hermeneutics or genealogy, is more adequate an orientation for studying social and political life? Are the critical possibilities of interpretive theory overshadowed by its emphasis on the internal standards of rationality and constitutive meanings? Can it give us criteria to choose between various explanations, that is, can it help us in affirming to values? Is it justified in making the kind of claims about its ability to explain social life as it does? Does its value lie primarily in being a critique of positivist conceptions of political inquiry or does it have any of its own strength to explain political life? Finally, what prospects does the interpretive political/social theory have for a non-Western country such as India?

More specific questions concerning Taylor and Foucault that have been pursued are: Can the notion of agency be totally ignored as has been done by Foucault's genealogy? Can power be conceived (as done by Foucault) as the all-pervasive entity determining everything else as its effect? Does pursuing teleology mean that our results are already determined by what is taken for granted by us? Does hermeneutics' emphasis on recovery meaning mean denial of otherness? Can interpretation really provide good grounds for critique of the society?

In order to answer the aforementioned questions, this study has examined the works of Charles Taylor and Michel Foucault. This involved critical evaluation of several methodological and philosophical issues related to their notion of interpretation. The comparison has been done with regard to the following key themes:

a) The notion of human subject. (Depth as achievement vs. Depth as illusion/ trap)

One major difference between Taylor and Foucault is the notion of human subject in their works. While both have criticised the notion of 'disengaged subject' of naturalism, they differ vastly on the alternative they have given to the naturalist conception of self. Taylor asserts that human subjects inescapably have 'depths'. The practices of the self are articulations of the possibilities of the self. On the other hand, Foucault claims that depth in humans is an illusion created by the power configuration in tandem with normalisation and discipline of the institutions.

b) Orientation towards Knowledge (Non-deterministic teleology vs. Power pervasive genealogy)

Taylor proposes hermeneutics with teleology implicit in it as his orientation to make sense of political and social life. Teleology enables him to account for the potentialities among humans and, thus, explain change as advancement. The notion of teleology has been criticised for being

deterministic and making humans pursue purposes as part of their essences. In contrast, Foucault's genealogy makes sense of the political and social life by giving primacy to power. He does not believe in the notion of ‘progress' or 'advancement'; suggesting that we move from one 'regime of truth' to another with ruptures in between. He supports relativism by claiming that there is no independent 'vantage point' to judge one epoch/ period as superior to other.

c) Notion of critique (Politics of accord vs. Politics of discord)

While Taylor prefers integration of the self with the will of the community, Foucault prefers to "unsettle” the conventions of the production of the self to reveal the nature of masked domination prevalent in our social practices.

These three themes will be discussed while comparing the two thinkers. The second theme is the main part of the thesis. The first and third themes have been taken up as they are inextricably linked to the second theme, the problem of relativism. The notion of human subject influences the way political and social life is studied and this would further determine what kind of political intervention one would endorse. The focus of the comparison has been the notion of interpretation and its impact on the notion of critique of political/ social life. The contents have been dealt at the methodological and philosophical level (notion or explanation, objectivity, etc) than at the level of politics. It is not a comparison of politics in general. This is the reason why political concepts of Taylor and Foucault have not been dealt in great detail on their own. They have been dealt only in relation to the notion of explanation. Despite the immense popularity of Taylor's notion of multiculturalism or Foucault’s notion of power, these have not been treated as a theme in itself but only in relation to the notion of explanation in the work of these two thinkers. So, this work presumes that the notion of explanation affects the notion of critique of a thinker. It also assumes that that the notion of explanation is affected by the conception of human agency implicit in these explanations.

It is often questioned whether two seemingly incommensurable interpretive theories can be compared at all? Since the sense of reality created is the effect of language categories used to grasp that reality, we cannot compare two different interpretative orientations because they do not have any common criteria to arbitrate between them. In this thesis, the notion of practical reason has been used as suggested by Alasdair Mclntyre and Charles Taylor to overcome the problem of incommensurability.[83]

[83] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* (Notre dame: University of Notre dame Press, 1982), chap 2. Also, Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments,* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 34-60. Hence forth *PA.*

According to this notion, the comparative arguments are addressed to the rival positions in a specific context and are not absolute for all times. If the passage from one position to another rival position turns out to be more clarifying or error-reducing, then it can be claimed as a gain in understanding (epistemic gain). Conversely, the passage from second position to the first position, is not a gain. The first position should not judge the other position merely from its own canons but should go further and explain how the rival's way of explaining could arise. Such an exercise would make pre-understandings of the first position's knowledge explicit besides extending its ability to effect purposes by increasing the grasp on reality. In short, it would make practices more effective. It would make the 'losing theory' recognize that there is something that is outside the scope of its original standard. In such an exercise, the mediating element between the two positions is 'something deeply embedded in the human life form'.[84]

The interlocutors are implicitly aware of this domain and recognize so when these are made explicit. This is the link between understanding and practical capacity. The researcher has evoked this notion of practical reason in two cases. First, to check whether the slide from naturalism towards interpretive approach in the discourse of the scientific explanation is an epistemic gain. Second, to see whether Taylor's Post-Heideggerian hermeneutics is better able to cope with demands of an effective and critical human science than Foucault's Nietzschean inspired genealogical approach.

Chapterisation

This thesis contains six chapters in all. The first chapter sets out the problematique of the thesis. It puts forth the problem of comparative evaluation of two thinkers, Taylor and Foucault, into context. It shows how the natural science explanation model dominated the field of political enquiry during the twentieth century and how interpretive approaches emerged as an alternative because of dissatisfaction with empirical political science. The notion of interpretation of several thinkers of our times such as Peter Winch, Clifford Geertz, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Steven Lukes, Brian Fay, William Connolly and Jurgen Habermas can be broadly categorized as 'hermeneutics of recovery' and 'hermeneutics of suspicion' as suggested by Paul Ricoeur. Taylor and Foucault have been regarded as the proponents of these two schools of thought respectively. The juxtaposition of Taylor and Foucault along the axis provided by these models brings out the relation between the notion of interpretation and the notion of relativism/ objectivity and other

[84] Charles Taylor, SS, Op.cit 72-73

related issues. It also examines the issue of critical possibilities of the different notions of interpretation. It sets out the case wherein the notion of practical reason, inspired by Alasdair MacIntyre, would be invoked.

The second chapter discusses the natural science method and its relevance for study of social sciences. We need not search for alternatives if methods of natural science are able to provide the kind of certitude they promise. In this chapter, the nature of scientific explanation in its formal conceptions such as classical induction model, falsification theory, D-N Scheme, etc. have been examined. After discussing that logical and rational approaches to explain the practices of scientific explanation are inadequate, it moves on to examine historical, and sociological approaches such as that of Kuhn, Feyerabend, and Lakatos among others to explain the success of science. The study also examines the claim that attempts at overcoming inadequacies of the scientific method have led to the basic premises of hermeneutic tradition. The issues dealt in this chapter also form the backdrop for examination of Taylor's and Foucault's notion of explanation/ interpretation.

The third chapter deals with the hermeneutics of Charles Taylor. Taylor's philosophical project is considered comprising two agendas: positive and negative. The overall aim of his philosophical project is to recover the role of 'meaning' in human life. In the negative agenda, Taylor attempts to show that the role of 'meaning' cannot be denied in the study of political life as attempted by the natural science model. This is done this by showing that value-neutrality is not possible and certain everyday terms cannot be left out of explanatory language. In articulation of Taylor's positive agenda, the philosophical or ontological basis for his claim that man is a self-interpreting animal has been explored. For this exercise, his notion of human agency, role of consciousness in human action, notion of qualitative action, significance view of human agency, constitutive role of language, etc. have been examined. Thereafter, the issue of validation of theory, possibilities of prediction, and other such issues related to explanation in hermeneutical thinking have been examined. This shall bring out the overall nature of Taylor's hermeneutics.

The fourth chapter deals with the genealogy of Michel Foucault. It begins with a discussion about Foucault's style and manner of presentation of his thoughts; difficulties involved in interpretation of his work; periodisation/ classification of his work as belonging to archeology, genealogy and ethic/interpretive analytics. The chapter elaborates on Foucault’s notion of discourse, discursive formation, rules of formation, episteme, etc. The chapter also discusses his notion of truth as an effect of power-knowledge; body as a site of normalising/ disciplining practices of institutions. It delineates the overall nature of genealogy as a mode of enquiry.

The fifth chapter, drawing upon the themes built up in the preceding chapters, makes a comparative evaluation of Taylor's hermeneutics and Foucault's genealogical orientations. The comparisons have been with regard to the following themes: notion of human subject, notion of explanation in their works and the notion of the political which these frameworks entail. In examining the notion of human subject, an attempt has been made to examine how these two thinkers conceived the notion of 'depth'. Taylor vouches for it while Foucault vehemently denies it. About the second theme, the role of notion of power in Foucault has been examined. How it makes it almost impossible to evoke the notion of truth, freedom, etc. in genealogical explanation. The role of teleology in Taylor's hermeneutics in order to show how it makes it possible for him to have 'standards' to be able to judge practices as good or bad has also been examined. The study explores how these modes of enquiries attempt to examine the issue of 'relativism'. Finally, with regard to the third theme, study explores the nature of political entailed in their respective frameworks.

In the sixth chapter, some of the implications of the comparative analysis in the fifth chapter have been discussed. The study further examined the roles genealogy and hermeneutics could play in the study of politics. In light of the findings from the preceding chapter, an attempt has been made to show how these frameworks have been applied to the contemporary political studies discourse. The final chapter is the conclusion of the thesis.

The general outline of the thesis is as follows:

CHAPTER I	:	Introduction
CHAPTER II	:	Scientific Explanation
CHAPTER III	:	Taylor: Post Heideggerian Hermeneutics
CHAPTER IV	:	Foucault’s Genealogy
CHAPTER V	:	Comparative Evaluation of Hermeneutics and Genealogical Orientation
CHAPTER VI	:	Implications for the Study of Politics
CHAPTER VII	:	Conclusion of the Thesis

CHAPTER II

SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION

This chapter engages with the scientific modes of enquiry. In the last chapter, the problematique of this thesis, comparative evaluation of the notion of explanation in the writings of Charles Taylor and Michel Foucault, were put forth. These interpretive orientations towards political inquiry emerged in response to the challenges posed by the positivist political inquiry. Therefore, examination of the latter's explanation-model, that is, 'nomologicalism', should put our discussion on interpretation in context.[85] If the scientific-explanation is actually being able to provide certitude based on value-neutrality, as its proponents claim, the very basis of our task at hand that is the appropriateness of the interpretive theory for the study of politics would be undermined. It would render this study a non-starter. If the empirical explanation model was on the firm ground methodologically or philosophically then why would we need interpretive theory as an alternative? If the two cardinal virtues of empirical political science—value- neutrality and certitude of belief -- that enable prediction of future events, were on firm ground then why would there be a need to show so much ingenuity for alternative modes of enquiry?

The scientific explanation model has set the tenor of methodological debates about explanation in political enquiry in the last two centuries. In fact, the positivist orientation was so dominant in the middle of the twentieth century that it was just impossible for any rival explanation model to be credible unless it could live up to the standards (such as objectivity, verifiability etc.) set by positivism.[86] The scientific explanation model became the benchmark for other orientations to match. In this context of positivist dominance, the problem of relativism became imminent when certitude guaranteed by the scientific explanation model was shown as impossible to be achieved by its critics.[87]

The developments in the 1970s such as 'the return of political theory', emergence of new alternatives to empirical political science and new works in the philosophy of science (like those of Kuhn, Feyerabend, etc.) revealed that the natural science model was, after all, not so

[85] The term 'nomologicalism' has been borrowed in this thesis from the usage made by Brian Fay for the model of explanation in which the central role is played by scientific laws. See Brian Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy*, Op.cit, 156-159.

[86] Gabriel Almond, 'Political Science: The History of the Discipline,' in *A New Handbook of Political Science* edited by Robert. E Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann., (New York: Oxford University Press 1996), 50-89. David Easton, 'The Current Meaning of Behaviouralism' Op.cit, 16-17. Evron M Kirkpatrick 'From Past to Present', Op.cit 22-3.

[87] Brian Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy*, Op.cit, 2-3.

invulnerable.[88] The debate about scientific explanation continues to exist. The discipline of politics is in a state of transition as several modes of enquiries, even if in nascent forms, are emerging as challengers to the mainstream natural science approach.[89] Therefore, a break with empiricism will require careful justification on our part. This chapter explicates and critiques the Positivist and Popperian conceptions of science that have immensely influenced the recent practice of political science. Such a diversion at first might appear far removed from the central concerns of political scientists, but a clear understanding of the assumptions about science that inform disciplinary practices would set the agenda of this thesis on the right course. It would put the case for alternatives to positivist modes of enquiry on much stronger grounds.

The notion of explanation implicit in a mode of enquiry determines the kind of questions that can be raised by that mode of enquiry. For instance, during the heydays of Behaviouralism in the 1950s and 1960s, due to the acceptance of the scientific explanation model, the normative aspects of political life were completely left out of the purview of political enquiry. In its conception of fact-value dichotomy, 'values', since they were intangible and could not be grasped by senses, were kept out of political enquiry for being meaningless, irrational, or arbitrary. On the other hand, ‘facts' were considered unproblematic as they were immediately observable or ‘given' and their apprehension required no interpretation.[90] Thus, the notion of explanation, which is implicit in an orientation, has significant bearing on the kind of political enquiry that is possible through it. The mode of enquiry that one pursues determines the kind of questions that are asked or left out in a field of enquiry. Examination of scientific explanation would make us see what aspects of our social and political life are left out of the empiricist orientation towards the study of politics and whether the interpretive mode of enquiry is justified in bringing these aspects back into focus.

This chapter begins with the examination of the scientific method in its two versions: Classical-Inductivism and Popper's Falsification Theory. It examines the kinds of questions that these theories raise and the manner in which they attempt to overcome the methodological and philosophical difficulties encountered in the process. It then examines the implicit model of logic behind scientific method, the Deductive-Nomological Scheme, and attempts to show its

[88] Andrew Vincent, *The Nature of Political Theory*, Op.cit, 12-13. Richard J Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory Part II*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1983). See the Introduction.
[89] John Dryzek, and Stephen Leonard, ‘History and Discipline in Political Science,’ *American Political Science Review 82*, no.4 (Dec 1988): 1245-1260. Gabriel Almond, ‘Political Science’, Op.cit, 50-89.
[90] Charles Taylor, *Philosophy and the Human Science: Philosophical Papers 2* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985) 58-61. Henceforth PHS.

shortcomings. Further, we explore how historians of science such as Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, and Paul Feyerabend have explained the nature of science through their works.[91]

I. Nature of Scientific Explanation (Nomologicalism)

This section discusses the notion of explanation in 'nomologicalism' within mainstream political studies. Nomologicalism subscribes to a model of explanation in which the central role is played by scientific laws (or nomos in Greek).[92] This model was adapted in the study of social and political life after the tremendous success it had achieved in natural sciences. The proponents of scientific explanation were impressed by the natural sciences' ability to control nature through technology. To them, superiority of the natural science method over other ways of attaining knowledge was beyond doubt.[93]

Inductivism in Scientific Inquiry

The ideal of the natural science model was to arrive at an objective explanation of political and social life through statistical correlations and causal laws that are empirically discoverable. The assumption on the part of this mode of enquiry is that there are units of data (e.g., overt political behaviour such as voting and subjective attitudes regarding issues) that are identifiable and exist independent of methods used to reveal them. According to this explanation-model, there are general recurring patterns (regularities) that lie underneath particular and temporally situated instances.[94] The particulars are mere instances of generalities. The main thesis of Classical Inductivism could be stated in the following manner:

a) Science is cumulative. It accumulates well-attested facts. The addition of new facts does not affect the factual status of the ones already possessed.

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[91] To have an overview of the trajectory that the history of philosophy of science has taken, see Derek Gjertsen, *Science and Philosophy: Past and Present*, (Penguin Books: London, 1992). Theodore Schick Jr (ed) *Readings in the Philosophy of Science: From Positivism to Postmodernism* (Mountainview, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co., 2000). Samir Okasha, *Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[92] Gurpreet Mahajan, *Explanation & Understanding in the Human Sciences* (Delhi: Oxford University Press). Brian Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy*, Op.cit, 156-159. Alexander Rosenberg, The Press, 1997) 1-26. *Philosophy of Science: A Contemporary Introduction to Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2000) 23-31.

[93] David Easton, 'The Current Meaning of Behaviouralism' Op.cit., 16-17. Also, David Easton, 'Political Science in the United States: Past and Present' in *International Political Science Review*, Vol 6, 1985; pp. 133-152.Evron Kirkpatrick, 'From Past to Present' Op.cit, 22-3.

[94] Gurpreet Mahajan, *Explanation*, Op.cit, 1-26. Georg Henrik Von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 4.

b) Science is synthetic. It is possible to formulate or infer an entirely novel fact from the list of facts one already possesses. True general laws express and summarise collections of known simple facts (universalisable).

c) The number of confirmatory instances that one can have determines the reliability of a theory (verifiable).[95]

A general or universal law is accepted when all the cases that one has so far examined are in accordance with it (inductivism).[96] According to this view, scientific theorising is the combination of the above three features and is grounded in a specific sequence of activities as definitive to the scientific method (logico-experimental techniques). Best sciences are expected to approximate these logico-experimental techniques. In social sciences, since experiments are not possible due to ethical and other reasons, researchers were supposed to approximate these logico-experimental techniques to the best possible extent. The sequence of activities is as follows: It begins with carefully controlled, neutral observation of empirical events. Sustained observation over time enables the regularities or patterns of relationships in observed events to be revealed and thereby provide for the formulation of hypotheses. Hypotheses, once formulated, are subjected to systematic empirical tests. Those hypotheses which receive external confirmation through the process of rigorous testing could be elevated to the status of scientific laws. The scientific laws, when identified, provide the foundation for scientific explanation in accordance with the 'covering law' model.[97] The discovery of scientific laws also provide the foundation for prediction which comprise demonstrating that an event would occur depending on the occurrence of certain initial conditions and the operation of general laws of the field. Hence, inductivism involves prediction of novel facts as its crucial component. Wholly new instances are derived on the basis of the ones that are already known.[98] Such predictions enable experiments to be designed and certain form of logic to be invoked in order to test the generalisation being offered. The methodological process involved is summarised in Figure 2.1.

[95] Derek Gjertsen, *Science and Philosophy* Op.cit. 93-96. See also Gurpreet Mahajan, *Explanation* Op.cit 1-26
[96] Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). 73-74. Derek Gjertsen, *Science and Philosophy* Op.cit, 69-99.
[97] The 'covering law' model consisted in demonstrating that the events to be explained could be expected, given certain initial conditions (C1, C2, C3...) and the general laws of the field (L1, L2, L3...). This is discussed in detail in Appendix one, See also Alexander Rosenberg, *The Philosophy of Science* Op.cit, 28-31
[98] Gurpreet Mahajan, *Explanation* Op. cit, 8-12. Brian Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy* Op. cit. 158-159. Also see Carl Hempel, *Aspects of Scientific Explanation and Other Essays in the Philosophy of Science*, (New York: The Free Press, 1965)

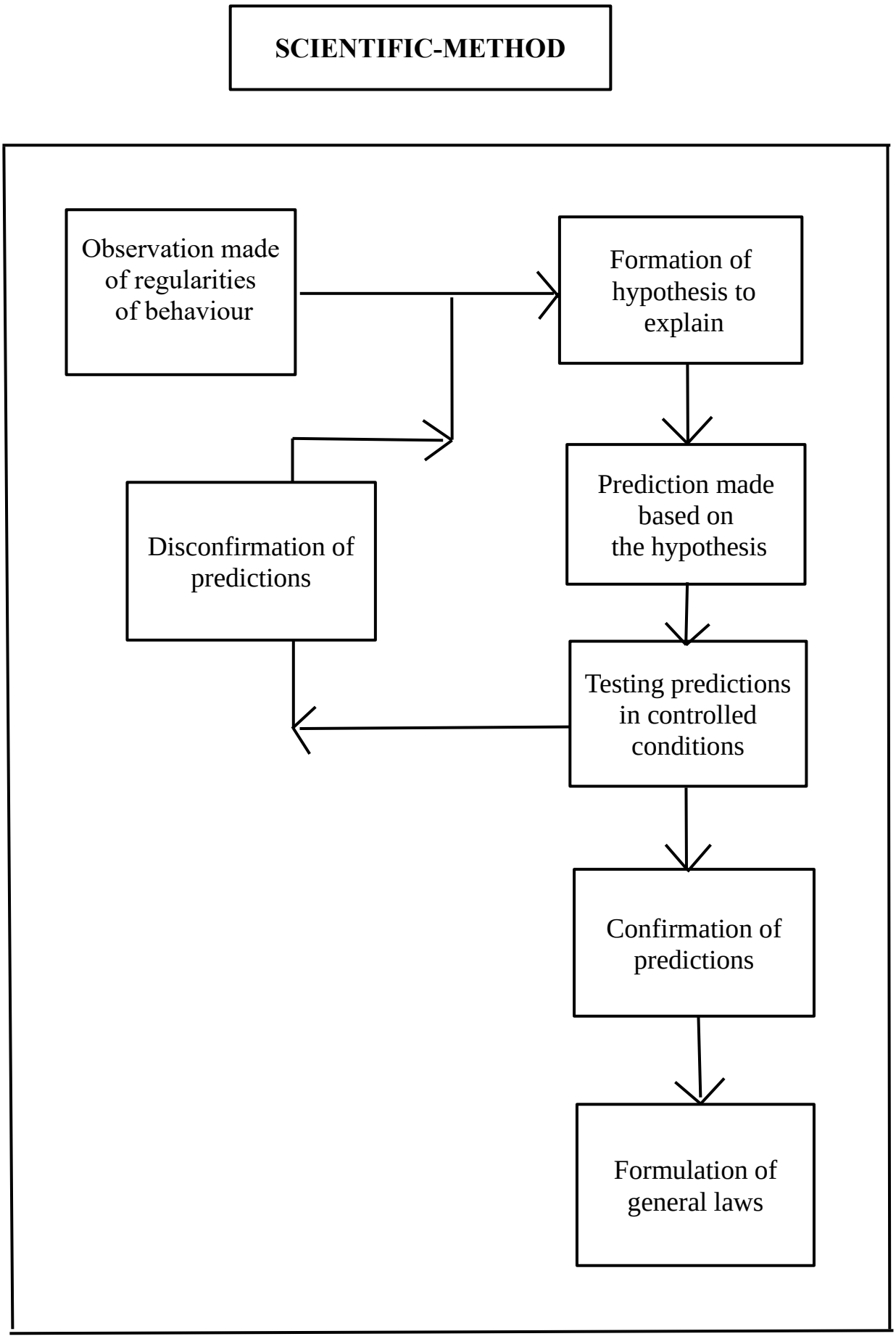
SCIENTIFIC-METHOD
Observation made of regularities of behaviour
Formation of hypothesis to explain
Prediction made based on the hypothesis
Testing predictions in controlled conditions
Confirmation of predictions
Formulation of general laws
Disconfirmation of predictions

Figure 2.1

The use of prediction in the method (refer Fig. 2.1) uses inductive reasoning and logico-experimentalist techniques. This is premised on the Principle of Universal Causality according to which every observable event has a knowable cause. The cause is the conjunction of prior sets of conditions and the relationship which holds between them. The task of scientific theory, as per the inductivist view, is to identify the causal conditions and to generalize them into causal laws.

This identification between the causal conditions and the generalised causal laws is achieved by the following methods as suggested by John Stuart Mill: a) method of agreement and b) method of difference.[99]

i) The 'method of agreement' enjoins the investigator to examine the antecedent conditions of two identical events. If there is a common condition among the two clusters, it is the cause. If there are many, then they must be varied under controlled conditions so that their causal contribution can be evaluated.

ii) The 'method of difference' is the reverse of the above method. If two clusters of conditions are identical except in one respect and they result in different events, then what is different in the conditions is the essential cause of the differences in outcomes.

Logico-experimentalism is followed in the sciences. The experimental sophistication adds greater and greater control over the conditions being studied and hence gives precision in the predictions being made.

The proponents of the scientific method have modelled the study of social and political life more and more on this inductivist methodology. They have imitated techniques that correspond to this logico-experimentalism and searched for generalisations concerning efficient causation by means of precise prediction and observation. In the social sciences, they have had to rely upon techniques of sampling and inferential statistics because of the practical and ethical issues of running experiments on human beings.

Critiques of Inductivism

Despite the tremendous impact, several objections have risen regarding the plausibility of inductivism as a methodology even in science itself. Amongst these objections, one raised by

[99] G Mahajan, *Explanation,* Op.cit p.3. J.M. Robson ed. John S, Mill, *Collected Works, Vol. VII: A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive, Books I-I*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 323-34.
Peter Sedgwick, *Descartes to Derrida: An Introduction to European Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 16-25.

David Hume in the eighteenth Century, called Hume's logical problem, is amongst the most notable and has been evoked in various forms. It asks on what grounds can the regularities observed for a class of phenomena supposed to be generalisable to all members of the class. According to Hume, there is no logical basis for such an inclination. It is based on a supposition of symmetry between all the future cases and those which have already been examined so far. One's willingness to bridge the logical gap between 'some' and 'all' is, for Hume, an understandable habit of mind.[100] But in logical terminology, it would mean that we cannot extend the quantification from 'some' to 'all' and also be certain that we have preserved the truth of the proposition. The move is not truth-preserving of itself. It must be clarified here that it is not the truth of scientific propositions that is at stake, but the strategy for arriving at them. The method of reasoning involved in inductivism does not guarantee the preservation of truth. The symmetry between the two classes (one examined so far and those that would be occurring in future), and hence the proposition, is achieved by the assumption that the world will continue in exactly the same way that it has till now. This assumption in itself cannot be logically grounded. It must be pointed here that this argument is not saying that science is illogical or invalid. But it highlights that the logico-experimental method of science cannot be deductively valid. If deductive validity is used as criterion of truth, then one cannot guarantee scientific generalisations as true. The generalisation would only be contingent and not necessary.

In response to such critical arguments, usually, the achievements of sciences are claimed as indicators of effectiveness of scientific methods. But this reasoning needs to be questioned. It amounts to trying to justify induction inductively. The fact that science has got a vast range of things right so far (assuming that it got them right by use of induction) does not allow us to step from 'some' generalisation to 'all' such generalisations and their truth. The inductive method might have been successful in the past but that is no guarantee for the future.[101] This shortcoming of inductivism, as pointed out by Hume, has never been convincingly countered. Despite several attempts, logicians have come up with a 'justification in the circumstances' argument.

The second major objection raised against inductivism is related to the supposed determinate relation between a theory and the domain of facts to which it is applied. This has been done by Quine and other modern realists through the notion of under determination of theory by facts and

[100] Peter Sedgwick, *Descartes to Derrida*, Op.cit 16-25. William Kelley Wright, *A History of Modern Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1941) 203-05. Steve Clarke, Metaphysics and the Disunity of Scientific Knowledge (Sydney: Ashgate, 1998), 21-22. Alexander Rosenberg, *The Philosophy of Science: A Contemporary Introduction to Philosophy*, (London: Routledge, 2000),107-110,127-8.
[101] Derek Gjertsen, *Science and Philosophy* Op.cit, 99. Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science*, Op.cit, 47-49. Gurpreet Mahajan, *Explanation* Op.cit, 6-7.

the Duhem-Quine thesis.[102] According to this realist perspective, a web of propositions within which the theory is located can always be adjusted to accommodate novel facts and apparent disconfirmation. Simply put it means that in the face of disconfirmation, rejecting the theory is not the only given alternative. Adjustments can be made in the logical relations between this set of theoretical propositions and others, thereby making an accommodation between it and the facts without violating the canons of logic. The above arguments lead us to the conclusion that the central element in the logic of inductivism, the compulsion to reject theories in the face of disconfirmation is not grounded adequately. Hence, attempts at justifying the truth of scientific hypotheses and generalisations create various kinds of philosophical difficulties. Thus, in its classical formulation, the scientific method is inadequate, both at the logical and epistemological level.

Karl Popper and Falsification

Karl Popper attempted to overcome these philosophical difficulties through his 'theory of falsification'.[103] According to Popper, science does not seek the confirmation of its predictions and generalisations but their falsification.[104] Scientific theories state the conditions under which they would count themselves as having failed. It is this specification of the conditions of failure internal to a theory and the method by which those conditions are tested that distinguishes science from metaphysics. Science is critical while pseudo-sciences such as metaphysics are not.[105] Hence, Popper transformed the way in which one could conceive the logic of science. The aim of science is no longer the inference of generalisations from confirmatory instances but the search for disconfirmation and rejection of conjectural hypotheses. Scientific history is not an accumulation of true generalisations but the culmination of conjectures that have not been refuted as yet. This allows Popper to introduce a subsidiary criterion for the evaluation of bonafide scientific theories. For him, best theories make very precise predictions and are therefore, much

[102] Donald Gillies, 'The Duhem Thesis and the Quine Thesis', in *Philosophy of Science: The Central Issues* edited by Martin Curd and J.A Cover, (Norton: New York, 1998), 302-319. W.V.O. Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' in *From a Logical Point of View*, second Ed. (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science*. Op.cit., 77-84. Also, University Press, 1980), 20-46. Ouine's interview in Bryan Magee, *Men of ldeas: Some Creators of Contemporary Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, 1982), 170-179. See also Roger Gibson, *The Philosophy of WV Quine*, (Tampa: University of Florida Presses, 1981).

[103] 19 Popper's views on science could be found in the following books*: Karl Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. (London: Hutchinson, 1959, 1980). K. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, 1983). K. Popper, *Objective Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). Also see, Bryan Magee, Karl Popper, (Penguin, 1973).

[104] Popper, Karl, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* Op.cit, 57-74.

[105] This has been called 'the demarcation problem', a way to differentiate science from non-science. M Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science*, Op.cit. 71-77. Bryan Magee, Karl Popper, Op.cit.35-56

more likely to fail. Good theories are, then, the improbable ones which are more definitive with more empirical contents.

It must be pointed out here that the falsification criterion is to be applied only to the restricted range of propositions, namely, synthetic statements and not analytical statements. So, Popper's theory is not a kind of empiricism. He accepts that facts and reality are theory dependent.[106] The method which science uses, according to Popper, is the critical appraisal of plurality of theories and hypotheses that are, at any moment, in competition with each other. It is by trial and error that science learns which theory to use and which to discard. The only function of any kind of empirical reference must be to ensure that the best fitted theories survive longest. The longer a theory survives, the greater its 'verisimilitude', its approximation to a description of how things are or truth.[107] This gaining of knowledge by trial and error and the mutation of theories in response to attempts to apply and test them is part of Popper's 'evolutionary epistemology'. Hence, Popper emphasises the centrality of problem solving and incrementalism in his account of scientific activity. This has parallels with the works of adherents of pluralist approaches to political analyses.[108]

The implication of Popper's falsification thesis is enormous for social sciences. For him, demarcation between science and non-science is important politically. He believes that non-scientific theories such as Marxism and psychoanalysis are unable to offer a correct account of society and are dangerous with regard to political application. These non-scientific theories do not match up to the theoretical requirements that falsification entails as they do not express testable hypotheses.[109] They also do not make precise predictions nor state the grounds on which they would count themselves as refuted. All they offer are sets of organizing categories, ways of looking at social life. But they are in no way scientific theories.

Karl Popper and Critiques

Popper's critical rationalism is a significant improvement over early positivist conceptions of science. However, it too suffers from several grave shortcomings. First, despite acceptance of

[106] David Maurrice, *Philosophy, Science and Ideology in Political Thought*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1996), 85.
[107] K. Popper, *Objective Knowledge*, Op.cit, 47.
[108] Mary Hawkesworth, 'Political Science in a New Millennium: Issues of Knowledge and Power"' in *Encyclopaedia of Government and Politics, second edition,* (Eds.) Mary Hawkesworth and Maurice Kogan, (London: Routledge, 1992) 24-25.
[109] Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961). Also see Karl Popper, *Unended Quest,* (London: Routledge, 1998). Chapter 8. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Vol. 2, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

priority of theory in science and the theory-laden nature of observation, Popper still affirms to the positivist's logical distinction of facts and values.[110] As a result, Popper continues with notions such as 'empirical reality' and 'autonomy of facts' which posits facts as given and experiences as ontologically distinct from the theoretical construct that are advanced to explain it. According to Popper, for falsification to provide an adequate test of a scientific theory, it is necessary that there be a clear distinction between theoretical postulates and independent correspondence rules that link theoretical principles to particular observations. Since Popper embodies theory-independent evidence, neutral correspondence rules are essential for the very possibility of refutation. However, works in 'post-positivist presupposition theories of science' have shown that theory is essential to and constitutive of all human knowledge.[111] Although Popper himself admits that observation is theory-laden, yet he underestimates the complex role of theory in scientific practices. According to the post-positivist presupposition theories of science, science as a form of knowledge is dependent upon theory in multiple and complex ways. The notions of perception, meaning, relevance, explanation, knowledge, and method, that are central to the practice of science are theoretically constituted concepts. Theoretical presuppositions shape perception and determine what is taken as a fact. This is done not only at the conscious level but also at the tacit or preconscious level. They confer meaning on experience and control the demarcation of significant from trivial events. Theoretical presuppositions afford criteria of relevance according to which facts can be organised, tests envisioned, and the acceptability or unacceptability of scientific conclusions assessed. They sustain specific methodological techniques for gathering, classifying, and analysing data.[112] They set the terms of scientific debate and organize the elements of scientific activity.

This conception of fact as a theoretically constituted entity calls into question the notions of 'unmediated reality' and 'brute data'. No conclusive disproof of a theory (falsification) is possible as the theory that is undergoing test is itself constitutive of the phenomenon tested. Independent evidence on which falsification depends does not exist. The available evidence is pre-constituted by the same theoretical presuppositions as the scientific theory under scrutiny.[113] Moreover, in contrast to Popper's claim that one disconfirming instance is sufficient to falsify a theory,

[110] J Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 304. Also see H Albert, TW Adorno et al, *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, (London: Heinemann, 1976).
[111] Following works can be said to articulate the post-positivist presupposition theories of science:
M Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). R. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1978, 1983) M. Hesse, *Revolutions and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980,). J. Gunnell, *Between Philosophy and Politics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986). J. Gunnell, 'Realizing theory: The Philosophy of Science Revisited', *The Journal of Polities Vol.57* (4.) 1995 pp. 923-40.
[112] Mary Hawkesworth, 'Political Science in a New Millennium' Op.cit, 13.
[113] Mary Hawkesworth, 'Political Science in a New Millennium', Op.cit 14.

presupposition theorists following Quine and other realists, emphasize that it is always possible to 'save' a theory from refutation. This is possible because future research can always show how a counter instance is really only an 'apparent counter-instance'. Further, due to theory-laden nature of observation and theory-constituted character of evidence, there are always enough grounds to challenge the design and or the findings of specific experiments that claim to falsify respected theories.

In order to arrive at testable predictions, Popper depends on a well-known procedure called the 'Covering Law' or 'Deductive Nomological' scheme. However, this procedure also encountered several problems. According to D-N scheme, in order to explain an event *E*, the statement reporting it must be deduced from a description of certain initial condition (*C1, C2, C3*...) and the general laws of the field (*L1, L2, L3*…).[114] In this scheme, explanations and predictions have the same logical form, only the time factor differs. While an explanation pertains to past events, prediction pertains to future events. The precise specifications of the conditions to be incorporated in *C* - by means of some criterion such as that given by Popper- allow for the testing of the proposed universal or general laws. If they are true, then E will result. If not, then the prediction will fail. In Popper's case, the statements in *L* become hypotheses or conjectures, and the goal is to find the conditions under which they will fail.

In principle, D-N scheme can be used with regard to all sorts of explanations. All scientific explanations, including those of political science/social science, could be agreeably framed within these terms. The only difference between social sciences and most natural sciences explanations will be in the knowledge that we have about the relevant conditions and laws. Social sciences do not have full blown explanations but only explanation sketches. These weaker explanations have to be filled in by additional accounts about initials conditions.[115] The explanation sketches do not entail deductively valid arguments as they are probabilistic in nature. Therefore, the D-N scheme does not apply strictly to them. This is because the probabilistic explanations are of a different order than deductive nomological explanations. In probabilistic explanations, the relationship is not one of entailment from the truth of propositions but the likelihood of one event following the other. The connection is not logical but statistical and gives rise to a host of problems about fit between the actual event and expected event. Another

[114] Carl Hempel, 'The Functions of Laws in History', in *Theories of History*, edited by P. Gardener (New York: The Free Press, 1959), 345. Brian Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy*, Op.cit. P.158. G Mahajan, *Explanation*, op.cit.7. Also see, Carl Hempel, Aspects of Scientific Explanation, Op.cit, 334-339. Paul Oppenheim 'Studies in the Logic of Explanation'. *Philosophy of Science* 15: (1948): 135-175. Merrilee Salmon et al. *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall,1992).

[115] Wesley Salmon, *Statistical Explanation and Statistical Relevance*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1971). A Railton, 'A D-N model of Probabilistic Explanation,' in. J A Cover and Martin Curd (eds), *Philosophy of Science: The Central Issues*, (New York: WW Norton, 1998), 746-766.

objection to the deductive scheme is that it does not apply to functional theories.[116] Since the social sciences make extensive use of functional explanations, the usefulness of D-N scheme is greatly restricted.

The third significant objection raised against deductive schemes is that, in the end, they are not explanations of anything.[117] The combination of conditions and laws does not explain why the event occurred. This is so because, in order to explain, we need to make reference to the specific causal mechanisms that are not present in the scheme. In fact, one could enumerate all the relevant conditions and all the general laws, and still have no idea why the event happened. The reason for this is that we have no idea why the conditions are subsumed under the law. Without knowledge of why the conditions fall under the law we would have no means of distinguishing the specious from the effective explanations. To do so, we need to provide enough details to be able to make the connection between explanans and explanandum and for this we would have to describe the unique situation relating to the event. But this would violate the NES requirement of the D-N scheme.[118]

For the same reason (violating the NES requirement), nomological explanations are unsuitable for explaining historical events too. This is so because they try to see historical events as part of timeless regularity, to be subsumed under a law which contains no essential time markers. Laws are not supposed to contain specific times or places in them. This makes general laws of social science so abstract that they omit a great deal of what may be significant about human phenomenon. According to nomologicalism, true explanations occur only when historical accounts are replaced by scientific explanations. But in studying history we are interested in the uniqueness of events, say for instance the origin of capitalism. Another difficulty is that human actions are not simply physical occurrences but are intentional and rule governed.[119] Human actions are always something an agent does and performs with an end in view often in conformity to social rules which specify that some act will have some particular meaning. To account for human actions, we need to employ intentional terms. This requires interpretation of meanings of intentions of the agents and not merely description of their overt behaviour in physical terms. But these intentional phenomena are subject to constant change because of conceptual innovation which a group's member may introduce. Moreover, for conceptual

[116] Martin Hollis, *The Philosophy of Social Science* Op.cit. 95-106.
[117] Brian Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy*, Op.cit, 156-159.
[118] See Gurpreet Mahajan, *Explanation*, Op.cit,1-26 which delineates the formal structure of D-N Scheme and explicates condition no. 2 called NES requirement.
[119] G.E.M Anscombe, *Intention* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957). Arthur. C Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of Action*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). Donald Davidson, *Actions and Events*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

innovations that involve fundamental alterations in basic concepts, predictions are impossible. Therefore, nomological explanation is grossly inadequate for explaining human actions.

Hence, we can see that Karl Popper's Falsification theory and the related Deductive-Nomological scheme are not adequate for giving accurate accounts of scientific method. The picture of science as overtly rational, plural, and critical in spirit has also been found to be historically incorrect by the works of historians of science such as Thomas Kuhn, Imre Laktos, and Paul Feyerabend. They have shown that the depiction of science as a rational, critical, and incremental evolution of competing conjectures is not how scientists actually work. Very often theories are proposed that don't specify what would falsify them (perhaps they're at an early stage), or else are falsified but are still clung to by scientists. Einstein is the paradigmatic example of both.[120] It may be that an experiment discovers an anomaly, not a falsification. It is possible that the experiment was in error somewhere or its consequences misunderstood. At times, even when a theory is wrong, scientists cling to it and find a way around the difficulty and thereby make it stronger.

II. History of Science

This section presents an account of historical development scientific methods. In contrast to Popper's viewpoint, Thomas Kuhn claims that the history of science is not a progression towards truth.[121] Rather, it is a history of changes between various incommensurable paradigms where choices between paradigms is made on non-rational, extra-scientific factors such as distribution of scientific power, the nature of psychological commitment, and so on. Rather than having logic of criticism, the sciences have logic of conformity and conservatism. According to Kuhn, science evolves through a period of 'normal science'; a long duration of conformity, with most scientists being attached to general frameworks called 'paradigm'.[122] These phases of 'normal sciences' are punctuated by a few and brief periods of upheaval called 'revolutionary sciences'.[123]

[120] See Einstein's observation about the quantum theory in 'The Born-Einstein Letters',1944. "You believe in the God who plays dice, and I in complete law and order in a world which objectively exists, and which I, in a wildly speculative way, am trying to capture. I hope that someone will discover a more realistic way; or rather a more tangible basis than it has been my lot to find. Even the great initial success of the Quantum Theory does not make me believe in the fundamental dice-game, although I am well aware that our younger colleagues interpret this as a consequence of senility. No doubt the day will come when we will see whose instinctive attitude was the correct one". Albert Einstein to Max Born, 'The Born- Einstein Letters', Sept 1944.

[121] Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970) second edition). T Kuhn, 'Second Thoughts on Paradigm' in *The Essential Tension*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1977). Brain Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy*, Op.cit. pp. 80-83. A. Rosenberg, *The Philosophy of Science*, Op.cit 136-148.

[122] T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* Op.cit pp. 18-19 and 43-44.

[123] T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* Op.cit 6-8, 92-98.

Kuhn's formulation of history of science is sociological in which science is a particular kind of social institution. The scientific community is held together with stability by sharing of a set of basic ideas called paradigm. One stable state is separated from a later stable state because of paradigms, which decide what would be within purview and what would not. Thus, the development of science takes a standard from. A new framework gradually emerges, gets popular and adopted out of the ferment that occurs during the disintegration of an established paradigm. This new framework has novel and different standards of measurement, new topics, methods, concepts, and problems and makes new observations possible. In other words, it is incommensurable to the earlier paradigm.[124] In exploring this new paradigm, odd results may arise, or disconfirmations may occur that are set aside for some future consideration. Meanwhile, anomalies gradually accumulate until they become intolerable and lead to the emergence of another 'new paradigm' or 'revolutionary science'.

For Kuhn, then, in the explanation of scientific development, priority is given to non-scientific, psychological factors. The change from one paradigm to another incommensurable paradigm amounts to ‘gestalt switch', denying the possibility of holding on to or working within both the paradigms simultaneously. Under this notion of incommensurability, there are no common standards to mark off progress between the paradigms.[125] Hence, for Kuhn, the history of science is one of changes. It denies any claim about progress towards the truth. Unlike Popper, for Kuhn, science does not develop rationally or on logical ground, but through non-rational or extra-scientific factors such as distribution of scientific power, the nature of psychological commitments and so on. The character of scientific logic is neither critical nor internal.

Imre Lakatos, by introducing the key notion of ‘research programme' avoided the relativist and irrationalist streak in his account of development of science.[126] He explained the 'irrational' tendency of science to persist with a disconfirmed research programme. Unlike Kuhn and Popper, disconfirmation to Lakatos could be regarded as perfectly understandable delaying of judgments upon a theory until the 'research programme' it had initiated would mature. Lakatos in a way brings back seemingly external factors of Kuhn within the internal logic of science.

This, however, does not mean that there can be no distinction between internal history and an external one. In fact, there is a history of its progress and the relation of that progress to other contemporary events. But the lines between the two cannot be drawn in advance and must be decided on a case-to-case basis. In other words, internal history cannot be treated as if it were

[124] T. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions Op.cit. 103.
[125] B Fay, *Contemporary Philosophy* Op.cit, 80. David Maurrice, *Philosophy, Science and Ideology*, Op.cit, 97-98.
[126] Lakatos, ‘The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes’, in *Philosophical Papers, Vol. 1 edited by J Worrall and G Currie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 10-52.

hermetically sealed off from external history. Therefore, the degree of the relationship between scientific reasoning and historical factor is a crucial point of issue.

Another historian of science, Paul Feyerabend, claims that scientific changes and progress are really the conversion from one myth or set of myths to another.[127] These conversions do not occur simply through appeals to reason, argument, evidence or method but rely on self-interest, ideology and attitudes of other social institutions in the surrounding society. Therefore, given this contextuality, science cannot claim superiority over any other form of knowledge. Rather, by adhering to the 'ideal' of science, we refuse to allow claims on behalf of other forms of knowledge that can counter science.[128]

Due to these difficulties, some philosophers such as John Dupre, and Nancy Cartwright have begun to wonder if the prospect of a unique scientific method was such a good one after all. Sciences employed different methodologies even within the same field, for example, particle and condensed matter physics, or molecular and organismic biology. At present, this disunity of the scientific enterprise has gained greater recognition.[129] Scientists and philosophers alike are less keen to hold on to the scientific method. Moreover, as can be seen from above, studies in the history of science have shown that no methodological account seems to be able to take into account all the complexities of scientific theorising.

In fact, the picture of science that emerges now is one wherein theories provided by various disciplines within science are indeed 'phenomenological'.[130] They are descriptions of what has been observed, measured, affected and brought about, the phenomena of studies, experiments and investigations. Such 'phenomenological laws' are discontinuous with each other because they are the outcome of many different sets of premises and interests. Although the 'phenomenological laws' are correct within their domains, they do not add up to or reduce to a theoretical unity. Any attempt to unify them by translating their terms and descriptions into more 'fundamental' ones is bound to distort them.[131] This will happen because the concepts being

[127] P Feyerabend, *Science in a Free Society* (London: New Left Books, 1978), 106.
[128] P Feyerabend, *Against Method*, (London, Verso, 1975), 295. Also see, D. Maurrice, *Philosophy, Science and Ideology*, Op.cit, 101-104.
[129] The theme of disunity of science has been dealt in Nancy Cartwright, *How the Laws of Physics Lie*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) Nancy Cartwright, *Nature's Capacities and Their Measurement*, (New York, Oxford University Press: 1989) and John Dupre, *The Disorder of Things*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 199. Also see Steve Clarke, Metaphysics, Op.cit, 18-55.
[130] 'Phenomenological laws' of science are laws which directly describe the behaviour of the entities in the world. Cartwright contrasts the "phenomenological laws' with the anti-realist 'fundamental laws'. Nancy Cartwright, *How the Laws of Physics Lie*, Op.cit. 63-64.
[131] According to Dupre, the best attempt to achieve unity is through what are called "interfiled theories" which make explicit the relationship among fields. Fields are areas of knowledge that have a common problem and domain of facts; for instance, cytology and genetics together can bring about a better understanding of the mechanism of heredity, even if one is not reducible to the other.

invoked can only be approximations to those applied in the original theories. As a consequence, any attempt to produce a set of 'fundamental laws' will result in distortions. The different orders of observation, measurement and phenomena do not reduce without residue to one another. Hence, the picture of science that emerges is that it is committed to 'multiple realities and not the philosophical myth of a single, unified description of how things really are. These 'multiple realities' are available in the theories and descriptions given within different disciplines. The implication this picture has for humanities and social sciences is that there is little point in trying to unite human sciences and natural sciences. So, for the study of political and social life there is no need for emulating the natural science.

Instead, like the post-positivist presupposition of theories of science, we should view science as a human convention, based in the practical judgments of a community of fallible scientists struggling to resolve theory generated problems under specific historical conditions. It rejects the correspondence theory of truth.[132] It claims that all human knowledge depends upon theoretical presuppositions whose congruence with nature cannot be established conclusively by reason or experience. Theoretical presuppositions, rooted in living traditions, provide frameworks through which the world is viewed. These presuppositions determine what is considered to be normal from deviant. The structure of pre-understanding' and 'pre-judgments' is such that it is difficult to isolate and illuminate the full range of presuppositions which affect cognition at any given time.[133] In order to examine presuppositions we will have to move within the 'hermeneutic circle' which means that any examination of assumptions or expectations would occur within the frame of reference established by the other presuppositions.[134] Some presuppositions must remain fixed if others are to be trapped within the framework of theories for critical reflection. There can be no unmediated grasp of reality or total transparency.

Like in Quine's notion of underdetermination of facts, the presupposition theorists claim that the world is richer than theories devised to grasp it or that theories are underdetermined by facts. As a result, there always will be alternative and competing theoretical explanations of particular events. This claim does not imply relativism. The belief that the absence of independent evidence necessarily entails relativism is itself dependent upon a positivist commitment to the verification

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However, Dupre argues that even if these unified fields exist, there is no guarantee that the related fields themselves may be scientific, so that even if one is able to unify the sciences, there would still not be a unified science. See also E Nagel, 'Issues in the Logic of Reductive Explanation' in J A Cover and Martin Curd (eds*) Philosophy of Science: The Central issues* (New York: WW Norton, 1998), 905-922.

[132] Charles Taylor, *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Paper I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 248-291.

[133] R. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism,* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983). 113-67

[134] 'Hermeneutic circle' is the problem in the process of interpretation that arises when one element, for instance in a text, can only be understood in terms of meanings of the other elements or the whole text, yet understanding the other elements or whole text, in turn presupposes understanding of the original element.

criterion of meaning. It is only when one assumes that the sole test of the validity of a proposition lies in its measurement against the empirical given, that one concludes that no rational judgments can be made concerning the validity of particular claims in the absence of the 'given'.[135] Hence, absence of one invariant empirical test for a theory does not imply abandonment of the entire criteria for evaluative judgment. We can have other rational grounds for assessing the alternative theoretical perspectives. Therefore, conceptions of science that define rationality in terms of one technique or rigid adherence to rules are inadequate.

Instead, the proponents of presupposition theory of science put forward the case for Phronesis or Practical Reason.[136] According to this, any adequate conception of human reason must take into account diverse cognitive practices of humans such as various processes of contemplation, conceptualisation, representation, remembrance, reflection, speculation, rationalisation, and so on. This would involve deliberation, interpretation and judgment. The picture of science depicted by Phronesis suggests that the attempts to divide the world into ontologically distinct categories of facts and values are flawed. All empirical propositions involve valuative component. Description, explanation, and evaluation are inextricably linked in the theoretically mediated world.

Something similar is being claimed in Quine's notion of 'underdetermination of theory by facts'.[137] According to this notion, the theory or web of propositions for a language or a paradigm can be adjusted to accommodate what are apparent contrafactuals. The incommensurability problem thus can be solved by 'semantic ascent'. Even though one cannot fix the continuity of properties of objects as between theories, one can fix the continuity of the truth of the propositions. For Quine, this can be done because the unit of meaning (hence truth) is the whole language and not a word or a sentence. Thus, we have a notion of a proposition being 'true in a language' or 'true in a conceptual framework'. This shift in our notion of meaning from words to sentences to language undermines the 'correspondence theory of language' which is implicit in the natural science model.

Hence, we see that our attempts to account for scientific explanation, in both its classical inductivist form and falsification form, fail to ground scientific explanations adequately. These accounts of scientific explanations encounter serious philosophical problems. The accounts of several historians of sciences such as Kuhn, Feyerabend, and others suggest that the nature of

[135] Bernstein *Contemporary Philosophy*, Op.cit p. 92, And Gunnell J, *Between Philosophy and Politics,* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1986). 66-8.
[136] R. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism* Op.cit pp. 54-78.
[137] W.V.O. Quine, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' in *From a Logical Point of View*, second Ed (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard University Press), 20-46. Also see interview of Quine titled 'The Ideas of Quine' in Bryan Magee, Men of Ideas, Op.cit 170-179. Alexander Rosenberg, *The Philosophy of Science*, Op.cit, 148-54.

scientific enterprise is neither consistently rational, nor critical or cumulative. Rather, these studies point towards extra-theoretical, socio-historical factors. These studies also show that the notion of rationality is internal; that it is the result of paradigm or framework. Further, value-neutrality is impossible as all observations are theory-laden. In fact, attempts by the logical positivist to ontologically separate facts and values were mistakes. In contrast to these studies, post-positivist presupposition theorists of science show that we should view science as a human convention, based in the practical judgments of a community of fallible scientists, struggling to resolve theory generated problems under specific historical conditions. These presuppositions determine what is considered to be normal from deviant. The structure of 'pre-understanding' and 'pre-judgments' is such that it is difficult to isolate and illuminate the full range of presuppositions which affect cognition at any given time. In order to examine presuppositions, we have to move within 'hermeneutic circle'. In other words, any examination of assumptions or expectations would occur within the frame of reference established by the other presuppositions. Some presuppositions must remain fixed if others are to be trapped within the framework of theories for critical reflection. There can be no unmediated grasp of reality or total transparency. Further, works by Nancy Cartwright and John Dupre suggest that any attempt ‘unify' science would result in distortions. This suggests that ideals of logical positivist of 'unity of science' and 'reductionism' are inadequate to account for the nature of our scientific practices. Instead, our scientific practices point towards multiple realities. Consequently, we need not attempt to model human sciences on natural science or to unite the human sciences with the natural sciences. We can see that the discourse about scientific explanation with its initial methodological and epistemological formulations have to be given up for 'opening up of ontological considerations'. As shown in the works of Quine and other realists, this results in foregoing the Correspondence theory of meaning or truth for Coherence or Constitutive theory of meaning/truth. This switchover entails ‘holism' where language is considered like a web with each element linked to other elements and the whole text, and the latter taking priority over its part elements. Thus, the meaning of an individual word or sentence can only be understood in terms of its relation to an indefinitely larger body of language or form of life. This web of meanings, in principle, is not deterministic but revisable. But coherence or constitutive theory of meaning and holism are the founding features of the interpretive approach to study societal/ political/ scientific practices. Therefore, in order to better account for nature of scientific practices, we need to cross over from empiricist model to interpretive orientation.

In short, attempts at overcoming the inadequacies of the scientific method itself lead us towards the basic premises of hermeneutical orientation. The 'slide' from naturalist orientation to hermeneutics orientation results in a kind of epistemic gain. The passage from nomologicalism to

post-positivist pre-suppositionist theories of science results in doing away with some serious shortcomings of the scientific-explanation model. It accounts better for our scientific explanation practices. Thus, we are not only able to show the shortcomings of the naturalist orientations but also show how they are overcome by interpretative orientations. Therefore, we are well justified in taking up the comparison of the two interpretative approaches by Taylor and Foucault vis-à-vis the mainstream explanation model. The interpretive orientations make a prima facie case for itself against the empiricist orientation. It is well justified in putting up a challenge against empiricist mode of enquiry. Since both Taylor and Foucault adhere to the constitutive theory of language and consider unit of meaning to be lying in language/ social practices itself, they are justified in taking up the study of society or politics by rejecting the empiricist modes of enquiries for a contingently linked historical interpretation.

We can see from the above arguments that lots of problems are encountered in justifying the notion of scientific explanation at methodological and epistemological levels. It cannot be defended adequately just at the rational level. For instance, as Hume has shown, it runs into difficulties in its inductivist form. Even Popper's falsification theory fails in its attempt to account for scientific explanation in terms of methodology. Moreover, our efforts to link the logic of scientific explanation to the history of science also proved inadequate. Thus, we can come to the understanding that science cannot not be justified on the rational and logical basis. The picture of science that emerges from this exercise is a form of knowledge that emerges within a particular historical context and can be justified only on the basis of extra-rational factors. Besides, it also brings up the problem of incommensurability and radical translation in the scientific-explanation discourse. These problems can be addressed adequately only at the extra-rational level or ontological level. We showed with Quine's example that in addressing these issues the notion of meaning of texts in his work shifts from words to sentence to language itself. It is precisely on these considerations that interpretive orientations challenge scientific explanation. On close scrutiny the nature of scientific explanation itself leads us towards interpretive orientation.

In short, attempts at overcoming the inadequacies of the scientific method itself lead us towards 'the basic premises of hermeneutics' orientation. The slide from naturalist orientation towards hermeneutics orientation results in a kind of epistemic gain. The passage from nomologicalism to hermeneutics results in doing away with some serious shortcomings of the scientific-explanation model. It accounts better for our scientific explanation practices.

This very well agrees with Taylor's notion of practical reason which is the organising principle of our manner of argument in this thesis. These arguments are dealt with in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

TAYLOR: POST HEIDEGGERIAN HERMENEUTICS

In the last chapter, it is seen that efforts to ground nomologicalism have proved to be inadequate. Natural science methods for gaining knowledge cannot be accounted for by rational or logical models. Nomologicalism, in its various formal versions such as Classical-Inductivism, Falsification theory, Deductive-Nomological scheme, etc. could not live up to the standards of rationality that it had set for itself. Attempts at overcoming these methodological problems shifted the discourse of scientific explanation towards sociological and historical factors in the works of thinkers such as Kuhn, Lakatos and Feyerabend. Kuhn shows that human sense of reality is dependent on the paradigm used to grasp it. Quine's efforts at salvaging nomologicalism lead to change in the notion of meaning of a text from word to sentence, to language itself. These are exactly the issues where the interpretive mode of inquiry challenges empirical political science. Also, attempts at finding unity of scientific methods were implausible. The kind of claims about 'certitude' and 'rationality' that were made by the scientific explanation model proved to be inadequate as well. Efforts at overcoming these difficulties lead towards interpretive orientations. Thus, interpretive mode of inquiry makes a prima facie case for itself.

Charles Taylor and Michel Foucault, whose notions of interpretation would be elaborated in this and the following chapter, are well justified in making a case vis-à-vis nomologicalism. How these two interpretive thinkers attempt to resolve difficulties about explaining social and political life and the notion of explanation in their works would be examined. In doing so, one of the main concerns would be to examine the place of objectivity/relativism in their notion of interpretation. If the value-neutrality implicit in the scientific-explanation does not seem possible, then should it mean there is no escape from the problem of ethnocentrism/ relativism. This would involve answering the following questions: If the kind of certitude claimed by the scientific explanation is not possible and rationality is generated internally by discourse then can one compare two seemingly incommensurable perspectives at all? Can there be a way out of this quagmire of relativism?[138] Taylor answers this query in the affirmative while Foucault denies it.

[138] Andrew Vincent, *The Nature of Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 12-13. Richard J Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory Part II*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1983). See the Introduction

I. Taylor's Philosophical Project

In order to see how Taylor attempts to answer these questions, one needs to understand the issues or concerns he was trying to address. Due to his Catholic Christian background, Taylor believes that human life and community possess intrinsic significance independent of their utility for individuals.[139] For him, meaning is not just something that objects in the world have when they relate to our desires and purposes but something that human beings seek of their desires and purposes and their lives as a whole.[140] Influenced by existential thinkers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger, Taylor also believes that human life is structured by inescapable layers of meaning or significance.[141] But these layers of meaning are hidden, suppressed, and misunderstood in the disenchanted modern world. This is due to the manner in which these distorted meanings are articulated in our language and institutions by naturalism-inspired mechanistic approaches. The task of philosophy then should be to help us recover these meanings, especially those related to self-defining modernity. Taylor's aim, therefore, is to understand the present within a horizon of possibilities of how the human spirit might realize itself more.

In pursuing this task, he initially sought the style and manner of analytical philosophy that was prevalent in the Anglo-Saxon academic world during the 1950s. His education at McGill University, Montreal from 1952 to 1955 and Oxford University in the late 1950s trained him in this tradition. His first major work, *The Explanation of Behaviour* (1964) was written in a typical Wittgensteinian manner. It argued for the importance of teleological explanation in making sense of human behaviour in contrast to mechanistic explanations.[142] From this tradition, he picked up a relatively jargon-free, problem centred style of writing. However, Taylor's spiritual concerns did not fit very neatly into this outlook[143] He found the phenomenological and dialectical traditions of the Continental Philosophy more attractive; especially the work of thinkers such as Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. A major influence in introducing Taylor to Continental themes was the work on Vico, Herder, and the Expressivist movement by Isaiah

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[139] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 495-523; henceforth abbreviated as SS. James L. Heft, (Ed.), *A Catholic Modernity?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 32-35. Also see James Tully, (Ed.), *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 228. And Stephen Mulhall, "Sources of the Self's Senses of Itself: The Making of a Theistic Reading of Modernity' in D.Z Phillips, ed., *Can Religion be Explained Away?* (London: Macmillan, 1996).

[140] Nicholas H. Smith, *Charles Taylor: Meaning, Morals and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2),4

[141] Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 61-78; henceforth abbreviated as PA. Charles Taylor, SS, Op. cit 25-53.

[142] Nicholas H. Smith, *Charles Taylor*, Op. cit 47-51. Daniel M. Weinstock, Jacob T. Levy, and Jocelyn Maclure, 'Introduction, Charles Taylor: A Biographical Sketch' in *Interpreting Modernity* Ed. Daniel M. Weinstock, Jacob T. Levy, and Jocelyn Maclure, 3-20.

[143] Nicholas H. Smith, *Charles Taylor*, Op. cit 10

Berlin, his teacher at Oxford.[144] Taylor's work on Hegel during the 1970s has become part of standard literature in this area.[145] His later works such as *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (1989) and *A Secular Age* (2007) have continued the trend. Over the years, he has developed a philosophical style that draws from the best of both traditions, i.e., continental and analytic. He is unique in having the clarity and cogency of the Anglo-Saxon tradition with the complexity and depth of Continental philosophy. Since he can write and express himself in French and German besides English; his ability to draw upon various intellectual sources from these two traditions is remarkable. This can be gauged from his contribution to the debates in a variety of subject areas such as political theory, hermeneutics, theories of subjectivity, philosophy of language and so on.[146] This makes it difficult to place Taylor in schools of thought or assign him labels in terms of standard academic discourse. This problem is further aggravated by the dialectical style of philosophising that he has borrowed from Hegel. Taylor does not make a sharp distinction between 'form' and 'content' as in traditional (Aristotelian) logic. Therefore, he does not have a 'method' or a set of principles like Aristotle's which can be simply stated and then applied to whatever subject-matter one chooses. Instead, for Taylor, form is attained in its embodiment in a medium. There can be no form without content. They are intimately related and cannot be separated neatly. They dynamically unfold in a movement towards totality. This process cannot be explained easily but can be seen in practice.[147] As a result of this acceptance of dialectical way of thinking, Taylor's approach towards the world is problem oriented rather than focused on the systematization required for academic discourse. He is not interested in general truth about the human condition. Like Foucault, he is interested in contingent constellations of human self-understanding, especially those prevalent in the modern world.[148] He believes that the truth of the problem emerges from actual examination of the issue in hand. Hence, in order to address the problem of meaning or significance, Taylor has developed an eclectic style of philosophising.

In his eclectic style, Taylor has interpreted the canonical masters and the lesser-known thinkers of the two traditions mentioned above in a unique way. For example, he has been inspired by Hegel's style of philosophizing in his outlook but asserts that Hegel's conclusions are ‘dead'.[149] He was influenced by Romantic thinker Herder, in his notion of expression but refines him in a

[144] James Tully, *Philosophy in an Age of Pluralism*, Op. cit 213-14.
[145] Charles Taylor *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Henceforth abbreviated as *HMS*.
[146] This can be seen in his of history of modernity, SS and recently published narrative of secularization of modem world, Charles Taylor *A Secular Age*.
[147] Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, Op. cit.16-17.
[148] Here it is akin to Foucault and Heidegger with emphasis on 'strategic exemplar' See Herbert L. Dreyfus, Beyond Hermeneutics: Interpretation in Late Heidegger and Recent Foucault' in Michael Gibbons ed. *Interpreting Politics*, (New York: New York Press, 1987), 202-220. Also see Nicholas H. Smith, *Charles Taylor*, Op. cit, 8.
[149] Charles Taylor, *HMS* Op. cit. 167.

creative way with insights from Heidegger's philosophy.[150] So, the problem still remains about the 'position' or 'label' one should assign to Taylor's approach towards understanding human predicament. Michel Gibbon, in an essay has assigned the category "expressivism" to Taylor's orientation.[151] However, since the term 'expressivism' has been used exhaustively in the context of cultural theory of Romanticism it is avoided here as it is likely to misinterpret Taylor. Nuances and subtlety of his Post-Heideggerian hermeneutical insights are lost in doing so. Taylor himself, at different places, has termed his own project as 'philosophical anthropology' and 'Post-Heideggerian hermeneutics'.[152] In this thesis, the term "Post-Heideggerian hermeneutics" has been preferred simply because it is the term that Taylor has favoured in his later works. Both the terms deal with the 'ontology of the human' and can be used interchangeably.[153]

Taylor's philosophical project attempts to analyse the modern world in order to articulate moral sources of the self that have been muffled by it. His project has both, a negative element and a positive agenda.[154] His negative agenda is to critique naturalism which considers humans as any other object in nature and strives to study them according to ideals of natural science.[155] According to Taylor, naturalism eclipses the meaning dimension of human existence as a realm of subjective illusion.[156] The negative agenda of making critique of the naturalism begins with the publication of his doctoral dissertation, 'The Explanation of Behaviour' till mid-1980s. Most of the articles criticizing naturalism were collected and published in two volumes of Philosophical Papers in 1985.[157] These essays are mostly critiques of mechanistic, or reductive, and/ or atomistic approaches to human sciences. In these works, Taylor has tried to show that the popularity of naturalism depended on faulty philosophical thinking or over-simplified views of human life.

Taylor's positive project concerns demonstrate why and how meanings are constitutive components of human reality. This involves two tasks: one, transcendental and the other historical.[158] The transcendental task is to investigate why meanings have an indispensable place in human perception, action, ethics and politics.[159] The initial part of the *Sources of the Self*

[150] Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op. cit.79-100.
[151] Michael Gibbons ed. *Interpreting Politics* Op. cit.12-13.
[152] Charles Taylor, *EB*, Op.cit, 4. In this Taylor defines 'Philosophical Anthropology' as "the study of the basic categories in which man and his behaviour is to be described and explained." See also Charles Taylor 'Introduction' to *HAL*, Op. cit. and *PHS*, Op. cit.1.
[153] Nicholas H. Smith, *Charles Taylor*, Op. cit.237-8. The 'Ontology of humans' means 'an account of the distinctive, essential features of human reality."
[154] Nicholas H. Smith, *Charles Taylor*, Op. cit. 6-7.
[155] Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Papers Vol. 2: Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985), See Introduction. Hence forth, *PHS.*
[156] Charles Taylor "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," *Review of Metaphysics*, 25, 1971: (3-51).
[157] Most of these articles are in the two volumes of *Philosophical Papers* published in 1985. Only some essays in *Philosophical Arguments* deals with this negative agenda. Later part of the book concerns his positive dimension.
[158] Nicholas Smith, *Charles Taylor*, Op. cit. p.7
[159] Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op. cit., 20-33.

(1989) and *Essays in Philosophical Arguments* deal with this transcendental exercise. It is the first principle of Taylor's 'philosophical anthropology'. The second principle of his positive agenda requires explicating the manner in which meanings are historically conditioned and are historically variable. Such an enterprise has been taken up in his works, *The Malaise of Modernity* (1991), *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition* (1992), *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004), and *A Secular Age* (2007). These two principles provide the framework for Taylor's investigations of particular meanings that help shape the modern identity.

In the initial part of his career, Taylor's thrust was towards a critique of naturalism. His positive agenda of showing why and how meanings are constitutive components of human reality comes to fore only in his later works with increasing intensity. Taylor's later works have apparent differences in terms of style and treatment from his earlier works. His earlier works such as *The Explanation of Behaviour*, *Human Agency and Language*, and *Philosophy and the Human Science* (collectively called Philosophical papers) were analytical in style with focus on the methodological issues, much narrower in conception. His later works, on the other hand, are wider in range, more historical, and even more abstract. Role of ethics and religion has increased even further in his later works, such as, *A Catholic Modernity? Varieties of Religion today: William James revisited*, and *A Secular Age*. They seem to draw on an even larger canvas. These works deal with role of religion and secularization in the modern society. Since our modern academic intellectual tradition is based on humanitarianism values inspired by Enlightenment, these later works of Taylor with theistic thrust appear slightly off-beat or eccentric.[160] Should we see a break or shifts in Taylor's works as Louis Althusser had claimed for Marx? In this thesis, Taylor's later works have been interpreted as refinement of his earlier concerns, a gradual slide from his negative agenda dominant works to a full-blown positive project. Both, the negative and positive agendas, have a singular aim of opening up of moral sources of modern world through Post-Heideggerian hermeneutics. These later works broaden the range, become more historical and abstract than earlier works, but do not change the basic direction of the project that Taylor had initially undertaken.

II. Overcoming Naturalism through Practical Reasoning

Taylor's philosophical project aim to restore the significance of meanings in human life that have been relegated to the subjective realm by the reductive frameworks based on natural science

[160] This is because modernity defines itself in contrast to theological discourse of the pre-medieval times. Religion discourse, based on 'faith', has been depicted as 'irrational" (not based on reason) and not taken as a valid form of knowledge or belief. The modem conception of reality is 'anthropocentric', that is, human centred. A theological or religious conception of reality with 'totality' or 'God' as the basis of reality is difficult to make sense by the modern discourse.

models. It involves both a negative element and a positive agenda. The negative element is a critique of naturalism which reduces the self to an atomic individual, essentially disengaged from everything except their own ideas and desires. It tries to understand human life in terms of methods inspired by the natural sciences. The positive agenda is to show the features of the undeniable experience of self as a moral agent. This entails understanding the human being as a self-interpretive creature only through 'hermeneutics.

On the face of it, these two approaches to study human behaviour seem incomparable. They make different sets of presumptions about reality and do not have any common 'criteria' to decide between them.[161] They seem to disagree not just about interpretation about reality but the very way in which reality is perceived. Therefore, in order to compare these two seemingly incomparable positions, we have invoked the notion of practical reason by Taylor.[162] Borrowing from Aristotle, Taylor claims that this kind of reasoning is evoked when we deal with two 'incommensurable' perspectives.[163] It does not attempt to establish some position absolutely through common criteria but addresses arguments to rival explanation/ explanations in a relative manner. This is termed by Taylor as 'reasoning in transition' that avoids abstract formalism. "It is concerned with comparative proposition where one shows that the move from *A* to *B* constitutes a gain epistemically. This is something we do when we show that when we go from *A* to *B* by identifying and resolving a contradiction in *A* or, a confusion which *A* relied upon, or by acknowledging the importance of some factors which *A* screened out, or something of the sort. The argument fixes on the nature of the transition from *A* to *B*. The nerve of the rational proof consists in showing that this transition is an error-reducing one. The argument turns on rival interpretations of possible transition from *A* to *B* or *B* to *A*."[164]

Taylor contrasts the aforementioned reasoning with what he calls the 'bad' model of practical reasoning rooted in the epistemological tradition that mistrust transition arguments. He observes:

> It wants us to look for 'criteria' to decide the issue, i.e., some consideration which could be established even outside the perspectives in dispute, and which would nevertheless be decisive. But there cannot be such considerations. My perspective is defined by the intuition I have by what I am moved by. If I abstract from this, I become incapable of understanding any argument at all.[165]

In this chapter, the model of 'reasoning in transition' has been applied to show that the slide from naturalism to Post-Heideggerian hermeneutics is indeed an error-reducing one. The study shows

[161] MacIntyre calls this moral outlook 'emotivism' in Alasdair McIntyre, *After Virtue*, Norte Dame, 1981. Chapter 2. See also Neil Levy, "Charles Taylor on overcoming incommensurability", *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, Vol. 26, No. 5, (2000) 47-61

[162] Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op. cit 34-60.

[163] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. D.Ross, (Oxford: OUP, 1980).

[164] Charles Taylor, *SS* Op. cit, 72-73. Charles Taylor, PA, Op. cit., .34-60.

[165] Charles Taylor *SS*, Op. cit, 73. Terry Pinkard, "'Taylor, "History" and the History of Philosophy' in Ruth Abbey ed., *Charles Taylor* (Cambridge, CUP, 2004), 198

the inadequacy of naturalism by reasoning how its cherished ideal of value-neutrality is simply not possible. It also argues that one cannot have reductive explanations (inspired by the empirical model) reconstructing human behaviour according to some narrowly defined conception of rationality by leaving out ‘value terms' such as freedom, dignity, etc. It is seen that the hermeneutical orientation proposed by Taylor can avoid these weaknesses making a strong case for hermeneutics. The researcher has reasoned why human actions need to be interpreted rather than observed. In order to ground this claim, the following notions from Taylor's work have been invoked: qualitative theory of action, significance view of agency, language as constitutive of human action, strong evaluation, etc. Also delineated are Hegel's five claims about human agency that emotions are an effective mode of awareness about situations; they are not irrational but, on expression, reveal what is significant in a specific situation so as to orient humans towards reality. This would give some basis to the claim that human beings are self-interpretive creatures. Further on, the study seeks to buttress its claim by taking up human actions which involve interpretation and show how they are shaped by language and history. Thereafter, it articulates the nature of interpretation, its characteristics, notion of hermeneutic-circle, and so on. Subsequently, it attempts to explain empiricism's motivation in terms of hermeneutics and shows how it leaves out inter-subjective meanings from its purview conforming to its notion of practical reason. It thus demonstrates that the 'transition' from empiricism to hermeneutics is indeed an 'epistemic gain'. Towards the end of the chapter, the study seeks to validate its claim of explaining human life better in terms of hermeneutical theories and if prediction of human behaviour is possible in hermeneutics.

III. Taylor's Negative Agenda: Countering Naturalism

The negative agenda of Taylor's philosophical project is to make a critique of naturalism which reduces the self to an atomic individual essentially disengaged from everything except its own ideas and desires. Naturalism tries to understand human life in terms of methods inspired by the natural sciences. It eclipses the meaning dimension of human existence as a realm of subjective illusion. The subject takes a disengaged view of reality by somehow neutralizing his/ her emotions or significance and have an objective view of reality.

According to Taylor, for studying social and political life, scientific method explanations are inadequate in a major way. To him, they seem to be terribly implausible. ‘They lead to a very bad science: either they end up in wordy elaboration of the obvious, or they fail to address the interesting questions, or their practitioners end up squandering their talents and ingenuity in the attempt to show that they can recapture the insights of ordinary life in their manifestly reductive

explanatory languages.'[166] For this reason, in the introduction to *Philosophical Papers*, Taylor states that one of the important agendas of his project is to counter the dominance of Enlightenment-inspired naturalism that argues for universal application of scientific method.[167] So strong are his objections to naturalism that he has described himself as a 'monomaniac' continually 'polemicizing against the ambition to model the study of man on the natural sciences.'[168]

Indispensability of Values

In one of his early essays, 'Neutrality in Political Science', Taylor has examined the issue of value-neutrality in the context of the study of political life.[169] The proponents of empirical model proposed that the study of politics should concern itself only with detached study of the facts. They suggested that there should be logical separation of facts and values in such a way that one could set aside their values while studying politics.[170] Moreover, the relation between factual study and normative beliefs was considered to be unidirectional: from value to fact, not from fact to value. Thus, scientific findings were held to be neutral. The facts, as we discover them, do not help to establish or give support to any set of values.[171] However, values can influence our findings. These values are not founded on scientific facts but arise from outside factual study. They spring from deep choices that are independent of facts. These can be countered by setting out one's value position in detail at the beginning of a work to set the readers on guard.[172]

Arguing against this, Taylor claims that this neat separation of facts and values does not survive close scrutiny. According to him, theoretical studies do not proceed simply by random collection of facts:

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[166] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op. cit 1. Ian Fraser, *Dialectics of the Self: Transcending Charles Taylor* (Imprint Academic, Exeter, UK.), 2007. 7-30.

[167] ibid.

[168] ibid.

[169] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op. cit. 58 -90.

[170] Dante Germino points out that the term 'value judgment, as distinct from fact, did not enter the philosophical vocabulary until the late nineteenth century with the neo-Kantian thinkers. It is at this juncture that the 'split' between normative and descriptive took place in the course of Western philosophy.
See Dante Germino, *Some Observations on Recent Political Philosophy and Theory*, in The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1972; 400p. 140-148. Also see, Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1952). Voegelin blames Max Weber for declaring all values to be "beyond science" and for "treating all values as equal."

[171] Charles Taylor, 'Neutrality in Political Sciences' in *HAL*, Op. cit, 59.

[172] That reality is infinitely complex and conceptually inexhaustible and social sciences typically use generalizing and individualizing modes of concept formation; and that the objects of the latter are distinguished by being imbued with meaning and values. Value-relevance, for Weber, governs the selection of facts by clarifying value inherent in a situation under analysis. There could be several possible plausible interpretations. But once a phenomenon is 'constructed for a particular inquiry, objectively one-sided 'social scientific knowledge becomes possible. See Thomas Burger, *Max Weber's theory of Concept Formation: History, Laws and Ideal Types*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1976.

> For the number of features which any given range of phenomena may exhibit, and which can thus figure in correlations, is indefinite; and this may be so because the phenomena themselves can be classified in an indefinite number of ways. Any physical object can be classified according to shape, colour, size etc; when we come to realities as complex as political society, the case is no different. But among these features only a limited range will yield correlations which have some explanatory force.[173]

The task of a theoretical framework is to discover what kind of features to look for in an explanation. It delineates the relevant features in different dimensions and their relation so that we have some idea of causation. 'Before we have made some at least tentative steps in this direction we do not even have an idea where to look for our explanations, we do not know which facts together.'[174] A framework, therefore, sets the crucial dimensions through which phenomena can vary. It sets out the essential functional relations by which they can be explained besides ruling out certain other functional relations belonging to rival frameworks. The theoretical frameworks, thus, are not neutral but have a value-slope. They tend to incline our explanation towards a certain gamut of possible politics and policies related to it.[175]

A given framework, therefore, affirms some dimension of variations and denies certain others. However, if there is a 'countervailing factor 'which 'undermines' (totally rejects) the valuation implicit in a framework then we need to change our framework. The undermining objection destroys the alternative (or set of values) on which the original judgment was based. It thus deprives the previously preferred alternative of its differential property for which it was valued. But not all countervailing factors are undermining. Some are simply 'over-riding' (accommodated with modifications). They show us that our originally preferred regime cannot be integrally fulfilled and could be inadequate in some minor ways. Since the values can be 'over-ridden', we can only say that they tend to support the framework and not establish their validity.[176] Therefore, we can see that a given framework restricts the range of value positions which can be defensibly adopted. 'For in the light of the framework certain goods can be accepted as such without further argument, whereas other rival ones cannot be adopted without adducing over-riding considerations. The framework can be said to distribute the onus of argument in a certain way. It is thus not neutral.' [177]

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[173] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op. cit p. 61.
[174] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op. cit p. 63
[175] Ibid
[176] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op. cit. 73. According to Taylor, there are two kinds of objections that can be raised against a valuation in a framework. The first kind of objection (over-riding) is where while one concedes that a thing in question has some properties that its proponents attribute to it but it also has some other properties that force one to proceed temporarily or permanently (e.g. freedom of speech is good but it could be curtailed in certain emergent situation). In case of second kind of objection (undermining), one denies the very properties by which it is judged good (e.g. the legislation of the society without cleavage emanates from the free conscious will of all its citizens)
[177] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op. cit.90.

Hence, we can see that the findings of studies in empirical political science are not neutral in the sense described by the proponents of the naturalism. The frameworks have a value-slope implicit in them. Values cannot be avoided in frameworks. The only way to avoid values would be to restrict political science to the narrow-gauge discoveries. But then the study of politics would not be very useful. Therefore, to the extent political science cannot dispense with theory, it cannot stop developing normative theory. The place of values in the study of politics cannot altogether be avoided. This undermines the claim of the proponents of empiricist political science that we can sharply separate facts and values, keep the latter out of our studies, and have an objective study of political events.[178]

Since the value-neutrality thesis constitutes the foundation of empirical political science, once it is refuted the whole edifice of objective study of politics collapses. In 1967, when this essay was published it made a major impact on what has been described by some as the 'return of the political theory'.[179]

Best Account Principle: Indispensability of Everyday Life Terms

In *Sources of the Self*, Taylor proposed another principle, in an attempt to counter the empirical model to totally disregard certain evaluative terms of everyday living such as freedom, dignity, etc. out of explanatory theory. He terms the principle as 'Best Account Principle.'[180]

According to Taylor, if some theoretical language proposes to explain behaviour from the observer's standpoint, neglecting to take into account indispensable terms of subject's deliberations, then such explanations would be inadequate. This is so because the reason behind our explanations is to make sense of subjects' life, to make the related social practices more clairvoyant for the subject. If we arrive at some reductive terminology that does not inform the practices of agents involved, then the significance of the study is lost. Such explanations would be 'changing the subject' to suit the reductive frameworks of the observer. He further argues

> Proponents of a reductive theory may congratulate themselves on explanations which freedom and dignity, or the various virtue terms which resist splitting into factual and evaluative components of meaning. But even if their third-person explanations were more plausible than they are, what would be the significance of this if the terms prove ineradicable in first-person, non-explanatory uses? Suppose I can convince myself that I can explain people's behaviour as an observer without using a term like 'dignity'. What does this prove if I can't do without it as a term in my deliberations about

[178] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, op. cit.90

[179] Nicholas H. Smith, "'Taylor and the Hermeneutic Tradition' in Ruth Abbey ed., *Charles Taylor* (Cambridge, CUP, 2004), 198

[180] Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit. 57-59 and 71-74. Terry Pinkard, 'Taylor, "History" and the History of Philosophy' in Ruth Abbey (ed.) Charles Taylor (Cambridge, CUP, 2004), 201

> what to do, how to behave, how to treat people, my questions about whom I admire, with whom I feel affinity, and the like?[181]

These terms are indispensable for making sense of our lives. Therefore, empiricist explanations that do not take these terms into account could at best be applied only in certain specialised domains where behaviour is rather rigid. Such explanations cannot be made a general model for social sciences.

Hence, the naturalist's claim that indispensable terms of everyday life should be relegated to the realm of mere appearance and should not be taken seriously for explanatory purposes is wrong. The empiricist's neglect of the 'phenomenology' on principle is a mistake. Because by denying such terms of everyday living they are modifying the subject matter to be studied to suit their framework.

> What we need to explain is people living their lives; the terms in which they cannot avoid living them cannot be removed from explanandum, unless we can propose other terms in which they could live them more clairvoyantly. We cannot just leap outside of these terms altogether, on the grounds that their logic doesn't fit some model of "science" and that we know a priori that human beings must be explicable in this "science". This begs the question. How can we ever know that humans can be explained by any scientific theory until we actually explain how they live their lives in its terms…? This establishes what it means to 'make sense' of our lives[182]

According to Taylor, the only way of accounting for these indispensable terms is by studying human action interpretively. The terms of explanation should make sense across the whole range both, explanatory and life uses. 'These terms are not only indispensable, but they also make best sense of us, unless we can replace them with more clairvoyant substitutes. We can see that the conception of a disengaged subject, who is radically detached from the reality outside and can somehow neutralize significance things have for him, does not survive close scrutiny. Hence, we cannot have reductive explanations (inspired by the empirical model) that reconstruct human behaviour according to some narrowly defined conception of rationality, leaving out value terms' such as freedom, dignity etc.'[183]

But why does naturalism attempt to leave out everyday evaluative terms or values from the explanation. It does so because everyday evaluative terms and values involve intention, desires, purpose, etc. that do not fit into the mechanistic model of natural science explanation. The natural science model must explain human behaviour in mechanistic terms. This is so because for naturalism, to count as genuine knowledge, a statement or doctrine must be empirically verifiable. Scientific concepts should avoid reference to anything non-observable. If for some

[181] Charles Taylor *SS*, Op. cit, 57.
[182] Charles Taylor, *SS* Op.cit, 58
[183] Craig Calhoun, 'Morality. Identity, and Historical Explanation: Charles Taylor on the Sources of the Self, *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 9, No.2 (Autumn, 1991), 232-263

reason these theoretical concepts do not designate observables directly, they should be translatable by 'correspondence rules to an 'operational definition' which would give them unambiguous empirical content.[184] In this manner, there is a priori rejection of the explanatory function of intentionality or consciousness/ by the natural science explanation. Can intentions be left out of the explanation of behaviour?

In his doctoral work, 'Explanation of Behaviour', Taylor, by analysing the concept of action as it features in ordinary language, points out that behaviour counts as action whenever the presence of an intention or purpose plays a role in bringing about the behaviour. Thus, action can be defined, in opposition to mere movement, as behaviour directed goal that is intended or desired by an agent. The occurrence of movements that towards bring about an end does not normally suffice for us to speak of an action taking place. Action involves an intention to realise that end-state as goal. Therefore, distinction between action and non-action is incompatible with the determination of behaviour by mechanistic laws.[185]

After establishing that the picture of the agent in naturalism is inadequate; if this study can show that the transition from disengaged to engaged or embodied agency is more clarifying, then Taylor's notion of hermeneutics would be on firm ground. For this, the study now delineates Taylor's positive agenda of trying to make a case for hermeneutics by articulating the philosophical basis of its basic insights.

IV. Taylor's Positive Agenda: Post-Heideggerian Hermeneutics

Action and Behaviour

Taylor claims that the disengaged knowledge is intelligible only on account of the never-fully-articulated background knowledge we have as agents. For overcoming the inadequacies of the notion of the disengaged self that was inspired by naturalism, Taylor tums to the works of philosophical masters such as Hegel, Herder, Merleau-Ponty, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Gadamer among others. He argues that the self-clarity inspired by Cartesian approach, cannot deal adequately with the way in which human actions are constituted by their meaning and the ineliminable role of values in human action. Human actions are not reducible to brute data. Meaning is not straightforwardly observable but has to be interpreted. In short, one cannot understand what people do without reference to purposes of agents and the social practices available to them.

[184] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op. cit, 28-32. N. Smith, *Charles Taylor*, Op. cit, 43-44.
[185] Charles Taylor, *EB*, Op. cit, 26-71.

For Taylor, hermeneutics is essential for the study of social and political life because human beings are creatures who have 'meanings'.[186] Human actions are more than physical movements as they involve intentions of agents and, therefore, need 'thick and not thin' (a distinction made by Gilbert Ryle) descriptions to explain them.[187] In contrast, a bodily movement is just what it says: the movement of a body part in some particular manner. Actions, unlike movements, are always something an agent does, something performed for a purpose. Actions are intentional and rule-governed: they are performed with an end in view often in conformity to 'social rules' which specify that some action will have a particular meaning. Thus, raising one's hand is a movement; whereas raising one's hand to vote is an action because here the hand has been raised to express support for a candidate. An action, then, is not simply a physical occurrence; it has a certain intentional content which specifies what sort of action it is in terms of what it expresses or attempts to accomplish.[188]

Actions, unlike bodily movements, are not merely physically observable phenomena. Some actions, such as those of forbearance, do not involve any movement whatsoever. Even those actions which do include movements involve more than mere observation. They are actions only because they express certain intentions which are not observable. To ascribe particular intentions to agents and to characterise their actions, requires interpretation of their movements in a particular way. Consequently, to describe actions we must employ intentional terms which pick out the intentions and rules that define actions instead of physical terms which refer to overt movements. Thus, we can see that the study of human behaviour, as it involves intentions, cannot be based merely on observation but involves interpretations as well.

Furthermore, this process of interpretation is quite complex; therefore, in order to determine whether an agent had a particular intention one has to assign to him or her a whole raft of other mental states or events relevant to that intention. The ascription of intentions and determination of what actions are being performed involve piecing together an agent's mental states and events into a coherent scheme. So, we can see that since the study of human behaviour involves meanings it should have interpretation as a form of explanation.

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[186] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op. cit, 21. Taylor's notion of self, besides Hegel, Merleau-Ponty, has been greatly influenced by Martin Heidegger. See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Translated by John Macquarie and Edward Robinson, (Harper &Row, 1962).

[187] Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 3-30. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, (London: Hutchinson, 1949).

[188] G.E.M Anscombe, *Intention*, Op. cit, 5-8.

Man as a Self-Interpreting Animal

The distinction between action and movement makes clear the reason for including interpretation in the study of human actions. The disengaged view sidelines this issue because it runs against the very ideals of disengaged agency. It violates the paradigm of clarity and objectivity entailed by the disengaged agency viewpoint. According to the disengaged view of agency, thinking clearly about something so as to arrive at the truth about it requires that we think of it objectively, i.e., as an object among other objects. This means we stop attributing to it properties which are subjective in the sense that they are only properties of the object in our experience of it. These subjective properties are also called anthropocentric or "secondary" properties.[189] Instead, we seek 'absolute' description; to use a Thomas Nagel's expression, a view from nowhere. But such accounts ignore that whatever is explicit in our experience occurs against an implicitly apprehended background.[190] Agents are always engaged or embedded in a culture or a form of life. Leaving out purview of this engaged agency results in reductive explanation of human action. It results in trying to account for 'explanation of self-explanation' as an epiphenomenon or a description of a brain-state'.[191] In other words, it is not able to account for certain types of human actions, especially those that involve consciousness, or getting aware of itself (sociologists call 'reflexive action').

Hegel's Five Claims About Human Agency

Is it possible to have an alternative which can avoid this shortcoming? It should be an alternative that is able to account for intentions in human actions. It should not get into difficulties explaining certain types of human action that involve consciousness getting aware of itself. According to Taylor, among others, Hegel has given an alternative that the 'subjective aspects' of our agency, which are left out of explanation by mechanistic explanations, are in fact indispensable for explaining human actions.

On this issue, acknowledging the significance of Hegel, Taylor says, "contemporary attempt.... to situate subjectivity by relating it to our life as embodied and social beings, without reducing it to a function of objectified nature, constantly refers us back to Hegel'[192] This notion of human agency was developed by Taylor in contrast to the various narrow conceptions of human behaviour in psychology. He takes recourse to the 'expressivist' theory of meaning developed by

[189] Charles Taylor, "Understanding and Human Science", *Review of Metaphysics* 34 (1980), 25-38. Bernard Williams, *Descartes* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1978) also offers account of this requirement. Also See Thomas Nagel. *The View from Nowhere* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[190] Charles Taylor," Engaged Agency and background in Heidegger" in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* cd, Charles B. Guignon. (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 317-336

[191] See the notion of 'absolute description' in Bernard Williams, *Descartes*, (Harmondsworth, 1978). Also Nagel, Thomas, *The View from Nowhere*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[192] Charles Taylor, *HMS*, Op.cit 167

Hegel, Herder, Humboldt and later Heidegger. The expressive model of the subject can take several courses. One, following Hegel, is the kind of argument that he used to realize the ambition of overcoming the dualism of mind and nature. In order to develop unity of mind and nature, Hegel and other German romantics developed a new mode of philosophical reasoning. It involved new conception of reason and transformed the understanding of human subjectivity and what it means to say that a human being is rational. This is the notion of self-defining subjectivity, of how things should be if subjectivity is self-defining or free. According to Taylor, this notion of self-defining subjectivity is central to the modem understanding of the self. Modern mechanism displaced the teleological and enchanted view of ancients in which nature instantiates a pre-given order of divine purposes or ideas. Within the pre-modern framework, human self-realization is defined in relation to ideas, as fixed in advance by patterns of significance already realized within the cosmic order. However, with the fading away of the enchanted world view, new conceptions of the self-emerged dispensing with the dependence on an external pre-given world. According to Taylor, there are two basic models of self-defining subjectivity working in the modern society. One of them envisages self-definition instrumentally as in the picture of disengaged agency discussed above. The other, which arose historically as a reaction to first model, conceives self-definition expressively.[193]

In his essay, Self-interpreting animals, Taylor has attempted to articulate this ‘expressive' self-definition of moderns. He argues in the essay, following Hegel, that subjective aspects of human agency which are denied by the mechanistic explanations are in fact indispensable.[194] Rather, he proposes five claims about self-defining expressive human agency, as under:

1. Some of our emotions involve import ascriptions.
2. Some of these imports are subject-referring.
3. Our subject-referring feelings are the basis of our understanding of what is to be human.
4. These feelings are constituted by the articulations we come to accept of them; and [195]
5. These articulations, which we can think of as interpretations, require language.

For Taylor, these five claims (each of which builds up on its predecessors) together offer a picture of humans as self-interpreting beings. Let us consider them one by one. The first is that human feelings, emotions, and desires, or our experienced motivation, are such that saying properly what they are like involves expressing or making explicit a judgment about the object they bear on. In other words, emotions are essentially related to certain objects. Emotions cannot be talked about without reference to objects which we are related to. They are effective modes of

[193] Nicholas Smith, *Charles Taylor*, Op.cit, 58-86.
[194] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op. cit, 45-76
[195] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit,.75-76

awareness of our situation. Emotions cannot be neutralized. Nor can we be indifferent to them. This claim does not fit into the modem conception of objectivity. Emotions understood as above do not fit easily into an account of humans and human behaviour as objects among objects. This is so because our imports are essentially experience-dependent properties. The emotions characterise things in their relevance to our desires and purposes, or in their role in our emotional life.[196]

The second claim states that the emotions or imports referred to in the first claim are possible only by reference to a subject who experiences his/ her world in a certain way. This subject is capable of experiencing a whole range of emotions. Taylor terms these experience-dependent properties as 'subject-referring' properties. These properties can only exist in a world in which there are subjects of experience, because they concern in some way the life of the subject qua subject.

Regarding the third claim Taylor says that our subject-referring feelings open us to the domain of what is to be human. We can have no dispassionate awareness of the human good. The quality of our awareness of the good is a function of the alignment of our feelings.

About the fourth claim Taylor states that our feelings are bound with the process of articulation. The sense of import feelings incorporate is articulated into a picture of our moral predicament. According to this, some goods are higher than others while still others are false and illusory. "And because they are articulated they purport to give a characterisation of these imports, and hence to offer insight into this domain. One might say they ascribe form to what matters to us... In offering a characterisation, these feelings open the question whether this is adequate, or whether it is not incomplete or restart.... This question once opened can never be closed. For, unlike the non-subject referring imports which can ultimately be grounded on external criteria, the articulation of these emotions has to be self-validating".[197]

The fifth claim concerns the role of language in our subject-referring emotions. "Our language is constitutive of our emotions, not because de facto we have articulated some of them, but also de jure as the medium in which all our emotions, articulate and inarticulate are experienced. Only a language-animal could have our emotions: and that means, inter alia, emotions which involve strong evaluations".[198]

Taylor's five claims about human agency give us a picture of the human being as a self-interpreting animal. "This is an animal whose emotional life incorporates a sense of what is really important to him, of the shape of his aspirations, which asks to be understood and which is never adequately understood. His understanding is explicated at any time in the language he uses

[196] Charles Taylor, ibid.
[197] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit, 64.
[198] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit, 74

to speak about himself, his goals, what he feels, and so on; and in shaping his sense of what is important it also shapes what he feels".[199]

Why does this language-animal ask to be understood? Because, Taylor says, as language-animals we are already engaged in understanding, we already have incorporated into our language an interpretation of what is really important. It is this articulation which transforms our inarticulate feelings into questions. Without language, we cannot have a sense of distinction between what is really important and what we just desire at different points of time. In our language we have already opened the issue by giving a first, fumbling answer.[200]

Thus, Taylor concludes that as self-interpreting animals, human beings cannot be understood simply as an object among objects. They have to be interpreted; and that interpretation plays not a secondary, optional role but one that is essential to human existence.

Qualitative Theory of Action

Related to the above picture of human agency that suggests that men are self-interpreting animals is Taylor's notion of qualitative action, again inspired by Hegel. The qualitative theory would "thicken' our description about the human agency. It would also demonstrate the importance of expression and its embodiment in a medium as necessary aspect of this agency.[201]

According to this notion, there is a basic qualitative difference between action and non-action. We, as agents, are capable of grasping our own action in a way that we cannot come to know external objects and events. In other words, there is a knowledge we are capable of concerning our own action which we can attain as the 'doers of action'.[202] This is different from the knowledge we may gain of objects we observe or scrutinize. These actions are intrinsically directed to achieve ends or purposes. Actions are inhabited by the purposes which direct them, so that action and purpose are ontologically inseparable. Taylor traces Aristotle's theory of inseparability of form and matter as one of the roots of this doctrine.[203]

In contrast, the Causal theory, inspired by naturalism, attempts an "absolute description' of actions. It attempts to go beyond the subjective standpoint of the agent and comes to an understanding of things which is objective. It is an understanding which is tied to no particular

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[199] Ibid

[200] Ibid. See also C Taylor, 'Language and Human Nature' in *Interpreting Politics* (ed.) Michael T. Gibbons, Op.cit, 101-132

[201] Charles Taylor, Hegel's philosophy of Mind' in *HAL*, Op.cit, 80-81.

[202] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1990), 132.
Peter Sedgwick, *Descartes to Derrida: An Introduction to European Philosophy*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 44. Terry Pinkard, 'Taylor, "History," and the History of Philosophy' in Op.cit, 194.

[203] Charles Taylor, HAL, Op.cit, 86. Nicholas Smith, Charles Taylor, Op.cit 74.

viewpoint.[204] It attempts to explain human actions in terms of antecedent conditions. It does not have the agent's knowledge available to the knower as agent. Therefore, for them, human actions are like any other external event.

The qualitative view considers action itself as primitive. Since 'purpose' is not separable from action, there is no need to make 'action' independently understandable. In fact, we may never be without some sense of what we are doing. However, in order to have knowledge about what we are doing we need to formulate it correctly, though we may do so partially or in a distorted manner. Nor is knowledge ever immediate (as Cartesian believe); it is on the contrary mediated by our efforts or formulation.[205] Actions may be totally unreflecting; they may be something we carry out without awareness. We may then become aware of what we are doing and formulate actions at our ends. Hence, actions form a sort of continuum of actions, ranging from unreflecting to highly conscious behaviour with varying degree of awareness. Highly conscious actions are, in a sense, an achievement.[206] In achieving this we transform our activity. The quality of consciously directed activity is different from that of unreflected, semi-conscious performance. Therefore, to become conscious is to be able to act in a new way. Action is not essentially or originally conscious, to make it so is an achievement and this achievement transforms it. Taylor evokes the principle of embodiment to account for the manner of this achievement.[207] According to the embodiment principle, the subject and all their functions, however 'spiritual' they may appear, are inescapably embodied. The embodiment is in two related dimensions. First, as a 'rational animal', i.e., as a living being who thinks. Secondly, as an expressive being, that is a being whose thinking is always and necessarily in a medium. The 'mental' is the inward reflection of what was originally external. Self-conscious understanding is the fruit of an interiorisation of what was originally external.[208] The implication of this principle is that self-perception/understanding is something we do, something we bring off, or fail to bring off, rather than a feature of our basic predicament. It is the result of activity of formulating, how things are with us, what we desire, feel, think, and so on. It is brought off in a medium through symbols or concepts. Thus, life forms have two dimensions - effective and expressive.[209] Each life form is both the effective realization of a certain pattern, and at the same time an expression of a certain understanding of man. We are moved on by the gap between these two dimensions. One major implication of this principle is that mental life has a '*depth*' which defies all immediate

[204] Thomas Nagel, *The view from Nowhere*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) Bernard Williams, *Descartes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978)
[205] Peter Sedgwick, *Descartes to Derrida*, Op.cit, 52.
[206] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit, 84.
[207] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit, 85.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit, 87.

self-transparency that Cartesian and empirical frameworks proclaim. It also links up the level of our understanding with the quality of our practice.[210]

Taylor traces the origin of this view of action in Hegel's project demonstrating the subject-object identity.[211] For Hegel, what is first seen as 'other' is shown to be identical with the self. It is crucial to this demonstration that the self-ceases to understand itself as merely finite but sees itself as part of 'spirit'. The recognition of this identity between self and the Spirit (Geist) is spurred on by the insight that everything emanates from the Spirit's activity. To understand reality properly is to understand it as an 'actuality'. This requires understanding of reality as activity.[212] It also requires that we come to understand in a fuller way what we are doing up to the point of seeing what Spirit is doing through us, we see the identity of the world-activity with our activities. This conception leads to a form of agent's knowledge wherein the observer's knowledge is ultimately superseded. This supersession is required as it claims that we only rise to a higher kind of knowledge through suppression of the lower kind.

Another ramification of the qualitative theory is that action is not of individuals only. There are collective actions also. Human actions are to be understood in two dimensions, namely effective and expressive. The expressive dimension implies that human action is not necessarily that of an individual. "An expression essentially in public space may turn out to be the expression essentially of a common sentiment or purpose. That is, it may be essential to this sentiment or purpose that it is shared, and the expression may be the vehicle of this sharing".[213]

Therefore, claims Taylor, the two features that action can be that of a community and it also exists in the expressive dimension form the crucial background to hermeneutical sciences. "The *Sittlichkeit* of a given society is not only to be seen as the action of a community, or of individuals only, so far as they identify themselves as members of a community (an 'I' that is We', and a 'We' that is 'I'); it also embodies and gives expression to a certain understanding of the agent, his community and their relation to what is beyond that. It is this which gives us the

[210] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit, 89. This has also been articulated differently in Harry Frankfurt, Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person', *Journal of Philosophy*, 68, 1, 1971, 5-20 as First-order and second order desires.

[211] Taylor's interpretation of Hegel is in opposition to the current trend wherein Hegel is interpreted as a non-metaphysical philosopher-- one whose primary concern is to take up and bring to completion the critique of metaphysics initiated by Kant. Taylor, on the other hand, interprets Hegel in metaphysical manner, claiming that the universe is posited by a Spirit whose essence is rational necessity. See Paul Redding, *Hegel 's Hermeneutics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996); Alan White, *Absolute Knowledge: Hegel and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1983); David Kolb, *The Critique of Pure Modernity* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986); and Robert Pippin, *Hegel's ldealism.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

[212] This conception of reality as a process or activity had tremendous impact on Marxist notion of Praxis and Taylor's notion of validation of hermeneutics in practice.

[213] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit, .94

key to the fate of the society."[214] This implies that, in order understand social institutions; they should be understood as trans-individual actions that also have an expressive dimension.

Taylor's qualitative theory of action provides basis for many of the insights of his Post Heideggerian hermeneutics. However, in doing so, he has dispensed with Hegel's 'metaphysical' terminology and has attempted to re-formulate it in modern context. For instance, Taylor incorporates Heidegger's notion of 'Dasien' to totally rule out Hegel's chimerical goal of a fully explicit and self-authenticating understanding. 'Disclosure is invariably accompanied by hiddenness; the explicit depends on the horizon of the implicit.' [215]

Strong Evaluation

The implication of the qualitative theory of action is that it makes possible for Taylor to claim that there could be agents who can have 'depth'.[216] It also shows the importance of embodiment of expression in a medium. Articulation of desires in a medium enables humans to become better aware of motivation towards their ends. As a result, their actions become qualitatively better. In order to further develop this notion of depth and to explain how agents are oriented towards 'depth' in the context of moral goods, Taylor proposes his notion of strong evaluation.[217]

According to Taylor, there are two kinds of desires in human beings: first-order desires and second-order desires. First order desires do not involve 'qualitative distinctions of worth' (are quantitative in weak sense) and are concerned only with outcomes. In contrast, second-order desires deploy a language of evaluative distinctions such as 'higher' and 'lower' desires. These two types of desires involve two different kinds of self. Agents concerned with first-order desires are inarticulate about their choices. Taylor calls such agents 'simple weigher'-- lacking in 'depth'. In contrast, agents having second-order desires are able to articulate reasons behind their choices. Such agents are termed 'strong evaluators'. They have depth, an ability to use language of contrastive characterisation of 'higher' and 'lower', 'noble' and 'base', etc. Since these strong evaluators are articulate about their choices, they have a capacity for reflection as they are able to reflect on their choices and can be articulate about them. As a result, 'strong evaluators' can have 'plurality of ways'. It is not a choice between what is clearly the higher and the lower, but there can be a kind of 'slide and criss-crossing in their choices. One can associate the concept of

[214] Charles Taylor ibid; also See Charles Taylor, ' Hegel's "Stitlichkeit" and the Crisis of representative institutions,' in Yirmiahu Yovel (ed.), *Philosophy of History and Action*, (London and Jerusalem, 1978)

[215] Charles Taylor, 'Engaged Agency and background in Heidegger', *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, (Ed.) Charles. B Guignon, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 317-336.

[216] Deane-Peter Baker, *Tayloring Reformed Epistemology: Charles Taylor, Alvin Plantinga and the de jure challenge to Christian Belief*, (SCM Press, London, 2007)108-110.

[217] C Taylor, 'What is human agency?' in *HAL* Op.cit, .16-27. This notion is based on an article by H, Frankfurt, 'Frankfurt, 'Freedom of the will and the concept of a person', Op.cit, 5-20. Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit, 14-20. Stephen Mulhall, "Articulating the Horizon of Liberalism" in *Charles Taylor* Ed Ruth Abbey Op.cit 104-110

responsibility with these agents, besides being able to talk about them in terms of the metaphor of depth'.

According to Taylor, the concept of 'strong evaluation' is something like a human universal.[218] It is present in all but 'damaged' human beings. "I don't consider it a condition of acting out of a strong evaluation that one has articulated and critically reflected on one's framework. Clearly this would be to set too narrow entry conditions. I mean simply that one is operating with some desires, goals, applications are qualitatively higher than others. A true simple weigher in all contexts in life would be a severely pathological case, incapable even of what we would call an identity, incapable of shame and much else."[219] Taylor connects this notion of strong evaluation to the notion of identity.[220] This is so because strong evaluations are also concerned with what kind of life, and what quality of agent one should be. Identity is defined as 'fundamental evaluations' which are inseparable from the person. Thus, the notion of identity refers to certain evaluations which are essential because they are the indispensable horizon out of which one reflects and evaluates as a person. "To lose this horizon, or not to have found it, is indeed a terrifying experience or disaggregation and loss".[221]

Further, says Taylor, the concepts in the terms of which we evaluate strongly are not given to us through individual fiat. They stem from traditions and latent understandings of human communities. Hence, they are necessarily embedded in linguistic forms. "Our evaluations are not chosen. On the contrary they are articulations of our sense of what is worthy, or higher, or more integrated or more fulfilling, and so on... Much of our motivation- desires, aspirations, and evaluation - is not simply given. We give it a formulation in words or images'".[222]

Strong evaluations are also perceived by us as articulations of intrinsic goodness of those things external to us towards which our desires and feelings implicitly direct us. These are neither simple descriptions nor are they characterisations of a fully independent object. Rather, articulations are attempts to formulate what is initially inchoate, or confused, or badly formulated. This kind of formulation or reformulation does not leave its object unchanged. Articulation is to give shape to our sense of what we desire or what we hold important in a certain way.

The notion of strong evaluations enables Taylor to link the notion of human agency, interpretation and moral goods. Unlike the narrow conception of agency in naturalism, Taylor attempts to link the nature of human agency to 'higher aspects' of human subjectivity. The notion of strong evaluation also entails teleology. According to Taylor, humans have the capacity for

[218] Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit.3-24.
[219] Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit.27-28.
[220] Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit.3-52.
[221] Ibid
[222] Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit.53-89.

moral goodness, or spirituality, or depth inherent in them. We have the potential for attaining qualities that we associate with civilization and are distinctively human. Since articulation forms an important aspect of the notion of strong evaluation it is also intrinsically linked to the notion of interpretation.[223]

Thus, we have a picture of human beings as self-interpreting animals whose self-interpretations have an important role in understanding them. Human actions are not reducible to mere observation. Meaning has to be interpreted by referring to the purposes of agents and social practices available to them. These interpretations are constitutive of them. Meanings are linked to the evaluative frameworks we used in judging and assessing them making these agents 'strong evaluators'; agents with depth. Strong evaluations appeal to something beyond the state of the agent and evoke features external to the agents. The notion of strong evaluation implies that our sense of identity is not something that we construct for ourselves; it has an essentially social dimension. The concepts and categories that we use in this process are given to us in our language. Our language is something which we cannot create individually; it is necessarily social and inter-subjective.[224]

Significance View of Agency

Taylor has also proposed the notion of significance view of agency to account for what is peculiarly human in us. The notion of strong evaluation that we have discussed earlier relates the notion of significance to that of interpretation. He proposes two views of agency, namely the 'significance view' of agency and, the 'representation view' of agency as models to explain this peculiarly human dimension of our agency.[225]

According to Taylor, human agents are in principle sharply distinct from other things surrounding them. They are not passive but respond to their surrounding things in a manner which suggests that things matter to them and hold significance for them. Things matter to agents because purposes can be attributed to agents in a strong original sense.[226] Matters of significance such as pride, shame, moral goodness, evil, dignity, the sense of worth, forms of love, and so on have no analogue in animals. These matters of significance are peculiarly human. Consciousness, in the characteristically human form, is something that we attain when we come to formulate the significance of things for ourselves. We, then, have an articulate view of self and world. However, things matter to us even prior to this formulation. Therefore, the original purpose cannot be confused with consciousness. Consciousness opens agents to peculiarly human

[223] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit .97-114.
[224] ibid
[225] Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit .97-114.
[226] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit 99

concerns. It does not just enable us to depict them but is constitutive of these matters of significance. This view considers interpretations or understanding of our emotions to be constitutive of emotions.[227] Understanding helps shape emotions which is why emotions cannot be fully independent objects. As per this view, the essence of evaluation not just comprises assessment in the light of fixed goals, but also, and even more, in the sensitivity to certain standards-- those involved in the peculiarly human goals. The sense of self is the sense of where one stands in relation to these standards, and proper personal choice is one informed by these standards.[228] The focus thus shifts in our interpretation of personal capacities. The centre, says Taylor, is no longer the power to plan, but openness to certain matters of significance. This openness becomes essential to personal agency for the 'significance' view.

In contrast to the significance view, there is the ‘representation’ view of agency that emanates from naturalism. This view is rooted in the seventeenth-century, epistemologically grounded notion of subject. Taylor calls it 'representation' view of agency. It does not see an essential difference between animals and humans except the power to representation of things that animals do not possess. Hence, what marks out agents from other things tends to be identified by a performance criterion. Animals (and humans too) are complex machines. They (animals) somehow maintain and reproduce themselves through a variety of circumstances. Animals merely show highly complex adaptive mechanisms. Unlike the significance view, the representation view considers the agency's ends as unproblematic.[229] What is striking about humans is their ability to conceive different possibilities, to calculate how to get them, to choose between them, and thus, to plan their lives. "The striking superiority of man is in strategic power. The various capacities definitive of a person are understood in terms of this power to plan. Central to this is the power to represent things clearly. We can plan well when we can lay out the possibilities clearly, when we can calculate their value to us in terms of our goals, as well as possibilities and the cost of their attainment. Our choices can then be clear and conscious."[230] Since this viewpoint emphasises on the peculiar power of humans to evaluate and choose clearly, it considers the goals as fixed during the evaluation process. This notion of agency leads us to what Max Weber has called 'instrumental rationality' (in contrast to value-rationality). Built into this notion of representation is the idea that representations are of independent objects and these independent objects stands as a standard for this depiction. This suggests that the ‘representation’ view of agency does not consider our articulations about ourselves to be constitutive. It considers

[227] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit 101.
[228] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit 102
[229] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit. 103
[230] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit. 104.

our articulations about ourselves as a ‘representation' or correspondence of reality or whatever is being depicted. Therefore, the ‘representation’ view does not adequately apply to human matters.

Taylor observes that these two conceptions of agency have different ramifications for both science and morals - how to explain human behaviour and the practical deliberations of how we ought to live. The 'representation' conception has its basis in the scientific domain. One of the key themes of this conception is the eschewing of 'anthropocentric’ properties and giving an account of things in absolute terms.[231] ‘Anthropocentric’ properties are ones in which things lie only within the experience of agents (e.g., secondary qualities); while 'absolute’ properties are supposedly free of any such relativity. "This was crucially at stake in the seventeenth-century distinction between primary and secondary properties. Secondary properties (such as colour) were applied to things only in so far as they were being experienced. In a world without experiencing subjects, such properties could no longer be sense fully attributed to objects. They were understood as merely subjective, as relative to us, and not as absolute properties of things".[232]

Taylor claims that this ‘eschewal of anthropocentric properties’ was undoubtedly one of the bases of spectacular progress of natural science during the last three centuries and, therefore, the idea of adopting it for the study of human behaviour always seemed attractive. However, what it leads to is trying to explain human behaviour without drawing on our background sense of significance for its intelligentibility and trying to characterise human situation and ends in absolute terms. In fact, Taylor argues, it is relatively easy to do so. "Any situation bears a great number, an indefinite number of descriptions. The predicament that I find humiliating is also one that can be described in a host of other ways, including some which make no reference to any significance at all."[233] So, if an explanatory relationship between situation and response can be captured in absolute description then it would suffice even if the features picked out in the significance descriptions are not essential to explain. The explanation may just concern itself with the way things appear to us in ordinary life. What this does in effect is to encourage 'reductionism' in the study of human behaviour.

In contrast, the 'significance’ view takes into account peculiarly human motives which are irreducible. These explanations are not possible without taking into account what is significant for us. For instance, between various human cultures there may be different ways of shaping and interpreting matters of significance: "So what is a matter of shame, guilt, dignity, or moral goodness, is notoriously different and often hard to understand from culture to culture".[234]

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[231] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit, 106.
[232] ibid.
[233] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit, 108.
[234] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit, 111

Another difference, according to Taylor, between the two views is about the 'sense of control'. The subjects according to the significance perspective are in a world of meanings that they understand imperfectly. Their task is to interpret it better, in order to know who they are, and what they ought to seek. But the subject, according to the representation view, already understands his/ her ends. Their world is one of potential means, which they understand with a view to control. Thus, in a crucial sense they are disengaged. To understand things in the absolute perspective is to understand them in abstraction from the significance for the subject. To be able to look at everything-- the world and society-- from this perspective would be to neutralise its significance. This gives the subject a kind of freedom; that of a self-defining subject, who determines their own purposes, or finds them in their own natural desires. The ideal of the modern free subject, capable of objectifying the world, and reasoning about it in a detached, instrumental way, is a novel variant of the old aspiration to spiritual freedom. "They are also of spiritual origin, in a sense which is understandable from our Western religious tradition. In both its Greek and Christian roots this has included an aspiration to rise above the merely human, to step outside the prison of the peculiarly human emotions, and to be free of the cares and demands they make on us. This is of course an aspiration which also has analogous forms in Indian culture, and perhaps, indeed, in all human cultures".[235] Thus, according to Taylor, the representation view conceives our ends as set by nature, and discoverable by objective scrutiny, or else as chosen. In the light of these ends, reason is and ought to be instrumental. Utilitarianism is product of this modern conception, with its stress on instrumental reasoning, on calculation, and on a naturalistically identified end, happiness (or on a neutral, interpretation-free account of human choice, in terms of preferences). The emphasis on freedom emerges in its rejection of paternalism.

The significance view, claims Taylor, has arisen as an alternative perspective in last few centuries as a reaction to the representative view. It objects to the representative view as a ‘flight’ from the human and sets up a completely different model of practical deliberation.[236] Rather than side-stepping the peculiarly human emotions, and turning to instrumental reason, the main form this deliberation takes is a search for the true form of these emotions. Finally, Taylor says, those who seek certainty would only find it in the representative view, while the 'significance view' deliberates in such a manner as not to take any larger order of more than human significance as an un-argued text. This gives it its tentative, exploratory nature. As can be seen from the above argument, human agency can be explained either in terms of human significance (significance view) or in terms of significance-free descriptions. Both the views have different implications for

[235] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit, 112
[236] Charles Taylor, *HAL* Op.cit, 113.

the study of human behaviour. This is an important claim by Taylor to which would be referred to in later chapters.

Hence, one can see that the contrast between significance and representation views of agency explains the peculiar human dimension of our agency. It points out that humans, in some way, are essentially different from animals in having significance of things around them. When one disregards this aspect of human agency, we take a scientific stance towards our surroundings. It is a stance of instrumental rationality in which our attempt is to control things by remaining disengaged. It eschews anthropocentric properties in us. On the other hand, significance view opens us to matters of significance. In articulating these matters of significance, one has to take into account our emotions of a situation and articulate them in language. It involves self-interpretation which is partly constitutive of us. We become sensitive to certain standards that are peculiarly human. Our sense of self derives from the sense of where one stand in relation to these standards and a properly personal choice is one informed by these standards. The concepts and categories that one uses in this process are given to us in our language. Our language is something we cannot create individually; it is necessarily social and inter-subjective.

V. Language and Interpretation

In the discussion thus far, it was found that humans are self-interpreting creatures. They are essentially different from animals in having significance of things surrounding them. They have purpose in the original and strong sense, peculiarly in human matters of significance. They become aware of these initially inchoate, muddled feelings through articulation in language. By articulation of their predicament, humans become conscious of their motivation towards their goals. In the process their understanding of their actions as well as their notion of self-changes. Thus, we can see that articulation in language forms an important component of interpretation. The concepts and categories that one uses in this process are given to us in our language.

Taylor's view on language is inspired by the works of Herder, Humboldt, Hegel, and later Heidegger and Gadamer.[237] He identifies with the post-Romantic tradition of Continental philosophy on this issue. Contributing to the discourse on language after the 'linguistic turn' associated with the twentieth century, Taylor asserts that we must first think about language in the right way if we are to grasp what is to be human and if we deviate from it then we would misconstrue the kind of being we are.[238] To do so, he proposes two models of language:

[237] Charles Taylor, *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity*, (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2016),3-50.

[238] "Linguistic turn" refers to development in the Western philosophy during the twentieth century that explored relationship between philosophy and language. It involved contribution from thinkers from both traditions, analytical

Designative theory of language and the Constitutive theory of language, and identifies himself with the latter.

According to Taylor, it was Herder who was first to have significant insights about the expressive conception of subjectivity. Since he was not a very rigorous thinker, it was the systemiser, Hegel, who worked upon these insights and made them popular.[239] But there is problem in Hegel's grounding of human expressive power in the unfolding of 'Spirit' as a rational necessity. If this course is taken, then only speculative metaphysics can take up the task of articulating the conditions of human self-realization. But the expressive model of subjectivity need not take this path. The line of development taken by Herder, Humboldt, and later Heidegger is much more fruitful. Herder rejects the division of mind and body and takes our primary access to the world to be practical. It is shaped by the desires and purposes that come with embodiment. Before anything else, the human being is 'at grips' with the surrounding things as an organic unity.[240] Human language, due to 'semantic dimension', can create new kinds of feelings and sociality. Taylor later built up existential and phenomenological themes from the works of Heidegger and Gadamer on these insights of Herder.

Language, according to Taylor, is central to understanding human social life. It is only through language that we are able to experience the world in ways that are distinctively human. "Language is the mode of operation of our being-in-the-world and the all- embracing form of the constitution of the world."[241] This conception recognises a constitutive dimension to the relationship between language and human action. Taylor calls this conception of language as Constitutive theory of language. It emphasises on the fact that language is prior to individuals. It is something which we cannot create individually; it is necessarily social and inter-subjective. Our identities are dialogic products of our interactions with other people.

Taylor contrasts this view of language with the Designative theory of language. According to it language is an instrument, an inventory of signs which can be used to label and represent the world objectively. The primary task of philosophy is to make language as transparent and manipulative as possible. It is this conception of language which informs the empiricist requirement of an operationalised language within social science.

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and continental philosophy. These thinkers include Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Derrida from the continental tradition, and Wittgenstein, Austin and Rorty from the analytical tradition. The term became popular after the publication of the book, ' The Linguistic Turn' by Richard Rorty in 1967. Rorty, later disassociated himself from the linguistic turn and analytical philosophy. Generally, the phrase "the linguistic turn" originated with the Austrian philosopher Gustav Bergmann.

[239] Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op.cit.79.

[240] Nicholas Smith, *Charles Taylor*, p. 76. See "The Importance of Herder" in Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op.cit.79-99.

[241] Hans Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 3 Charles Taylor, *HAL*, Op.cit. 215-247.

In contrast to this designative view, Taylor finds language as more than an instrument with which to describe the world. It is "a pattern of activity, by which we express/realize a way of being in the world, that of reflective awareness... At the same time, it is not something that is completely at our disposal. This is so because it precedes us. It is always more than what any particular use of language can encompass…. it is a pattern which can only be deployed against a background which we can never fully dominate; and yet a background that we are never fully dominated by because we are constantly reshaping it".[242] Language is not merely a tool of any individual but belongs first to the community of its users. It enables us to express not just subjective preferences, but also possibilities of the self, the relationship between the self and society, and the possibilities for political life in general.

According to Michael Gibbons, Taylor's conception of language recasts the relationship between appearance and reality along lines which are significantly different from the hermeneutic theories of recovery and suspicion.[243] In contrast to the hermeneutics of recovery, it emphasises the extent to which the self-understanding of participants is always potentially incomplete or flawed. It is, therefore, subject to re-examination and revision. In contrast to the hermeneutics of suspicion, Taylor's theory of language recognises the reality of appearances. He explains not only how inter-subjective meanings constitute the inchoate pre-understanding against which conscious self-understanding is formed, but also how this underlying reality of social and political life takes the shape it does because of the self-understanding that operates at the level of appearances. "It relaxes suspicion, refusing to insist that the underlying reality is either that which in some strong sense determines the apparent world, or to which understanding at the level of appearance by itself has little or no access, little or no affect."[244]

Taylor's view on language has important implications for understanding the self and self-reflection. Our critical reflections are not the description of pre-existent, independent passions, needs, wants and interests that is to be discovered by correct vocabulary to representation. Rather, passions, needs, wants and interests are given shape and form by the very process of articulating them. It is a process by which we give our inchoate desires, vaguely articulated hopes, and incompletely articulated needs, a new force. It is the process of bringing that which was undifferentiated and unclear into language, giving it specificity and bringing to bear public standards of criticism and rationality. Deep reflection consists of critical articulation rather than simply the description of sensation. In short, because language is an expression of a way of being in the world, it is also that by which we realize the potential for reflective awareness. Because it is an articulation of possibilities, the reflective awareness available to us encourages the

[242] Charles Taylor, "Language and Human Nature", in Interpreting Politics, Op.cit, p.117
[243] Michael Gibbon's 'Introduction', *Interpreting Politics*, Op.cit, p.14.
[244] Michael Gibbon, Introduction', *Interpreting Politics*, Op.cit p.l13.

realization of some possibilities of the self and political life and conceals others. As our language changes, new articulations and understanding of the self and society become impossible. Consequently, according to Taylor, our understanding of ourselves is always subject to revision and re-evaluation. The language we find ourselves immersed in shapes the possibilities for our conception of the self, its relationship to others and society as a whole. Thus, one of the primary tasks of interpretive theory is the interpretation of the possibilities of the self and its connection to society that is embodied in inter-subjective meanings and practices.[245]

VI. Interpretation and Historicity

In his notion of interpretation and language, Taylor also has been greatly influenced by the works of Heidegger and Gadamer. In fact, recognising the importance of these two giants have made on his work, Taylor identifies himself with the 'post-Heideggerian hermeneutics.[246] It is due to their influence that Taylor is able to avoid subjectivism that was prevalent in the early hermeneutic thinkers such as Schleiermacher and Dilthey. The early hermeneutic thinker could not avoid some of the subjectivist shortcomings derived from Enlightenment project due to Cartesian presumptions prevalent in their work. A key role in this was played by the Heidegger's notion of language as the ‘house of Being'.[247]

Taylor stresses on hermeneutics as a feature of human existence' rather than it being merely a kind of method to gather knowledge. For him, understanding and interpretation are essential and not accidental features of the human existence.[248] In fact, he argues that much of European philosophy since Enlightenment has been 'subjectivist' in the sense that it has concentrated on the features of 'pure reasoning’ and the rules that a’ pure reasoner’ would follow. As a result, such a philosophy is alienating as it ignores our location in history as human beings and interpreters.[249]

Despite being opposed to Enlightenment, even Schleiermacher and Dithey could not free themselves from the idea of knowledge being obtained by 'pure reason'. A 'pure reasoner' is a scholar who has detached from his social and cultural context by adopting methodologically secured sets of rules of enquiry.[250] The early hermeneutic thinkers seemed not to have rejected

[245] Michael Gibbon's 'Introduction', *Interpreting Politics*, Op.cit, p.14

[246] Influence of Heidegger here. See Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit, 47-51. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. John Macquarie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 192, Gadamer argues so in his *Philosophical Hermeneutics, TM* Op.cit, 259.

[247] Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings: Martin Heidegger*, (Routledge,2010).

[248] Influence of Heidegger here. See Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit, 47-51. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. John Macquarie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), 192

[249] Gadamer argues so in his *Philosophical Hermeneutics, TM* Op.cit, 259.

[250] Jean Paul Surber, *Culture and Critique: An Introduction to the Critical Discourses of Cultural Studies* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 50-53. Hajo Holborn, ‘William *Dilthey and the Critique of Historical Reason*’ Journal of the History of Ideas, Volume II No. 1(Jan 1950)

this view because they held that the historical and cultural differences between the historian/ scholar and the society being studied was an impediment to the acquisition of valid knowledge. It had to be overcome by the hermeneutic method. For instance, it was Schleiermacher who argued that a historian's (as he elaborated his views on hermeneutics in the context of history) task is to place himself in the position of the person, the subject, who created the original meaning, the text or artifact. To achieve this, historian should submerge himself in the totality of life that gave them meaning. This involves coming to share the background against which interpretation takes place. It is because we do not have this background in the first place that we find the texts, events, movements and artifacts puzzling.[251] Similarly, Dilthey too could not completely come out of this aspect Enlightenment legacy. Both still concentrated on 'pure reasoning' and the rules that 'pure reasoning' would follow. Our social and cultural location in history is an accidental and potentially distorting feature of understanding to them.[252]

Following Gadamer, Taylor argues that our 'historicity' (a term coined by Gadamer) is an ontological condition of understanding. It is because of our historical and cultural location that we can engage in interpretive understanding. It is our present understandings, our conceptions of life that open up the past to us, so that we can have knowledge of it. These conceptions are grounds of judgments that we make about other societies on the basis of our understandings. This insight has been captured by Gadamer's notion of 'prejudice', while Taylor has used notions such as 'strong evaluation' and 'horizon' to delve on these themes. Taylor has worked out these insights in his works such as *Sources of the Self: The Malaise of Modernity*, and *Modem Social Imaginaries*.

For Taylor, as for Gadamer, our position (historical) can never be entirely held at a distance and left out of account. Background, horizon, etc. enable us to experience and understand other societies through their texts, artifacts and so on. Our historical position is the 'given' which shapes our experience. As our historical position is itself shaped by the past; the past has considerable power over our understanding. The past provides the tradition, which defines the ground on which interpreter stands. Taylor's conception of interpretive understanding is not that of reconstructing the past in the present but of mediating the past for the present. The work of mediation involves attention to the continuity of heritage and tradition. The past already influences the present by shaping the interpreter's horizon and understandings. The prejudices and interests that we bring to understanding are located in history. This mediation should be forward as well as backward looking [hermeneutic circle].[253] There is a continuous mediation of

[251] Jean Paul Surber, ibid.
[252] Jean Paul Suber, ibid. Also see William Dilthey, *Selected Writings*, and Trans& Ed by HP. Rickman (Cambridge University Press, 1975).
[253] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, p.24

past and present in which our interpretation marks just a moment. In fact, the past is an active force providing an inexhaustible supply of possibilities. It is not merely a passive, inert, object of contemplation. Texts, events, and so on come to acquire different meanings as they become part of new hermeneutical situations. As the interpreter's horizons change with the understandings which they acquire, they reconsider and review the text, etc., which are meaningful to them. This back-and-forth movement is a kind of dialogue that begins with the interpreter genuinely opening to a text and allowing it to speak no matter how challenging its viewpoint. The opening up throws the interpreter's prejudices into relief by raising them for critical appraisal. 'This "collision of horizons" (a phrase borrowed from Gadamer), the shock of contact between our own and some entirely alien viewpoint, reveals our own deep-seated assumptions and our historicity."[254] Genuine understanding requires imagination in situations like this; the ability to see what is questionable and what is questioned, to be carried along by it and immersed in its flow.

Taylor maintains that our understanding unfolds in a 'hermeneutical circle' which is a sort of process of hypothesis and revision as understanding develops. As we come to grasp a part, we conjecture a sense of the whole. This conjecture is then revised as our knowledge progresses. The 'unity of sense' towards which interpretation strives is the integration of all parts in a meaningful whole. Although he does not emphasize it as much as Gadamer, yet this conception of hermeneutics by Taylor entails a view that hermeneutics should take into account tradition and history. In fact, these traditions are integral to understanding and cannot be set to one side. Taylor's historical work such as *Sources of the Self* can be viewed as 'works of retrieval' of meanings of modern identity based on the notion of hermeneutics we have articulated above. Thus, hermeneutics is not just a method or an ideal. Rather it is the original form of our 'being-in-the-world'. It is the universal principle of human thought.

This Post-Heideggerian hermeneutics implies that hermeneutics cannot be viewed as recapitulation of some actor or agent's intended meaning. To view it so would be to suppose that there was just one, fixed meaning to be attained. That would render unintelligible a host of differing interpretations that are found in history, and which make up the tradition we bring to interpretation. These interpretations cannot be treated as misunderstandings (as Schleiermacher did) but as varying understandings. In fact, this variety gives us an 'excess of meaning' in the tradition which we bring to bear in our understanding well beyond that of any particular author or agent's intentions. Thus, what a text means keeps on growing and changing. In this way, one can see that post-Heideggerian hermeneutics circumvents objections premised upon a requirement that knowledge can be objective. There can be no standards of objective independent of the inter-

[254] Charles Taylor, PA, Op.cit, p. 51.

subjective fusion of horizons arrived at by partners in the dialogue of interpretations. This fusion is brought about through the interpreter's willingness to review his prejudices in the light of those brought by the author of the text in question. According to Taylor, our possession of language underpins the possibility of a fusion of horizon. Our concepts and meanings are expressed in our language. Without language we would not be able to understand for we would have no way of expressing our concepts. Taylor argues that our possession of language is not merely an accidental feature of our existence. Rather, we possess the world through language because we experience the world mediated through our concepts. Language is a pre-condition of any truth and understanding. It follows since we cannot experience the world independently of our concepts that language sets limits upon the world for us.

Moreover, by its very nature language is communal (possessed by the community). This offers the possibility of escape from relativism. Knowing a language means knowing how to make one understood in it. Language has 'disclosure power'. What is spoken of in language and what is captured in our concepts, is the common world in which we live. Just as prejudices are not bars to our understanding but its starting point, so to know a language is to be open to participation with others in dialogue that can transform and broaden the horizons from which we begin. Language discloses realities and assimilates them within itself. Since there can be no experience of the world outside of that given in a language, the question of relativity of language does not arise. There is nowhere else to view the world from, nowhere that is fixed and independent of language.

In the above articulation, what Taylor has been pointing at is the essential creativity of language and interpretation. Meanings that are disclosed through the dialogue of interpretation pose further questions for us. The spiral of understanding and interpretation is a creative process which constantly fuses and enlarges the horizon provided by the interpreter and the interpreted. The linguistic nature of interpretation is the way that tradition is able to communicate with us. At each point in the spiral tradition interpretation and horizons are encountered and transcended at a more universal level. There can be no end to this transcendence.

The account above shows how Taylor has selected some of the key themes of post-Heideggerian hermeneutics and is able to avoid the 'subjectivist' assumptions (or the notion of pure reasoner) made by earlier hermeneutic thinkers. As we can see, the post Heideggerian hermeneutic thinkers conceive the issue of understanding and explanation in a drastically different manner than naturalism and earlier hermeneutic thinkers. They do not conceive the problem of knowledge (also, that of explanation) in terms of sharp distinction between subject and object; but in terms of humans being language-animals residing in a community. Hence, instead of problem of knowledge in terms of 'pure reasoner' (as a result, an essentialist explanation); the hermeneutic-

discourse deals with themes such as human as language animal and the role of interpretation in understanding them.

VII. Interpretation and Its Characteristics

In our exposition about Taylor's view on language we found that humans are self-interpreting creatures who are constituted by their articulation about their predicament. Their constitution by the language is not an optional extra for them but an inescapable condition. Human beings are essentially creatures of meanings. If they are creatures of meanings, then their actions should be amenable to interpretation.[255] This issue will be examined now.

Interpretation, as Taylor terms it, is an attempt to make clear or to make sense of an object of study. This object must, be a text or text-analogue, which in some way is confused, incomplete, seemingly contradictory; in one way or another, unclear. The aim of interpretation, then, is to bring to light an underlying coherence of the object of our study (text). Attempts to bring to light the underlying coherence involve, first, an object or field of objects, about which we can speak in terms of coherence or its absence, of making sense or not making sense. Second, one needs to make a distinction between the sense or coherence made and its embodiment in a particular field of carriers or signifiers. A meaning is one which admits 'of more than one expression'. Finally, these meanings are for a subject. Without a subject, the choice of criteria of sameness and difference, among different forms of coherence which can be identified in a given pattern, among different conceptual fields in which it can be seen, is arbitrary.[256] Thus, the object of a science of interpretation must have sense, distinguishable from its expression, which is for or by a subject.

Taylor claims that since the experiential meanings that characterize human behaviour satisfy the above-mentioned three conditions, the study of human behaviour should involve interpretation. According to Taylor, the notion of 'experiential meaning' is not an illegitimate extension of the notion of linguistic meaning. Experiential meaning is involved when we talk about the meaning, a situation, an action or a demand has for a person. Taylor contrasts this notion of meaning from the 'linguistic meaning' which is concerned with words in a semantic field. When, we speak of 'meaning' of a given situation (experiential meaning), it has the following articulation:

a) Meaning is for a subject: it is not the meaning of a situation in vacuo, but it's meaning for a subject, a specific subject or a group of subjects.

b) Meaning is of something: We can distinguish between a given element-situation, action and its meaning. This is not to say that they (the given element and its meaning) are

[255] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, p.21
[256] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, p. 15

physically separable. Rather, we are dealing with two descriptions of the element, in one of which it is characterised in terms of its meaning for the subject.

c) Things only have meaning in a field, that is, in relation to the meaning of other things. This means that there is no such thing as a single, unrelated meaningful element; and it means that changes in other meanings in the field can involve changes in the given element. Meanings cannot be identified except in relation to other meanings. [257]

Thus, experiential meaning is for a subject, of something, in a field. It is different from the linguistic meaning in the sense that it has a four- and not a three-dimensional structure. Linguistic meaning is for subjects and in a field but is the meaning of signifiers and it is about a world of referents.

As we can see from the above elaboration, 'experiential meaning' which is an essential characteristic of human action satisfies the three conditions that an object must have to be explained interpretatively. This "making sense of is the proffer of an interpretation; and we have seen that what is interpreted meets the conditions of a science of interpretation: first, that we can speak of its sense or coherence; and second, that this sense can be expressed in another form, so that we can speak of the interpretation as giving clearer expression to what is only implicit in the explicandum. The third condition, that this sense be for a subject, is obviously met in this case, although who this subject is by no means an unproblematical question...This should be enough to show that there is a good prima facie case to the effect that humans and their actions are amenable to explanation of a hermeneutical kind. There is, therefore, some reason to raise the issue and challenge epistemological orientation which would rule interpretation out of the sciences of man."[258] Thus, we can say that study of human action should necessarily involve interpretation as form of explanation. "The norm of explanation which it (experiential meaning) posits is one which 'makes sense' of the behaviour, which shows a coherence of necessarily involves interpretation as form of explanation."[259]

VIII. Hermeneutical Circle

Since human action is amenable to interpretation, it involves a circular process that cannot be captured by the linear models of logical reasoning. In the discourse of hermeneutics, this circular process is often referred to as the 'hermeneutical circle'.[260] The conception of hermeneutical circle does not mean that hermeneutics is without its own principles and methodological constraints but only that human action cannot be adequately described by the logic appropriate to

[257] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, p. 22-23. Charles Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections: Selected Essays*, (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 2011).24-38.
[258] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, p.27
[259] Ibid.
[260] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, p. 24

the natural world. According to the notion of hermeneutic circle, in the context of language, we cannot make sense of an instance of language usage until we have an understanding of the entirety of the language. On the other hand, we cannot know a language in entirety until we learn it by making sense of the particular instances involved in that language. Interpretation thus involves a circular process and poses a logical conundrum at the level of theory. However, in practice it is not a vicious circle, since we in fact do gradually come to understand not only the meaning of texts as a whole but also how the whole text achieves its meaning in relation to its various parts. That is why when we learn a new language, then by first learning specific words and phrases, at some point, we become able to speak the whole language itself and recognise when instances of it obey or do not obey its rules.

Taylor points out that the 'hermeneutical circle' is inescapable for hermeneutics because it involves expression. Expression, by nature, belongs to a field. In case of confusion or misunderstanding, in order to understand an expression, we need to appeal to other related expressions in the field. In order to understand each other we need to refer to a common understanding of the expressions of the language involved.

Taylor has expressed the problem of 'hermeneutical circle' in a manner different from the traditional articulation of the problem in terms of part and whole. For him, parts consist of objects to be interpreted; the whole consists of these objects and their interpretive audiences together. "Our aim is to replace this confused, incomplete, partly erroneous self-interpretation by a correct one. And in doing this we look not only to the self-interpretation but to the stream of behaviour in which it is set; just as in interpreting a historical document we have to place it in the stream of events which it relates to."[261] The hermeneutic circle is comprised of a continuous ramifying between something to be interpreted and its interpreters. Since for Taylor meaning is not a property of an object but a field within which an object is situated in interpretation, only in being related to its interpreters is the meaning of objects or events actualized. Thus, the meaning of these interpreted entities will vary as their interpretive audience varies.

According to Taylor, there is a slide in the notion of interpretation: "Already to be a living agent is to experience one's situation in terms of certain meanings; and this in a sense can be thought of as a sort of 'proto-interpretation' (1st level). This is in turn interpreted and shaped by the language in which the agent lives these meanings (2nd level). This whole is then at a third level interpreted by the explanation we proffer of his actions (3 level)."[262] Because of this slide in the notion of hermeneutical circle, we do not have 'fixed meanings' of object (or events) in interpretive sciences in contrast to the empirical sciences which follow correspondence theory. On this

[261] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit. p.26
[262] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit. p.27

account, meaning is both multivalent and dyadic. It is multivalent because any intentional act or its product will have multiple meanings depending on the interpreter(s) involved. It is dyadic because meaning only emerges out of the relation between two subjects (the agent and the interpreter).

We have established that in the hermeneutical sciences knowledge is acquired only through a tentative, never-ending process called hermeneutical-circle. This situation of hermeneutical science connotes a sense of uncertainty.

Now, let us examine a claim that empirical sciences are actually a method of going beyond the uncertainty of hermeneutical-circle to arrive at a level of certainty through the verificability process.

The establishment of a certain reading of a text involves grounding it in readings of other texts. What we do if someone does not 'see the adequacy of our interpretations of a particular reading? We would try to convince them by trying to show how it makes sense of the original confusion. ‘But for him to follow us he must read the original language as we do, he must recognise these expressions as puzzling in a certain way, and hence be looking for a solution to our problem. If he does not, what can we do... We have to show him through the reading of other expressions why this expression must be read in the way we propose. But success here requires that he follows us in these other readings, and so on it would seem, potentially forever.’[263]

We can say that we cannot escape an ultimate appeal to a common understanding of expressions, of the language involved. This is same as what we termed as hermeneutical-circle. We can convince an interlocutor only if he shares our understanding of the language concerned. If he does not, then, it would only lead to 'a situation of uncertainty'. According to Taylor, there are two ways in which a level of certainty has been attained in the Western tradition by breaking beyond the hermeneutical circle. First, the rationalist way, one which does not involve negation of intuition and aspires to attainment of an understanding of such clarity that it would carry with it the certainty of undeniable.[264] Second, is the way 'empiricists' have attempted to go beyond the circle, by getting beyond 'subjectivity.' The attempt is to reconstruct knowledge in such a way that there is no need to make final appeal to readings which cannot be checked further. That is why, the basic building block of knowledge on this view is the sense-datum. It is a unit of information which is not the deliverance of a judgment, and which has by definition no element in it of reading or interpretation. The highest ambition would be to build our knowledge from such building blocks by judgments which could be anchored in a certainty beyond subjective intuition. If the original acquisition of the units of information is not the fruit of judgment or

[263] Charles Taylor, PHS, Op.cit. p.24.
[264] Charles Taylor, PHS, Op.cit. p. 18

interpretation, then the contestation that two such elements occur together need not be the fruit of interpretation either of a reading or of intuition which cannot be checked. For if the occurrence of a single element is a brute datum, then so is the co-occurrence of two such elements. The path to true knowledge would then repose crucially on the correct recording of such co-occurrences.

Taylor claims that this is what lies behind an ideal of verification; it must be grounded ultimately in the acquisition of brute data. In case a difference of interpretation can arise over given data then it must be possible to structure the argument in such a way as to distinguish the basic brute data from the inferences made on the basis of them. The inferences, themselves must similarly be beyond the challenge of a rival interpretation.

Thus, the surplus meaning in a theory (evaluative sentences) which could not be rigorously coordinated with brute data was considered quite outside the logic of verification. This is the reason why this kind of orientation is hostile to a conduct of enquiry which is based on interpretation, and which encounters the hermeneutical circle as characterised earlier. The interpretive orientation cannot meet the requirement of inter-subjective, non-arbitrary verification which it considers essential to science.

So, we can see that our conception of hermeneutics (interpretation as a form of explanation) is not only able to explain human behaviour adequately (that is not leaving out its essential aspect, 'meaning'), but is also able to explain the motivation of the rival model of explanation, empirical political science, in attempting to avoid this hermeneutical circle. What we have seen is that empirical political science, in going beyond the hermeneutical circle, is trying to achieve a level of certainty in explanation. It does so by identifying with the brute-datum and going beyond 'subjectivity'. If we can show that in avoiding the role of interpretation in explanation of human behaviour, empirical political science leaves out something significant, then, it would render the hermeneutical framework as superior to empirical political science. So, let us examine this aspect.

IX. Impact of the Natural Science Model on the Study of Politics

According to Taylor, the goal of a verifiable science in politics has led to concentration on those features that can supposedly be identified in abstraction from our understanding of experiential meaning. These brute data identifications enable us to break from the hermeneutical circle and base our science on verification procedure.[265] These reconstruct reality in such a way that it allows for an inter-subjective reality which is made up of brute data, identifiable acts and structures, certain institutions, procedures, and actions. It allows for beliefs, affective reactions,

[265] Elizabeth Anscombe 'On brute facts', *Analysis* 18 (1957-58), p. 69-72.

and evaluations, as the psychological properties of individuals. It also allows for correlation between these two orders or reality.

In short, what is objectively (inter-subjectively) real is brute data identifiable. This is what social reality is. Social reality in terms of meaning for the actors, about which disputes can arise about their interpretation and cannot be identified with brute datum was given subjective reality. There are certain beliefs, affective reactions, evaluations which individuals make in relation to social reality. "These beliefs or reactions can have an effect on this reality; and the fact that such a belief is held is a fact of objective social reality. But the social reality which is the object of these attitudes, beliefs, and reactions can only be made up of brute data. Thus, any description of reality in terms of meanings which is open to interpretive question is only allowed into this scientific discourse if it is placed as quotes and attributed to individuals as their opinion, belief, and attitude. That this opinion, belief, etc. is held is thought of as a brute datum, since it is redefined as the respondent's giving a certain answer to the questionnaire".[266] From the point of view of empiricist epistemology, Taylor says, this categorical principle leaves out nothing. Both reality and meanings that it has for actors are coped with. However, it does not allow for inter-subjective meanings, that is, it does not allow for the validity of descriptions of social reality in terms of meanings.

According to Taylor, empiricist political science ignores what underlies this set of brute data identifications. These identifications are the application of a language of social life: a language which marks distinctions among different possible social acts, relations and structures. In fact, "the vocabulary of a given social dimension is grounded in the shape of social practice in this dimension; that is, the vocabulary would not make sense (and) could not be applied sensibly where this range of practices does not prevail. And yet this range of practices could not exist without the prevalence of this or some related vocabulary... the language is constitutive of the reality is essential to its being the kind of reality it is."[267] Implicit in these practices is a certain vision of the agent and his relation to others and to society.[268]

Therefore, what this involves is not subjective meanings that can fit into the categorical grid of behavioural political science, but inter-subjective meanings. "It is not just that the people in our society, all or mostly, have a given set of ideas in their heads and subscribe to a given set of goals. The meanings and norms implicit in these practices are not just in the minds of the actors but are out there in the practices themselves, practices which cannot be conceived as a set of individual actions, but which are essentially modes of social relation of mutual action.[269] These

[266] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, 31
[267] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op.cit, p 34
[268] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op.cit,. p 35
[269] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op.cit, p 36

inter-subjective meanings are a social matrix in which individuals find themselves and act. Since empirical political science allows only for inter-subjective reality, which is brute data identifiable, it ignores inter-subjective meanings which are partly constitutive of the social practices and institutions. But if we have to understand these inter-subjective meanings then we have to understand the language, (and) the underlying meanings which constitute them.[270]

The empirical political science, by considering only brute data identifiable, gives up trying to define further what the social practices and institutions are. It is not able to account for the meanings which they require, and which sustain them. For these (inter-subjective) meanings do not fit into the grid; they are not subjective beliefs or values but are constitutive of social reality. In order to get at them we have to drop the basic premise that social reality is made up of brute data alone.[271]

Further, what the ontology of mainstream social science lacks is the notion of meaning as not simply for an individual subject; of a subject who can be a 'we' as well as an 'I' (We have dealt with this kind of subjectivity while discussing the qualitative view of human action inspired by Hegel). 'The exclusion of this possibility, of the communal, comes once again from the baleful influence of the epistemological tradition for which all knowledge has to be reconstructed from the impressions imprinted on the individual subject. But if we free ourselves from the hold of prejudices, this seems a wildly implausible view about the development of human consciousness; we are aware of the world through a "we" before we are through an "I". Hence, we need the distinction between what is just shared in the sense that each of us has it in our individual worlds, and that which is in the common world."[272]

Thus, it can be seen that mainstream social science is kept within certain limits by its categorical principles which are rooted in the traditional epistemology of empiricism. They are a handicap and prevent from coming to grips with important problems of our day which should be the object of political science. Therefore, we need to go beyond the bounds of a science based on verification to one which would study the inter-subjective and common meanings embedded in social reality. And says this science would be essentially hermeneutical as has been delineated above.

This hermeneutical science, as it would not be based on brute data its primitive data would be readings of meanings, and its object would have the three properties mentioned earlier: the meanings are for a subject in a field or fields; they are meanings which are partially constituted by self-definition, and are in this sense already interpretations, which can be re-expressed or made explicit by a science of politics. The subject may be a society or community; but the inter-

[270] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op.cit, p 38
[271] Ibid.
[272] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op. cit, 40

subjective meanings, as we have seen, embody a certain self-definition; a vision of the agent and his society, which is that of the society or community.[273]

Since this hermeneutical science has no brute data and relies on readings, it cannot but move in a hermeneutical-circle. As a result, hermeneutics would also not be able to meet the conditions (though misplaced) such as verifiability set by the empirical model. In fact, since it does not depend on brute data, hermeneutical science cannot but depend on insight. It requires one to have the sensibility and understanding necessary to be made and comprehend the readings by which we can explain the reality concerned. Moreover, says Taylor, this insight cannot be communicated by gathering of brute data, or initiation in modes of formal reasoning or some combination of these. It is unformalisable. And this may appear scandalous to the proponents of empirical model.

'For it means that this is not a study in which anyone can engage, regardless of their level of insight; that some claims of the form: "if you don't understand, then your intuitions are at fault, are blind or inadequate" will be justified; that some differences will be non-arbitrable by further evidence, but that each side can only make appeal to deeper insight on the part of the other.'[274]

According to Taylor, the superiority of one position over another thus consists in that from the more adequate position one can understand one's own stand and that of one's opponent, but not the other way around. So, hermeneutical science conceives differences in two positions as a gap in intuitions. This is not just gap of intuitions but is also bound up with the divergent options in politics and life, he observes.[275]

This is the kind of gap which arises when someone cannot understand the kind of self-definition which others are proposing as underlying a certain society or set of intuitions, he says. 'But self-definitions are not only important to us as scientists who are trying to understand some, perhaps distant, social reality. As men we are self-defining beings, and we are partly what we are by virtue of the self-definitions which we have been accepted, however we have come by them. What self-definitions we understand and what ones we do not, is closely linked with the self-definitions which help to constitute what we are. If it is too simple to say that one only understands an ideology which one subscribes to, it is nevertheless hard to deny that we have great difficulty grasping definitions whose terms' structure the world in ways which are utterly different from or incompatible with our own.'[276]

Hence, says Taylor, the gap in intuitions does not just divide different theoretical positions; it also tends to divide different fundamental options in life. The practical and theoretical are

[273] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op. cit,.52
[274] Charles Taylor, PHS Op. cit, 53.
[275] Ibid.
[276] Charles Taylor, PHS Op. cit, 54.

inextricably joined here. It may not just be that to understand a certain explanation one has to sharpen one's intuitions, it may be that one has to change one's orientation - if not in adopting another orientation, at least in living one's own in a way which allows for greater comprehension of others. 'Thus, in the sciences of man in so far as they are hermeneutical there can be a valid response to "I don't understand" which takes the form, not only "develop your intuitions", but more radically "change yourself."[277] Consequently, says Taylor, any aspiration to a value-free or 'ideology-free' science of man is not possible. This is so as a study of the sciences of man is inseparable from an examination of the options between which men must choose.

Since, says Taylor, the interpretations of meanings involve self-definitions, errors in these cases should be looked as 'illusions' (as we use the term illusion for such errors which build up a counterfeit reality of its own). 'But errors of interpretation of meaning, which are also self-definitions of those who interpret and hence inform their lives, are more than errors in this sense: they are sustained by certain practices of which they are constitutive.'[278]

Moreover, says Taylor, the role of intuitions may tempt us to revert to the verification model. We may want to take our understanding of meaning as part of the logic of discovery, as logical empiricists suggest for unformalisable insights, and still found our science on exactness of our predictions. Then, our insightful understanding of the inter-subjective meanings would serve to elaborate fruitful hypotheses, but their utility would remain in the degree they would enable us to predict.

X. Predictions

However, Taylor points out that if the epistemological views underlying the science of interpretation are right, then, such exact predictions are radically impossible. This would be so for the following three reasons of fundamentalness:

1. The first is called the 'open system' predicament. According to this, we cannot shield a certain domain of human events (psychological, economic, and political) from external interference. It is impossible to delineate a closed system for such domain of human events.[279]
2. The second, more fundamental, is that if we are to understand human behaviour by a science of interpretation, we cannot achieve the degree of exactitude of a science based on brute data. The data of natural science admit of measurement to virtually any degree of exactitude. But different interpretations cannot be judged in this way. At the same time

[277] ibid
[278] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op. cit, 54
[279] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op. cit, 55.

different nuances of interpretation may lead to different predictions in some circumstances, and these different outcomes may eventually create widely varying futures. Hence, it is more than easy to be wide of the mark in case of interpretation.

3. Finally, the most fundamental reason for the impossibility of hard prediction is that human being is a self-defining animal. With changes in their self-definition go changes in what a human being is, such that they have to be understood in different terms. But the conceptual mutations in human history can, and frequently do, produce conceptual webs which are incommensurable, that is, where the terms are defined in relation to a common stratum of expression.

On the other hand, the success of prediction in the natural sciences, says Taylor, is bound up with the fact that all states of the system, past and future, can be described in the same range of concepts, as values. Hence, all the future states of a system that can be characterised as past ones are in the same conceptual language. But for hermeneutics this conceptual unity is vitiated by the fact of conceptual innovation which in turn alters human reality. The very terms in which the future will have to be characterised if we are to understand it properly are not all available to us at present. Hence, we have radically unpredictable events.

In fact, it is much easier to understand a fact after its occurrence than to predict it, asserts Taylor. So, human science is largely ex post-understanding.[280] When we strive ex post to understand changes then we try to develop a language in which we can situate the incommensurable webs of concepts. 'Really to be able to predict the future would be to have explicated so clearly the human condition that one would already have pre-empted all cultural innovation and transformation. This is hardly in the bounds of possible.'[281] So, human science is inescapably historical.

XI. Validation of Social Theory: Theory as Practice

It was found earlier that hermeneutical conception of the human being as a self-interpreting animal rules out value-neutrality as an ideal to be achieved. With the rejection of this ideal, we should also do away with our concern to focus on the content of our theories as we do in natural sciences and, instead, should theorize about social matters as a practice.[282]

[280] Charles Taylor, *PHS*. Op. cit, 56. Note the parallel with Hegel who famously noted that "the owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk" - meaning that philosophy comes to understand a historical condition just as it passes away. Philosophy cannot be prescriptive because it understands only in hindsight.
[281] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit.56.
[282] Taylor's notion has important points of convergence with the views developed by Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

In our times natural science theory has been the model for social theory: that is, we attempt to see theory as offering an account of underlying processes and mechanisms of society, and as providing the basis of a more effective planning of social life. However, according to Taylor, for all the superficial analogies, social theory can never really occupy this role. It is significantly a different activity as the practices which make up society require certain self-descriptions on the part of the participants and these self-descriptions are constitutive. Further, the understanding formulated in these self- descriptions can be called 'pre-theoretical understandings.'[283]

According to Taylor, social theory arises when we try to formulate explicitly what we are doing, describe the activity which is central to a practice, and articulate the norms which are essential to it. Still stronger motive for making and adopting social theories is the sense that our implicit understanding is in some way crucially inadequate or even wrong. Thus, social theories do not just make our constitutive self-understanding explicit, but also extend, or criticise, or even challenge them.

Alterations in our pre-theoretical understanding which theory brings about can alter these practices. So, unlike natural science, social theory is not about an independent object but one that is partly constituted by self-understanding. Therefore, a theory can do more than undermine or strengthen our practices; it can shape or alter our way of carrying them out by offering an interpretation of the constitutive norms.[284]

In other words, while natural science theory also transforms practice, the practice it transforms is not what the theory is about. It is in this sense external to the theory. 'We think of it as an "application" of the theory. But in politics, the practice is the object of theory. Theory in this domain transforms its own object. Therefore, the validation of the social theory too is not simple correspondence model (as in natural science).'[285]

If the nature of social theory is such then the problem arises about validation: what is it for a social theory to be right. The answer Taylor proposes for this is that social theory can be validated or tested in the quality of practice it informs. "What makes a theory right is that it brings practice out in the clear; that its adoption makes possible what is in some sense a more effective practice."

People turn to political theory when they feel the need to get a clearer idea of what society's practices involve. These practices seem problematic because they are already loci of strife, or trouble and uncertainty. 'I am thinking in particular of the central political practices of modern Western democracies: elections, decisions by majority vote, adversary negotiations, the claiming

[283] Taylor's notion of practice is an influence of Heidegger's phenomenological description of everydayness. See Dorothea Frede, 'The question of being: Heidegger's project' in *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, Op.cit 42-69

[284] Charles Taylor, 'Social Theory as Practice', in *PHS*, Op.cit 98.

[285] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit 101.

and according of rights, and the like. These practices have grown in our civilization in a context of strife replacing sometimes violently earlier practices which were incompatible with them. And they are practices which by their nature leave scope for struggle between different conceptions, policies, and ambitions. Moreover, their introduction was justified by polemical theories which challenged the dominant views of the pre-modern era. Hence by their nature and history these practices constantly push us to find and redefine their theoretical basis.'[286] Thus, points out Taylor, theory has an important use to define common understanding and hence, sustain or reform political practices, as well as serving on an individual level to help people orient them (i.e., self-defining).

From the above following two points emerge: self-definition is essentially also a definition of norms, goods, or values; and there is in each case a practice of it which is the essential enabling condition.

Further, Taylor proposes two propositions regarding validation:

1. There is such a thing as validating a social theory in its self-defining use, as well as establishing it as an explanation/ description.
2. Validating a theory as self-definition is in an important sense primary, because understanding what is involved in such validation will frequently be essential to confirming a theory, even as an adequate description/ explanation

According to Taylor, these self-definitions can be tested in practice. 'Since theories enable practices to take a certain shape, a theory which badly misidentifies the good we can seek in a certain domain will ground a practice which fails to realise these goods. The practices informed by wrong theories will be in an important way self-defeating.'[287] Similarly, to have a better theoretical self-definition is to understand better what we are doing; and this means that our action can be somewhat freer of the stumbling, self-defeating character which previously afflicted it. Then, our actions become less haphazard and contradictory, less prone to produce what we did not want at all, he explains. In short, as theories which are about practices are self-definitions, and hence alter practices, the proof of validity of a theory can come in the changed quality of the practice it enables. Good theory enables practice to become less stumbling and more clairvoyant.

Taylor concludes that social/political theories serve more than descriptive and explanatory purposes: they also serve to define ourselves, and that such self-definition shapes practice. Therefore, the use of theory as self-definition also has to be borne in mind when we come to explain, and practice social science. So, whether we are trying to validate a theory of self-

[286] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op. cit 106.
[287] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, 109

definition, or establish it as an explanation, we have to be alive to the way that understanding shapes practice or disrupts or facilitates it.

But this raises a number of questions about the relation between the scientist's explanatory theory and the self-definitions of his subjects. According to Taylor, any account of human action must make the agents more understandable. 'A satisfactory explanation must also make sense of the agents. Of course, this does not mean that it must show their action making sense. For it very often does not. Frequently they are confused, misinformed, and contradictory in their goals and actions. But in identifying the contradictions, confusions, etc., we make sense of what they did. And this means that we come to see how as agents, that is, as being who act, have purposes, desires-they come to do what they did, and to bring about what befell.'[288]

Thus, says Taylor, interpretive social science requires that we master the agent's self-description in order to identify the explananda. However, it by no means requires that we couch our explanantia in the same language. On the contrary it generally demands that we go beyond it. The false assimilation of interpretive science with adopting the agent's point of view does place exactly this crippling restriction on the explanantia. But if, on the other hand, we attempt to by-pass his self-descriptions even in picking out our explananda, we have put paid to any attempt to make sense of him.[289]

Summary

This completes our explication of the hermeneutic project in the writings of Charles Taylor. It is found that master-philosophers such as Hegel, Heidegger and Gadamer inform the 'horizon' of Taylor's hermeneutic project. Taylor developed his outlook as an alternative to the natural science model that made logical separation between facts and values and made efforts to expunge the latter out of the study of politics. Taylor pointed out that theoretical frameworks have conceptions of human needs and values implicit in it. To shun values out of the framework would make the study of politics very narrow and practically useless. Thus, value-neutrality is not possible in political science. Moreover, the attempt to keep out values from study of politics contradicts the 'Best Account' principle proposed by Taylor.

Human action is not physical movements but involves intention; therefore, they should be interpreted. Then we looked into the notion of human agency in Taylor's works. What emerges from it is that human beings are self-interpreting animal who are partly constituted by their interpretation. This interpretation involves an expression or articulation of their concerns in

[288] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, 116-117
[289] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op.cit, 118.

medium. Human actions are not reducible to mere observation. Meaning has to be interpreted by referring to the purposes of agents and social practices available to them. These interpretations are constitutive of them. These meanings are linked to the evaluative frameworks we use in judging and assessing them making these agents 'strong evaluators', or agents with depth.

Strong evaluations appeal to something beyond the state of the agent and evoke features external to agents. The notion of strong evaluation implies that our sense of identity is not something which we construct for ourselves; it has an essentially social dimension. The concepts and categories that we use in this process are given to us in our language. Our language is something which we cannot create individually; it is necessarily social and inter-subjective.

Taylor's views on language were influenced by the phenomenological existentialism of Heidegger and philosophical hermeneutic of Gadamer. Using their insights Taylor could overcome the notion of interpreter as the ‘pure reasoner’ and hermeneutics as a method for interpretation by Schleiermacher and Dilthey. Following Gadamer, he argued that our location in history is not our handicap but a dimension that informs our interpretation.

Further, interpretation as a form of explanation is indispensable as a certain notion of meaning is essential characteristic of the human behaviour. Human behaviour has all the three characteristics that an object of interpretation has- sense, expression, and subject.

According to Taylor, hermeneutics is concerned with 'breeches of subjectivity', that is such situations wherein we encounter meanings that we cannot grasp, or which require considerable effort to understand. Hermeneutic understanding, both as a philosophical method and in ordinary life, has to bridge the gap between the familiar and taken-for-granted world we are all immersed in, and the strange and unfamiliar meanings that we find resist easy assimilation and understanding. As a result, interpretation not only encompasses that which we strive to understand but also that which we already do understand. Unlike naturalism, prediction is not possible in hermeneutics. It has to rely on insights that are unformalisable. Hermeneutic theory is validated by providing clarity to the social practices involved. It is essentially ex post, and historical understanding. Our account above of the critique of naturalism and how hermeneutics overcomes the shortcomings of naturalism makes a good case for Taylor's project. They/concur with his notion of practical reason that argues for eschewal of absolute explanation and comparative statements about human constant showing an epistemic gain as one moves from one position to another.

CHAPTER IV

FOUCAULT'S GENEALOGY

In this chapter, the genealogical orientation of Michel Foucault would be explicated to see how it addresses the methodological and philosophical challenges that were encountered by the proponents of nomologicalism in trying to account for scientific explanations. In the second chapter, we had seen that attempts at overcoming naturalism directs us towards the basic premises of Interpretative mode of enquires. The previous chapter delineated the way hermeneutical orientations of Charles Taylor meets this challenge of overcoming naturalism.

The first section of this chapter discusses the difficulties in reading Foucault. The second presents his constructivist position. The third engages with Foucault's critique of structuralism and the fourth section presents his explorations with the ideas of genealogy and discourse.

I. Interpreting Foucault: Difficulties

Interpreting Foucault seems to be a difficult exercise. The difficulty is partly linked to the peculiar nature of Foucault's thought. To avoid the usual traps of 'essentialist' thinking, including structuralism, Foucault has deliberately tried to escape any general interpretative categories. Therefore, his work is deliberately written in a manner so as to defy any attempt to provide meaningful summary of it.[290] All through his academic career, Foucault not only covered an astonishing range of topics, but his methods and purposes also seem to change as he moves from one theme to another. His methods and purposes seem to be specific to the work in hand. Interpretation or criticism of a particular aspect of his thought may be negated by other aspects of his thoughts.[291] Therefore, it becomes difficult to criticise Foucault. There seems to be no single 'Foucault' who persists through all his works. No wonder it has been very difficult to assign him a position in the discourse of social/ political sciences.[292] No label seems to be adequate for him. Foucault, himself in an interview, once said, "I think I have in fact been situated in most of the squares on the political checkerboard, one after another and sometimes simultaneously: as anarchist, leftist, ostentatious or disguised Marxist, nihilist, explicit or secret anti-Marxist, technocrat in the service of Gaullism, new liberal etc. An American professor complained that a

[290] Lois McNay, *Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 1. See also Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* trans. A.M. Sheridan-Smith (London, Tavistock, 1972), 17. Henceforth AK.
[291] Gary Gutting, Introduction Michel Foucault: A User's Manual in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (ed.) Garry Gutting, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3.
[292] Barry Smart, Michel Foucault, (New Delhi, Routledge, 1985, 2002, Special Indian Edition), 18.

crypto-Marxist like me was invited to the USA; and I was denounced by the press in Eastern European countries for being an accomplice of the dissidents."[293]

This ad hoc, fragmentary, incomplete, and heterogeneous nature of his work is a deliberately cultivated style to express the unstable and shifting nature of discourses. According to William Connolly, Foucault's style of writing is a part of his argument against mainstream social/ political science that seeks coherence, continuity, and stability.[294] If his style of writing is part of his argument, then interpreting Foucault in the conventional sense would surely distort his thoughts. This would be so because conventional interpretations seek to single out some comprehensive unity or definitive achievement that could provide key to Foucault's work. However, in contrast to the unity and coherence sought by conventional interpretation, Foucault's work tends to emphasise the fragmentary or 'heterogeneous' nature of the discourse.[295] For instance, Foucault wanted to dispel any notion of the author having a natural fixed point by which one can ascribe meaning to a text. Rather than the author producing a discourse, the author is a function of the discourse. The author is a discontinuous series rather than a unitary entity.[296] Thus, to re-articulate Foucault's insights in terms of canons of mainstream philosophical tradition as an author or a producer of a single genre would surely misrepresent him.

On the other hand, other commentators such as Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, maintain that despite the 'dispersion' in Foucault's thought, we can have a general interpretation of his works. They claim that Foucault has developed a new method (both historical and philosophical) whereby he goes beyond structuralism and hermeneutics. They term this new method as 'interpretative analytics.'[297] Analytics because it shares Kant's critical concern of determining the sources and legitimate uses of our concepts and interpretative because it seeks a pragmatically guided reading of the coherence of the practices in which concepts are expressed.[298] However, Dreyfus and Rabinow qualify their position by claiming that interpretative analytics "is not a general method." This is so since it recognises that it is itself practised within a historically contingent (context) and that its practitioner realises that he himself is produced by what he is studying, consequently he can never stand outside it".[299] Nonetheless, they do see Foucault's method as occupying a privileged position on the contemporary discourse. 'Since we still take the problem of our culture seriously... We are drawn ineluctably to a position like Foucault's. In a

[293] Paul Rabinow, (Ed), *The Foucault Reader*, (NY: Pantheon Books, 1984), 383-84.
[294] William Connolly, 'Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness", *Political Theory*, Vol. l3 No.3, (August 1985):365-376.
[295] Gary Gutting, 'Introduction: Michel Foucault: A User's Manual in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (ed.) Garry Gutting. (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
[296] Paul Rabinow, (Ed), *The Foucault Reader*, Op. Cit, 101-120.
[297] Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nded., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), viii.
[298] Gary Gutting, 'Introduction: Michel Foucault: A User's Manual' in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (ed.) Garry Gutting (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2.
[299] Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, Op.cit, 124 and 125.

sense, it is the only position left that does not regress to a tradition that is untenable... This does not mean that one is forced to agree with Foucault's specific diagnosis of our current situation. But... some form of interpretative analytics is currently the most powerful, plausible and honest option available.'[300] Thus they claim that the Foucault's oeuvre is directed towards development of a single historico-philosophical method that could play a privileged role in contemporary analysis.

The difficulty of interpreting Foucault is further aggravated by the methods and purposes Foucault employs in his studies. There are constant shifts in Foucault's methods and purpose as he moves on from one study to another. His books on history of madness, the birth of clinical medicine at the end of the eighteenth century, archaeology of the modem sciences of language, life and labour, a genealogy of the modern form of punishment, and on history of sexuality, etc. all seem to employ different methods in their treatment of themes. All these are historical studies by virtue of claims advanced and the documentary evidence adduced to illustrate and support them. Yet they do not conform to the established rules of conventional historical method. At times, these historical studies even claim to invent 'new objects of historical research'.[301]

In fact, Foucault had emphatically disassociated himself from the tradition of the 'history of ideas'.[302] This is also reflected in the title he chose for his designation when he was offered a chair at the College de France in 1970. He preferred a new title, 'Professor of the History of Systems of Thought' to the traditional phrase used in academics -Professor of History of Ideas. Foucault claimed that the new title was an apt description of the kind of work he was attempting.[303] Thus, we can see, Foucault does not identify with the traditional history of ideas but develops a new kind of orientation towards making sense of historical events. This new orientation is such that it does not reduce the object of study to generalities but retains its specificities and concreteness. In order to do so, Foucault varies his analytical tools from topic to topic depending upon the subject matter in hand. For instance, the analytical tools for *History of Madness* demanded are quite different from theoretical constructs needed for making sense of *History of Sexuality*. His approach towards various themes attempts to retain their specificities and varies accordingly. Thus, Foucault is able to retain 'the historical singularity of forms of experience' he is studying.[304] This variance of methods and purposes in Foucault's works has often been a source of confusion.

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[300] Ibid.

[301] Paul Patton, 'Foucault' in *A Companion to Continental Philosophy*, (Eds.), Simon Critchley and William R. Schroeder, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 537.

[302] Foucault Michel, *The Birth of the Clinic*. trans. A. Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1963),195.,

[303] Ladelle McWhorter, *Foucault*, 249.

[304] Paton Patton Foucault' in *A Companion to Continental Philosophy*, Op. Cit. 537.

While some commentators like Dreyfus and Rabinow have understood these shifts as a truly original position, others such as Charles Taylor, Michael Walzer etc. have interpreted them as/a sign of lack of coherence. For instance, Taylor points out that Foucault has three evolving lines of analyses in his historical works, each of which is connected with a certain line of critique of society. However, Taylor points out that the good implicit in each level of critique by Foucault is repudiated by his next level of analysis. Finally, even the good implicit in the last analysis is rejected. Thus, according to Taylor, Foucault in his circular-denial leaves us with no notion of good to judge to make sense of society. Foucault's different levels of analyses cut each other out and do not leave us on a firm ground. 'Shifts in his orientations towards study of society are ultimately incoherent and lead us nowhere.'[305]

On this issue, Foucault's own clarifications do not help much. While Foucault frequently reflected on his own development and offered interpretation of it, his self-interpretations are not always compatible with each other.[306] For instance, in *Madness and Civilization* (1961), Foucault described his project as an 'analysis of experience'. 'We must try to return, in history, to the zero point in the course of madness at which madness is an undifferentiated experience, a not vet divided experience of division itself.'[307] However, by the end of the 1960s Foucault started disclaiming any such efforts at recapturing a 'zero point' of human experience.[308] Foucault felt at this point that a search for origins indicates 'anthropologism', the belief in a conceptual abstraction called "man"'. To avoid this, he incorporated linguistic nominalism into his conception of archaeological method. For Foucault, structuralist linguistics is among very few human sciences that do not claim to uncover the essence of man by studying language. Instead, it contends that 'things attain to existence only in so far as they are able to form the elements of a signifying System.'[309]

But, by 1970, Foucault no longer identifies himself as theorising only about discourse. Instead, he emphasises on both discursive and non-discursive practices as his focus of attention. The notion of power/knowledge' becomes his key theme. About his earlier works, he is reported to have said in an interview in 1977, 'When I think back now, I ask myself what else it was that I was talking about in Madness and Civilization or The Birth of the Clinic but power'.[310]

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[305] Charles Taylor, Foucault on Truth and Freedom', *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, (Ed.) David Couzens Hoy, (Cambridge MA: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 70.
[306] David Couzens Hoy, 'Introduction' in Foucault, Op.Cit, 2.
[307] Michel Foucault, 'Preface', *Madness and civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans Richard Howard (New York: Random House, 1965) xi Hence forth MC.
[308] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* trans. A. Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1970 332.
[309] Michel Foucault *Order of Things*, Op. cit. 382.
[310] Colin Gordon, ed. Michel Foucault, Truth and Power, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972-77*, (New York: Pantheon, 1980), 115.

Further, by 1981, even his notion of power is seen to be displaced. At this time, Foucault disowns his earlier position. "The goal of my work during the last twenty years has not been to analyse the phenomena of power, not to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis.'[311] Instead, in the second volume of his *History of Sexuality (The Use of Pleasure)*, Foucault maintains that he had always been interested in 'experience.'[312] He describes his earlier conception of 'experience' in *Madness and Civilisation* as 'floating.' He specifies that 'experience' has three levels which can be studied by any historian. These three levels correspond to what others have considered as three distinct periods of Foucault's development.[313]

According to Foucault, any concrete human experience is constituted historically by these three levels. First is a field of knowledge with concepts, theories, and diverse disciplines. Second is a normative collection of rules, for instance, those operative in distinguishing the permitted and the forbidden or the normal and the pathological. Third is a mode of relation to oneself: by which one recognises oneself as a sexual object among others. These three levels can be found together in any of his works. The study of the asylum focuses on the first, the study of the prison on the second, and the later volumes of the *History of Sexuality* on the third level.

Thus, we see that there are conflicting positions about how to interpret Foucault's work.[314] So, what line of interpretation should we take in order to make sense of Foucault?

II. The Constructionist Position

In this thesis, we have taken a 'constructionist position' following thinkers such as Alasdair MacIntyre and Michael Walzer. These thinkers claim that it is impossible to do any meaningful academic exercise or thinking without taking recourse to certain key notions such as subject, coherence, author and continuity.[315] Further, they claim that these notions are also implicit in Foucault's own works despite his vehement denials. For instance, Alasdair MacIntyre argues that the need to approach Foucault by ascribing to him a persistent and purposeful self, behind all his masks and outward changes of belief and behaviour, reveals a crucial limitation of his philosophy.[316] He points out that it is a fact that Foucault inhabited one and the same body throughout his mortal life, accounted consistently for his actions and attitudes to others as well as

[311] Michel Foucault, 'Afterword,' The Subject and Power' in Herbert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, first edition 1982, 1986), 208.
[312] Marta Faustino and Gianfranco Ferraro, Introduction: Another Word on Foucault's Final Words in *The Late Foucault: Ethical and Political Questions*. (Bloomsbury Academic, London) 2022.
[313] Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, Op.cit, 351-352.
[314] Brent Pickett, "Foucauldian Masks and Contested Interpretations", *Political Research Quarterly* Vol. 50, No;4, (December 1997): 919-937.
[315] Michael Walzer, The Politics of Michel Foucault', Op.cit., 51.
[316] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rivals Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 32-57 and 196-215.

to himself, and understood his life as a 'teleological' structured quest (or, in French, recherché).[317] Hence, Foucault in living out his life and profession could not do without the notion of a persistent and purposeful self-suggesting that these notions are indispensable.

In a similar manner, Walzer claims that the notion of ‘death of author’ or 'disappearance of self’ in Foucault is misplaced. No thinker, he points out, can make an argument or write his works outside the overall discipline of language and without some rules of plausibility if not truth. Foucault while pursuing his works, had some ‘purpose’ and was making ‘arguments’:

> His books are full of statements that lay claim to plausibility here and now. He writes in declarative sentences, at least sometimes, though he is fonder of conditional and interrogative forms, so that his arguments often have the character of insinuations. They are bolstered in any case by extensive footnotes and a rather erratic but (he assures us) painstaking documentation. So, I take him to be saying something we are invited to believe -and then to disbelieve its’ opposite, that is, to detach the power of truth from the forms of hegemony.... within which it operates at the present time. I take him to be making an argument that is right or wrong or partly right and partly wrong.[318]

Walzer further argues that since Foucault himself never presents his thoughts in a systematic manner, ‘we shall “construct” a position for him, taking into account all the implicit notions and gaps in his thought.’ He suggests that, after a close reading, we can re-articulate Foucault's thoughts in terms of our current discourse.[319] This, according to Walzer, becomes necessary as conventions of mainstream discourse have been taken for granted by Foucault. In presenting his case, Foucault had to take recourse to these conventions, thereby suggesting indispensability of at least some of these notions. Denial of even these conventions and notions would be like to trying to speak from 'nowhere’. It would amount to trying to communicate ‘chaos', an almost impossible task. Walzer thinks that since Foucault persists with this impossible task, his works become incoherent.

Ironically, this would not be in disagreement with 'Foucauldian spirit'. Trying to reformulate Foucault's work in terms of mainstream discourse does not mean that we would 'read' Foucault in essentialist terms. Foucault's enduring importance lies in showing us new ways to conceptualise and study the past and present.[320] He himself does not provide any overarching systematization regarding his themes. What he attempts to do is to bring out the discontinuous, accidental, incidental, and opaque features of the discourse. His thrust is to challenge the essential and stable nature of the discourse. As long as, we do not essentialise Foucault, we would not be against the 'spirit' of his thought. Foucault himself asserted,

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[317] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rivals Versions of Moral Enquiry*, Op. cit. 196-215.
[318] Michael Walzer, 'The Politics of Michel Foucault' Op.cit, 52.
[319] ibid.
[320] Christopher Tilly, "Michel Foucault: Towards an Archaeology of Archaeology, in C. Tilly (Ed) *Reading Material Culture*, (Cambridge MA: Basil Balckwell, 1990),282

> "That we should not imagine that the world presents us with a legible face, leaving us merely to decipher it... there is no pre discursive fate disposing the world in our favour. We must conceive discourse as a violence that we do to things, or, at all events as a practice we impose upon them."[321]

In this thesis, rather than attempting to follow Foucault straightforwardly, we would use him both, to construct and deconstruct our own conceptual clearings. The reason behind this strategy is to avoid misinterpreting Foucault by reducing him to a 'stable' or 'same' Foucault and still use some key notions of the mainstream discourse such as subject and coherence. These notions are indispensable in effectively bringing out significance of Foucault's thought.

Periodisation in Foucault

Another heuristic feature that we have evoked to make sense of Foucault's persistent shifts and variation in methods and purposes is periodisation of his works into three distinct phases. These three periods are parallel to shifts in his orientation towards his objects of study.[322]

In the first phase of his career, Foucault terms his mode of enquiry as 'archaeology' and uses a kind of historical and textual analysis His major books during this period include *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), *The Order of Things* (which catapulted Foucault into fame in 1966) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). This period lasts from the beginning of Foucault's career in early 1950s to the first half of 970s.[323] In the second period, Foucault is attributed with 'genealogical orientation' which exemplifies a method of analysis that he had adapted from Friedrich Nietzsche.[324] This period lasts from mid 1970s to 1981. The major works written during this period are *Discipline and Punish* (1975), and *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (1976). In the last phase, that lasted from 1981 to his premature death in 1984, Foucault has been attributed an orientation called 'ethics'. Major works written during this period are *The History of Sexuality Volume 2 and 3, (The Use of Pleasure)* (1984) and *The Care of the Self* (1984).[325]

During the first phase of archaeological works Foucault's central concept is 'episteme'. It is a broad system of rules for knowledge formation that are immanent in most of the disciplinary

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[321] Michel Foucault, 'Discourse on Language' in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, op cit, 229

[322] Almost all major commentators on Foucault discuss the shifts in Foucault's work. However, this periodization of Foucault's philosophical career into three phases is based on Arnold Davidson's essay, 'Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics'. See Arnold I Davidson, 'Archaeology, Genealogy in Ethics' in *Foucault; A Critical Reader* (Ed.) DC Hoy, Op.cit., 221-233. Also see Foucault's interview, 'The structure of Genealogical Interpretation,' in Paul Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, Op.cit., 351-372.

[323] Barry Smart. Michel Foucault, Op.cit.,32-37.

[324] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, genealogy, history', *Interpreting Politics*, (Ed), Michael T Gibbons Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987. pg. 221-240. In this essay Foucault declares 'shift' in his manner of analysis due to Nietzsche's influence. Also see David C Hoy, "Power, Repression, Progress in *Foucault; A Critical Reader* (Ed.) DC Hoy, Op.cit., 129.123-147.

[325] Barry Smart. *Michel Foucault*, Op.cit., 107-117. James W. Bernaeur and Michael Mahon, The ethics of Michel Foucault in in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (ed.) Gary Gutting, (NY: Cambridge University Press, ,1994), 141-158. Lois McNay, *Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994), 133-135.

fields of a given historical period. As episteme shifts or breaks up, it becomes possible to explore the world in new ways and impossible to hold on to older ways of conceiving and analysing the world seriously. Thus, it is an analysis of systems of knowledge.[326]

Instead of the concept of 'episteme', Foucault's genealogical works focus on relationships between specific regions of knowledge institutions and power. They also do away with positing general conditions for all regions of knowledge within one historical epoch. As a result, the genealogical works are less sweeping in their historical and epistemological claims. The discourses are also not considered to be autonomous of the non-discursive practices.

In the last phase which has been labelled 'ethics,' Foucault explains how the self-works upon itself as a work of art to constitute himself/ herself as a subject. This he calls 'the techniques of the self.' This way of analysis, rather than being 'outer-directed is inner-looking.' It involves the internal modes of submission and domination by the subject.[327] Thus, we see that there have been constant shifts in Foucault's manner of analysis, during his academic career - from archaeology to genealogy to ethics.

According to Alan Davidson, these shifts in Foucault's works can be considered as three complementary levels of analyses rather than distinct phases. Each successive level of analysis widens the scope and depth of the preceding level.[328] In other words, genealogy broadens the scope of archaeology, and ethics refines genealogy.

However, an objection may be raised that if each succeeding level of analysis widens the scope the preceding level, then why is the term 'genealogy' used to describe Foucault's method in general (also, in the title of this thesis) rather than the term 'ethics'. If the third level of analysis is more refined than the second, why do we persist with the using genealogy- the term for his second level of analysis? The reason for this interpretation is that ethics, the third level of analysis, is not completely worked out by Foucault; perhaps due to his premature death in 1984. In the last two of his works Foucault was working out 'ethics' as the method of analysis but could not take it to its conclusion. Foucault had originally announced a six-volume study on the history of sexuality. These studies were to concentrate on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and were supposed to include volumes on women, children, and perverts.[329]

His actual published works noticeably diverged from the announced project. The most obvious divergence from the originally conceived project seen is the immense chronological displacement to the ancient Greek and Roman world. In his earlier works Foucault deals with late medieval

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[326] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. A Sheridan, London: Tavistock,1973, 313. See also Michel Foucault, *AK* Op. cit., 191.

[327] Arnold Davidson, 'Ethics as ascetics: Foucault, the history of ethics and ancient thought' in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, (Ed.) Gary Gutting (NY; Cambridge University Press, 1994), 115-140.

[328] Arnold Davidson, 'Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics', DC Hoy (Ed) Op.cit., 221.

[329] Arnold Davidson, Ethics as ascetics, in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Ed.) Gary Gutting Op. cit., 117.

and modern periods. Besides time displacement, there is also a change in his mode of analysis. For instance, in earlier works the subject is conceived as an effect of power, largely determined by discursive practices. However, in his post 1981works, the subject has been treated much more reflexively. This change is seen to be happening in the writing of the second and third volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, which were published posthumously.[330] This change in position is attributed to the result of his exchanges with Habermas and other philosophers when he began to reconsider his earlier position.[331] However, it could not be worked out completely.

Foucault himself had not drawn any division of his academic writings into phases. He does not even draw any distinction between 'archaeology' and 'genealogy' that most of his commentators do. These 'shifts', for him, are only 'levels' of analyses; various ways to understand the problem of subjectivity that remains Foucault's chief interest throughout. In an interview in 1983, he refers to all his major works as 'genealogies' and refers to 'ethics' as 'Genealogy of ethics.'[332] He claims in the interview that his principal interest is in the problem of subjectivity and that each of his works can be interpreted in terms of any or all of the following three questions:

1. How do people understand themselves as knower?
2. How are people subjected in power relations?
3. How do people establish themselves as moral agents?[333]

Each book takes up one or more of these questions in the context of a particular region of thought, such as psychiatry or medicine. Therefore, in this thesis, we have used a single term, genealogy, when referring to Foucault's mode of analysis in general. But we would continue to evoke the three distinct periods of his life to account better for the changes in his works.

Relationship between Major and Minor Works

Foucault's minor works such as *Mental illness and Psychology, Death and the Labyrinth* (on Roussel's novels); *This is not a Pipe* (on the painter Magritte) and two casebooks also form important part of his intellectual projects. These casebooks were compilations of historical material that Foucault had gathered while working on the histories of punishment and sexuality. These are *I, Pierre Riviere, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister, and My Brother*..... and *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth Century French*

[330] Roy Boyne, *Foucault and Derrida: The Other Side of Reason*, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990) 144.
[331] Jurgen Habermas, "Taking Aim of the Heart of the Present' in *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Ed). David Couzens Hoy, Basil Blackwell, 1986, 103-121.
[332] Michel Foucault 'On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of work in Progress, Interview, with Herbert L. Dreyfus, and Paul Rabinow,356. Herbert L Dreyfus, and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* 2 Ed. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1986. lan Hacking, 'The Archaeology of Foucault', in ed. DC Hoy, Op.cit., 27-40.
[333] Michel Foucault's Interview, 'The Structure of Genealogical Interpretation,' in Paul Rabinow, (Ed), *The Foucault Reader*, (NY: Pantheon Books, 1984), 351.

Hermaphrodite.[334] Foucault's minor works form an important component of his oeuvre and cannot be ignored altogether. So, we have used his minor works when necessary to complement our interpretation.

Influences

Another way to come to grips with shifts and variations in Foucault's thought would be to trace the influences that shaped his works. It is necessary to do so to put Foucault's works in perspective. Foucault identified himself within the critical tradition that extends from Kant through Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger to the contemporary critical and post-structural theorists.[335] This critical tradition does not seek universal or timeless structures of knowledge, but for ways of characterising the present as a particular moment in history.[336] However, the conception of history and the corresponding 'ontology' of the present vary from one member of this tradition to the other.

It might seem strange to associate a post-structuralist such as Foucault with Kant who is identified with universal truths about human nature. But Foucault very strongly identifies himself as a kind of Kantian. Kant's critical method, according to Foucault, shows philosophy its 'authentic form of self-realisation.'[337] In *Order of Things*, he affirms that 'Kantian critique still forms an essential part of the immediate space of our reflection. We think on this premise.'[338] And in an essay written in 1984 under the pseudonym 'Maurice Florence' for *Dictionnaire des Philosophes* (Dictionary of Philosophies), Foucault writes about himself as follows.

> To the extent that Foucault fits into the philosophical tradition, it is the critical tradition of Kant, and his project could be called a Critical History of Thought. This should not be taken to mean a history of ideas, or a decipherment of the misinterpretation linked to them... If what is meant by thought is the act that posits a subject and an object, along with their possible relations, a critical history of thought would be an analysis of the conditions under which certain relations of subject to object are formed or modified, insofar as those relations constitute a possible knowledge (savoir). It is not a matter of defining the formal conditions of a relationship to the object nor is it a matter of isolating the empirical conditions that may, at a given moment have enabled the subject in general to become acquainted

[334] To see the relationship of these minor works in formation of Foucault's philosophical outlook, see James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (London, Flamingo, 1994), 225-27.

[335] Michel Foucault's interview with Gerard Raulet, 'Critical Theory/Intellectual History', in Lawrence D Kritzman. ed. *Politics, Philosophy and Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984* (New York, Routledge, 1988), 17-46. (trans. by Alan Sheridan etc.). In this interview Foucault situates himself in relation to pantheon of modern Western intellectual thought.

[336] Dreyfus, H., and Rabinow, P., "What is Maturity? Habermas and Foucault on What is Enlightenment? " in Hoy, David Couzens (Ed), Op. cit, 111.

[337] Kant quoted in James, Miller, The Passion of Michel Foucault, (London: Flamingo1994), 138. Marc Djaballah, *Kant, Foucault, and Forms of Experience*, Routledge, 2008

[338] M Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. A. Sheridan, (London, Tavistock,1973.), 419. Also see Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment? trans Catherine Porter in The Foucault Reader, Ed. Rabinow op, cit. 32-50.

> with an object already given in reality. The problem is to determine what the subject must be, to what condition he is subject, what status he must have, what position he must occupy in reality or in imaginary, in order to become a legitimate subject of this or that type of knowledge. In short, it is a matter of determining its mode of subjectivation ... mode of objectivation.[339]

Kant, according to Foucault, is the first philosopher to break seriously from the metaphysical and theological heritage and open up the discourse of modernity. His notion of *a priori* categories has brought the Copernican Revolution in theory of knowledge. Before Kant, knowledge was conceived as an attunement of men's thinking to eternal ideas or essences inherent in the independently existing reality.[340] Kant's notion of *a priori* categories has changed this notion of knowledge to one as capacities of the human mind. The essential categories of thought now conformed to specific "laws of cognition," to which a determinate form of objectivity is to be traced back.[341] Thus, Kant's views on knowledge free man from the absolute, other worldly claims of the metaphysical world and bring "man" at the centre of our discourse." Kant, however, still restricts his conception of knowledge to 'formal structure' of human mind. Perhaps, he himself could not grasp the full implication of the question, 'What is man?' that he had posed in his essay on Enlightenment. Later, it was Nietzsche who is supposed to have grasped the full implication of the question and suggested the notion of 'overman' with 'yes-saying as his answer: 'The critical ontology of ourselves has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating, it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at the one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them.'[342]

In his biography of Foucault, James Miller claims that Foucault's philosophical project has been significantly inspired by Kant's offbeat work, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*.[343] Foucault wrote a commentary on this obscure work of Kant as a part of his Ph.D. coursework. Miller observes that *Anthropology* opened an important new philosophical horizon for Foucault. It unfolded the truly 'temporal dimensions of the *a priori* concepts' which were analysed by Kant

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[339] Maurice Florence, 'Michel Foucault' in Denis Huisman, (Ed) *Dictionnaire des Philosophes*, Paris, 1984, 94. Maurice Florence was Foucault's Pseudonym.

[340] Matan Oram, *Modernity and Crisis in the Thought of Michel Foucault: The Totality of Reason*, Routledge, 2017.

[341] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: 1929) and E Cassirer, *Kant 's Life and thought*, trans. Haden James, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press,1982), 151.

[342] Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?' (ed.) Paul Rabinow, Op.cit, 50.

[343] James. Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, (London: Flamingo, 1984) 137-142. Also see Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology Form a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Victor Dowdell, Carbondale, Il: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978. This work is so off beat that most students of Kant ignore it. Foucault himself argued strenuously for the centrality of this work. In contrast, Ernst Cassirer offers a marginal appraisal of this work in his classic, *Kant's Life and Thought*.

in his three critiques.[344] Kant relegated these to the realm of transcendental. However, *Anthropology* reveals how our essential categories and judgments grow out of social practices that are transmitted through language and regulated by social institutions. It explicates the various ways in which 'the self by becoming an object of regulated social practices takes its place in the field of experience and finds there a concrete system of belonging.'[345]

Unlike the three critiques, wherein Kant makes a sharp distinction between the empirical and the transcendental, in Anthropology, he has revealed various ways by which 'ideas of reasons', such as free-will put the transcendental into practice. In this work, Kant does not offer a conventional philosophical answer to the question, 'What is Man?' as in three critiques. Instead, he offers 'a variety of comments and maxims about a bewildering array of topics from the most abstract issues of cognition to the most concrete matters of everyday behaviour. Kant deduces pragmatic rules of conduct from all these comments and maxims; thereby closing the gap between the transcendental and the empirical. Thus, in this work, he turns ideas into objects of possible experience.[346]

Inspired by Kant's *Anthropology*, Foucault defines the task of his philosophical project as two-fold.[347] First; to examine the 'historical a prioris' of possible experience through an empirical investigation of the social practices and institutions.[348] This involves examining the specific languages and styles of reasoning that inform the various domains of these social practices. Due to influence of Kant's *Anthropology*, Foucault rejects the conventional philosophical themes and their way of atemporal analysis. Instead, he devotes his efforts to investigation of several topics such as dreams, mental illness, human imagination, structure of cognition and its limits, desire and sex among others dealt by Kant in *Anthropology*. The treatment of these themes illustrates how institutions and practices extend across these facets of human beings much before the active individual understanding comes into play. Foucault has termed this as 'analytics of truth.'[349] His second task of philosophy; to explore the frontiers of possible experience without Kant's inhibitions. This is done by developing a critical perspective on the social practices through an elaboration or 'ontology of humans'. By exercising transcendental freedom that Kant himself established but bracketed out of its full implication, Foucault claims, we can move from 'an

[344] Kant's three Critiques are: a) The Critique of Pure Reason; b) The Critique of Practical Reason and c) the Critique of Judgement. The three critiques are supposed to provide the basic framework of the Kant's philosophical project.
[345] James Miller Op.cit., 140.
[346] James Miller, Op.ci., 138.
[347] James Miller, Op.cit., 142.
[348] Ibid.
[349] James Miller, Op.cit., 142, Michel Foucault, "Kant on Enlightenment and revolution", trans Colin Gordon, *Economy and Society*, 15, (Feb 1986): 88-96.

interrogation of the limit and of transgression' toward an interrogation of the return of the self."[350]

Inspired by Kant's philosophy, Foucault has implemented his philosophical project along two parallel lines, namely empirical and transcendental. On the level of empirical inquiry, he investigates the prehistory of human sciences using the techniques of Gaston Bachelard and Georges Canguilhem.[351] On the level of transcendental enquiry, Foucault remains fascinated by the 'interrogations of the limit and of transgression.' directed towards the 'return of the self'.[352] This effort is inspired by the Nietzsche's notion of 'the return of the self' besides literary figures such as Raymond Roussel, Georges Bataille, and Maurice Blanchot.[353] It is clear from the above discussion that the very conception of Foucault's philosophical project has been inspired by Kant along with Nietzsche and Heidegger (to be discussed in the following paragraphs).

What Foucault finds distinctive and insightful in Kant, is that a *philosopher qua philosopher* for the first time realises that his thinking has arisen out of and is an attempt to respond to his historical situation. Nietzsche, according to Foucault, is perhaps the only thinker who could grasp the full implication of Kant's path breaking insights.[354] The end result of this understanding is Nietzsche's perspectivism, his persistent effort to avoid totalising forms of analysis and systematicity. He rejects all recourse to a privileged theoretical stance in favour of a historically embedded and constantly open process of radical critique. His orientation considers other theoretical options, only to reveal their internal instabilities, hence challenging their implicit claims to historical privilege. Nietzsche asserts that social productions, practices, and institutions are inseparable from theories about them.[355] His works show that any attempt to theorise social practices objectively is already informed by its own cultural prejudices. He maintains that both, social practices and theories about them have root in manifold complex and ever shifting configurations of power. The task of critique is not to propose yet another theoretical discourse but to reveal the specific configuration of power underlying the existing discourses. This way of

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[350] James Miller, *ibid*. See also Lois McNay, *Foucault* Op.cit., 145-149.

[351] Michel Foucault's interview, 'Critical Theory/Intellectual History', in Lawrence D. Kritzman (ed.) *Politics, Philosophy and Culture: Interviews and Other Writings* Op.cit., 22 & 27. For Georges Canguilhem's impact on Foucault see 'Michel Foucault, Life Experience and Science' in *Michel Foucault- Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology Essential Works of Foucault 1954-84, Volume 2*, (ed.) James D Faubion, (London, Penguin Books, 2000), 465-477. For the influence of Gaston Bachelard on Foucault see James Miller Op.cit. ,60-61.

[352] James Miller Op.cit.,143.

[353] Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. C. Ruas. Garden City (NY, Doubleday & Co.,1986). The book also has an interview with Foucault. For Georges Bataille's influence on Foucault's on Nietzschean themes such as transgression, 'limit-experience' etc. see James Miller, Op.cit. 85-86. For influence of Maurice Blanchot, see Michel Foucault, 'On the ways of writing History' in *Foucault- Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-84, Volume 2,* (ed.) James D Faubion, Op.cit., 279-295.

[354] Michel Foucault's interview with Gerard Raulet in 'Critical Theory/Intellectual History', in Lawrence D. Kritzman (ed.) Op.cit., 23-24. Also see Keith Ansell Person, 'The Significance of Michel's Reading of Nietzsche: Power, the Subject and Political Theory', in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, ed. Peter Sedgwick (Oxford, Blackwell, 1995).

[355] Fredrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Horace B. Samuel, (New York: Dover, 1913, 2003).

analysing reality or society is called genealogy by Nietzsche. Foucault's linkage of social practices, discourse and power is significantly inspired by the genealogical conception of Nietzsche.[356]

Related to this conception of genealogy are Nietzsche's notion of 'nihilism' and 'will to power'. This shapes his attitude towards the Western tradition which in turn greatly influenced both Heidegger and Foucault after him. According to Nietzsche, Plato's distinction between eternal 'ideas' and mutable 'opinion' results in devaluation of the 'real world' from which our biological life arises.[357] Christianity, according to Nietzsche, is built on this Platonic opposition in its doctrine of the 'fall of the temporal world'. It also stresses on the need to deny and mortify the physical body in this life to gain a heavenly reward in the next. For Nietzsche, although the skeptical attacks of modernity on religion manage to undermine belief in the other world, they have not succeeded in restoring to this world the meaning that Platonism and Christianity have denied it for so long. The result is nihilism, a sense of meaninglessness and valuelessness. It pervades the whole of Western civilization and has been expressed by Nietzsche in his well-known phrase 'God is dead'.[358] Nihilism, prevents thinkers from raising important questions about the 'meaning of being'.[359] As a result, in the contemporary world, science and technology have started acting as virtually autonomous forces and achieved dominance over all human affairs. Human beings too, lose any sense of meaning or value in their increasingly administered and regimented lives. The path beyond nihilism, according to Nietzsche, lies in dismantling its most fundamental assumptions. This involves new ways of experiencing, speaking, and thinking than those dictated by logic, science, and the modern technological attitude. Not merely does Foucault follow Nietzsche on this, rather his whole oeuvre borrows on this insight by Nietzsche.

Further, Nietzsche asserts that the Western philosophy is characterised by a will to truth which itself is a historical variant of a more fundamental and universal principle, the will to power. 'Will to power' is not merely a function of the desires of individual human beings but is itself a metaphysical principle. This principle defined nature, society, and being. Nietzsche sees every

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[356] For Nietzsche's influence on Foucault's conception of genealogy see Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, genealogy, history', *Interpreting Politics*, (Ed), Michael T Gibbons (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 221-240.

[357] Fredrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* Op.cit., 9-33. (Essay One) Foucault cited in D. Eribon, *Michel Foucault* Trans Betsy Wing, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 159.

[358] The expression first appears in *The Gay Science* but became popular from the Nietzsche's more popular work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

[359] Nietzsche, though not the coiner of the term 'nihilism' is often associated with it. By the term nihilism he meant God is no longer capable of acting as a source of any moral code or teleology. But Nietzsche did not approve of it and suggested ways of overcoming it through yes-saying. It was Heidegger who described the term in more specific modern context and argued that nihilism is what remains unquestioned and forgotten metaphysics is being; and hence, it is nihilistic.

being as striving to maintain its existence by carving out its own metaphysical sphere of influence.[360]

Genealogy's aim: Revelation of configuration of Power

Foucault has made the notion of genealogy a key principle of his approach. Influenced by this notion of 'will to power', Foucault tries to show that the ultimate aim of genealogy is to reveal how all social discourses, institutions, and practices, are based on particular configurations of power, however, innocent they might appear on the surface.[361] Foucault accordingly places the notion of discourse and its concrete functioning at the centre of his critical project. For him, society is the complex interplay of its discourses. To critique society is to reveal the manner in which various devices employed manifest specific configurations of power. In this manifestation they privilege certain terms, metaphors, and rhetorical figures suppressing others equally essential to the meaning of the texts. Thus, genealogy's aim is to reveal the "illusion of truth" created by social texts. It reveals the processes of privileging and marginalising, out of which the texts are constructed. It shows that the dominant terms and metaphors would lack all significance without those very determinations that they attempt to conceal and suppress. In other words, for Foucault, if language is a set of metaphors that become fixed as objective terms or true concepts when their metaphorical origins are forgotten, then the task of the genealogy is to demystify their pretensions of stating the objective truth, by revealing their historical, contingent and arbitrary 'origins.'[362]

Language as Metaphor and Rhetoric

It must be mentioned here that Foucault's seemingly impenetrable and idiosyncratic style is directly related to his view of language. His own styles of presentation become an overriding and decisive issue for him. This is so because, for Foucault, language is essentially a complex and dynamic interplay of linguistic and rhetorical figures rather than something analysable as a set of 'truth-bearing propositions'.[363] He also wanted to avoid at all costs the construction of yet another 'true' or 'conceptual' discourse, which would lead him into the very trap that he sought to critique. For him, the style of genealogy is not an arbitrary choice but a vehicle for instantiating, mirroring, inverting, or playing with the terms of the discourse being critiqued. Therefore, we can see that the major thrust of Foucault's philosophical project is inspired by Nietzsche's attack on totalising forms of analysis and systematicity. His works are based on a vision of history

[360] Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, (Cambridge Mass: MIT Press,1988).
[361] Michel Foucault, 'Nietzsche, genealogy, history', *Interpreting Politics*, Op.cit., 228. G. Kendall and G. Wickham, *Using Foucault's Methods*, (London: Sage, 1999), 30-33.
[362] Arnold Davidson, 'Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics', DC Hoy (Ed.) Op.cit. 224-2.
[363] Christopher Tilly, Op.cit, 284-85.

derived from Nietzsche. As Nietzsche has shown in his book, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Foucault also attempts to delegitimise the present by separating it from the past. However, unlike the historians who trace a line of inevitability, Foucault breaks off the past from the present and, by demonstrating the foreignness of the past relativises and undercuts the legitimacy of the present.[364]

Discontinuity

In attempting to break off from the past, Foucault rejects the Hegelian teleological model. He uses the Nietzschean tactic of critique through the presentation of difference rather than the teleological continuity in which one mode of production flows dialectically out of another. He begins with the present and goes backward in time until a difference is located. Then he proceeds forward again, tracing the transformation while taking care to preserve the discontinuities as well as the connections. The alien discourse is explored in such a way that their negativity in relation to the present explodes the 'rationality of phenomena' that is taken for granted. The gap between the past and the present underlines the principle of difference at the heart of Foucault's historiography. He allows the discontinuity to remain unexplained. The role of cause or explanation is severely reduced in his works since it leads to evolutionist conclusions and works against the purposes of genealogy of difference.[365]

Rejection of Correspondence theory of language

This notion of discontinuity in Foucault is related to the assertion that in writing the past meaning is not the result of transparent relation of the language with the world but the 'syntax of the text'. It must be pointed out here that this assertion is akin to Charles Taylor's assertion that the 'correspondence' or 'designative' view of language is not sufficient to explain the human world which involves meanings. This non-correspondence/ non-transparency between the language and the world can be well-illustrated by considering Foucault's work *This is not a Pipe*.[366] ln this work, Foucault uses Magritte's painting of a pipe with its appended message 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe (This is not a pipe) to demonstrate the fundamental gap between language and the world, between signifiers (e.g., words) and things.

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[364] Madan Swarup, *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988, 1993), 59. See also Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, genealogy, history', in *Interpreting Politics*, Op.cit., 228.

[365] Michael Donnolly, "Foucault's genealogy of human sciences", in M. Gane, (Ed.). *Towards a Critique of Foucault,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 15-22.

[366] Michel Foucault, 'This is not a pipe' in *Michel Foucault- Aesthetics. Method and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-84, Volume 2*, (ed.) James D Faubion, (London, Penguin Books, 2000), 187-204

Fig. 4.1

In the picture of the pipe (refer Fig 4.1) what is the relationship between the image and the words attached to it? Foucault finds four possibilities:

1) This is not a pipe but a drawing of a pipe.
2) This is not a pipe but a sentence saying that this is not a pipe.
3) The sentence ‘This IS not a pipe’ is not a pipe.
4) In the sentence ‘This is not a pipe', this is not a pipe: the painting, written sentence, drawing of a pipe-all this is not a pipe.

These denials keep on increasing and the image fails to relate with the words. The above analysis complements the argument Foucault makes in his work, *The Order of Things*. ‘It is not that the words are imperfect or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that what we say we see; what we see never resides in what we say’.[367] Foucault suggests that the relationship between the language and world is not transparent but there is a gap between the two. The meaning emerges from 'syntax and not through a transparent relationship between language and the world'.[368] The writing process in itself conveys as many meanings as the ‘discursive objects' described. While describing social practices we also produce ‘discursive objects' and are not transparently dealing with the 'real’.[369] For Foucault, there is no meaningful separation between theory and data. Unlike the mainstream social science that delineates the theoretical structure followed by its

[367] Michel Foucault, *OT*, Op.cit.,9.
[368] Christopher Tilly, Op.cit., 283.
[369] Michel Foucault, *OT*, Op.cit., 13.

application to explain the data, Foucault's work transgresses the theory-data divide as usually posited.[370] For example, Foucault does not begin *History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish* with a formal set of theses concerned with power which are then applied to discourse on incarceration or sexuality. Instead, his arguments emerge as his presentation progresses. This is why Foucault begins almost all his works with vivid descriptions from specific case details. For instance, *Madness of Civilisation* begins with the closing of the great European leper houses and an account of the ship of fools conveying a cargo of 'madmen' set adrift.[371] Hence, Foucault develops a new way of writing history that is neither 'how the past really was' nor a 'reflection of the present.' He rejects the empiricist discourse which argues for correspondence between language and reality. For him the mainstream empiricist discourse is a myth. Instead, he replaces it with 'a linguistic poetics'. For Foucault, discourse is a violence we do to things linking desire and power.

III. Foucault's Critique of Structuralism

Even structuralism that is usually critical of the correspondence theory of meaning succumbed to the conception of transparence between language and the world. Foucault's main objection to structuralism is that it assumes a clear line of demarcation between the surface structure of a text and its underlying deep structure, thus reaffirming the traditional metaphysical differentiations between opinion and truth, appearance and reality, and so forth. In all these distinctions the latter term is always privileged over the former. In contrast, Foucault emphasizes that these assumed differences between the surface structure and deep structure emerge from the 'play of signification' and that these differences are not real or ultimate. Foucault does not seek the meaning of text in some dimension of depth behind or beneath the text, but in the constantly shifting play of signification of the text's own elements. In fact, he even denies the notion of stability of the 'structure' as conceived in structuralism.[372]

Foucault can be seen as adhering to the sliding signified or its counterpart the sliding signifier. From Foucault's perspective, the relations between signifiers and the signified are constantly in flux in the actual use of language. This results in various occurrences of the same signifier in different contexts or in different historical periods.[373] Foucault's work implies that the meaning

[370] Christopher Tilly, Op.cit., 284.
[371] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit.,31-36
[372] Following Saussure, structuralists define a sign as the relation between a signifier and signified. They consider this relationship to be arbitrary with no natural connection lying at its basis. However, once the association between the signifier and signified has been established, they view the resulting sign as a relatively stable unit in the linguistic system.
[373] Michel Foucault, *OT*, Op.cit., 43-44.

possibilities of a linguistic system cannot be isolated from the actual uses of the language. Rather, the system itself is constantly being destabilised by new and innovative connections forged between the signifiers and signified in actual occurrences of linguistic acts. Therefore, for Foucault, a language is never a fixed, given, and closed matrix of possibilities for signification. His work thus questions the structuralist assumption of closure of linguistic systems. Instead, he proposes a view of language and texts that is radically open and polysemic.

Foucault also considered the structuralist distinction between synchrony and diachrony to be grossly inadequate. He was not keen on chronological historical narratives. From Foucault's point of view, synchrony and diachrony are the recto and verso of the same phenomenon. They are intimately related to each other and cannot be looked at separately. In fact, various linguistic productions and texts mutually influence each other over time in arbitrary and unpredictable ways. They borrow from one another, comment on each other, and often undermine each other's apparent meaning.[374]

The Inadequacy of History of Ideas

Foucault finds that the notion of history of ideas too is not compatible with his notion of discontinuity. In *Archaeology of Knowledge,* he explicitly criticised this notion that hitherto dominated the social sciences. Based on the notions of genesis, continuity, totality, and authorship consciousness, 'history of ideas,' according to Foucault, reduces knowledge to an expression of other social relations or the consciousness of imaginative individuals. It intends to set up a single line narrative of progressive intellectual development of knowledge assuming that it has specific points of origin. History of ideas has thus, developed into a definite tradition of thought continuing up to present times and can be studied by historians as a coherent set of ideas. Therefore, the history of ideas has sought "through comparative descriptions to reveal general forms, to reveal features of a cultural totality through analysis of some of its formations".[375] It aims "to uncover cultural continuities and to isolate mechanisms of causality".[376] For Foucault, this exercise entails use of self-sufficient categories such as ideas, traditions, disciplines, author, book, oeuvre etc. These categories are perceived to be closed in upon themselves. However, according to Foucault, our disciplines are entirely artificial creations whose boundaries are far from clear although enthusiastic attempts are always being made to maintain them. The academic disciplines are themselves products of a particular type of discourse that need to be analysed as such.

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[374] This interplay of texts over time, rejecting any notion of some overarching historical process of development is referred to as inter-textuality in the post-structuralist lexicon. See Jere Paul Surber, *Culture and Critique: An Introduction to the Critical Discourses of Cultural Studies*, (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 183-232.

[375] Barry Smart, *Michel Foucault*, Op.cit., 49.

[376] Ibid.

As an alternative, Foucault suggests that instead of following the thread of an original calendar in which one would establish the chronology of successive or simultaneous events, of short or lasting processes, momentary or permanent phenomenon, one tries to show how it is possible for there to be succession, and at what different levels distinct successions are to be found.[377] Foucault attempted to do so through his genealogical method of which the notion of discourse formed the key concept.

Discourse, Discursive Formations and Statements

The term discourse could be considered as one of the most apt words to describe Foucault's oeuvre. Despite its central role in Foucault's work, its conception remains unclear and paradoxical. At one extreme, in his earlier work, it is conceived narrowly as an autonomous system of rules that constitute objects, concepts, and subjects. At the other extreme, during his later works, he conceives it to be less autonomous and more constitutive with the intimate role of power strategies in relation to non-discursive practices and processes. However, there are still important continuities of method and substance through both the conceptions. Methodologically, Foucault never abandons his archaeological approach to discourse when constructing his later genealogies.[378] His works at both the stages also show great consistency with respect to the periodisation of post-Renaissance history.

In contrast to other post-structuralists such as Lacan and Derrida, Foucault's notion of discourse unfolds at a much more general level than that of the self or the individual text. While analysing the manner of interaction of texts with each other, Foucault takes into account the much broader historical context besides paying more attention to the extra textual practices and power structures operating in and among the texts.

During his archaeological period, his most explicit formulations about discourse occur in three texts, viz. *The Order of Things*, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, and *The Order of Discourse*. Of these *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is the only purely theoretical work. Others are historical analyses which use concepts, methods and strategies of discursive analysis but are not very explicit about them. Therefore, Foucault needed to clarify them through his commentaries in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.

In *The Order of Things*, Foucault does an analysis of the changing historical discourses of human sciences such as biology, linguistics, and economics. His aim is to show that diverse sets of discursive practices are ordered according to underlying codes and rules which change radically

[377] Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Op.cit., 169.

[378] Michel Foucault. 'Polemics, politics and problematisations: An interview in P. Rabinow (Ed.) *The Foucault Reader*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986, 388-90. Also, Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, New York: Pantheon, trans. R. Hurley. 1985,11-13.

through time. These codes and rules are culture-specific and shape what may be thought or said at any given time. Foucault calls these 'episteme', the 'historical a priori' of a given discourse.[379] An episteme is defined as a set of self-sufficient representations that give rise to various epistemologies, sciences, and formalised systems.[380]

They are grounds for judging 'true' or false'. They determine what would count as 'real' and what is to be counted as a 'discursive object'. Foucault intends to show how cultural order is created and sustained through discursive practices. From the sixteenth century to the present times, he distinguishes four periods of discursive coherences, namely, Renaissance, Classical, Modern, and Post-Modern. Foucault has analysed the connections between the representations of language, wealth or economic exchange, and living organisms in each of these four epistemes. Each episteme, for him, orders the relationship differently. A new episteme forgets a previous one working on a new set of discursive objects in a new way. These epistemes are incommensurable to each other and historically arise from ruptures in the ordering of experience. Foucault does not even attempt to explain reasons for the discontinuities that occur between various epistemes. Like a Kuhnian 'paradigm shift', a new episteme emerges alongside an already established one. In this change, the representation of the 'real' also changes along with the definitions of what is real. According to Foucault, the post-modern episteme, beginning with the structuralism of Saussure and the psychology of Freud, has unfolded a process of dissolution of humanity. Foucault makes a prediction.

One thing in any case is certain; man is neither the oldest, nor the constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge. Taking a relatively short chronological sample within a restricted geographical area-- European culture since the sixteenth century-- one can be certain that man is a recent invention within it... As the archaeology of our thought easily shows man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.[381]

Discourse and Archaeology of Knowledge

The basis for the historical analysis of discursive practices in *The Order of Things* was formalised by Foucault in his work, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. As per this conception, discourses consist of four basic elements. The elements include objects about which statements are made, places of speaking from where statements are enunciated, concepts involved in the formulation of discourse, and the themes and theories they develop.[382]

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[379] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Op.cit., 191.
[380] Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* Op.cit., 158. Also see, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A Sheridan, Tavistock: (London, NY: Pantheon 1977), 55.
[381] Michel Foucault cited in Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault* Op.cit.,159.
[382] Barry Smart, Op.cit., 39.

The basic unit of Foucault's analyses is discourse or discursive formations. According to him, in an analysis of discourse the 'material with which one is dealing is, in its raw, neutral state, a population of events in the space of discourse in general'.[383] As per his orientation, Foucault avoids the temptation to define and unify discursive formations around a unique set of objects, styles, concepts or themes. Rather he conceives discursive formations as systems of dispersion established by discursive practices. He describes (rather than explains) these systems and their complex interrelationship. To do so, he takes the rules that govern the production of statements as his primary object of investigation.[384] For this, he examines the way the rules structure the formation of objects, ways of speaking, concepts, and strategies of a discourse.

Foucault refers to discursive formation in the following manner: 'Whenever one can describe between a number of statements such a system of dispersion; whenever, between objects, types of statements, concepts or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functioning, transformations), we will say for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation.[385] Discourse attempts to describe the discursive events in order to search for internal unities or regularities that are not that of book, author, discipline, tradition, or other categories associated with history of ideas. Rather, Foucault's notion of discourse, leads to a different conceptualisation and forms of understanding of these 'displaced categories' (e.g., death of author). Thus, the discursive formations are located beyond the level of individual statements or any other traditional grouping of them such as text, author, discipline etc. In fact, discursive formations can intersect and play across all of these individual statements or their traditional groupings. These are historically specific and socially contingent ordering of discourse. Foucault defines 'rules of formation' as 'the conditions to which the element of this division (objects, mode of statements, concepts, thematic choices) are subjected'… The rules of formation are conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance, modification, and disappearance) in a given discursive division".[386]

Another important category used by Foucault for discursive analysis is statement. Foucault conceives a statement as neither a sentence nor a proposition. In fact, he dispenses with the notion that statements are linguistic units at all.[387] Instead, he argues, they are relational entities, which must be related to a whole adjacent field of other statements. Statements are not propositions because the truth conditions for them can be different 'depending upon the set of

[383] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 27
[384] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 31-37. Michel Foucault, "Politics and the study of discourse" in G. Burchell, C. Gordon and PH Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 53-64.
[385] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 41.
[386] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 42.
[387] Barry Smart, Op.cit., 40.

statements within which it appears'.[388] Since it cannot be conceived according to linguistic or logical categories, a statement has no unitary essence. It is not a thing or unit but an 'enunciative function'. The enunciative modality of a statement precedes the logical and grammatical analysis of propositions.[389] Analogies, graphs, maps, experiments, qualitative or quantitative descriptions, biographical accounts, deductions, statistical calculations, etc. can be considered as examples of statements.[390] Statements relate to both linguistic and non-linguistic signs. They cannot be reduced to language only. Description of a statement involves 'defining the conditions in which the function that gave a series of signs... a specific existence can operate... [in] relation to a domain of objects'.[391] Foucault further explains,

> In examining the statement what we have discovered is a function that has a bearing on a group of signs, which is identified neither with grammatical 'acceptability nor with logical correctness, and which requires if it is to operate: a referential (which is not exactly a fact, a state of things, or even an object, but a principle of differentiation); a subject (not the speaking consciousness, not the author of the formulation, but a position that may be filled in various conditions by various individuals); an associated field (which is not the real context of the formulation, the situation in which it was articulated, but a domain of coexistence for other statements); a materiality (which is not only the substance or support of the articulation, but a status, rules of transcription, possibilities of use and re-use).[392]

When considered together these statements become 'sets of functions that may articulate to form rules and rule-governed systems underlying particular discourses and knowledge. They form conditions of existence for propositions and sentences but have no unitary essence.[393]They are persistently in flux, shifting and changing according to both context and circumstances. They are never available to the consciousness of the social actor. These statements are normally never 'stated or 'known' but are acted upon regularly. To operate, statements require sets of referentials differentiating between objects and elements of social reality. They also require subjects through which they pass and finally, a field of operation and articulations provided by the discursive formation.[394] An analysis of statements leads to an investigation of why particular discourses are produced at particular times and places. In hermeneutics, this is done by looking for 'deeper meaning' but Foucault rejects hermeneutics and prefers 'surface description'.

For discursive formations, the statements need not refer to one and the same object. The statements could be in relationship of dispersion with each other. This relationship of dispersion

[388] Dreyfus and Rainbow *Beyond Structuralism*, Op.cit., 45.
[389] Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 239-40.
[390] Christopher Tilly. Op.cit., 295.
[391] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 108.
[392] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 115.
[393] Ibid., 116.
[394] Ibid,117.

is not neat and logical and may embrace non-correspondences and contradictions.[395] Discursive formation is irregular, differentiated and multiple. It is a set of oppositions rather than a series of unifications. Hence, Foucault, due to his notion of discursive formations is able to bring out real complexities and real differences of the 'reality'.

The dispersion of statements within a discursive formation is governed by rules of formation relating to the formation of objects of a discourse, the types of statements that are made in relation to these objects (enunciative modalities), the manner in which concepts are formed, and certain discursive strategies are actualised.[396] We would briefly consider each of these in turn.

With regard to the objects of discourse, as the first set of rules of formation, Foucault rejects the positivist, realist, and objectivist accounts that reduce reality to a pre-existing reality. For him, objects of discourse are not natural or pre-ordained but created in particular historical and social circumstances.[397] He emphasises the constitutive role of discursive practices in forming and determining objects. Foucault distinguishes three types of rules according to which discursive objects are created. These rules crystallize around 'surface of emergence', 'authorities of delimitation' and 'grids of specification'. Different discourses are not simply to be differentiated on the basis of the objects they deal with. They actively produce the objects that they speak of, internally limit their own domains, define what they are purporting to talk about, and make these objects manifest and subject to further description.

The second set of formation of rules relates to the constitution of enunciative modalities. Foucault argues that social subjects do not autonomously produce discourses. Rather, subjects are functions and effects of discourses. Therefore, Foucault argues, 'we need to ask certain basic questions about a discourse such as: Who is speaking? What is his/her institutional site? What position is occupied by the subject who speaks or writes in relation to discursive objects?' These questions arise from and are related to Foucault's consideration of statements as involving the production of serious speech acts. If we analyse those who are accorded the right to speak on any particular occasion, this analysis involves criteria of competence and knowledge in relation to institutions, pedagogic norms, and legal systems. These allow particular subjects to practice and extend their knowledge claims. In other words, statements cannot come from just anyone. Their value, effectiveness, and influence are to be related to an institutional and educational system, qualifications and legal rights.[398] Institutional sites -- the academic department, the seminar room, the finds processing laboratory, the museum and the library-- all provide support for the making of serious speech actions and differentiate hierarchically between those who may and

[395] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 155.
[396] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 149-154.
[397] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit.,47-48.
[398] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 36-37.

may not make them (the professor, the lecturer, curator, the student, and the man or woman in the street).[399]

The third set of rules relates to those that govern the production of concepts. According to Foucault, ‘what we must investigate is how concepts arise at a particular time and place. Which concepts may be placed alongside each other, and which are incompatible? What kinds of conceptual statements are permitted, and which are not?’ In accordance with his anti-humanist stand, Foucault argues that historical shifts in conceptual structures are not to be interpreted as the result of progress with truer or better ideas replacing those which are false. This position is similar to Kuhn's work about 'paradigm shift’ where one paradigm replaces another because of shifts of interest within the academic community. However, Foucault goes further by claiming that rules internal to discourse may be held to account for changes in the conceptual structures. "The rules of formation operate not only in the mind or consciousness of individuals, but in discourse itself; they operate therefore, according to uniform anonymity, on all individuals who undertake to speak in this discursive field".[400] Thus, Foucault rejects the belief that concepts are formed by a transcendental subjectivity or gradual accumulation of empirical knowledge.

The final set of rules relating to the production of discourse concerns the formation of strategies. Foucault argues that in human sciences some sets of rules underlie particular discourses at particular times, determining the kinds of discursive strategies (ways of speaking, writing, investigating, performance analyses, etc.) which can be undertaken and accepted. These rules account for the fact that some modes of investigation are carried on while others are ignored.[401]

Foucault used these four sets of rules to account for discursive formations in societies. Since he claims that discursive formations create truths according to time and place, he suggests that in order to study them ‘we must, bracket off both, ourselves and any claims to the real meaning made in discourse.’ For him, discursive formations do not replace each other in a successive advancement towards the truth, they just change. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he speaks about the project of a pure description of discourses.[402] According to him, consideration of truth or meaning would contaminate or prevent such description from taking place. Discursive formations are simply anonymous rule-governed historical systems. Agency (people using discourse) is irrelevant to its understanding.[403] In similar vein, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault refuses to link discourses to distribution of power within the social order. Although he does not deny that discourses are not meaningful to those who participate in them, he still refuses to seek any underlying meaning residing in the relations between discourses and, the outside

[399] Sara Mills, *Michel Foucault*, Op.cit., 61.
[400] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 63.
[401] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 36.
[402] Christopher Tilly, Op.cit., 300.
[403] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 39-48.

realm of the non-discursive. This is so because perhaps, he wants to avoid reducing discourses to a particular manifestation of a structural logic underlying all social practices.[404]

Hence, in accordance with the afore-mentioned four sets of rules of formation for discourses, Foucault can account for the ways in which a discourse is regulated and controlled in any given society. However, Foucault's archaeological conception of discourse has some shortcomings. Since Foucault wants to forego even the notion of 'structure' that forms the basis of structuralism, he denies the underlying logical conditions of discourse that make certain statements possible and instead focuses on ‘their historical conditions of existence'. This leads him to deny any kind of affirmation and stick to mere description of statements and their relationships. Further, ambiguity in his conception of formation rules results in him denying even the notion of truth and meaning. This seriously undermines his ability to make critique. Finally, in his archaeological account the relation between the discursive and non-discursive remains unclear. Discourse has gotten disconnected from power. This creates problem from the point of view of the academician: What should be his role in discourse? If we totally bracket ourselves off from a discourse and if discourses are meaningful, how can we be expected to identify statements? Foucault tackles this problem through his notion of power.

IV. Discourse and Genealogy

After developing archaeology's conceptual apparatus, Foucault, ironically, has never used it to conduct new empirical research. Immediately after writing *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* Foucault appears to have undergone a change in emphasis. Inspired by Nietzsche, he develops a new orientation towards society that attempts to overcome the difficulties of his earlier approach. However, he never abandons the archaeological perspective. The constitution of objects of analysis through ‘bracketing' now becomes an internal moment of his overall genealogical approach. Later on, Foucault attempts to bring them together in what he terms the method of ‘problematisation.[405] As per his new genealogical approach, the concept of discourse is still used but discourses are not conceived to be autonomous systems of scientific statements. Instead, they are conceived as products of power relations and forces that constitute them.

Rather than 'essences and origins’, Foucault's genealogy focuses on 'ignoble beginnings and the contingent fabrications of historical phenomenon’. It commits itself to thorough-going 'perspectivism' in which events are perceived from the particular point of 'situated' researcher. Foucault calls this kind of history, in contrast to the mainstream traditional history as 'effective

[404] Christopher Tilly, Op.cit., 301.
[405] Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, New York: Pantheon, trans. R. Hurley. 1985, 11-13.

history'. It involves a radical historicisation of discourses, institutions, and practices such that nothing in a human, not even their 'body' is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition, or for understanding other people. In his genealogical conception, Foucault claims that truth is not an outside power or lacking in power but a thing of this world. Truth is internally connected with logics of power and domination. Genealogy produces a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledge, discourses, and domains of objects' that necessarily involve the complex interaction of discursive and non-discursive practices.[406] Thus, genealogy is explicitly concerned with power and domination in the constitution of discourses, identities, and institutions.[407]

Foucault applies his genealogical approach in a number of important studies to account for the spread of power, regulation, and control in modern societies. These works primarily are *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* and *History of Sexuality Vol.1*. One can formalise the underlying methods and concepts of his genealogical approach thus. The process starts with the diagnosis of a problem that causes each genealogical reading. After identification of the problem, it seeks to examine contingent historical and political emergence. While doing so, it seeks to uncover the lowly origins' and 'play of dominations' that produced the phenomenon. It also shows the possibilities that were excluded by the logics of the historical development.

Power

Since the notion of power is central to the genealogical approach by Foucault, we now examine his notion of power. Beginning from *The Order of Discourse*, Foucault attempts to make clearer linkages between the discursive and the non-discursive discourse and the operation of power and social domination. Subsequently, this linkage became amplified in his later works such as *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality*.[408] In these works, discourse is not just 'connected' to power (as stated in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*) but is a 'form of power'.

Foucault's notion of power, unlike in mainstream academic discourse, does not ask 'what is power and where does it come from?' Instead, he asks how it is exercised (by what/means?), and 'what are the effects of the exercise of power'? In other words, power is not conceived as possession of a dominant class, state, or sovereign but as a strategy. It is not located in an institution or a structure but as a 'multiplicity of force relations' which is simultaneously

[406] Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, (Ed.) Colin Gordon, New York: Pantheon, 1980, 117.

[407] D. Owen, *Maturity and Modernity: Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and the Ambivalence of Reason*, London: Routledge, 1994, 210-13. James Tully, 'To think and act differently: Foucault's four reciprocal objections to Habermas's theory', in S. Ashenden and D. Owen (Eds.) *Foucault Contra Habermas: Recasting the Dialogue Between Genealogy and Critical Theory*, (London: Sage, 1999).

[408] For the notion of power, besides *DP* and *History of Sexuality*, also see the text of Two Lectures in C. Gordon (Ed.) *Michel Foucault: Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York, Pantheon, 1980).

'intentional' yet non-subjective'.[409] In *Power/Knowledge*, Foucault describes it as follows: 'Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain... Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation... Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application'.[410] Foucault's conception of power radically departs from the Weberian conceptions of power that focus on individuals in determinate relationship between with each other as power-holders in positions of authority and power-subjects over whom power is wielded.[411] He also breaks away from the structuralist accounts which locate power as a structural feature of the social order. In this way, Foucault is able to radically decentralise power from any sort of specifiable context or location such as residing in individuals, institutions, classes, the economy, the state, and so on. Instead, he emphasises that contexts can only be understood in relation to the kind of power that inhabits them.[412]

Due to his conception of power as relational, Foucault claims that power is not simply repressive but is also productive and positive. Absence of power means no social relations. Power works through social relations; in them, and on them. In relation to historical and social circumstances, it leads to the creation of subjects of a certain kind. Power is integrally linked to and is reciprocally dependent on knowledge. They build upon each other to form Power-Knowledge strategies. This does not mean that power can be collapsed into knowledge and vice versa.[413] The Power/ Knowledge strategies are also linked to the notion of truth and rationality.

Power relations are multiple and do not simply flow from the top to bottom of the social order (for example, as in juridical-legal theories) but permeate all relations within society. The modalities power takes, and the way it operates, are historically specific. It is a networking of relations and practices throughout the social[414] It is found in institutions, forms of administration and family relations but is not exactly located in them. In other words, power does not spread out from specific points or nodes.[415] It is more like a web, each part linked to the whole and the whole affecting the part. This means that we must abandon any attempt aimed at reducing power to be originating from the economic or being held' and 'wielded by individuals.' Power is the term that 'one attributes to a complex strategically situation in a particular society.'[416]

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[409] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality I*, Op.cit., 94.
[410] Michel Foucault, 'Two Lectures' in C. Gordon (ed.) *Michel Foucault* Op.cit., 98.
[411] Marcelo Hoffman, *Foucault and Power: The Influence of Political Engagement on Theories of Power* Bloomsbury, London, 2014.
[412] Michel Foucault, *Power/ Knowledge*, Op.cit., 116-118.
[413] Michel Foucault, 'Structuralism and Post-structuralism: an Interview with Michael Foucault', *Telos*, 55:195-211.
[414] L. Althusser, *Essays on Ideology* (Verso, London, 1984).
[415] Michel Foucault's interview with Gerard Raulet, *Critical Theory/Intellectual History,'* in Lawrence D Kritzman, (Ed.) *Politics, Philosophy and Culture: Interviews and other Writings 1977-1984* (New York, Routledge, 1988), 38.
[416] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. I*, Op.cit., 93.

According to Foucault, power comes from below too; so that relations of domination on a societal or global scale are effects of and sustained by power in families, local groups, offices, etc. ‘Power is not a possession but a strategy which is both intentional and non-subjective'. It is exercised with aims and objectives, but these cannot be simply reduced to a framework of intentional agency in relation to either individuals or social classes. The rationality of power is characterised by its tactics: "logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them”.[417] Charles Taylor has labelled this aspect of Foucault's notion of power as 'purposefulness without purpose’.

Foucault's conception of resistance is linked to his notion of power. This resistance is built into power as its irreducible opposite. Wherever there is power there is always resistance. Resistance too is dispersed and heterogeneous like power. The principal modalities of the operation of power in the modern state are disciplinary procedures coupled with a bio-power managing populations.[418]

Because of this conception of power, Foucault has a very cynical view of modernity. According to him, humanitarianism of Enlightenment has resulted in a fresh system of domination related to new modes of surveillance technology. The notions of truth, reason, and science, unlike what most of us take them to be, are actually part of the new, more systematic and totalising technology of power. Even some of the critiques of this new mode of domination such as Marxism are not free from its presumptions and if given a chance to be applied to the society would result in similar kind of domination.

Foucault's conception of power, thus, makes him skeptical of the Enlightenment agenda of knowledge and truth liberating humankind from coercive power. For him, Enlightenment linkage of these categories is off the mark. The basis for Foucault's claim is his adaptation of the Nietzschean notion of ‘will to power.’ Following Nietzsche, Foucault too claims that knowledge and discourse can never be regarded as dispassionate or disinterested. In fact, knowledge is always useful, a will to truth. It seeks to dominate socially. Power, truth and claims to knowledge are inextricably intertwined. They cannot be separated without the risk of distorting our understanding of the relations between them. In fact, power creates truths which cannot be detached or liberated form it. Therefore, truth cannot be a condition for, or means of, liberation. Similarly, we cannot evoke the notion of rationality. According to Foucault, wherever there is social domination, it is because of capacity of the modalities of the networking of power in the social field to create empirical truths through ideological mystification. This mystification is the result of the creation of truth in opposition to falsity. Therefore, to evoke 'truth' to judge such

[417] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol 1*, Op.cit., 95.
[418] Christopher Tilly, Op.cit., 285-86.

social domination would result in re-enforcing the very practices that created the opposition between truth and falsity in the first place. Instead of opposing truth to falsity, Foucault's approach is to make an historical investigation of the reasons why some truths are accepted in society rather than others. For him, there is no deep-seated human nature to be liberated.[419]

If there is no truth to evoke in order to liberate ourselves, on what grounds do we resist domination? The answer lies in his conception of power as dual-natured. According to Foucault, power should be understood as a capacity in social life to bring about outcomes and effects in the world. Power has multiple meanings as an integral feature of social life. It has two sides, and it avoids essentialism. It may be regarded as a facet of all social encounters, a positive production of social effects. Therefore, without power the social world will not and cannot exist. The negative side of power cannot be unequivocally linked with discipline and social control since these may be necessary for positive outcomes of social action. Although power is neither directly positive nor negative, the picture Foucault leaves us with is that it generally results in new forms of domination.[420] Hence, we can see that Foucault's decentring of power from agency, class or institutions, or the state means we are left with power strategies without there being any necessary purpose to them. Wherever these power strategies operate, there is always resistance to them because strategies are not necessarily coherent but operate within a contradictory and conflictual field of social articulation.[421]

As per the conception of power/knowledge explicated above, discourse is not just connected to power but is a form of power. This new conception of power marks a significant shift in Foucault's work towards incorporating non-discursive factors into the explanation of historical change. Foucault argues that in the history of Western thought, there has been a persistent tendency to invalidate ordinary speech acts and convert more and more statements into serious speech acts produced by specialists within institutional settings. This is a manifestation of a 'will to truth' constantly reinforcing itself.[422]

As a result of this notion of discourse, Foucault manages to show us how to think with historical and cultural specificity. In contrast to conventional history, his writings create an 'encoded eye' that shows us social and cultural objects that have been perceived differently by other eras. He shows that through this 'encoded eye' the world of previous historical eras could appear to us as utterly alien. Foucault's way of writing history/politics emphasised on specificity, particularity, and difference. He termed this alternative the 'historical a priori' which avoided writing history using present-day terms.

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[419] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Op.cit., 118-119.
[420] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Op.cit., 121.
[421] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Op.cit., 132.
[422] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Discourse*, Op.cit., 57-58.

In contrast to Foucault's conception of history, conventional history has a cross-cultural, atemporal, and aspatial generalising perspective. It does not recognise real and irreducible differences of different times. Instead, it tries to subsume description of/different eras under generalised common categories. Therefore, for Foucault, conventional history is the endless repetition of the same. To avoid this, Foucault denies all conventional types of explanations and approaches like comparative method, the erection of typologies, cause-and-effect-type explanations, and appeals to/the collective consciousness of an age. His emphasis on discursive formations as a dispersed relational order of statements remains distinct from the normal unities proposed as binding ideas, such as traditions, books, or authors. He constructs rules for specifying discursive objects and relations between these objects based on a 'principle of rarity'. This principle asks, why is it that of all the things that could have been said about certain things just these things were said and not others?[423]

Foucault's analysis of discourse is 'anti-evolutionary'. Instead of emphasis on origins, continuities, and notions of progress, he emphasizes on ruptures and discontinuities. Hence, he rejects the notion of 'total history.'[424] By 'total history' is meant forms of explanation in which it is proposed that there is one set of processes uniting all areas of human society from economy to religion. Instead of the coherence of processes Foucault has the dispersion of events. He interrogates the past by relating evidence to specific problems and totally rejecting the hypothetico-deductive method. As a result, for him, there can be no question of testing or independently verifying a theory or hypothesis. Foucault interweaves thoroughly evidence, practice, and theory.[425]

We can see that in his genealogical conception, with the abandonment of the concept of episteme, Foucault is no longer required to regard historical differences in various phases as so profound that there is no point of contact. For him, history becomes a more complex web of continuities and discontinuities. He seeks the discontinuous in the continuous. Therefore, his genealogical history does not attempt to 'contradict archaeology but to supplement' it. For Foucault, an archaeological study forms a necessary basis for carrying out a genealogical analysis. The major difference in Foucault's later works compared with the earlier ones is that in the latter he appears far more concerned with the relationship between discursive and non-discursive practices. The lack of an adequate theorisation of the non-discursive practices created major problems which had remained unresolved in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. The emphasis on the supposed autonomy of discourse is abandoned by investigations which show how the discursive and the non-discursive mediate to form each other. Discourse is linked with

[423] Michel Foucault, *OT*, Op.cit., 23.
[424] Michel Foucault, *AK*, Op.cit., 17.
[425] Michel Foucault, AK, Op.cit., 38-44.

power and forms of social domination.[426] We might state that while archaeology is a descriptive analysis concerned with what statements are actually made, genealogy is a critical analysis of the social conditions of existence of these statements and their relationship to power. In *Archaeology of Knowledge* statements in discursive formations have ‘surfaces of emergence’ which are considered as being beyond further intelligibility, whereas in genealogy these statements emerge as the result of a linkage between the discursive and non-discursive in a longer-term historical field.[427] As the statements and their related field of social practices are linked with power, they can no longer be regarded as meaningless permutations. They have profound consequences for those involved. Foucault the 'archaeologist’ can bracket himself off (or attempt to do so) from questions of meaning and seriousness, but as a genealogist he can no longer do so. Genealogy does not revert to a search for deep meanings or an evolutionary trajectory in history. It only questions the political status of meaning and discourse in relation to power.[428]

Foucault's historical investigations are closely bound with the uses of space and time in relation to social practices. Space and time are constructed in relation to the discursive practices rather than acting as 'containers’ for them. They act so, as to construct themselves. The spatial is intricately bound with the temporal though they are interwoven in an irregular and dispersed manner.

Foucault suggests that a general distinction might be drawn between the Middle Ages constituting a 'space of emplacement' and modern use of space embracing specific sites with differentiated oppositions and functions. For him, Middle Age's 'space of emplacement' is made up of hierarchies such as sacred and profane spaces, protected and open places. In modern times, this is substituted by an infinitely open space. These open spaces become increasingly localised in terms of sites with their relations of proximity, accessibility, or inaccessibility.[429] The problem becomes that of knowing what relations of storage, circulation, marking, differentiation and classification of spaces should be developed for given ends. The division and utilisation of space is largely de-sanctified. In the disciplinary society, the control and distribution of people in space becomes of central concern. The map becomes a means of inquiry, examination, and control. Techniques of social control become increasingly invested in varied institutional architectural forms like hospitals, prisons, factories, schools, office buildings, etc.[430] The aim of all these institutions is to create a space for surveillance. Foucault uses Bentham's plans for a 'panopticon', although never actually built, as signifying a particular form of redistribution of space required in the disciplinary society that both individuates and transforms subjects.

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[426] Ian Hacking, Op.cit., 28-9.
[427] B. Smart, *Michel Foucault*, (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, Indian Reprint 2007), 56.
[428] Arnold Davidson, ‘Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics’, Op.cit., 225.
[429] C. Tilly, Op.cit., 309.
[430] Michel Foucault, *DP* Op.cit., 228.

> At the periphery an annuals building; at the centre a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring, the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside corresponding to the windows of the tower, the other, on the outside allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in the central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker, or a schoolboy. By the effect of backlighting, one can observe from the tower, standing out precisely against the light, the small captive shadows in the cells of the periphery. They are like so many cages, so many small theatres in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualised and constantly visible.[431]

This scheme permits the prisoners to be constantly observed with a minimum of effort in all their individuality. Surveillance is constant as the inmates can never be sure when they are being watched… It does not matter that the Panopticon was designed as a prison since Foucault demonstrates similar uses of space in other institutions. 'Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up', he shows.[432] Discipline can be effective only through the control and structuring of space, enclosure and measured subdivision or partitioning, fixed positions, paths for circulation, complex spaces at one and the same time architectural, hierarchical, and functional. Such spatial divisions are not just restricted to institutions but extend to private space as well. For example, the large open rooms of the medieval house in almost anyone of which, guests could be received were done away with. Instead, "the working-class family is to be fixed; by assigning it a living space with a room that serves as a kitchen and dining-room, a room for the parents which is the place of procreation, and a room for the children".[433] For Foucault, a whole field of morality is spatially circumscribed. Like his notion of space, Foucault's conception of time is also different from the conventional notion of time. Unlike the conventional sense of time which is uniform, spatial, chronometric, and calendrical time, Foucault's conception of time is linked to social processes and discourses. His work denies homogenous time. Foucault understands time as a series of differences inextricably bound up with social practice. For him, there can be no one periodisation applying to all events and no one time corresponding to these events. So something that happens in France in 1839 may belong to the same time as another event occurring sixty years later in

[431] Michel Foucault, *DP*, Op.cit., 200.
[432] Michel Foucault, *DP*, Op.cit., 202.
[433] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Op.cit., 149.

India. It is up to the historian to organise his periodisation according to temporalities of the events under investigation.[434]

The Subject and Subjectivity

An important aspect of Foucault's notion of discourse is the constitution of subject in it. He has examined subjectivity throughout his work in relation to various themes such as madness and rationality, in the formation of historical and social sciences, clinical and psychiatric practice, among others. He has gone on to describe the purpose of his own work "to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects".[435]

Foucault has provided a strident critique of humanist conceptions of the person, agent or subject, and a reconsideration of the place of subjectivity in discursive and non-discursive social practices. The subject's identity, position, and place are constituted in language and social practices. Foucault displaces the subject into history. In so doing he eliminates both subjectivity and consciousness (individual or collective) as having any prime explanatory significance in consideration of the social or historical change. Subjectivity and consciousness instead become problems for analysis and discussion.

Rather than appealing to a realm of ideas which supposedly explain social action (as in idealism that postulates an immanent rationality or teleology in historical development), Foucault adopts a materialist conception of the subject. The subject becomes something attached to the materialism of the physical human body and is historically constituted. Physical and biological bodies do not alter historically but the types of subjectivity engraved into them through discursive and non-discursive practices do. The subject is formed through a dialectic of power and knowledge. This is why, according to Foucault, the notion of man is just a fairly transient mutation in Western culture not even 200 years old. It is a phase in knowledge which will disappear as this knowledge takes a new form.[436]

Knowledge, Truth and Rationality

The implication of the above discussion is that human sciences are also linked to a kind of disciplinary power in contemporary society. Each society has its own regime of truth and rationality. There is no absolute form of truth or rationality to evaluate statements against. Different social practices determine different forms of rationality and truth. Keeping this in mind, human sciences should be understood to have their technical matrix in details of their disciplines

[434] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Op.cit., 187; *DP*, Op.cit., 160.
[435] Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2nd ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
[436] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Op. cit, 77

and practices. Thus, Foucault never attempted to provide a self-sufficient theoretical system for the study of discourse or social totalities. His emphasis on dispersion--of statements in discourse, of power in terms of strategies, of subjectivity in history- and his discussion of power-knowledge directly mitigate against any such attempt. If anything, he tends towards the dispersion of theory rather than its systematization. "The whole of society is precisely that which should not be considered except as something to be destroyed".[437] According to Foucault any (totalising) theory that attempts to take everything into account is impossible. It is socially and politically suspect, a manifestation of domination. It is the very 'the will to truth' that Foucault is so concerned to attack. Since Foucault abandons the attempt to create a totalising theory, he also abandons any notion of the universal intellectual (as in Marxist theory) whose job is to provide a blanket political critique of modern society. He sees the role of the intellectual in specific and localised interventions operating at specific institutional sites and in relation to specific knowledges.[438]

Hence, we can see that Foucault's genealogical conception provides a way to understand society/ politics in a specific and non-reductionist manner.

[437] Michel Foucault, Revolutionary Action: "Until Now"‘, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays* and Interviews by Michel Foucault, (Ed.) Donald Bouchard., 1977, 218-233.
[438] Michel Foucault *Power/Knowledge*, Op.cit., 126-30.

CHAPTER V

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION OF HERMENEUTICS AND GENEALOGICAL ORIENTATION

In the previous chapters, it was shown that Taylor and Foucault approach the problem of overcoming naturalism in radically different ways respectively. Both attempts to go beyond the essentialist legacy of Enlightenment. They can be seen as trying to overcome the disengaged view of agency and the correspondence theory of knowledge implicit in the natural science explanation model. Both are critical of the idea of a knowing subject with a transparent relationship to the world and removed from history. While Taylor suggests his post-Heideggerian hermeneutics as a solution; Foucault proposes his Nietzsche inspired genealogy as the way to go beyond essentialism. Each having different implications for the study of politics and society.

On the issue of relativism, it was proposed, Taylor claims that despite our sense of reality being internally generated by language we can still determine one interpretation to be superior to another and consequently endorse one way of life as superior to another. On the other hand, Foucault takes a value-neutral stance and claims that there is no way we can claim one description of reality to be superior to the other as they are effects of arbitrary power-knowledge strategies.

One way of conceiving these different orientations of the two thinkers could be in terms of ‘coherence’ and 'discontinuity/rupture' as their key themes respectively. They can be seen as belonging to hermeneutics of recovery and hermeneutics of suspicion respectively.

According to Taylor, as shown in Chapter Three, humans are self-interpreting animals partly constituted by their interpretation. This interpretation is based on a tacit pre-understanding which can never be made fully explicit. The ‘horizon' of the interpretation is always hidden. This interpretation is expressed in a medium and partly constitutes the self. Any change in interpretation also changes the self. In understanding one’s own human condition or in attempting to understand the unfamiliar, the self is provoked to reconsider its own presumptions. Due to this review of their presumptions, the self develops a new language of contrast that considers both the interpreter's and the other's language. A new fusion of horizon takes place. This new understanding thus arrived at, is richer and more clarifying than the earlier one. It makes clear what was earlier inchoate or unrealized. However, this articulation is not yet final but part of a never-ending process in which prediction of the future is not possible.

In contrast, for Foucault, there are no 'truths’ to be revealed by the interpretations. Truth and other categories of our discourse such as man, reason, etc. are 'unities' that become fixed over

time due to power configuration. Their metaphorical origins are forgotten, and they appear to us as 'objective truths'. The task of genealogy is to demystify their pretensions of being 'objective truths'. This is done by revealing their historical, contingent, and arbitrary aspects through rhetorical usage of language. Moreover, each episteme (epoch) in history has its own truth. There are no abstract and universal truths for all times. Rather truth is relative to episteme and are incommensurable to each other. The episteme arises from ruptures in the ordering of experience. Foucault is not interested in finding out the reasons for such ruptures. He views the modern society evolving due to disciplinary practices through knowledge-power strategies.

In this chapter, a comparison of these seemingly incommensurable modes of enquiries by Taylor and Foucault would be made.

I. How are Comparisons Possible: Notion of Practical Reason

Some commentators point out that a comparison between Taylor and Foucault's projects is not possible as they lack 'common criteria' for arbitration. They argue, how can two positions, with 'coherence' and 'discontinuity' as their key categories, have anything common between them to make a comparison. These two rival positions generate their own notions of valid knowledge and are 'incommensurable' to each other. To translate insights from one to another would be to distort one in terms of the other. These are two different ways of seeking knowledge; both equally valid in their own terms.[439] To decide between these, according to critics, would be to arrive at a set of considerations that is acknowledged by both positions and are sufficient to show one to be right and other to be wrong. However, in situations of a deep rift between two rival positions, such as Taylor and Foucault's, these conditions are never met. For these positions, claims to self-understanding, being constitutive cannot be construed as representations of an independent object. Different positions have different notions of truths and, therefore, cannot be compared and evaluated.

Following MacIntyre, it can be argued that, in such situations, superiority of one position over another can be rationally demonstrated by showing that the passage from one to another result is a gain in understanding.[440] One can give a convincing narrative account of the passage from one to the other as an advance in knowledge, a step from a less good to a better understanding of the phenomenon in question. On the other hand, similar plausible narrative of a possible transition from the second to the first cannot be constructed. Such an exercise would establish an

[439] William Connolly, 'Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness", *Political Theory*, Vol 13,3 (August 1985) 369
[440] Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts,1997), 41-43.

asymmetrical relation between them.[441] In such comparison one makes modest claims (rather than absolute claims). They are comparative judgments about transitions. They are specifically addressed to the holders of the rival positions and not ultimate for all times. MacIntyre argues, 'We are never able to claim that now we possess the truth or now we are fully rational. The most that we can claim is that this is the best account which anyone has been able to give so far, and that our beliefs about what the marks of a best account so far are will themselves change in what are at present unpredictable ways.'[442]

On the other hand, in foundationalism, comparative judgments are secondary to absolute ones. Rival positions are checked against facts, and one is shown superior to the other because it predicts or explains certain facts which the other does not. Comparative judgment between the two is based on absolute judgments concerning their respective performance in the face of reality. The role of criteria is taken by facts, observation standards applied to explanations of facts as, for instance, done in Karl Popper's falisficationalist theory. The rival positions are seen as closed explicit systems. Once one has articulated their major premises, it is assumed that all possible routes of appeal to them have been defined. For MacIntyre, comparative reasoning can draw on more resources than simply facts. It can involve not only explanations of facts, but also the way the two rival positions deal with each other. Thus, it would explain not just the phenomena in dispute but also how the difficulties or shortcomings of the rival position can be overcome by one and not the other and vice versa.

According to this notion of practical reason, a theory's performance in face of reality must not just be assessed by its own canons but should go further and explain how the rival way of explaining the world could arise. Such an exercise would make pre-understanding of knowledge explicit and extend our ability to affect our purposes by increasing our grasp on reality. In short, it would make our practices more effective. It would make the 'losing theory' recognise that there was something which was outside the scope of its original standard.

In this exercise, the mediating element between the two positions is 'something deeply embedded in the human life form'. It is a domain of human practice that becomes clearer and more effective by this comparison. The interlocutors are implicitly aware of this domain and recognise so when these are made explicit. This is the link between understanding and practical capacity. Unlike in the standard foundationalist view, rival positions do not appear as closed explicit systems to the proponents of this notion of practical reason. Real positions held in history by the thinkers do not correspond to the watertight deductive systems of foundationalism and that is why rational transitions are in fact possible. Therefore, it becomes possible to arbitrate between two seemingly

[441] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological Crises, Dramatic Narrative, and the Philosophy of Science, "in *The Monist* 60 (1977), 275.

[442] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Epistemological crises", Op. cit., 455.

incommensurable modes of enquiry such as hermeneutics and genealogy. The notion of practical reason evoked makes it possible to arbitrate between two seemingly disparate perspectives. It is this notion of practical reason that has been evoked in this chapter (besides the early part of this thesis).

Foucault, perhaps, might have not approved of this notion of practical reason as a kind of foundationalist view. This because, being too radical, he may not have seen enough stability in the systems to be able to make this kind of comparison possible. In Foucault's worldview things are too much in flux to make this kind of comparison possible. In his view, words are counter for meanings; while the shell remains the persists meaning within gets changed over time. The 'fixedness of the discourse is the illusion' created by the 'unities of the discourse'. He focuses his efforts on de-linking knowledge, power, and discourse. To get involved in comparisons, for him, would result in creation of further 'truths'; precisely the task he was trying to undo.

II. Foucault-Taylor Exchange

Unlike Habermas, Foucault did not have any direct exchange of views with Taylor. The latter's essay on Foucault about power and freedom was published in 1985, a year after Foucault's untimely death. In this article and some occasional references in his other works, Taylor is polemical and dismissive of Foucault: Some commentators on authors such as Derrida, Lacan, Loytard, and Foucault are 'breathlessly admiring of their deep and unprecedented insights; others are impatient scoffers. I confess that I sometimes find myself drawn into the latter category... Foucault's sliding between different contradictory positions… I confess that I have not been entirely cured of the scoffers' disease'.[443] Similarly, elsewhere Taylor alleges that Foucault's genealogy does not provide arguments but resorts to rhetorical tricks: 'Certainly not Foucault's way, which is to suggest by a trick of rhetoric that whoever is in disagreement with his Nietzsche an gloss must still be suffering from a kind of Panglossian belief in a teleologically ordered universe, organized by the Ideas... rhetorical hijinks come just where we should be deploying the more responsible arguments'.[444] At another place, he says that Foucault's (genealogical) analyses are terribly one-sided as other aspects seem to be denied altogether'.[445]

Similarly dismissive, Foucault shrugs off hermeneutics (he calls it exegesis or commentary) as a 'mistaken' attempt to get at a deep truth hidden behind discourse.[446] Commentary attempts 'the

[443] Charles Taylor, "Review of Logics of Disintegration" by Peter Dews, *New Left Review*, 170: 110.
[444] Taylor, "Connolly, Foucault, and Truth", *Political Theory*, Vol.13 No 3, (August 1985) 381.
[445] Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Truth and Freedom", *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, (Ed.) David Couzens Hoy, (Cambridge MA: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 69-102.
[446] Michel Foucault, *About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Lectures at Dartmouth College, 1980.* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2016), 1-17.

re-apprehension through the manifest meaning of discourse of another meaning at once secondary and primary, which is, more hidden but also more fundamental'.[447] According to Foucault, hermeneutics thus "dooms us to an endless task... [because it] rests on the postulate that speech is an act of 'translation... of the word of God, ever secret, ever beyond itself". Foucault brushes aside this approach by saying, 'for centuries we have waited in vain for the decision of the Word.'[448]

III. Common legacy: Influence of Heidegger

These remarks against each other might suggest that there is a gulf of difference between the two thinkers. In fact, it is to the contrary. Since both these thinkers were greatly influenced by Martin Heidegger's work, they have tremendous similarities in their orientations. In an article, 'Beyond Hermeneutics: Interpretation in Late Heidegger and Recent Foucault,' Hubert Dreyfus points out that notion of hermeneutics in Heidegger's classic, *Being and Time* and later works kept on evolving.[449] Based on this, he delineates three ways of doing interpretation in Heidegger's work, each with its distinct subject matter, method, and goals. It can be summarised as follows:

a) Hermeneutics of everydayness - treats social practices as text, and by circling back and forth between details and the whole seeks to reveal the meaning in these practices (Charles Taylor, Robert Bellah, Clifford Geertz, Kuhn).
b) Hermeneutics of suspicion - uses the same method to liberate social participants by unmasking their deep meaning which everyday practices serve to suppress (Marx, Freud).
c) thinking or deciphering - focuses on specific social paradigms to highlight what our current practices are doing to the quality of our lives and open us to the possibility of change (later Heidegger, Foucault).

In this article, Dreyfus slots Taylor in the category of 'hermeneutics of everydayness' while he places Foucault along with Heidegger in the 'deciphering or thinking' category. But at the time of writing of this article in 1985, Taylor's historical works, *Sources of the Self* (1989) and *The Ethics of Authenticity* (1991) had not been published, otherwise he would have assigned the 'deciphering' category to Taylor too[450]. However, it can be argued that both Taylor and Foucault had their inspiration in Heidegger's notion of interpretation.

[447] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (0T), Op.cit,.373.
[448] Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic* (BC), Op.cit, xvi.
[449] Herbert L Dreyfus, "Beyond Hermeneutics: Interpretation in Late Heidegger and Recent Foucault" in *Interpreting Politics* (Ed)., Michael Gibbons (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987),202-220.
[450] It is interesting to note that Elliot Jurist, describes Taylor's approach as 'genealogical'. He says that it is genealogical as far as it attempts to look into past for understanding the present better. However, since genealogy does not allow for possibility of higher-order goods (or hyper goods) this term could be misleading. See, Elliot. L

Connolly has stated these ‘commonalities’ between Taylor and Foucault in the following seven points:

(1) An episteme sets (in Taylor's language) ‘the limit of the thinkable’ for an age, even though those limits do not necessarily correspond to the limits of thought.

(2) The correspondence theory of truth does not coalesce with modern understandings of finitude, as those understandings find expression in theories of life, labour, and language.

(3) The pre-modern mode of attunement to the world no longer is available to us although Taylor seems to think that a new form of attunement between self-identity and the world might become available.

(4) There is more to being knowing than knowing, or in the formulation of Foucault would prefer, there is more to life than knowing.

(5) Language is impoverished if it is forced into a designative philosophy of language and the pre-discursive realm from which discourse is formed never can be drawn fully into discourse.

(6) The strong theory of the subject as sovereign or universal is no longer sustainable.

(7) The death of God does or would spread an infection throughout the prevailing understanding of truth, the self, rationality, and morality.[451]

These differences are reflected in several ways in their works. For instance, both Taylor and Foucault problematize the modem conception of the subject. The idea of a subject with a transparent relationship to the world, removed from history, is an obstacle to understanding the possibilities of human knowledge and political life. (See point 2 and 6 above). Similarly, both deny that the conscious self-understanding of participants reveals the truth about the self. Because practices of the self are largely articulations of the possibilities of the self (hermeneutics) or the medium of webs of power-knowledge (genealogy), there is no underlying reality to which practices of the self can appeal (points no. 1 and 2).

Related to this, both assert that any set of social practices will be both revealing and concealing; any set of social practices will encourage some possibilities of the self, some possibilities between oneself and society and some possibilities between the self and the other while denying other possibilities (point no. 5). In terms of genealogy, any set of power-knowledge relations will produce some forms of truth while disqualifying others. Consequently, it will be important to show how each came into being, the costs it imposes and the possibilities of resistance.

Jurist, *Beyond and Hegel and Nietzsche: Philosophy, Culture and Agency*, (Cambridge, M.A.: The MIT Press, 2000) 129-132.

[451] William E. Connolly, "Taylor, Foucault and Otherness”, *Op. cit*. 367.

Finally, both stress that modem technological forms of understanding pose significant problems for the variation of human experience, although they disagree over just what those distorting effects are. This is reflected in their conception of modernity also (points no. 2 and 7).

Thus, due to Heideggerian influence, both Taylor and Foucault can be viewed as attempting to go beyond the legacy of the Enlightenment project. They both can be seen as trying to go beyond the 'disengaged subject' and the correspondence theory of language. They can be seen as 'anti-essentialist' thinkers trying to go beyond the 'essentialist' way of conceiving reality in the empiricist and rationalist approaches. Both these thinkers approach history in a contingent manner that 'diffuses subject' in history. Commentators usually do not talk about Taylor in this manner, but a close reading of *The Sources of the Self* suggests this.[452]

So, it can be argued that in sharing a Heideggerian legacy, both have some broad commonalities. However, as Connolly points out, differences that arise between the two are over these commonalities or basic agreements. Along with other critics such as Rorty and Blumenburg, Connolly labels these two thinkers as opponents of 'epistemological foundationalism', trying to outdo each other in overcoming the shortcomings of the epistemological foundationalism.[453] According to him, within these broad commonalities reside fundamental differences in the orientations of each to morality, polities, the self and the entire modern condition. Moreover, these commonalties limit the ways in which each can legitimately criticise the contrary impulses governing the thought of the other. ‘It is at the first level they share so much that they struggle so valiantly at the second level’, says Connolly.

IV. Different Readings of Hegel and Nietzsche

Furthering the above discussion, this section argues that this difference in their orientations at the second level is due to different readings of two masters, Hegel, and Nietzsche, in their works. While Taylor gives primacy to Hegel in his works, Foucault is a Nietzsche an to the core. The two masters, Hegel and Nietzsche can be juxtaposed as opposites in terms of their basic philosophical commitments and their styles. Habermas claims that Hegel is Nietzsche's ‘great antipode’ and warns against ‘Nietscheanisms’ of all kinds.[454] Similarly, Derrida says that there is a ‘hand-to-hand combat between Hegel and Nietzsche’.[455] We can see similar tensions in the works of Taylor and Foucault due to dissimilar influence of these two masters on their works.

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[452] Elliot Jurist, *Beyond Hegel and Nietzsche*: Op. cit, 129-132. Jurist in his evaluation of Taylor's conception of agency describes Taylor as 'genealogical'

[453] William Connolly, "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness", *Political Theory*, Vol. 13 No.3, (August 1985)

[454] J. Habermas, " Interpretive Social Sciences vs. Hermeneutics", in, *Social Science as Moral Enquiry*, (Ed.) R. Haan Et al, (NY; MIT Press, 198)3, 253

[455] J. Habermas as cited by Elliot Jurist, *Beyond Hegel and Nietzsche*, Op cit, 1.

A major difference between Taylor and Foucault is about their conception of human subject. Taylor, following Hegel, finds that human beings have 'depths' or 'significance'. Foucault, inspired by Nietzsche, claims that ‘depth' in humans is an illusion created by the power configuration in association with institutional normalization and discipline.

While Taylor, influenced by Hegelian themes argues that human society is evolving teleologically towards a better society (if not more rational), Foucault, in a Nietzschean strain, dashes any such hope. For him, we move from one 'regime of truth' (episteme) to another with ruptures in between; each episteme having its own notion of truth and no independent 'vantage point' to judge one epoch/period as superior to other.

Another major divide between Taylor and Foucault's orientations is about the legacy of the Enlightenment. While Taylor is positive about reason and knowledge, Foucault is skeptical about knowledge and there is a streak of 'irrationalism' in his work. Related to this is the issue of whether modernity is worth salvaging as Taylor believes, or whether it is to be despaired about, as Foucault asserts. For Taylor, modernity is problematic and oppressive but not hopeless; Foucault finds it dislocating and pathological and thus attempts to go beyond to a new (post-modern) era.

The issue about individual and community also divides Taylor and Foucault. Admitting the importance of individualism (in contrast to atomism), Taylor nevertheless has communitarian sympathies. On the other hand, Foucault prefers ‘techniques of the self’ or ‘aesthetic of the existence’ in which individuals hold themselves above community and have the strength to create values for themselves. Like other Hegelians, Taylor shows serious concern about society and institutions. Often, followers of Nietzsche move to the margins of the society and are tempted by 'what lies below and beyond'. Nietzschean perspectivism is designed in part to undermine or at least to question the value of any kind of communitarian projections.

Due to Nietzsche's influence, Foucault’s work gives exalted status to art. Influence of artists such as Bataille and Roussel is more than apparent in his works. For him, arts provide justification for life itself and philosophy is clumsy and intrusive in comparison. Like Nietzsche, Foucault too uses language in a rhetorical manner. He attempts to give philosophy a new playful incarnation. Thus, for him philosophy is in the image of art.

In contrast, Taylor, in footsteps of Hegel, defends philosophy as a superior form of articulation in comparison to arts. While he acknowledges both art and philosophy as valid form of human expression, in the last instance he gives preference to philosophy.

The impact of this difference can also be seen in their philosophical styles. Foucault has literary quality with rhetorical devices interspersed in his works; perhaps, an appropriate form for

bringing out aspects of the decentred subject. In contrast, Taylor, in Hegelian manner, takes a systematic form, showing the subject's struggle and advancing towards more clarity.

Hence, we can see that the difference in styles of philosophizing between Taylor and Foucault can be seen as the result of difference in readings of Hegel and Nietzsche in their works. This is not to say that Foucault has only negative reception of Hegel or Taylor does not acknowledge Nietzsche's impulse; it's only that they emphasize one over the other.

After having outlined this difference between Taylor and Foucault in terms of their legacies let us examine the differences between them in detail as outlined in the Introduction (Chapter1). In the following pages, Taylor and Foucault would be evaluated on three key themes, namely, human subject (depth as achievement vs. depth as illusion/trap), orientation towards knowledge (non-deterministic teleology vs genealogy) and notion of critique (politics of accord vs politics of discord).

V. Human Subjectivity: Depth and Its Denial.

One major difference between Taylor and Foucault, as pointed out above, is the notion of human subject in their works. While both have criticised the notion of 'disengaged subject' of the naturalism, they differ vastly on the alternative they gave to the naturalist conception of self. Taylor, as pointed out in Chapter Three, asserts that human subjects inescapably have 'depths'. The practices of the self are articulations of the possibilities of the self. On the other hand, Foucault, as delineated in Chapter Four, claims that "depth' in humans is an illusion' created by the power configuration in tandem with the normalisation and discipline of institutions. Since the difference between their notions of subjectivity is crucial to our subsequent arguments let us examine this issue in detail.

Expressivism, Strong Evaluation, Depth and Teleology

For Taylor, human beings can have 'depth' because they have the capacity to engage in second-order desires. According to Taylor, there are two kinds of desires in humans: first order desires and second-order desires. First order desires are concerned only with the outcome of the choice and do not involve 'qualitative distinctions of worth'. When the agents are concerned with first-order desires they are inarticulate about their choices and, therefore, lack depth. Taylor calls such agents 'simple weigher.' In contrast, second-order desires are desires about first-order desires and deploy a language of evaluative distinctions such as higher or lower desires.[456] Agents who have second-order desires use the language of contrastive evaluation and can be articulate about their

[456] Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Papers (PP1), HAL*,16-27.

choices. They indulge in what Taylor has called 'strong evaluations.' Since these agents are articulate about their choices, they have capacity for reflection. Their articulation opens ‘plurality of ways' for them. Taylor calls such agents 'strong evaluators’. One can associate the concept of responsibility with these agents and talk about them in terms of metaphor of ‘depth'.

Thus, we can see that it is the human capacity to engage in second-order desires or articulate strong evaluations that gives them depth. According to Taylor, this notion of ‘strong evaluation' is something like a human universal. It is present in all people except what we would clearly judge as very damaged human beings. This is so because strong evaluations are concerned with questions such as the kind of life one should lead, the quality of agent one should be and hence, they shape our identities. Strong evaluations are goods that are independent of us and towards which our actions are oriented. We already have a pre-reflective understanding of these in our behaviour. When we try to articulate this in language, we become conscious of it. Identity is defined by Taylor as our ‘fundamental evaluations' that forms indispensable horizon out of which we reflect about ourselves as persons. Thus, it involves strong evaluations.[457] There can be no person without such horizon or framework of evaluative distinctions. Even those who deny frameworks of 'strong evaluations', such as the proponents of naturalism or utilitarianism, operate by such evaluative distinctions (e.g., affirmation to ordinary life) in coping with their life. These people may not acknowledge it, but they use such evaluative distinctions in judging their own and other's actions. Thus, strong evaluations are inescapable part of human agency.

These strong evaluations are linked to articulations. The strong evaluations are perceived by us as 'articulations of intrinsic goodness’ of those things external to us towards which our desires and feelings implicitly direct us. These articulations are not characterisations of a fully independent object as they are part of our implicit understanding. This implicit understanding is already part of our orientation towards our objects of characterisation. It is unlike the objects of characterization in natural sciences which are independent of the observer; these objects of concern or characterisation are already part of our self-interpretation. When we make these implicit orientations or understanding explicit, we also bring out or express our motivations towards these objects. In doing so, we can take a reflective stance towards these objects and, hence, open plurality of ways towards our objects of concern. Thus, formation or reformulation of our feelings and desires about objects of concerns also changes our motivation towards these objects. They are attempts to formulate what is initially inchoate, confused, or badly formulated about our motivation towards these objects. In making explicit what was earlier implicit, we change our feelings towards those objects. An altered description of our motivation can be

[457] Deane-Peter Baker, *Tayloring Reformed Epistemology: Charles Taylor, Alvin Plantinga and the de jure challenge to Christian belief,* (scm press, London,2007),105-124. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3-52.

inseparable from a change in this motivation. In this manner these articulations that involve strong evaluations partly constitute our self-interpretation.

Moreover, these articulations can never be made fully explicit. This is so because our articulations involve language, and we cannot fully articulate what we are taking as given. Of course, we can increase our understanding of what is implicit in our articulations about strong evaluations. But it can never be made fully explicit by its very nature. We can clarify one language with another, which in turn can be further clarified, and so on.

In making these strong evaluations explicit we become aware of our desires in relation to our objects of characterisations and ends. We can see in making such a claim Taylor is following Aristotle's theory of inseparability of form and matter in human action and teleology. Thus, while accounting for human actions one cannot ontologically separate action and purpose. We, as agents, are capable of grasping our own actions in a way that we cannot come to know external objects and events. In other words, there is a knowledge we are capable of concerning our own action which we can attain as the doers of action and it is different from the knowledge we may gain of objects we observe or scrutinise externally. Actions are in a sense inhabited by the purposes which direct them.

Therefore, when we make strong evaluations, we articulate our desires in relations to our goals (objects of characterisations or goods). In doing so, we become aware of our motivation in relation to our ends. This makes us conscious of our implicit sense of our predicament. Thus, we move from unreflective or less reflective stage to a more conscious reflective stage. As a result, we become more expressive and rational, more open to plurality of ways.

Thus, actions can be seen as a kind of continuum with varying degrees of awareness, ranging from unreflecting to highly conscious behaviour. Highly conscious actions are, in a sense, an achievement for human agents. In achieving consciousness, we transform our activity. The quality of consciously directed activity is different from that of un-reflected or semi-conscious performance. So, to become conscious is to be able to act in a new way.[458] The 'mental' is the inward reflection of what was originally external. Self-conscious understanding is the fruit of an interiorisation of what was originally external.

Thus, in attaining 'depth' the individual not only goes inward but also moves beyond his subjective preferences towards the moral goods that are independent of him. As a result, the self 'expands'; that is, it identifies with a larger reality (community, nature, etc.) and leads a 'richer' life. This notion is also the basis for Taylor's assertion that atomist view of agency is shallow and unable to capture the complexity of our political life. However, this issue will be addressed in a later section. Here it must be emphasised that in attaining 'depth' or in working out 'strong

[458] Charles Taylor, Ibid., 90.

evaluations', the self-moves beyond its 'narrow' self, identifies towards the 'bigger reality' and attains 'richness' in life. The self, to use Taylor's own phrase, follows 'a direction of being'.[459]

In fact, Taylor makes a stronger claim in his later work, *Sources of the Self* where he claims that 'strong evaluations' are an inescapable feature of human existence. While working out his phenomenological account of identity, Taylor argues that by very nature human beings exist in a space of questions that are mapped out by strong evaluations.[460] These claims suggest that, for Taylor, a kind of telos works in case of humans. William Connolly points out that Taylor treats the self as if it were designed to fulfill its potentiality through perfecting its subjectivity. In making stronger evaluations the self seeks to situate itself in a world both larger than it and partly constitutive of it. Taylor, says Connolly, does this by 'striving to articulate for us those elements in the self and its circumstances that come closest to expressing what we are at our best. The most expressive articulations are not simply the creations of subjects, nor do they represent what is true independently of human articulations'.[461] Supporting this, Connolly quotes Taylor, 'They rather have the power to move us because they manifest our expressive power itself and its relation to the world. In this kind of expression, we are responding to the way things are, rather than just exteriorising our feelings.'[462]

Further, in *Sources of the Self*, while discussing his notion of stronger evaluation and narrative identity, Taylor claims that there is a kind of 'a priori unity in humans'.[463] In his reply to Connolly, Taylor explicates two kinds of teleological orientations. First, Hegelian, that finds inescapable design inexorably working in history. This kind of teleology with emphasis on necessity and finality is not plausible in our times, says Taylor. Second kind of teleology, he says, is espoused in his own works. In this kind of teleological orientation, authentic self-understanding 'follows a direction in its being... (this) makes a big part of my "ontology" of the human person.'[464]

According to Isaiah Berlin, Taylor is basically a teleologist as he believes that 'human beings, perhaps even entire universe, have a basic purpose'. Consequently, Berlin says, everything that Taylor has written is concerned with what people have believed, striven for, developed into, lived in the light of, and finally their ultimate goals towards which human beings are by their very nature determined to move. In short, or Taylor purposes are not imposed by human beings upon

[459] Charles Taylor, 'Connolly, Foucault and Truth', *Political Theory*, Vol 13, No. 3 (August,1985) 377-385.
[460] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (SS) Op.cit, 32.
[461] Connolly, "Taylor, Foucault and Otherness", Op cit, 367.
[462] Charles Taylor, "Language and Human Nature" *PPI*, Op. cit,
[463] Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit, 51.
[464] Charles Taylor, "Connolly, Foucault, and Truth" Op. cit, 384.

nature and the world but pursued by them as part of their own central natures or essences, he observes.[465]

Foucault: Depth as Illusion

In contrast to Taylor's conception of subject in terms of depth and teleology that sought truth, freedom, and increasingly unified subjectivity; Foucault asserts that human subject has no essence and depth to explore. Depth, unlike what Taylor asserts, for Foucault, is the dimension in which human beings are identified, interrogated, constituted and, hence, subjugated. It is the promise of freedom through truth that lurks in depth and draws people deeper and deeper into subjugating examinations of themselves and others. It's a nightmare towards which aspects of modernity lead us.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault says: 'The man described for us, whom we are invited to free, is already in himself the effect of a subjection much more profound than himself. A "soul" inhabits him and brings him to existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power existence, which is itself a factor in the mastery that power exercises over the body. The soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body.'[466]

Thus, he rejects the soul along with the belief that it should be the ground and target of our explorations for deep truth and freedom. Instead, he tries to understand 'What is man?' at the boundaries of man's being where man confronts his others. To do so, he 'decentres the subject'. By de-centred subject, is meant a notion of subject as not the unified subject of consciousness, linking together a body and an ego but the subject as a variable and dispersed entity, whose very identity position and place is constituted in language and social practices.

In this direction, it could be claimed that Foucault goes further than other structuralists and post-structuralists. While Lacan and Barthes displace the subject into language, Althusser into ideological practices mediated through language, Foucault displaces the subject into history. In doing so he eliminates both subjectivity and consciousness (individual and collective) as having any prime explanatory significance in considerations of the social or historical change. Instead, subjectivity and consciousness themselves become problems for analysis and discussion.

[465] Isaiah Berlin, "Introduction" in *Philosophy in an Age of pluralism: The Philosophy of Charles Taylor in Question*, (Ed.) James Tully (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)1-3.
[466] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (DP) Op.cit., 30. Anne Schwan and Stephen Shapiro, *How to Read Foucault's Discipline and Punish* (Pluto Press, New York, 2011) 46-47.

Discursive Practices as Level of Analysis

According to Foucault, we should analyse the society at the level of 'discursive practices'. It should not be reduced to the familiar categories of individual oeuvre, academic discipline, authors, books, etc. In one of this works, this is what he has to say about 'discursive practices':

"These groups of regularities [in discursive practices] do not coincide with individual works. Even if they appear through them, even if they happen to become evident for the first time in one of them, they extend substantially beyond them and often unite a considerable number. But they do not necessarily coincide either with what we habitually call sciences or disciplines, although their boundaries can sometimes be provisionally the same."[467]

For Foucault, we cannot reduce 'discursive practices' to the familiar categories of author, discipline, oeuvre, as discursive practices are regularities that emerge in the very fact of their articulation; they are not prior to articulations. The systematicity of discursive practices is neither of a logical nor of linguistic type. The regularity of discourse is unconscious and occurs at the level of Saussure's parole, and not at the level of a pre-existing langue.[468]

Foucault does this because he does not want to study movements in thoughts in the manner of History of Ideas (see chapter four) where ideas would be prior to the material being studied. His analyses are at the level of 'regime of practices' because, for him, the line between seeing and doing, or between seeing and speaking is always unstable. The division between these actions is always changing. Therefore, 'regimes of practices' cannot be reduced to an ahistorical form of doing, or practice.

Moreover, following Nietzsche, Foucault wanted to avoid 'projecting meaning into history'.[469] For him, even the notion of cause is suspect. All we have are material effects and material acts; there is no essential meaning to things-no essential subject behind action nor is there an essential order to history. Rather order is the writing of the history itself.

Man as a Creation of Discourse and the Vanishing of Man

Thus, the notions of subjectivity and consciousness are to be seen at the level of discursive practices. When we do so, we find that the notion of man/ woman is merely a transient mutation' in Western culture not even 200 years old; a fold in knowledge which will disappear as knowledge takes up new form. So, for Foucault, man has not been there since antiquity or earlier but is a very recent creation.

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[467] Michel, Foucault, 'Resume des cours', 1970-1982, Paris, Julliard, 1989, p. 10; quoted in John Lechte, *Fifty key contemporary thinkers: From Structuralism to Postmodernity*, (N.Y.: Routledge, 1994) 110-115.

[468] Langue- individual natural language viewed as a structure, or system; Parole- individual speech acts, or acts of language as a process.

[469] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Vintage Books, I968) sect.1011, p.523.

To understand the reason behind such a claim we will have to examine Foucault's materialist conception of subjectivity and the way he links subjectivity to discourse. According to the materialist conception of subject, the subject becomes something attached to the materialism of the physical human body and is historically constituted, physical and biological bodies do not of course alter historically but the type of subjectivity engraved into them through discursive and non-discursive practices do change. The subject is formed through dialectic of power and knowledge. This is what has been worked out in his texts *The Order of Things, Discipline and Punish: Birth of Prison, History of Sexuality* (*Use of Pleasure).*

To make sense of the manner in which Foucault links subjectivity to discourse, we will have to understand that for him, human body is created through the discourse; it is neither natural nor pre-ordained but created in particular historical and social circumstances. In *The Order of Things*, he says that 'humanity', as the term is understood today, emerges in the Modern episteme (nineteenth century). 'Man' is no longer an object amongst other objects as in the Classical episteme (the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) but a subject among objects; a subject in discourse and of discourse. According to Foucault, the Classical age conceived the world as a great chain of beings created by God. Each of the beings lodged within this continuous chain varied only in the slightest manner from its neighbours in the chain. Each being was represented but its representation was not creation of other being. The place of human beings in this scheme of things was to compare the representations of a world that had been scrambled by time to examine the minute identities and differences between beings, to construct an order that would resemble as closely as possible the Order that God created. Thus, the Classical episteme lacked the space in which humans could be originary beings.

In Modern episteme, 'Man' (Foucault's usage for humans) becomes not only a subject and object of knowledge but the 'organizer of the theatre' in which he inserts himself. There is an emphasis on history and more broadly the development of the human sciences. Linguistic philologies emerge. Analogy and succession become the primary principles at work.[470] 'Man' becomes an 'empirico-transcendental doublet': a fact among other facts studied empirically and yet also attempting to provide a transcendental grounding for this knowledge. Man emerges as a product of history whose origin could not be traced but he is the source and foundation of this history. As a result, various philosophical attempts such as phenomenology and existentialism emerged to resolve this dilemma but failed to do so.

According to Foucault, in modern thought man attempts to show that he is the complete foundation of what can be stable truth; that the unthought can always be thought; that he can seize his origin. Man tries to 'close' the gap where the other might arise. Foucault summarizes: in

[470] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Op.cit, 218

modernity ‘we have moved from a reflection upon the order of Differences… to a thought of the Same, still to be conquered in its contradiction. It is always concerned with showing how the other, the distant, is also the near and the same’[471]. The ultimate result of this is that modernity harbours within itself a most compulsive imperative to obliterate differences. All that is other threatens "man's" inherently unstable position and must succumb to the same. Modernity is founded on ontology in which the other is continually reborn in the depth of being and must be ceaselessly transformed, identified, and made the same.

Further, Foucault perceives the activity of revealing the same to be even more dangerous than the grounding of the same. If in the latter the other might avoid recognition and exist simply as a non-being, in the former there is absolutely no place for the other to hide. The other is ceaselessly present as an absence recognised as the danger of death and madness, and must be the target of continuous, detailed, deep illumination and intervention.

Thus, Modern episteme is incapable of grounding (or revealing) the 'man’; it ends up trying to obliterate the other. The strategy it employs is seeking 'depth' within the self or 'deep’ intervention in other through normalization and discipline.

According to Foucault, along with attempts at resolving the dilemma of modernity, emerges a new episteme that threatens to collapse into ‘subjective less objectivity’. This can be seen in consideration of structure, language, and the unconscious in which humanity can be deconstructed as a unitary essence or subject of consciousness. Humanity vanishes as an effect of the linguistics of Sassure, the structuralism of Levi-Strauss and Lacan's re-reading of Freud. ‘The idea of ‘psychoanalytic anthropology’ and the idea of a ‘human nature’ reconstituted by ethnology, are no more than pious wishes. Not only are they able to do without the concept of man, but they are also able to pass through it, for they always address themselves to that which constitutes his outer limits... they dissolve man’.[472] Thus, we can see that for Foucault the notion of human with 'depth' is a transient phase in human history and would dissolve over time.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault traces the constitution of subjects with 'depths' in relation to the nexus of power-knowledge and truth. He introduces the notion of body as the ultimate material locus (docile body) on which the modern power (normalizing gaze/ panopticon) is brought to bear and through whose structuring and control it most decisively functions.

He contrasts forms of power in the absolutist and capitalist western state through a specific examination of penal history. In the absolutist state, punishment (taking the form of torture) was an excessively violent and ritualised public spectacle operating directly and physically on the body with differing degree of gradation of torture according to the crime. This public display of

[471] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Op.cit, 339.
[472] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Op. cit, 379.

violence represented a display of the force of the sovereign and his ability to punish transgression. The actual power of sovereign over subjects regarding life or death was absolute but its effective penetration throughout the population remained relatively low. The kind of subjectivity produced by sovereign power was essentially based on ritual, memory, etc. Only the rich and the powerful were subjectified, the great mass of the population remained anonymous unless they transgressed the law. By the eighteenth century the public spectacle of controlled torture began to have definite political risks. The subsequent reforms, often considered to be more humane, shifted discipline from the public application of force on the body to system of incarceration and finely tuned observation which required the creation of the 'soul'.

The advent of industrial capitalism brought forward incarceration as the principal mode of punishment. It used disciplinary procedures along with surveillance of the population as the means for creation of subjects (bio-power). The prison is merely the most visual and obvious manifestation of this new focus of power, a microcosm of all institutional forms. This disciplinary power creates subjects of everyone, it radiates throughout the entire social fabric. As power spreads it becomes anonymous and less visible. It makes power to punish 'more regular, more effective, more constant and more detailed in its effects; in short [to] increase its effects while diminishing its costs'.[473] Discipline is located and exercised in a wide variety of institutions such as factories, schools, hospitals, university departments, military, etc. These institutions are constructed and organised with greater attention to the principle of increasing the visibility of those contained within. Discipline creates subjects by providing procedures for the training or coercing of people through hierarchical observation, the normalising judgment and examination involving the compilation of documents and the constitution of case histories. Surveillance takes place in the workplace, increasingly separated from home, and through systematic collection and organisation of information that can be stored and used to monitor populations. The factory-based labour process renders bodily behaviour routine, repetitive, subject to codifiable rules and accessible to surveillance and calculation. Thus, incarceration is more efficient in terms of an economy of power. Thus, discipline does not crush, negate, and alienate people. It is a far more insidious process producing subjects who '*will*' work for the capitalist. Power can only subject if it first subjectivises.

This new disciplinary power (which the subject internalises) is accompanied by the development of 'the art of light and the visible' in creating the subjects with depths.[474] Institutions such as military camps, workshops, schools, hospitals, asylums, etc. began to get constructed and organised with greater attention to the principle of increasing visibility of those contained within.

[473] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Op.cit. 80-81.
[474] Michel Foucault, *DP*, Op.cit. 171.

Gaps, aisles, openings, walls, the position of tables and beds were designed to optimise survey-ability. Groups were designed, organised, and arranged in hierarchies to facilitate inspection, and new groups were formed solely for this. Besides this, in schools, factories and armies' careful attention was given to gestures, punctuality, attitudes, and subtle variations in behaviour that had previously gone unnoticed. Regions of the visible were divided and divided again with an ever-intensified focus on details, which become the objects of normalizing judgments. Thus, this normalising gaze played a central role in constituting humans as objects of knowledge-things to be used. The architectural scheme that most embodied these principles of light and vision was Bentham's plan for the 'Panopticon'. In this arrangement, prisoners are placed in cells arranged in a circle around a central observation tower so that each prisoner is constantly visible from a central watch tower while they cannot see the guard. This not only allowed for continuous observation, but also gave the prisoner a feeling of being under continuous observation even though he could not verify this suspicion. This situation -- the ever-present possibility of the invisible gaze- compelled the individual continually to watch over their own behaviour. The Panopticon manifests a 'gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself."[475]

Thus, we can see that the most significant aspect of disciplinary power is the constitution of subjects that relentlessly subject themselves to self-observation. The Panopticon was to be auto catalytic: 'the perfection of [this] power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; in short, the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers'.[476] This resulted in an ideal economic situation: maximized control at minimal cost.

However, in the emergence of disciplinary power, it is not only crime, visible deviation, or error that is judged, but also passions, potentials, drives, instincts, desires, beneath the visible: 'These shadows lurking behind the case itself".[477] It is this gaze that we internalize and perpetuate. There is a subterranean quality to the gaze. The correlation of this gaze and mechanisms of power is the soul, for both the effect of this power and what reproduces it at the level of the self.

So, for Foucault, depth is not an essential quality of self as it is for Taylor. Rather, it is a dimension that comes into being as an effect of power. Further, we are constituted as not just beings with a depth, but become beings directed towards depth (i.e., develops teleology); or become beings that dwell in and grope through depth. For depth harbours the secret truth that 'demands' to surface so that we may obtain our health, freedom, and intelligence.[478] Because the

[475] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, (*PK*) Op.cit, 155.
[476] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Op.cit,.201.
[477] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Op.cit, 17.
[478] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 1, (HS) Op.cit, 60.

promise of liberation lies buried in one's depths, one must delve deep and ‘tell what one is and what one does, what one recollects and what one has forgotten, what one is thinking and what one thinks he is not thinking’.[479]

Thus, we can see how depth (of the self) as the dimension of truth and freedom lead people into a kind of subjectivity that is a trap. In fact, the space (of depth) is continually shaped by a variety of power strategies. According to Foucault, Truth is not ‘the child of protracted solitude’ but ‘is a thing of this world, it is produced only by multiple forms of constraint’.[480] We discover within, the being we have fabricated to be, and we perpetuate and intensify this form of being when we exalt it as truth. The soul is an effect of a form of power that proliferates in an endless self-discovery of bottomless depth.

In addition to the effects of the depth discussed, Foucault claims that the conception of the self as a subject of deep truth functions to disguise the operation of power in which it plays such an important part. Since we think that truth originates within, we avoid examining the social, economic, and political practices in which truth and the subject are produced. Ironically, says Foucault, people exalt the very effects of power in rather poor attempts to be free. As the deep self, a profound effect of power- becomes the *a priori* assumption of the analysis of power; power itself becomes increasingly invisible. Thus, we can see that, for Foucault, depth of the self is an effect of power and is a trap in the name of truth and freedom.

We can see from the above exposition that one major difference between Foucault and Taylor is their notion of subjectivity. For Taylor, self is always an interpretation such that it partly constitutes itself. This partial constitution of the self is done through articulation by the self of its predicament. This expression of the self of itself can move in a form of continuum from unawareness to highly conscious self. The movement from unawareness to highly conscious self is done through mediation of culture and is an achievement. As the self-gains in 'depth', life becomes richer. With the realisation of truth of its predicament and identification with moral goods, self becomes freer. There is also a realization by the self that it is more than a 'solitary individual', it is an individual who is part of a community. It is ‘I’ that is ‘we’ and ‘we’ that is ‘I’.

In contrast, we can see that for Foucault there is no 'unity' at the individual level. Concept of man is a creation of modern discourse, some 200 years ago and with the advent of the structuralism and post-structuralism it would fade away. It is the 'discursive regularities' that shape humans. The modern self is the result of the disciplinary power with its normalising gaze. It is a product of power-truth-knowledge strategies. Depth of the self is a space created by the disciplinary power in lure of freedom by truth. But this freedom through truth is a trap that takes one's focus

[479] ibid.
[480] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* Op.cit., 131.

off from the outside world of economics, society, etc. to elusive depth within. This inward peep within makes human internalise power and wilfully become subjects of power, intensifying power even further.

Can The Notion of Agency Be Totally Ignored?

From the above discussion, we can see that Foucault's conception of depth as trap is diametrically opposite to (totally incompatible) Taylor's conception of self's depth as an achievement. Now, the question arises what implications these conceptions of subjectivity have for the study of society/ politics? How does the notion of depth and teleology in Taylor impact his study of society/ politics? On the other hand, can Foucault really do away with the concept of the subject altogether? Is subject only to be seen as the effect of power in discursive practices? Can we totally ignore the subject and study society at the 'discursive practices/ structural level' only?

It seems that in trying to emphasise on the structural/discursive level, Foucault wanted to argue against the kind of existentialism held by Sartre that emphasised on the freedom of the individual (to resist forms of domination) and individual consciousness as the centre of meaning. To this humanist conception, Foucault wanted to point out that human subject was not inherently free but shaped by numerous social determinations. In fact, the very idea of the subject is a social construction, produced through social discourse (language, thought, symbolic representations) which position subjects in a field of power relations and within sets of practice.

The humanist view, according to Foucault, ignores the social distribution of meaning through social discourse. In this sense, meaning is a product of the internal relations between the elements of the discourses which define and facilitate the social practice of individuals. People live their lives through socially constructed meanings that are available to them. Certainly, the practices that people engage in daily life act back upon, and thus come to shape, discourses, just as discourses shape practices. But these are social phenomena; individuals themselves do not create the meanings or the practice they inform. Therefore, Foucault attempts to centre his analysis at the discursive practices/structural level and to steer away from the error of subjectivism.

According to Foucault, the individual is not a coherent being, self-aware and in full control of himself. The conceptions of coherent and unified subject neglect the role of history and social-structural factors that shape individual subjectivities. Moreover, human beings are affected by irrational and contradictory feelings and drives over which they have little control. Thus, individuals have a psychic interior which is many-faceted and deeply layered. The unconscious forces play a significant part in human experience and produce tension and contradiction in

people's behaviour and in their attitudes and perceptions. In this way, people are not rational selves, they have multitude of ‘reasons' which may be conscious or unconscious or irrational.

The fact that people exhibit contradictory aspects in their behaviour reveals that the self is fragmentary and a multiple phenomenon that varies according to social circumstances and positions, as well as unconscious forces. The self is constituted within the play of language (and discourse more generally) and the field of practices and power relations that define the social locations in which people live out their daily lives. The self is the product of several cross-cutting discourses and practices. Therefore, to talk about self we need not analyse at the individual level but need to have a genealogy of various discourses.

Similarly, while working out his notion of power, Foucault leaves out individuals totally. For him, power is 'a more or less stable or shifting network of alliances' within which points of resistance open up. The power mechanisms can be seen as operating independently of people. People (or subjects) are simply conduits through which power operates whilst also being produced by that power. That is, individual subjectivity identity, psychological predispositions and energy is an effect of power relations. This is so because the individual is already enveloped in forms of discourse and practice, and power is an essential component of both.

In his later works, Foucault moves away from this predominant concern with power and domination and its formative effects on subjectivity and self-formation. In his work on ethics and 'technologies of the self, he shifts attention to the self, subjectivity, and the ability of individuals to define their own identities.[481] However, even here, Foucault never jettisoned his ideas about the abolition of humanist subject. He still retains the idea that people are conditioned by social discourse and practices but now the individual is seen as a creative agent who can overcome socially imposed limitations and attain self-mastery.

Thus, we see that Foucault's focus on discourses and practices has the effect of keeping the analysis at some impersonal realm beyond the reach of productive activities of human beings. The human self is denied any constitutive role in the circulation of power and production of social life in general. They are merely effects of power. The human subjectivities are constituted by, and in, the play of power, discourse, and practice. This account certainly brings out the nature of domination in modern society but totally undermines the active aspects of agency. The human subject comes out as a passive being, determinant of discourses.

In his later works, Foucault, to some extent, displaces centrality of an impersonal realm of power and domination by a concern with how the subject constitutes himself or herself in an active fashion. However, in this regard, Foucault never adequately connects the two phases of his works. There is no attempt to connect the constituted and the constituting self, and there is no

[481] Steve Best & Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory*. (NY: Guilford Press, 1991):65

adequate account of how technologies of the self can proliferate in the modern era, which he claims is saturated with power relations.[482]

Thus, we can see that Foucault never adequately theorises both sides of the structure/ agency problem. He never manages to interweave the two levels and give a full account of both structure and human activity. In his zeal to oust the bourgeois myth of free, rational subject, Foucault completely overlooks situated interaction/ inter-subjectivity as a domain of decisive importance. Of course, Foucault is right to view that the individual should not be viewed as the source of meaning and emphasises the role of discourse in the production and establishment of meanings. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that this is the only valid level of analysis.

In fact, as Taylor points out in his essay on Foucault, there is a circular relation between structure and action. Structures of action are only maintained by being renewed constantly in action. And it is in action they also fail to be maintained, that they are altered. Therefore, to give an absolute priority to structure makes as little sense as the equal and opposite error of subjectivism, which gave absolute priority to action.[483]

Further, claims Taylor, the structuralist and post-structuralist have been over-enthusiastic about the fact that any action requires a background language of practices and institutions to make sense; and that while there will be a particular goal sought in the action, those features of it which pertain to the structural background will not be objects of individual purpose. Such insights have also been articulated by other schools of thought such as post-Heideggerian hermeneutics without making the grave error of dismissing the subject altogether.

This denial of the subject argues Taylor, results in Foucault attributing a 'purposefulness without purpose' to history. What Foucault meant by this was that there is a strategic logic of the context itself which cannot be attributed to agents as their plan, as their conscious purpose. The whole constitution and maintenance of the modern system of control and domination is an example of this thesis. According to Taylor, this thesis of logic to events without design does not make sense in Foucault's case though there could be some examples such as Marxist ‘invisible hand theories' where this logic might work.[484] This is so because to make sense of such explanation we must relate the underlying systematicity to the purposeful actions of agents in a way we can understand. The reason for this requirement is that the text of history, which we are trying to explain, is made up of purposeful action. Where there are patterns in this action which are not on purpose, we must explain why the action marked under one description on purpose also bears

[482] Steve Best & Douglas Kellner, Op.cit, 67.
[483] Charles Taylor, *Foucault on Freedom and Truth*, Op.cit. 90.
[484] Charles Taylor, *Foucault on Freedom and Truth*, Op.cit, 87. He gives some other examples such as Dostoyevsky's analysis of modern political terrorism in terms of projected self-hatred; Leninists politics of devolution where participation becomes more and more restricted.

another description. We must show how the two descriptions relate.[485] A strategic pattern cannot just be left hanging, unrelated to our conscious ends and projects. Taylor points out that it is true that not all patterns issue from conscious action, but that does not mean we have foregone our attempt to make all patterns intelligible in relation to our conscious action. In Foucault's case, because of his strong claims to systematicity he does not even attempt this. Taylor claims that Foucault cannot do so without abandoning some part of his declared position. For instance, we could explain the constitution of the growing system of technologies of control, if we could understand it as meeting (the largely unacknowledged) purposes of some group. But this cannot be done without going back on Foucault's claim that there is no priority in terms of interest of some dominant class and the system must arise out of the micro-contexts in which people act and react. And, if the group that brought about change is co-terminus with society at large, then there would be problem interpreting these as the relations of domination.[486]

Thus, we can see that overemphasis on analysis at the discursive practice or structural level results in inadequate conception of agency in Foucault's work. It could not have been rectified without a major revision in his notion of power (macro-micro politics) or withdrawing from his declared position. The conception of subject in Foucault is very passive. It is of one who cannot escape the modes of objectification and subjectification of discourses. How the subjects interact with the structures they are moulded by and, nevertheless, shape structures are ignored. The relationship between action and the structure is one way for Foucault; from top (structure) to bottom and not the other way round. This has tremendous implication for Foucault's notion of freedom. He gives no reason for individual to attempt to be free. This seems rather paradoxical given the way Foucault practiced 'radical' politics in his actual life.

It has been pointed out by critics that this is so because Foucault ignores the 'interactive dimension' of meaning. Derek Layder claims that the structuralist and post-structuralist analysis of meaning would remain incomplete unless they do not acknowledge the contribution of interactive and phenomenological schools of thought.[487] The situated dimension of meaning refers to that element of meaning which is produced through inter-subjective processes of negotiation, definition and general forms of creativity that are brought into play whenever and wherever human beings mix socially.

Moreover, Franco Crespi has shown that human action has a dual character or 'ambivalence' about structure.[488] The self is constructed through the dialectic between identification with and differentiation from the objectivated forms. An important aspect of self-consciousness is its

[485] Ibid. 87
[486] Charles Taylor, *Foucault on Freedom and Truth*, Op.cit. 88.
[487] Derek Layder, *Understanding Social theory*, (London: Sage, 1994)
[488] Franco Crespi, *Social Action and Power*, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1992), 134

capacity to negate the objectivated forms, and thus become open to ever-new forms of life experience. In this perspective the individual appears both as a product of society and as a potential active producer of new meanings and new practices by shifting from one to another form of determinacy.[489]

From the above passages, it can be argued that Foucault's conception of the self as the product of modes of subjectification and objectification is inadequate. It overemphasizes the structural aspects and totally neglects the transformative and creative aspects of agency. This has tremendous impact on the notion of freedom that we would analyse later.

It is clear from our explication of Taylor's notion of the self that it avoids these pitfalls. It avoids the shortcomings of subjectivism by stressing on the constitutive role of the language. By talking about tacit knowledge of the self in social practices, it also considers the unconscious/structural aspects of the self for which Foucault had to take recourse to discursive level analysis. By suggesting that the self is partly constituted by its own understanding, it opens the possibility of change. It also avoids 'total transparency' of Cartesian type by pointing out that the background knowledge or 'horizon' can never be made fully explicit. Thus, we can see that Taylor is able to maintain a balance between the agency and structure. This saves him from the mistake Foucault made of denying active role of the agent.

VI. Orientation towards Knowledge

After the exposition of the notion of subjectivity, we shall examine the 'theory of knowledge'; rather, 'orientation towards knowledge' implicit in the works of these two thinkers. It may be pointed out that both Taylor and Foucault do not approve of the primacy of 'theory of knowledge' or 'epistemology'. Both vehemently deny the reductionist overtones of this Cartesian phrase. It suggests that a theorist must declare beforehand what knowledge claims are and then proceed with his or her analysis about the world. Foucault would claim that 'knowledge' is not something that can be analysed properly without absence of consideration of relations of power. In a parallel sense, Taylor would find it wrong to arrive at the bottom of what knowledge is without drawing on the 'never-fully-articulable understanding of human life and experience'.[490] Nevertheless, the expression 'theory of Knowledge' continues to be used in this work, in absence of a convenient alternative term.

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[489] This issue can also be developed from Gadamer's concept of experience as an initial experience of nonentity, that is, the perception that things are not as we thought they were and the development of self-consciousness as a unit through the acknowledgement of what is alien to it. See Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1975). 356, as cited in Franco Crespi, Op, cit., 69.

[490] In fact, Charles Taylor has written an essay titled 'Overcoming Epistemology', in *After Philosophy*, (Ed.) Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman and Thomas McCarthy, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987) 464-88.

In the third and fourth chapters, the mode of analysis (for making knowledge claims) of Taylor and Foucault were dealt with individually. The earlier part of third chapter explored how Taylor's hermeneutics entailed teleology. This section will take up the issues further. Foucault was extremely critical of hermeneutics. Were his objections to hermeneutics justified? On the other hand, Foucault's genealogy, in Nietzschean vein, denies the conception of liberation' and 'truth'. Is it possible for him to do away with these categories?

Let us take Foucault's criticism of hermeneutics first. There are remarks by Foucault about archaeology being a 'pure description' of discursive events. This seems to be rather simplistic as a 'pure' description would be an impossible description. There are always choices involved in the manner we describe discourses. In fact, Foucault's entire output is an active interpretive engagement. To describe is to interpret; to study objects whether discursive or non-discursive is to interpret. So, Foucault cannot deny the importance of interpretation. Thus, there must be more to his criticism of hermeneutics.

We can see that his more serious arguments are about 'depth hermeneutics'. We have already seen in earlier part of this chapter why Foucault thinks that 'depth' in an individual is an effect of power strategies. The very process of seeking 'depth' entraps one further into power strategies. The 'deep interpretation attempts to recover hidden or real meanings' of the events/text being studied. This revelation of hidden or deep meanings involves comparing various truth claims to answer questions such as whether meaning is restricted or infinite or at what level is meaning located. On the other hand, for Foucault, truth and meaning are both dispersed and lie on the surface of things rather than being hidden in their interiority. If interpretation is a never-ending task, it is simply because there is nothing to interpret. There is nothing primary to interpret because, when all is said and done, underneath it all everything is already an interpretation.[491] For Foucault, it is truths and not truth; meanings and not meaning. Following Nietzsche, he claims that human existence is an interpretation, and all interpretations are equally imposed on the 'real'. Interpretations are contingent. The questions that arise are specific to discourses we undertake: why these interpretations? Why these ascribed meanings rather than others? Therefore, a belief in deep, essential, coherent, and non-dispersed meaning should be done away with. If one 'interprets it in right way meaning is visible on the surface in small specific details, shifts in the forms of practices among others. So, depth should be rejected.

From Taylor's point of view, the problem of surface/ depth appears to Foucault in this way because of his acceptance of primacy of power in shaping subjectivity. If power is not conceived as 'the principle' (metaphysical) along the lines of Nietzsche, the problem would dissolve by

[491] Michel Foucault, " Nietzsche, Freud, Marx, 189 as cited in *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, (Eds) Dreyfus and Rabinow, Op.cit.107.

itself. So, Foucault does not have problem with interpretation' per se' but seeking 'depth' through it.

Moving on to the related issue of 'teleology' in Taylor's work that justifies 'depth' through his notion of 'strong evaluation,' he claims that in seeking 'strong evaluations' humans move beyond their subjective preferences towards the moral goods that are independent of them. As a result, the self 'broadens' by identifying with the larger reality (community) and leads a 'richer and significant life'. The self, to use Taylor's own phrase, follows a 'direction of being'. In *Sources of the Self*, Taylor claims that by very nature human beings exist in a space of questions that are mapped out by strong evaluations.[492] There is a kind of telos working in case of humans. William Connolly observes that Taylor treats the self as if it were designed to fulfill its potentiality through perfecting its subjectivity. In making stronger evaluations the self seeks to situate itself in a world both larger than it and partly constitutive of it.

In *Source of the Self*, while discussing his notion of a stronger evaluation and narrative identity, Taylor claims that there is a kind of 'a priori unity in humans'.[493] He asserts that a basic condition of making sense of human life is to 'grasp our lives in a narrative'.[494] 'Making sense of our lives as a story or narrative is not an optional extra. Our lives exist in a space of inescapable questions that can be answered only by coherent narratives.'[495] Similarly, following Heidegger, Taylor points out that we (humans) have an inescapable temporal structure of our being in the world. From a sense of what we have become, among a range of present possibilities, we project our future being. Thus, we cannot have just any interpretation of ourselves. But the very nature of 'human existence' poses certain questions for us that we cannot escape and imposes a certain kind of 'structure' on us through notions such as strong evaluations and narrative identity. Similarly, on 'exploring the conditions of intentionality we would find that language and holism are also indispensable features of human existence.'[496] Thus, Taylor's teleology suggests a certain 'ontology of humans' that moves from subjectivity to inter-subjectivity to a still larger life.[497] It seeks to 'integrate otherness into more perfect forms of identification with the will of a rational community.[498]

Foucault, like Nietzsche before him, is highly suspicious of the notion of absolute truth and any philosophy which claims to be based on universal principles. To him teleology is determinate in

[492] Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit, 32.
[493] Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit, 51.
[494] Charles Taylor, *SS*, Op.cit, 47.
[495] MacIntyre's notion of life as a 'quest') [See A MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, second edition, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984). Jerome Bruner, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1986).
[496] Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op. cit., 13.
[497] This is rather simplistic expression of what has been argued in several of Taylor's books. Moreover, the issue is still far from settled.

nature. Thus, he thinks he has a valid reason for not having a system. According to Nietzsche, a system is reducible to a set of premises which cannot be questioned within the framework of the system. 'The will to system is a lack of integrity', he observes.[499] All assumptions have to be questioned. For him, all systems are merely perspectives or partial claims on truth. There are many truths seen from different perspectives. Thus, 'reality' is thoroughly 'plural'. So, we must consider many perspectives and not imprison our thought in any one system. Hermeneutics tends to make men pursue 'purposes' as part of their 'essences' or nature. Such an account already has a bias of its own design implicit in it. It cannot question its own premises. Therefore, teleological explanations are not rational. These are not 'science' enough as science must accept whatever evidence comes up. That the evidence does not fit into our perspective or is unpleasant should not come in our pursuance of science. This is the reason why Foucault talks about 'happy positivism'. Connolly also points out that teleology imposes its design to fulfill its potentiality through perfecting its 'subjectivity' and, in this process, 'subjugates recalcitrant material in an embodied self-resistant to this form'.[500] This results in either obliteration or marginalisation of otherness. Hence, Taylor's teleology leads to politics of accord or politics of normalization', says Connolly.

From Taylor's point of view, this criticism about propagation of 'politics of normalisation' is actually misconstruing his position. Broadening or enlargement of the self is not simply imposition of the self's standard on the other. Rather it involves what Gadamer has termed 'fusion of horizon'. When we encounter the other who is different or strange, to understand them, we must review our own pre-suppositions about them. Simultaneously, we must also consider the other's own self understanding of the situation. By taking these two conditions, review of one's own presumptions and taking other's viewpoint into account, we arrive at a new self-understanding of the situation. This new language is neither ours nor theirs. It is a 'perspicuous contrast' Therefore, creation of the 'broader' self, from subjective self to inter-subjective self, does not necessarily involve muffling the other.

Moreover, self and the other are not distinct and detached entities. Nor is our sense of identities something which we can construct entirely for ourselves; it has a social dimension. We are linked together by language. Our language is not something which we create individually; it's necessarily social and inter-subjective. Our identities are products of dialogical interaction with others and through the meanings we derive from our culture. In fact, our sense of who we are is in part a function of what others take us to be, that is, our recognition by others. Thus, social interactions are not always necessarily adversarial as claimed by the neo-Nietzscheans.

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[500] William Connolly, "Taylor, Foucault and Otherness", Op.cit., 371.

As far as Foucault's objection to 'teleology' is concerned, it must be pointed out that affirming teleology does not necessarily mean affirming an inexorable, deterministic teleology of the Hegelian kind. In one of his essays, 'Comparison, History, Truth', while discussing Hegel's theory of history, Taylor delineates three features that Hegel used in his historical explanations:

a) Notion of potentiality- that makes use of Aristotle's concept of potentiality. We have it in us from the beginning to become what we later become.

b) A single line of unfolding potentiality, that is, it is the same for all human beings.

c) It unfolds in fixed stages, where each is the precondition of what follows.[501]

Taylor points out that while (b) and (c) features are dispensable, we cannot do away with condition (a) in any human explanation of history. Replying to Connolly in an exchange of articles he claims that Hegel's theory of history was deterministic as he took all the three features above seriously. On the other hand, his (Taylor's) teleological conception adheres to feature (a) only, that is, the notion of potentiality. As a result, he (Taylor) avoids the determinism in his teleology and is open-ended and contingent. One need not hold on to full-scale Hegelian theory of history to believe that some self-interpretations are less distortive or more clairvoyant than others.

This is because one can give a convincing narrative account of the passage from one to the other as an advance in knowledge, a step from a less good to a better understanding of the social practice in question. There is a gain in understanding and as a result better grip over reality. On the other hand, a similar plausible passage from the second to the first cannot be undertaken. There is a kind of asymmetrical relation between them.[502]

According to Taylor, we can see examples of such changes in our lives all the time. It involves the possibility of a change in life forms which can be understood as a move towards a greater acceptance of truth. Hence, it is also, in certain conditions, a movement towards greater freedom. Similar processes are also at work in society and history.

The reason one cannot do without such a notion of change as advancement is that we have 'rationality' as an inescapable 'potentiality' in us.[503] This potentiality has been articulated in various manners in different cultures. Ancient Greeks have articulated this potentiality for the west. This makes a non-hierarchical ranking between the rational and non-rational to see change in life/ history as gain/ progress. If one does not make this distinction, the potential for rationality, in men, remains unrealised. Moreover, claims Taylor, 'we consider certain changes in history, of which the development of rational discourse is an example...we see...once they come about, they are almost irreversible. They could be reversed by a massive disruption of human

[501] Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op.cit 160.
[502] ibid.

society, by some natural man-made catastrophe. But, normally speaking, people don't want to go back on them. They become permanent and inescapable aspirations'[504] Such 'potentialities' (there are other examples such as invention of writing, rise of city-dwelling, etc.) are often grouped under the title 'civilization'. Taylor claims that we need some notion of potentiality to make sense of these changes. Those who have undergone these changes, tend to define them as development, evolution, or realisation of the properly human. Thus, we can say that history has a shape; there is 'a before and after, a watershed'. History, in this sense for the West, has a direction, claims Taylor.[505]

However, Taylor points out, to speak of potentialities, does not mean to suppose a unitary set of potentialities. We can and do increasingly recognize diverse lines of possible developments. While reading history we need not restrict ourselves to a singular choice between progress or decline, fulfilment or loss. We can have elements of both loss and gain in the same reading.

Thus, for Taylor, teleology makes it possible for us to have a rich and meaningful life. It makes it possible to talk about various potentialities of humans. It makes it possible to articulate significant values like reason, truth and freedom associated with civilization. We cannot envisage any meaningful human life without these potentialities.

Rather than impeding a good analysis of society, teleology makes our study of societies more effective as it enables us to consider significant potentialities of human life. It also enables us to have 'standards' about these potentialities to be able to compare them and be able to judge our practices as gain or loss.

VII. Genealogy and Denial of Truth

Having examined the role of teleology for the study of society/ politics, let us now examine Foucault's claims about genealogy as the mode of inquiry that can avoid shortcomings of teleological explanations.

Foucault is critical of the traditional history of ideas and teleological explanations of Hegelian kind. This is due to Nietzsche's influence on him. According to Nietzsche, 'knowledge' is not innocent but it is the expression of an assemblage of drives and interests (will power). Values (as Nietzsche sought to study 'ethical system') are held by people not because of altruism or utility but because these further their vested interests. Hence, values can be revealingly understood by producing a causal and historical account of them, that seek to unearth their 'origins' (hence, the

[504] Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op.cit, 160.
[505] Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op.cit, 161.

term 'genealogy').[506] Nietzsche has tried to show that 'values' can be adequately accounted for within a materialist methodology of explanation.

Following him, Foucault develops an argument that seeks to analyse knowledge forms as an expression of determinate social interest. For instance, in *Madness and Civilization*, his analysis of the clinical definitions and treatments of madness since the seventeenth century, emphasize the importance of social relations (above all, relations of power) in the construction of knowledge. In the process, it seeks to reveal through painstaking historical analysis the influences and interests which underlie and are concealed by discourses which claim to articulate objective knowledge.

These genealogical studies, as seen in the last chapter, attempt to bring out/ reveal the foreignness of the past, and relativise and undercut the legitimacy of the present. These studies allow the discontinuities to remain unexplained. They reduce the role of cause or explanation in analyses as it leads to evolutionist conclusions. Instead of grand explanatory systems and linear processes that seek origins of events, genealogical analyses attempt to establish and preserve singularity of events, highlight the discredited and neglected in history. They mix up erudite knowledge and local memories to establish historical knowledge of struggles. They focus on local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges as against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise, and order them in the name of some true knowledge.

Thus, Genealogy, as a form of critique, rejects the pursuit of the origin, in favour of a conception of historical beginnings as lowly, complex, and contingent. It attempts to bring out the multiplicity of factors behind an event and avoids essences.

However, critics have pointed out that despite its ability to express the hitherto neglected aspects of reality, there are serious difficulties with Foucault's genealogical conception on several counts. Taylor points out that Foucault's analyses are paradoxical in nature. While his studies are a critique of modern society that has some 'good' repressed or unrealized due to power strategies, Foucault denies that these shortcomings of the modem society can be overcome by making use of his analyses. This is so because Foucault takes a stance of 'neutrality' and refuses to affirm any 'good' including the notion of freedom and truth. According to Taylor, Foucault has three 'evolving' lines of analyses in his historical works, each of which relates to a certain line of critique of our society.[507] However, the 'good' implicit in each level of critique by Foucault is repudiated by his next level of analyses. And, finally, even the 'good' implicit in the last analysis

[506] In *On the Genealogy of Morals* Friedrich Nietzsche, offers an account of ethical systems which identifies the values they espouse with their genealogical heritage: 'slave' morals valorize the 'meek' because the slave is a victim; noble morality, in contrast, values what is powerful. Both slave and master, in one way or another, affirm themselves through their moralities. F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic'* Trans and Intro, Douglas Smith, (Ox ford: OUP, 1996).

[507] Charles Taylor, 'Foucault on Truth and Freedom', Op.cit 152-83

is rejected. Thus, according to Taylor, Foucault in his 'circular-denial' leaves us with no notion of 'good' to judge or make sense of society. Different levels of analyses by Foucault seem to cut each other out and leave us on no firm ground to judge.

In the first line of analysis, Foucault does not make any distinction between the ancient mode of punishment and the modern less violent mode of punishment. For him, they are simply different kind of punishments, and we cannot privilege one over other. In his second line of analysis, Foucault discusses the 'sovereign power' and the 'disciplinary power'. (See the section on subjectivity in chapter four). However, Foucault refuses to view the latter as more humanitarian than the former as most of us would judge. In the third line of analysis, Foucault asserts that the notion of sexual nature in human beings is itself a product of the modes of knowledge designed to make us objects of control. When we accept ourselves as having 'sexual nature' which must be realised or made free, we are getting more and more trapped in power strategies. Thus, what would normally be seen as 'liberation' appears to Foucault as domination at a still 'deeper' level.

Assigning primacy to power, Foucault maintains strict neutrality between various 'good'. He does not affirm to any 'good' and even denies the notion of truth and liberation. This assertion is based on the Nietzschean belief that there is no order of human life, or human nature that one can appeal to, and judge or evaluate between ways of life. There are only different orders imposed by men on primal chaos, following their will-to-power. From this Nietzschean conception, Foucault comes with the following two relativity theses.[508]

1) *Relativism of forms* - This claims that we cannot judge between forms of life/thought/ valuation. The truths are relative to regimes. There are no truths independent of regime. Therefore, liberation in the name of truth is not possible. We only move from one system of power to another system of power. Truth and freedom are redefined in new contexts and are not incomparable.
2) *Monolithism of forms* - This notion claims that the different forms of life involve imposition of power. As a result, Foucault cannot envisage transformation within a regime too. The regimes of truths are entirely identified with their imposed truth. Their unmasking only destabilizes them. As a result, only local resistance is possible. There are no new stable freer forms.

Like Nietzsche, Foucault also gives primacy to the notion of power. Power is almost a metaphysical principle in his works. It gives effect to 'truth' in the 'regime of truth'. 'Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to

[508] Charles Taylor, 'Foucault on Truth and Freedom', in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, (Ed) David Couzens Hoy, Op.cit, 93.

distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true'.[509]

This conception of truth as relative to the regime means that there can be no such thing as a truth independent of its regime unless it is that of another regime. Therefore, one cannot judge a regime as 'true or false.' Liberation in the name of 'truth' could only be the substitution of another system of power for this one. Transformation from one regime to another cannot be a gain in truth or freedom, because each (truth or freedom) is redefined in the new context. They are incomparable. Moreover, due to the theses that truth is an imposition by power, we cannot judge a regime as true or false from within also. Thus, by combination of the two aforementioned theses, it becomes impossible for Foucault to evoke the notion of truth and freedom in his genealogical conception.

Taylor questions this stance of Foucault as it denies that some change in our understanding could be a gain. For instance, the modern definition of citizenship which includes women in its purview would be seen by most of us a 'gain' but not by Foucault. Foucault does not judge between this modern conception of universal citizenship and earlier conceptions restricting citizenship only to men. According to Taylor, this blocks the possibility of change of life forms towards greater freedom and truth.

Taylor argues that we cannot put aside issues about truth and freedom. These are indispensable conditions for human agency. As mentioned above while discussing teleology, they are part of our 'potentialities'. We have prior identities that define the horizon of understanding for us. They define what is of significance for us, how would we orient our actions. Therefore, any change in self-understanding that enables us to achieve these potentialities is a change towards truth or a step out of error.

According to Taylor, Foucault ignores the notion of 'throwness' that formed an important part of Heidegger's phenomenology. Foucault theorises as if we do not have any prior identity. 'Foucault's monolithic relativism only seems plausible if one takes an outsider's perspective-- the view from Sirius; or perhaps imagines oneself as a soul in Plato's myth of Er.'[510] Foucault ignores the fact that 'we have already become something' and have history. Since we have history, questions about truth and freedom can arise for us in the transformations we undergo or project. We are not just self-enclosed in the present but live in time that has a past which has helped define our identity and a future which puts it again in question.

[509] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Op.cit, 131

[510] Charles Taylor, 'Foucault on Truth and Freedom', in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, (Ed) David Couzens Hoy, Op. cit, 98.

Rather than raising the issue of 'significance' and change as a 'gain', Foucault persists with his 'hermetically sealed monolithic truth regimes'.[511] According to Taylor, this is due to Foucault's rather primitive and undifferentiated notion of truth. Foucault conceives 'truth as imposition of form upon material not designed to receive it'. Since all truth is imposition; no change can be a gain (hence, hermetically sealed). This conception of truth obfuscates the issue about truth, claims Taylor. When one challenges this notion of truth by making 'statements about truth' (in Taylor's phrase, 'more truth about truth'), then Foucault points out that all truths are impositions. Thus, there is 'no space left' for the rival to counter Foucault's notion of truth. It is monolithic in this sense. Thus, Foucault forecloses the issue about truth with rhetoric.

According to Taylor, Foucault justifies his notion of truth by use of rhetorical strategy. Foucault's argument moves in the following manner: from [a] the analysis of certain historical regimes of truth as repressive, to [b] the suspicion that all hitherto existing regimes of truth have been in some regard repressive, to [c] the claim that discourse is a violence we do to things and that in this regard all regimes are equally or incommensurably imposed.[512]

Taylor argues that all the arguments and analysis by Foucault is at level [a], with perhaps some implicit inductive support for moving to [b]. Foucault comes up with no serious arguments to move to [c]. Instead, he takes recourse to rhetorical devices. The movement from [b] to [c] is the stage at which Foucault forecloses the issue of truth. The claim that some change in self-understanding could be a gain in principle is, thus, ruled out by him. Since he assumes from the beginning that no regime of truth fails to distort, he does not engage with the issue seriously. He does not even see a possibility that rivals in arguments could have another language to make their case. As a result, whosoever disagrees with the genealogical conception is supposed by Foucault, to be suffering from a 'kind of Panglossian belief in a teleologically ordered universe.' For Foucault, if one accepts [a] then he would have to agree with [c].

According to Taylor, when talking about modern natural science one can take a 'neutral' stance. In case we do not agree with modern science, then it would be like reverting to something like Plato's conception of a universe organised by ideas, a kind of ontic thought. In our times no one would want to revert to the Platonic conception of science. However, in human sciences, this 'neutrality does not make much sense.' In human sciences, points out Taylor, we do not describe 'a cold, neutral, nonogomorphic universe.' Instead, we deal with human actions which concern desires, aspirations, sense of virtue, and the good. They can be talked about in terms of less or more faithful descriptions. Since one can 'do violence' to reality by distortion, one can also

[511] Charles Taylor, 'Foucault on Truth and Freedom', *Political Theory*, Op.cit. 382.
[512] Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Truth and Freedom", *Political Theory*, Op.cit, 380.

alleviate from reality by less unfaithful description. But Foucault denies this. Rather than responsible arguments, claims Taylor, Foucault deploys ‘rhetorical strategies.’

Connolly points out that Foucault does not deliberately have a consistent, coherent, argument as this is his 'mode of argument' against the rival positions. Rhetorical devices such as irony and contradictions are not optional extra but indispensable in his genealogical conception. He claims that Taylor is being unfair to Foucault in formulating the issue of truth in straight line of non-contradictory argument.[513] In reply to Connolly, Taylor argues that while Foucault is correct in deploying such inconsistencies in his first order studies, he should not have extended this mode of argument to the meta-level discussions. At the meta-level discourse, one can talk about truth in a non-contradictory manner and that would have clarified the issue much better. But by not doing so, Foucault has evaded the issue of truth rather than showing a responsible argument. Taylor claims that Foucault was correct in rejecting the correspondence notion of truth as a universal model. However, he does not have any good reason to reject the hermeneutic theory of truth as self-interpretations. In fact, claims Taylor, hermeneutics theory is the only one within which this debate can be carried on without prejudgment. Further, argues Taylor, regimes of truth are not all-encompassing but porous and elastic. Had they not been so, Foucault would not have been able to take a 'relative distance in his own work and come up with such good criticisms of the modern society. But by denying the notion of truth and freedom and giving absolute primacy to power, Foucault analyses modernity in a one-sided manner. Modernity is conceived exclusively as 'unalloyed loss of being in favour of a limitless will to dominance.’ [514]

In Foucault's work, related to this notion of truth is the notion of power. Foucault conceives truth as an effect of power. For him, power is primary, almost a metaphysical principle and he does not leave space for 'truth' and 'freedom'. They are mere effects of ‘will to power'. Taylor argues that the power along with truth and freedom belong to a semantic field. They do not make sense if considered singly. They are related to each other such that we cannot have a concept of power that leaves out truth and power from this semantic field. The notion power requires some notion of constraints imposed on someone by a process in some way related to human agency. Otherwise, the term 'power’ loses all meaning. It requires some notion of constraint imposed on someone about some significant desire. It requires a victim if not a clearly demarcated perpetrator of power. Otherwise, it is not clear that the imposition is in any sense an exercise of domination. Hence, it cannot be separated from some relative lifting of restraint, from an unimpeded fulfillment of these desires/ purposes. But this is what is required in a notion of

[513] Connolly, William, Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness", *Political Theory*, Vol.13 No.3, (August 1985): 365-376.
[514] Taylor, Charles, "Foucault on Truth and Freedom"', *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Ed.) David Couzens Hoy, Cambridge MA: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 69-102.

freedom. Thus, Foucault's notion of power does not make sense without the notion of liberation. Further, the notion of liberation requires the notion of 'truth'. This is so because the power works by getting us to agree and concur in name of truth. It foists illusion on us; it proceeds by masks and disguises. When one talks about mask, falsehoods, then we also need to consider the corresponding notion of truth. Thus, truth is subversive of power. It aids in lifting of impositions or in liberation. So, we see that Foucault's notion of power requires not only correlative notions of truth and liberation, but also the standard link between them, which makes truth the condition of liberation. In denying the notion of truth and freedom, while according primacy to power, Foucault is being incoherent, argues Taylor.

We can see that Foucault's genealogy by giving primacy to power and denying the related concept of truth and liberation is unable to explain change as gain or loss. This is because of the incoherence in Foucault's conception of these notions which are often confused for new formulations of our predicament. Earlier, it was also seen that the conception of teleology in Taylor's hermeneutics is non-deterministic and can understand change in human society in terms of gain or loss or both.

VIII. Critique

After examining the notion of human agency and orientation towards knowledge in the works of Taylor and Foucault; the conception of critique in their works will be examined in this section

As we have explicated in chapter four, Foucault identifies himself with the critical tradition that extends from Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger to post-structuralism. This tradition does not involve seeking metaphysical or religious accounts of knowledge but characterises the present as a particular moment in history and ways of going beyond them. According to Foucault, this tradition does not think of social and political issues in terms of content but as an attitude or a virtue in general. It's an attitude one develops by 'exiting from self-incurred tutelage of tradition' through the 'courage' to stand up for oneself without direction from another.[515] But this explicitness with regard to critique is shown by Foucault only in the later stage of his life when he was more forthcoming in his identification with Kant.[516] In his earlier works, Foucault maintains strict neutrality with regard to the objects of his analyses and refuses to make any value-judgments. He extends this neutrality to such an extreme that even the human subject and

[515] Hubert Dreyfus, and Paul Rabinow, in 'What is maturity? Habermas and Foucault on 'What is Enlightenment?' *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, (Ed.) David Couzens Hoy, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 109-121.

[516] Roy Boyne claims that this shift in Foucault's position occurred between volume one of *The History of Sexuality* and the later, posthumous volumes where his doctrines give way to a sense of renewed ethical and social engagement. See Roy Boyne, *Foucault and Derrida: The Other side of Reason*. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), 144.

truth are conceived as the effect of power. Some commentators find this extreme neutrality rather perplexing. After writing such brilliant analyses to bring out or reveal the domination of disciplinary power in modem society, Foucault refuses to endorse any method or way of overcoming this domination.[517]

Nevertheless, even Foucault's critics concede that his analyses are brilliant in expressing the nature of domination in modern society. For instance, in his exchange with Connolly on Foucault's work, Taylor writes,

> Indeed, learned why this model (correspondence theory of knowledge) has to be rejected partly from Foucault. It plainly distorts much of our understanding of human life...Foucault's work can save us from a far too simple and too upbeat application of this theory, from the view, that the rise of modern subjectivity has been nothing but triumphant progress of self-discovery... it can make us aware of the "denial of otherness" involved in our most cherished modem notion of freedom and dignity. And it is clear that we need this reminder badly.[518]

Foucault's analyses extend the 'discourse of emancipation' in social/ political studies. The strength of Foucault's mode of analysis lies in its ability to account for complexities and changes in the society that the earlier modes of enquiry could not deal adequately with. For instance, because of the primacy it gives to class, Marxism attempts to reduce other kinds of dominations such as those related to gender, race, and location to the realm of labour and production. Such Marxist explanations are grossly inadequate as they attempt to fit 'reality' to a particular theory/ ideology that is not suitable to deal with it.[519] By the 1950s and 1960s there was a growing realisation that classical Marxism is grossly insufficient to account for changing circumstances which are very different from those of the nineteenth century. This explains Foucault's remark: "Marxism exists in nineteenth-century thought as a fish exists in water, that is, it ceases to breathe anywhere else"[520] This is also the reason why new movements such as feminism, anti-racism, and post-colonial struggles turned to orientations such as post-structuralism, semiotics, linguistics, etc. for articulating their concerns.

Foucault, due to his more fluid notion of discourse and power, does not need to reduce the phenomenon to be explained to some privileged category such as class. Power is conceived, by him, as diffused and dispersed in the society and is always in flux, shifting from one region to another with no stable configuration. There is no privileged single category or a set of categories such as class or state to which phenomena could be reduced. Any event to be explained involves several factors (multi-causal) such that we cannot not single out any one factor or a set of factors

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[517] J. Habermas, 'Taking aim at the heart of the present', 103 and Charles Taylor, 'Foucault on Truth and Freedom', in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, Op.cit. 69-102.
[518] Charles Taylor "Connolly, Foucault, and Truth", *Political Theory* Op.cit, 383.
[519] Andrew Gamble, Why Bother with Marxism?' in Marxism and Social Science, ed.by A; Gamble, David Marsh, and Tony Tant, (London: Macmillian, 1999), 1-8.
[520] Michel Foucault cited in D Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (London: Vintage 1993), 177.

as primary. Besides, there is also no fixed pattern of interaction amongst these factors to arrive at law-like regularities. Therefore, it is difficult to pin down clear-cut or definite causes in genealogies. Thus, Foucault's accounts are flexible, contingent, and specific, avoiding the reductionism, determinism and rigidity of earlier discourses of emancipation.

From Foucault's point of view, another problem with Marxism is that it relied on a 'system' or a 'strategy' for the improvement of society. Such systems always implicitly contain within them elements that can do more harm than good, particularly if they became orthodoxies. This is what happened in the former Soviet Union.[521] Though critical of contemporary society, unlike Marxists, Foucault prescribes no specific programme of action, promises no utopia, and is sometimes as critical of the "the proletariat" as he is of "the ruling class" and "the bourgeoisie". In fact, for Foucault, the use of the notion of 'truth' or 'science' in resisting domination results in getting oneself more entrenched in the effects of disciplinary power. This is the reason for Foucault's greater fluid conceptualization of power. Arnold Davidson points out that Foucault's analysis of power leads 'one to view power not as the homogeneous domination of one group or class over another, but as a net-like, circulating organisation that involves everyone in society'.[522] Foucault saw power not only in negative terms, for repression, but for its positive possibilities as well. It could also be used for constituting new objects of knowledge and putting up resistance against domination. For these reasons, Mark Poster construes Foucault's mode of analysis as "a response to the crisis of Marxism".[523] For him, works such as Foucault's "are significant to the extent that they present a critique of Marxism and therefore indicate paths that may be taken to get beyond its current theoretical impasses."[524]

Poster believes that Foucault's work evades the "totalizing" and "reductionist" tendencies inherent in Marxist analysis. Foucault's critiques are both more regional in nature, and allow a wider range of conceptual bases from which to work; e.g., the analysis of the rise of mental hospital need not be grounded in the same beliefs and practices as those on which the analysis of the rise of the human sciences, or of the rise of the prison, are based.[525] Thus, we can see that Foucault, with his post-structuralist orientation, has been able to avoid several inadequacies of the earlier critical traditions.

Similarly, in case of feminism, Foucault's orientation proves helpful in overcoming the difficulties faced by the activists working in liberal and Marxist traditions. Feminists attempted

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[521] M Philp, Michel Foucault. In Q. Skinner (Ed.), *The Return of Grand Theory in The Human Sciences*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 65-81.

[522] L Davidson, "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics". In *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Ed.), D. C. Hoy Op.cit. p. 226.

[523] M. Poster, *Critical Theory and Post-Structuralism: In Search Of A Context,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989, 104.

[524]M Poster, *Critical Theory and Post-Structuralism: In Search of a Context,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989. 104

[525] Ibid.106

to explain the issues related to women through universal, absolute and foundational categories borrowed from the Enlightenment epistemologies and political theories. These worked well in the early phase of feminism which emphasized on political and economic equality with men. But with the advent of the 'second wave' of feminism, when the feminist sought fuller and more sophisticated understanding of cultural nature of oppression, these 'essentialist' and 'reductionist' ways of understanding of the early phase appeared to be inadequate. It was argued that they had assumed universality of male values. The second wave feminists tried to reflect on women's own experiences to create their own values and their own identities. Moreover, in this process, Western feminists also came to realise that they themselves were products of a particular cultural tradition (the white European/ American), rather than a universal expression of women's struggle for emancipation. Therefore, the "third wave feminism" sought to overcome the difficulties surrounding the question of what or who exactly a 'woman' is and who is that the feminist movement claim to represent. To be able to answer these questions, feminists took recourse to work of thinkers such as Foucault. This involved abandoning the concept of a single collective identity. The idea of 'women' as a fixed, natural category is now envisaged as an outcome of a historical, cultural, and contextual process. The notion of ambiguity and difference have been used by feminists to understand the unique issues and interests of each woman. Since the strength of Foucault's work is to bring attention to the historical transformation in practices of self-formation to reveal their contingency, it has proved particularly useful for feminists. It has enabled them to explore new possibilities of self-understanding, new modes of experience, new forms of subjectivity, authority, and political identity. Thus, Foucault has played an important role in shaping feminism as a gender-based identity politics. This version of feminism has had an ambivalent relationship with Enlightenment, humanism, traditional forms of authority, and even femininity itself.[526] In a similar vein, Foucault is also a major inspiration behind the postcolonial movement thinkers such as Edward Said, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, etc.

It can be argued that Foucault's work has helped in extending the 'discourse of emancipation' in our times. His fluid conceptions of social reality capture much better the experiences of our times. Earlier traditions such as liberalism and Marxism may have served their purpose well in their times, but they seemed sufficiently inadequate in the new emerging situations. Their explanations turned out to be rigid, deterministic, and reductionist. Foucault's genealogical conception, with emphasis on contingency, enabled thinkers to talk about reality in a new way. It does not talk about reality in terms of content but as a historical process where things (which themselves were unstable) interact with each other not with necessity but in a contingent way.

[526] Jana Sawicki, 'Foucault, feminism and questions of identity', in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, (Ed.) Gary Gutting, Op.cit, 288.

Events do not follow neat patterns but unfold in a complex way depending upon the circumstances. Such a conception enables one to better account for shifting nature of power in the society. This avoids pseudo-problems (one that arise out of frameworks' attempts at fitting reality to its assumptions) of location and reduction of reality to some privileged entity or structure such as class. Foucault's contingent way of analysis side steps these problems. Instead, he opens the discourse to hitherto unrevealed aspects of reality which were denied expression or articulation in earlier discourses. These 'excess meanings' that come up in Foucault's analysis were 'silenced' in earlier discourses by the process of 'normalisation' in the name of truth'. Thus, Foucault brings out 'denial of otherness' that is done through disciplinary power in name of 'truth'. This has been brilliantly brought out in his case studies of madness, medicine, prison, and sexuality. It unsettles one by showing how 'deep' (at the level of unconscious) could the domination of humans by the social institutions be, through the process of normalisation and disciplinary power. Moreover, to make the case worse, this domination is felt by the victim as 'fulfillment' of his essential nature and attainment of cherished values such as 'freedom' and 'truth'.

One-Sidedness of Foucault's Historical Studies

However, critics such as Taylor find his analyses extremely one-sided as these studies view all social relations as dominations only. While their strength is their insightfulness and originality, in bringing usually neglected aspects to light, their weakness is that the other aspects are denied altogether. For instance, Foucault reads the rise of humanitarianism exclusively in terms of the new technologies of control. For him, modern system of power is simply another system of power and not a gain over the classical system of power based on coercion. It is simply a new form of domination maintained towards increase of biomass. According to Taylor, Foucault ignores the fact that notion of good and the 'moral horizons' for the modern man have changed. They no longer privilege 'higher activities' such as contemplation or citizen life over the 'ethics of ordinary life'. Hence, terrible tortures and sufferings inflicted on human beings in the name of mystification do not seem justified to them.[527] Unlike Foucault, Taylor maintains that the rise of new forms of discipline in modern times should not be read exclusively in items of domination. They also are forms of genuine self-discipline that have made possible new kind of collective action. These/ new kinds of collective actions are characterised by more egalitarian forms of participation. Taylor points out that one of the basic requirements of the 'civic humanist tradition' of political theory is that free participatory institutions require some commonly accepted

[527] Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Truth and Freedom", in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, (Ed) David Couzens Hoy, Op.cit,73

discipline. The free citizen has the *'vetru'* to give willingly the contribution which otherwise a despot would coerce from him, perhaps in some other form. Without this, free institutions cannot exist. There is a tremendous difference between societies which find their cohesion through common disciplines grounded on a public identity, and which thus permit of and call for the participatory action of equals, on the one hand, and the multiplicity of kinds of society which require chains-of command based on unquestionable authority on the other.[528] Thus, maintains Taylor, collective disciplines can function in both ways, as structures of domination, and as bases for equal collective action. They can also slide over time from one to the other.

According to Taylor, it is possible that some of the disciplines which helped to find the societies based on contract and responsible governments in earlier times, and which encouraged egalitarian politics, are now serving bureaucratic mode of irresponsible power. This is adversely affecting the democratic process in modern societies. Rather than understanding this process, Foucault's notion of power, because of its strict neutrality, incapacitates us in making sense of this process. This is because Foucault thinks of discipline as a form of domination only. He simplifies complex historical happenings as a single dimensional process and leaves out everything in Western history which has been animated by civic humanism/or/analogous movements.[529] He ignores the ambivalence of human action as we have shown in our examination of the notion of human agency. Therefore, for him, reading of modernity is in terms of loss only. Thus, maintains Taylor, Foucault's historical readings are very one-sided.

The reason for this one-sidedness is Foucault's notion of subjectivity. For Foucault, subject is the effect of discursive practices with phenomenon such as 'soul' and individuals as internalisation of the 'norms' implicit in the discursive practices. This is a one-way process with discourses determining subjectivity but not the other way round. The role of the agent has been significantly undermined by Foucault as we have also explained above in the section on human agency. As a result, 'truth' and 'knowledge' appear to Foucault as traps which rather than begetting freedom entrench us even more in power-strategies.

The basis for these claims is Nietzschean-influenced primacy that Foucault gives to 'will to power' which conceives even 'truth' as an effect of power. If truth and knowledge are mere effects of power imposed by us on 'reality' then we cannot judge between different knowledge claims as they do not have any independent status to act as standard for us. We simply move from one set of truth-claims defined by a configuration of power to another set of truth-claims

[528] Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Truth and Freedom", in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* (Ed) David Couzens Hoy, Op.cit 82
[529] Ibid, p 83.

both equally valid. Hence, it leads to a kind of relativism. We have already discussed this issue in the section on theory of knowledge.

According to Taylor, Foucault's notion of power is ultimately incoherent. The notion of power makes sense only in a semantic field along with other conceptions such as truth and freedom. To have a coherent conception of power we need at least a victim if not a clearly demarcated perpetrator of power. This victim should feel some restraint on unimpeded fulfillment of his significant desire. And this restraint on desires needs to be lifted. This is just what is involved in the idea of freedom.[530]

Similarly, the notion of power also requires the notion of truth. One of the crucial features of the modem system of power is that it makes us concur in the name of truth or liberation of our own nature. To do so, we need the notion of ‘truth' as the imposition proceeds by foisting illusion on us; proceeds by disguises and masks. But masks and falsehood does not make sense without a corresponding notion of truth. The truth here is subversive of power. Hence, we can see that the notion of power needs notion of truth and liberation to make sense. Thus, Foucault's mode of critique is essentially incoherent due to its Nietzschean insistence of primacy of power and denial of the notion of truth and liberation. It leads to one-sided interpretation of history which is conceived as loss only. Since it accounts only for the loss, it ignores the positive developments in history which can be interpreted as gain in our way of life (e.g., democratic institutions).

Another problematic/ troubling feature of Foucault's notion of critique, according to Taylor, is related to the notion of freedom implicit in his work. Since Foucault rejects the Romantic expressive understanding of nature as fundamentally a source of ‘good’, he takes recourse to a notion of liberation as a 'work of art' or 'aesthetic of existence'. Thereby he succumbs to a conception of politics which is extremely individualistic and without any potential alternative social form. In his review of Peter Dew's book on post-structuralism, Taylor distinguishes between two kinds of liberation which he calls the liberation of nature and liberation from nature. The first, liberation of nature has been invoked by the Romantics, Marx, Critical theorists, etc. The proponents of this kind of liberation oppose the impoverished mode of reason over nature, desire, or sensibility. They claim that the instrumental stance towards reality creates a 'master within' the atomist individual such that a person's living unity gets divided within. In objectifying nature, one loses one's touch with the organic unity of nature. The way to overcome this division within is to have a correct stance towards nature. In such a stance the person comes up with an authentic expression which reconciles nature and reason. Thus, by coming up with the right expression we liberate ourselves from what was distorted within due to instrumental stance. This notion of liberation had been evoked by Schiller in his famous Letters on the Aesthetic Education

[530] Ibid., p 92.

of Man (1795). It also forms part of Marx's theory of alienation. This perspective affirms the Romantic expressive understanding of nature as fundamentally a source of good which for some reason (say, capitalist commodity production) is prevented from proper expression. Liberation of nature involves recovering what was denied ‘right' expression due to division within or without.

According to Taylor, there is another kind of stance towards liberation: liberation from nature. This view has its roots in Schopenhauer, Baudelaire, and Nietzsche. In this stance, one does not turn for empowerment to nature, or the deep sources in the self, but to our power to create a beauty independent from nature. Our creative action turns its back on life and the organic in order to make something higher in the realm of artifice. Thus, this view rejects the Romantic expressive understanding of nature as fundamentally a source of good and instead affirms a conception of art which takes us in some way outside of nature. This is not a freedom of fulfilled nature but of creative artifice once it has thrown off specious standards of nature. It is a freedom won by denouncing the moral imposture of the natural, unmasking the pretences of the merely organic. It is the freedom to impose orders, unconstrained by the natural. It finds an echo in some of the more voluntarist passages of Nietzsche. It is palpably a constituent strand of much post-structuralist thought.[531] Taylor claims that these two notions of liberation are totally different although they are confused as similar. The second (liberation from nature) is often presented as the radicalisation of the first (liberation of nature). These two notions of liberation are often woven together and confused because they had a common enemy in the new commercial civilization founded on instrumental reason (capitalism). However, these two notions take us in different political directions. The first notion of liberation (liberation of nature) is the basis of a kind of opposition to capitalist-instrumentalist-bureaucratic society which both defines its aims by and grounds its confidence in the motivational make-up of human beings. This motivational make up for them could be the basis of a more convivial, ecologically responsible, more self-managing society. Several of the socialist, feminist, and 'green' movements have been inspired by this notion of freedom. In contrast, the second notion of liberation (liberation from nature) was the basis of proto-Fascist thought although it must not necessarily be so. The second notion of freedom can provide us the basis for opposition to capitalist-bureaucratic-civilization but the opposition it proposes cannot be based on any potential alternative social from. It proposes a strategy of perpetual destabilisation, a sort of guerrilla warfare.

Foucault, claims Taylor, belongs to this second category (liberation from freedom). In fact, in his early phase Foucault took a stance of strict neutrality and refused to affirm explicitly to any notion of freedom. In response to critics such as Habermas, in later years, he came up with this

[531] Charles Taylor, Review of Logics of Disintegration, *Political Theory*, Op.cit, 113

extreme notion of freedom as 'liberation from nature'.[532] So, it was a case of slide from an initial stance of total denial of freedom to extreme notion of freedom as creation of self as a work of art. It totally rejected the more conventional notion of freedom that sought human motivation in nature or self as sources. It was freedom to propose new meanings without the constraints of truth. This position became the basis for strong adherence to negative liberty, to the freedoms of classical liberalism as can be seen in his conception of 'governmentality' developed between 1977 and1983 at College de France.

Defining 'critique' as the art of not being governed in a certain way at a certain price [What is Critique], Foucault, in this phase, found the 'will not to be governed' in the libertarian views of Ludwig von Mises and Fredrick Hayek.[533] He also analysed the character of modem liberalism with unprecedented sympathy. For him, against the modern state which worked on the principle, 'one governs too little', liberalism questions this logic by the maxim, 'one always governs too much'. As a result of this liberal principle, 'governmentality cannot be exercised without a "critique."' Further, Foucault deliberately omitted any mention of the republican strand of French liberal thought that runs from Rousseau to Durkheim for its totalitarian implications. Thus, he preferred the 'negative freedom' expressed in the demand "not to be governed" form of liberalism to the 'positive freedom' entailed by the collective security of institutions.

Against the powerful strategies of disciplinary power, Foucault does not take recourse to any 'group or institutional' mechanism. Instead, he prefers individual strategies of perpetual destabilisation. Due to his peculiar notion of power, for Foucault, resistance emerges at the very points at which power relations are most tightly bound together and is mobile and transitory in form. Resistance is mobile as it emerges randomly throughout the social totality.[534] It is transitory because it necessarily eludes systematic generalisation into alternative institutions or codes of practice lest it result in the installation of new regimes of normalisation. Thus, Foucault's conception of resistance is sporadic and ephemeral and undermines any sustained political action. He naively celebrates marginal and spontaneous acts of non-conformity.[535]

This explains Foucault's rather extreme view on an issue like the Iranian Revolution of 1978 which he described as a revolt against entrenched power without recourse to an armed struggle. He was especially impressed by the ritualized demonstration of defiance shown by the people (Shias) through 'a kind of tragic liturgy of suffering and death'.[536] He found these events of

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[532] J Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Fredrick Lawrence (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1987) 238-293 and J Habermas, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present," in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, Ed. David Couzens Hoy, op.cit, 103-108.

[533] James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, Op.cit, 310

[534] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol 1, Op.cit, 96.

[535] P. Stallybrass and A. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, (London: Methuen and Co.,1986), 200.

[536] James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault*, Op.cit. 307.

defiance as ‘latent counter-power’ of the people to topple a regime and transfigure themselves spiritually. Foucault's enthusiasm for the revolution did not subside even when the 'excesses' of the newly formed Islamic regime as its implementation of draconian laws also became known. These excesses included killing of homosexuals and others by firing squads, stoning of people on public squares, etc. Working as a correspondent for the French newspaper, Le Monde, on the Iranian revolution, Foucault surprisingly wrote, ‘Last summer the Iranian said, “We are ready to die by the thousands to get the Shah to go...” Today it is the Ayatollah, who says, “Let Iran bleed so that the revolution may be strong.”’

Similarly, on the issue of 'popular justice', Foucault wrote in a special issue of Sartre's magazine, *Les temps Modernes*, that term should not be associated with a form of court but with acts of justice by the people. According to Foucault, court is not the natural expression of popular justice; rather its historical function is to ensnare it, to master it and to repress it, by re-inscribing it within institutions that are typical machinery of the state. Instead, the natural expression of popular justice should be seen in streets as in the example of September Massacres of 1792. During the French revolution, hordes of Parisian crowds, inflamed by rumours of a royalist plot, had stormed prisons and brutally killed suspected traitors. More than one thousand men and women were killed in this massacre. According to Foucault, popular justice would be best served by throwing open every prison and shutting down every court.

The above two examples show utter disregard shown by Foucault towards the democratic legal system. For him, every legal code is to be seen in terms of the method of subjugation that it institutes. Foucault treated the ‘model of war’ as a paradigm for the analysis of society. Gillian Rose argues that Foucault ignores the role played by the democratic legal system in the regulation of unhindered growth of tutelary powers. By reducing democratic forms to a precipitate of power, Foucault simplifies the paradoxes and antinomies of law and social control.[537] Similarly, Habermas claims that Foucault levels down the dilemmatic structure of legal regulation whereby 'the legal means for securing freedom...themselves endanger the freedom of their presumptive beneficiaries'.[538] Thus, we can see that Foucault celebrates the spontaneous and marginal acts of non-conformity. As a result, the mode of protest or resistance is one of individualistic political destabilisation rather than sustained political action of individualistic political institutional form. This seriously underestimates the role of legal institutional practices in the modern society. If we can make a stronger claim, then Foucault's disregard for these institutional mechanisms makes him vulnerable to the charge of giving tacit

[537] G Rose, *Dialectic of Nihilism: Poststructuralism and Law*, (Ox ford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 177.
[538] J. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Op.cit, 238-293.

support to violent modes of protests such as ultra-left militant groups, and other anarchist tendencies such as use of drugs in commune that emerged with advent of counter-culture.

Thus, we can see that Foucault's notion of critique while being very insightful in bringing out the 'denial of otherness' in our society is not very conducive to sustained political actions. Due to its peculiar notion of power, Foucault totally disregards the legal institutional mechanisms that further 'rule of law' and make democracy possible. His mode of protest in the society is individualistic, celebrating marginal and spontaneous acts of non-conformity over sustained political actions of institutional kind. It rather ends up justifying several controversial positions such as ultra-left militant groups, new lifestyles of counterculture such as drug consumption sadomachochist (SM) practices, etc. It totally disregards the advantages of the democratic legal systems and rule of law as mechanisms or modes of collective life. Hence, Foucault's mode of critique emphasises only one dimension of our social life.

Taylor's Notion of Critique

Two conceptions of critiques can be discerned in the works of Taylor. First, the early Marxist phase when he was influenced by the conception of 'alienation' of early Marx and was himself engaged in concrete political issues. However, even during this stage (between early1950s and late 1960s) Hegel's influence was silently lurking in the background through Marx. Second, a more Hegelian phase that was modified by the influence of hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer. During this phase, Taylor's work was much more philosophical and examined political and social themes at a much broader and historical level. So, Taylor's notion of critique can be interpreted as basically Hegelian, with the influence of Marx dominant in the early years and existential-hermeneutics of Heidegger and Gadamer having more impact in the later years.

During the Hegelian-Marxist phase, Taylor was actively engaged in various radical left issues related to humanist socialism, nationalism, and imperialism. This phase lasted from his stay in England for studies till his teaching responsibilities at the McGill University in Canada in the early 1970s. In UK, during his student days, he became a founding editor of a journal *Universities and New Left Review* that later became the *New Left Review*.[539] Taylor also headed the World University Services in Vienna. When back in Canada, he was also at the centre of NDP (the New Democratic Party) activism. He ran four times as an NDP candidate at the federal level and contested against Pierre Trudeau in the 1965 election. Taylor's more committed NDP activism began to wane in the 1970s. He published a book titled *The Pattern of Politics* in 1970 on his engagements during this phase. The aim of his 'socialist humanism' in this phase was to analyse the deep-rooted causes of alienation in the capitalist society. Taylor and others in the

[539] The other three were Stuart Hall, Raphael Samuel and Gabriel Pearson

New Left sought to retrieve socialism from welfarism and Stalinism, the degenerate models then holding sway. Neither welfarism, with its narrow focus on piecemeal reforms, nor Stalinism, with its reliance on alien dogmas, had the power to express people's concerns. In such circumstances, Taylor felt, the left critic's task was to motivate people to adopt a critical socialist politics. Taylor saw apathy as one of the main obstacles to realisation of socialist purposes. The way to combat this indifference was to clarify the relevance of socialist values to everyone's life. To do so, the critic must be able to indicate how the quality of life would be superior in a socialist society, and this meant having an account of the qualitative transformations of life experience socialism would bring. 'If life appears to be fragmented and meaningless to more and more people today, the socialists must know what they mean when they speak of a "meaningful life"'.[540] The socialist critic, according to Taylor, will only be able to address such issues if he adopts a holistic approach (enters Hegel) to criticism. For this, the critic must seek 'some vantage point' from which to make a deep criticism, not merely of some institutions, but of a whole culture- a way of life, under capitalism.

In accordance with these principles, Taylor, in *The Pattern of Politics*, analysed nationalism and democracy in Canada in relation to the threat of US imperialism. He warned that USA and corporate wealth inhibit a fuller liberty for Canadians. He feared that Canadians could become 'a miniature replica' of the USA and get mired in the 'quick sands of dependence'.[541] He brought out the tension between Canadian nationalism and American imperialism and was greatly concerned about the colonization of Canadian culture and economics. However, according to some commentators, Taylor's view on socialism and nationalism were not intense due to the assimilationist Hegelianism in his work.[542] Notwithstanding his declared Marxist leanings, Taylor was being influenced by Hegel at the subliminal level. Over time, his dissatisfaction with Marxism drew him towards Hegel.

One of the reasons for Taylor to distance himself from Marxism was on account of its proximity towards Stalinism. According to Taylor, while Marx is not guilty of all the errors of Stalinism, his position not only lends itself to such distortions, but it also shares some of Stalinism's fundamental errors.[543] Marxism is incapable of dealing with democratic conflict due to its Jacobin ideal of a unified community. In this model, disagreement is seen as an imperfection of the system, and it gives the wrong 'unanimous' picture of democracy and self-rule. Its conception of democracy is misguidedly 'substitutionalist' and 'centralised'. Secondly, Taylor rejected the

[540] Charles, Taylor 'Alienation and Community,' *Universities and Left Review* (Autumn, 1958), 11-18.
[541] Charles Taylor, *The Pattern of Politics*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), 96.
[542] Ron Dart, 'Charles Taylor and the Hegelian Eden Tree: Canadian Compradorisim', Clarion: *Journal of Spirituality and Justice*,
[543] Charles Taylor, ' Marxism and Socialist Humanism' in *Out of Apathy: Voices of the New Left Thirty Years On* (Eds), Robin Archer and the Oxford University Socialist Discussion Groups (London: Verso, 1989), 59-78.

Marxist idea that the values of freedom and solidarity must be co-instantiated. Markets, Taylor conceded, are an important feature of a free society, even though they are inevitably divisive and exploitative. Even if the goods of autonomy and solidarity are reconciled, a socialist society could be disastrous in other ways, for instance as an agent of environmental destruction. Finally, Taylor found that orthodox Marxism's insensitivity to ecological issues reflects its weakness as a spiritual stance. It tends towards a superficially subjectivist interpretation of human expressive powers. It contrasts not so well with post-Romantic outlooks that see the aim of expression as reaching to 'something beyond ourselves'. Thus, Taylor rejected Marxism and found its main defect was to suppose that the deepest human aspirations could be realised in a single systematic change from capitalism to socialism.

For these reasons, Taylor turned more explicitly towards Hegel during the 1970s. He came up with two important works, *Hegel* (1975) and *Hegel and Modern Society* (1977) that established Taylor as a leading Hegelian scholar. In these works, though he claims that Hegel's "conclusions are dead", nevertheless he found some features of Hegel's philosophy still very relevant to our times. The very formulation of the problem of modernity as splitting of ‘reason' and ‘intuition', the Kantian paradox, and its reconciliation in history through the progress of reason and liberty, formed a seminal principle for him as it was for Hegel. Taylor's major work *The Sources of the Self* can be interpreted as an expression of this insight. Modernity is privileged over the classical, and post-modernity is dialectics taking a wrong turn. The past is merely a preparation for the present as the present is an unfolding preparation, of ever-increasing goodness, for the future. Much of Taylor's work since the 1970s can be seen merely as a fleshing out of the essential rightness of Hegel (past, present, future). More significant was the method of analysis (dialectics) adopted by Taylor. He too, like Hegel, attempted reconciliation of opposing values, through struggle and opposition, at higher level. For instance, for Taylor, the atomist view of society is not wrong altogether but only a mis-identification of good. The atomist view does realize the good of liberty partially but loses sight of the fact that our identities are sustained in a community. So, we should not totally reject the atomist view just because it is wrong partly. Instead, we should see the atomist view's shortcomings and reconcile those with the opposing value of community to arrive at a higher level of unity. At this higher level, a person would enjoy their liberty to maximum but still be aware of the dialogic nature of their identity and take up community responsibilities. Even during his early Marxist phase, Taylor has attempted to point out shortcomings of welfarism and Stalinism to arrive at his vision of humanist socialism rather than reject them altogether. Hegel was always present in Taylor’s works; it only became more profound after 1970s.

In the 1980s, Taylor delved in greater depths on questions of human nature and the self in *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern ldentity* (1989). The ideology of the 1950s had waned, the activism of 1960s thinned out, Hegel had been probed in the 1970s. Now, it was time to examine the roots and 'sources of the self.' *Sources of the Self* is an exquisite and compelling apologia for the modern notion of the self, the sources of such a self and the conflicts within the modem liberal project. Here too, Hegel along with Heidegger and Gadamer, informed Taylor's conception of the 'embodied subject'. 'Contemporary attempt to situate subjectivity by relating it to our life as embodied and social beings, without reducing it to a function of objectified nature, constantly refers us back to Hegel.'[544]

According to Taylor, Hegel's formulation of the problem of democracy is indispensable for any adequate understanding of the problem: "The modern ideology of equality and of total participation leads to a homogenization of society. This shakes men loose from their traditional communities but cannot replace them as a focus of identity. Or, rather, it can only replace them as such a focus under the impetus of militant nationalism or some totalitarian ideology which would depreciate or even crush diversity and individuality".[545]

The net impact of all these Hegelian conceptions on Taylor has been that his explanations on several dilemmas of modem life are accounted for in an adequate way. He reconciles seemingly incompatible values related to various modern problems while managing to retain their complexities. His solution is not reduction or simplification as can be seen in his views on liberal-communitarian debates. According to Taylor, the standard discussions on this debate have simplistically linked up atomism and individualism on the one side, and holism and collectivism on the other. These linkages have been due to confusion between what Taylor calls the 'ontological' and the 'advocacy issues'.[546] Taylor maintains that he is opposed to liberals sharply only at the ontological level. On 'advocacy issues', Taylor is very far from being hostile to traditional liberal freedoms; only he finds the way it is defended by modern liberalists (by atomism) unsatisfactory. In contrast to the simple grouping of atomism and individualism on one side and holism and collectivism on the other, he claims that there are other combinations possible. Taylor assigns to himself the category of 'holist individualists.' Thinkers in this category, maintains Taylor, 'represent a trend of thought that is fully aware of the (ontological) social embedding of human agents but at the same time prizes liberty and individual differences very highly'.[547] Defending liberal principles against the background of a holistic ontology, however, produces a rather different picture of the conditions of the liberties presented by atomist

[544] Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, Op.cit, 570.
[545] Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, Op.cit, 414.
[546] Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, Op.cit.181
[547] Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments*, Op.cit , p 185

individualists. The procedural liberal theories associated with the works of Rawls, Dworkin, and others cannot secure allegiance of its citizens as they have no conception of the good and are unified only by subscription to a set of procedures. As an alternative to procedural liberalism, Taylor seeks to recover a tradition of republican political thought which more effectively combines freedom with a substantial sense of political community. Thus, due to his Hegelian mode of analysis, Taylor can give a larger and more complex account of the problem where seemingly disparate values have been reconciled.

The strength of Taylor's notion of critique is that it gives a more complex and adequate account of affairs. As a result, we arrive at more clarifying and fulfilling social practices. We need not sacrifice some good to gain other good. Most, if not all, good can be adequately pursued by reconciliation at a higher level of unity. This description of good at a higher level is much more differentiated than the earlier descriptions of good as it accounts for more features. At this higher level, choices are not of either/ or kind, but ones which carry together a whole set of goods together. The focus is not merely on transformation or change in society but also retrieval of sources of social practices. It seeks transformation as well as appreciation of the significance of the present institutions. One cannot build the future by ignoring the present and past. The past shapes the present and the present is projected on the future. The emphasis is on both, continuity and change. It tries to consider all sorts of viewpoints. It does not consider any account to be totally wrong but only as partial fulfillment of the potential. That is why even a naturalist perspective is not wrong simply but ‘misidentification’ of the nature of freedom as atomism. Such an approach assists in better identification of the individual with the community (or the whole). There is more and more fine-tuning of our social practices towards our (moral) 'ideals’. We have more clarifying and fulfilling social practices.

Taylor's critics find these deepening of Hegelian themes in him to be conservative in orientation.[548] Those who have followed Taylor's journey from the 1950s to 1990s cannot help but sense that political theory and political activism had lost their lustre by 1980s. Taylor's project through the 1980s-1990s is a defence of Hegelian liberalism. This means much work must be done on unpacking *The Sources of the Self* and the varied ways of defining identity. Pluralism and multiculturalism become the buzzwords. The more substantive questions of imperialism, and nationalism simply don't exist, in a serious way. He has become, in many ways, the quintessential bourgeois and humanist liberal, defending the liberal status qua.

According to Ronald Beiner, there are serious shifts and alterations in thought and action between the younger and elder Taylor. He points out that Taylor cannot have it both ways. Those

[548] Ronald Beiner, ‘Hermeneutical Generosity and Social Criticism' in *Philosophy in a Time of Lost Spirt: Essays on Contemporary Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

who turn more and more towards a generous interpretive approach to the self, society, and politics find it increasingly difficult to raise hard critical questions about politics, society, and the self. This is so because positions and perspectives, dialogue, process, and dialectic are the new ideology. Hermeneutical generosity tends to lead to a paralysis of action on substantive issues such as imperialism and Canadian nationalism. Social critics tend to be weak on accepting the equal truth claims and insights of most perspectives. Taylor, claims Beiner, has tended, in the last two decades to marginalise social criticism (the younger Taylor) while holding high hermeneutical generosity. He does not summon forth liberalism's deeper premises and question them. He accepts them as the best for this ethos that we live in. Taylor is willing to question some of the aberrations of liberalism but not its core and centre. A problem exists when we marginalise the larger questions and become preoccupied with the secondary ones. 'We just don't discuss the large issues. We become overly concerned with the self and community. The meaning of nationhood gets lost in the shuffle. We accept the status quo. Just as Hegel thought the spirit of the age had settled best and in most mature way in his culture, so has Taylor accepted and defended the dominant ideology of our age,' he observes. Taylor's reply would be that Bernier's criticism stems from a narrow point of view of Marxism and nationalism. The Hegelian approach does tackle these themes but only at a broader, historical level, and in a more clarifying way.

Similar charges have also been hurled at Taylor by other critics such as Brian Fay, William Connolly, and Habermas among others. According to Fay, hermeneutical approaches such as Taylor's ignore the following:

a) Various causal factors such as technological developments that contribute to the rise of certain meanings.
b) The unintended consequences of action.
c) The structural conflicts between different aspects of social life, particularly where actor accounts are inconsistent with their actual practices; and
d) The explanation of social change, i.e., how constitutive meanings change over time.

As a result, interpretive approaches are unable to account for the resistance of social actors to explanations that are at odds with their self-understanding. They also insist that all social tensions are rooted in communicative misunderstandings rather than in social practices and institutions themselves. Fay claims that Taylor's hermeneutics is profoundly conservative because it leads to

reconciliation of people to their social order by demonstrating to them that actual social practices are inherently rational.[549]

In similar vein, William Connolly criticises Taylor for 'integration of otherness into more perfect form of identification with the will of the rational community'.[550] According to Connolly, there is an ambiguous gap between social practices and their ideals. Such ambiguity in gap can also be seen in the working of the modern notion of subject. The self was not designed to be a modern subject of total transparency and control. Once we realise this, we stop fitting 'otherness' (mental instability, criminality, perversity) into self-same subject and give them space to survive through 'agnostic respect'. This 'otherness' is reconciled in our democratic practices. Individuality and commonality are simultaneously differentiated and pressed to harmonise more clearly. The advocates of common good such as Taylor obscure the ambiguity by insisting that, when properly institutionalised, individuality and commonality must be harmonised well. The individual is to be situated within a common good which realises the essential good in the self. This is so because Taylor thinks that ambiguity should be resolved rather than acknowledged and expressed in the institutionalised life. This leads to a 'politics of normalisation'.

Taylor pursues this 'politics of accord' because he seeks a telos of expression which transcends the objects (as in designative theories), the self (as in the theories that give primacy to subject) and the intersubjective realm (as in theories which vest constitutive power in the community). Hence, he moves through subjectivity to inter-subjectivity to larger world in which the self and the public world are situated and to which they properly appeal. Thus, argues Connolly, discourse seeks to disclose a self-conception which harmonises with our essential character as embodied selves. In other words, it seeks to project a social life in which the self is harmonised with itself and integrated into a larger community ('something beyond us').

Connolly says that we must interrogate this 'ontology of accord'. Does the pursuit of attunement draw us to an order in which we can be more at home in the world, or does it initiate a fictional ideal into the discourse which can be actualised only through containment of that which deviates from it? Such questions are politically relevant, as Taylor's quest for attunement inevitably leads his political priorities in a particular direction. He seeks to increase the possibility of self-identification with the larger way of life by increasing the extent to which it deserves allegiance. This is done by giving priority to the integration of otherness into a more rational community over a politics which seek to give that which does not fit neatly into the order of the things more room to be.

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[549] Brian Fay, *Social Theory and Political Practice* (London: Allen and Unwin l975).

[550] William Connolly, 'Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness' *Political Theory*, Vol.13, No.3 (Aug 1985), 365-376.

The above criticisms by Fay and Connolly that Taylor's work encourages complacency on the part of actors can be sustained only if we presume that demonstrating the inherent rationality of a way of life is the overriding goal of his works. This certainly is not the case. Taylor does point towards the importance of rationality of practices, but he never insists that coherence and rationality is to be insisted upon at all costs. In fact, because of the conception of telos in his works, the transformative potential of the agents is also given due importance. Rather than insisting upon either of the two, continuity or change, Taylor accounts for both, continuity and change, in a reasonable manner. This can be seen in his treatment of several dilemmas of our times related to modernity, democracy, liberalism, selfhood, community, secularization, etc. Remarking on this aspect of Taylor's critique, John Dunn has said, 'Taylor is such a fascinating political theorist [because] in the face of distressing choices he is apt to cling tenaciously to both horns of the dilemma, refusing, for what are often humanly excellent motives to let either of them go.'[551]

For Taylor, (moral) values are enmeshed in social practices and constitute the pre-theoretical understanding of agents. In articulating these values through expression, we bring up these values informing our practices to our conscious level. Language of the community plays an important role in this. It defines our limits and possibilities. Hence articulation of our predicament also brings up the significance of present practices. The present practices may not be up to our potentialities but are nevertheless partial fulfillment of what we can be. This aspect of Taylor's analysis emphasises on continuity. On the other hand, there is a kind of telos working in our social practices that can enable us to realize our human 'potentialities'. This constitutes the transformative dimension of our practices. It also serves as the 'standard' for us to judge our current practices. This aspect of our analysis emphasises upon change. Thus, Taylor's mode of analysis account for both continuity and change making it a richer and more complex theory.

This richness can be seen in his treatment of the problem of the modernity where he does not take sides with either the 'knocker' or 'booster' of modernity.[552] According to Taylor, there are two main perspectives on modernity: one that associates it with triumph and optimism (boosters), and other that links it with the theme of loss (knockers). The boosters identify modernity with progress, especially with technological improvements and ethical-political gains (rights of women, rights of minorities, secularisation, etc.). The knockers describe modernity with loss of values, community, and sense of wholeness. Taylor falls into neither of these camps. For him, there are indeed various malaises of the modern world such as excessive individualism flattening

[551] Dunn, John, "Elusive Community: The Political Theory of Charles Taylor," *Interpreting Political Responsibility: Essays 1981-1989*, (London: Polity Press, 1990), p. 186.

[552] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991), 11. *Stephen Loxton, Dialogic Life: Charles Taylor and The Ethics of Authenticity: An Introduction and Guide*, (New Generation Publishing, 2022).68.

the meaning of the world; its granting overarching normative authority to instrumental reason, and its social atomism undoing our deeper connections to our communities and histories. But these are only malaises not intrinsic features of modernity. They arise from a misguided sense of what it means to be modern individuals and communities. The potential in modern life has been distorted and obscured by the very ways in which we have come to express and describe it. These distortions are shared by both the boosters and the knockers of modernity. They share a common horizon of understanding about what is possible for us and what can ultimately matter to us, but each tells a different story of how that came about and why it is our only option.

Taylor claims that human beings are always in such situations where there is conflict between seemingly incompatible moral demands. However, we should not see these situations as hopeless and succumb to relativism. Instead, we should struggle for a 'transvaluation' that could open the way to a mode of life, individual and social, in which these demands could be reconciled. This cannot be done, says Taylor, by a formula that renders these opposing demands harmonious. Rather it is done by making difficult judgments in which these demands are balanced against each other, at some sacrifice to one or both. In fact, we can interpret Taylor's magnum opus, *The Sources of the Self*, as attempting this task only. For Taylor, then modernity entails both positive and negative trends. Like Hegel, he claims that modernity seeks liberalism, but it is distorted by the atomist view of human agency evoked by naturalistic explanations. When we become aware of this defect and realise the dialogic nature of the human agency or embodied agency, then we become open to various 'sources of the self'. We can better identify with the community and the disenchantment of the 'atomist phase' fades out. The problematique of the denial of the otherness, which Foucault finds so compelling, claims Taylor, is to be raised only when we fail in this task of identification with the community.[553] Thus, the highest ideal for Taylor is the 'integration of otherness into more perfect forms of identification with the will of the rational community'.[554] These would be truly self-governing communities. In cases where differences are too great for people to coexist, we should create more institutional space to allow others to be through the principle of recognition and multiculturalism.

We can see similar complexity and richness in Taylor's conception of multiculturalism. According to Taylor, liberalism's emphasis on the sameness of all citizens, regardless of race, class, gender, etc. (the principle of universalism), often comes into conflict with their need to be recognised in their uniqueness (the politics of difference). In mainstream liberalism (liberalism 1), the politics of universalism 'difference-blind' politics often secretly 'negates identity by

[553] Charles Taylor, "Connolly, Foucault and Truth", *Political Theory*, Op.cit, 384.
[554] ibid,

forcing people into a homogeneous mould that is untrue to them.'[555] Moreover, this mould is often that of a hegemonic culture, whose own values override and alienate the social identities of minority groups. This is so because this kind of liberalism ignores the fundamentally dialogical character of human life.[556] In order to overcome this hegemony of dominant culture over minority, Taylor proposes an alternate model of liberalism (what Walzer termed 'liberalism 2'), that includes the notion of 'group rights' in balance with individual rights. This conception actively seeks to recognize the collective identity-related goals of cultural and social groups. As a result, Taylor's approach deals more adequately with the problem of denial of otherness. He can account better and more sympathetically for claims by aboriginals and immigrant populations, certain strands of feminists who emphasise on 'difference', nationalist movements, and proponents of identity politics. This 'politics of recognition' which was developed by Taylor in the 1990s, can counter more adequately the criticism made by critics such as Fay and Connolly that he promotes 'politics of accord'.

[555] ibid
[556] Charles Taylor, "Politics of Recognition", Op.cit. 32.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF POLITICS

In the previous chapter, a comparison of Taylor and Foucault on three key themes, namely, human subject (depth as achievement vs. depth as illusion/trap), orientation towards knowledge (non-deterministic teleology vs. genealogy) and notion of critique (politics of accord vs. politics of discord) has been done. It is seen that Taylor's post-Heideggerian hermeneutics seem to make a much better case as a mode of enquiry for the study of politics/ society than Foucault's Nietzschean-inspired genealogical approach.

It was observed that in order to emphasise on analysis at the structural level, Foucault totally ignores the creative and transformative potential of human beings. He denies depth and conceives the self to be an effect of power-strategies. Consequently, Foucault does not adequately theorise both sides of the structure/ agency problem. He fails to interweave the two levels and give a full account of both, structure and human activity. This results in a conception of the human being as a very passive subject who cannot escape modes of objectification and subjectification of the discourses. In other words, as per this conception, it becomes impossible for us to evoke the notion of freedom which seems indispensable for our social/ political life. In contrast to Foucault, it is seen that Taylor is not only able to give an account that overcomes these defects of subjectivism but is also able to avoid the pitfalls of the post-structuralist overemphasis at the structural level.

Similarly, in contrast to the non-deterministic teleological hermeneutics, Foucault's genealogy is unable to meet several demands of a good explanation. His key categories such as power, truth and liberation are problematic and have been justified by rhetorical strategies rather than sound arguments. He ignores the notion of 'thrownessʼ that formed an important part of Heidegger's phenomenology. Foucault theorises as if we do not have any prior identity and history and, thus, succumbs to relativism. On the other hand, Taylor's non-deterministic teleology takes into account/ various human potentialities such as reason, truth, and freedom which enable us to talk about standards. It thus enables us to judge our social practices as gain or loss. Since we have history, questions about truth and freedom can arise for us in the transformations we undergo or project.

Thereafter, these findings were linked to the notion of critique and political in the works of these two thinkers. In this comparison too it is found that Foucault's notion of critique, while being very insightful in bringing out the 'denial of otherness' in our society, is not very conducive to sustained political actions. Due to its peculiar notion of power, Foucault totally disregards the

democratic and legal institutional mechanisms that further the 'rule of law' and make democracy possible. His/mode of protest in the society is individualistic, celebrating marginal and spontaneous acts of non-conformity over sustained political actions of institutional kind. It rather ends up justifying several controversial positions such as ultra-left militant groups, new life-styles of counter-culture such as drug consumption, sadomachochist (SM) practices, etc. It also totally disregards the advantages of the democratic legal systems and rule of law as mechanisms or mode of collective life. Hence, Foucault's mode of critique denies the ambivalence in modern society and emphasises only one dimension of our social life.

In contrast to this one-sidedness of Foucault, Taylor's, notion of critique retains the ambivalence of our modern social practices and is able to explain both, continuity and the change adequately. When encountered with seemingly disparate values Taylor is able to arrive at a larger, complex and 'reconciled' account of the problem because of his Hegel-inspired mode of analysis.[557] Taylor claims that human beings are always in such situations where there is a conflict between seemingly incompatible moral demands. However, we should not see these situations as hopeless and succumb to relativism. Instead, we should struggle for a 'transvaluation' that could open the way to a mode of life, individual and social, in which these demands could be reconciled.[558] This cannot be done, says Taylor, by a formula that renders these opposing demands harmonious. Rather it is done by making difficult judgments in which these demands are balanced against each other, with some sacrifice to one or both.

On the other hand, his solution is not reduction or simplification. Most, if not all goods, can be adequately pursued by 'reconciliation at a higher level of unity'. This new description of good at a higher level is much more differentiated (in a contingent way) than the earlier descriptions of good. It can account for more features of our social life. At this higher level, choices are not of either/ or kind but ones which carry a whole set of good together. The focus is not merely on transformation or change in society but also retrieval of sources of social practices. It seeks transformation as well as appreciation of the significance of the present institutions. One cannot build the future by ignoring the present and past. The past shapes the present and the present is projected on the future. The emphasis is on both, continuity and change. It tries to take into account all sorts of viewpoints. It does not consider any account to be totally wrong but only as partial fulfillment of the potential.

The comparative evaluation of these two thinkers tends to show that Taylor's Post Heideggerian hermeneutics is better suited for the explanation of political and social life. But this conclusion

[557] The word 'reconcile' is not used in the typical Hegelian sense. For Taylor, process of reconciliation would involve considering further developments in the Western philosophy such as in the works of Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer. It does not entail the 'necessity' aspect of the Hegelian conception.

[558] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 65

seems to create a 'paradox'. If Taylor's orientation towards society is superior, then how do we explain the differential reception of the two thinkers in the academic world? During the last years of his life, Foucault had almost achieved the status of a ‘pop star’. His unique, original works generated immense amount of secondary literature and followers across a wide range of fields. His lecture tours at US universities, appearances at protest rallies, all tended to receive a great amount of attention and enthusiasm amongst students as well as general public. In contrast, Charles Taylor is, relatively, not so well known beyond the academic field. In academic world too he is known better for his contribution to debates about hermeneutics, communitarianism, multi-culturalisın, etc., rather than having any iconic status. In other words, Foucault seems to have created a legacy while Taylor is still far from such a status.

This can be partly explained by the difference in the intellectual milieu of these two thinkers. When Foucault arrived in the academic world in the 1960s Marxism and Structuralism were already very popular movements in the French intellectual scene. Foucault's original works which continued and further developed these trends immediately made an impact. In the late 1960s, his participation in the social movements and general atmosphere of counter-culture and students protests added to his popularity. In contrast, Taylor, a New Left Marxist, worked on continental philosophy themes such as phenomenology and existentialism that were received with indifference, if not hostility, in the Anglo-Saxon academic world. Taylor has gained in popularity only during the 1990s and 2000s with his contributions to communitarianism, multiculturalism, nationalism debates. His contributions to the rights versus goods debate against procedural democracy, which has made even Habermas make changes in his overall Kantian project, has greatly enhanced his reputation. Moreover, his philosophical project has a theistic streak which does not largely agree with humanitarianism values of modernity. But even with regard to these issues his ability to account for various sources of our modern identity is gaining gradual and wider acceptance. Nevertheless, the significance of a thinker's work should not be made on the basis of his influence or legacy. It should be judged solely on the basis of the merit of his arguments. How do we explain the almost total indifference to Nietzsche's work during his own lifetime (except at the fag-end of his life when he went almost mad) but the immense appreciation of his works after his death?

According to Taylor's Hegelian inspired notion of critique, genealogical approach is not wrong but inadequate for understanding. It is partial; it is a one-sided historical understanding of society. While it works well to bring out the nature of domination and silencing' of the marginalised groups in a society by the majority discourse, it altogether neglects the other aspects of our society. Therefore, aspects of our social practice such as discipline are seen only as

'entrapment' and not as a mechanism to make new kind of collective action possible. But does this mean that genealogical approach has no role play in study of society and politics?

The genealogical approach still has an important role to play in certain kinds of analyses. It could play a major role in extending the 'discourse of emancipation' in our times. Foucault's fluid conception of social reality much better captures the experiences of our times. The earlier traditions such as liberalism and Marxism may have served their purpose well in the nineteenth century and first half of twentieth century, but they seem inadequate in the new emerging situations. Their explanation turns out to be rigid, deterministic, and reductionist. On the other hand, Foucault's genealogical conception, with emphasis on contingency, enables thinkers to talk about reality in a new way. It does not talk about reality in terms of content but as a historical process where things (which themselves are unstable) interact with each other not with necessity but in a contingent way. Events do not follow neat patterns but could unfold in a complex way depending upon the circumstances. Such a conception is able to better account for the shifting nature of power in the society. This avoids' pseudo-problems' (one that arise out of frameworks that attempt at fitting reality to their 'assumptions) of location and reduction of reality to some privileged entity or structure such as class. Foucault's contingent way of analysis side steps these problems. Instead, he opens up the discourse to hitherto unrevealed aspects of reality which were denied expression or articulation in earlier discourses. These 'excess meanings' that are brought out by Foucauldian analysis were silenced in the earlier discourses by the process of 'normalisation' in the 'name of truth'. Thus, Foucault brings out 'denial of otherness' that is done through disciplinary power in the name of 'truth.' This has been brilliantly brought out in Foucault's own case studies of madness, medicine, prisons, and sexuality. It unsettles one by showing how deep (at the level of unconscious) could be the domination of humans by the social institutions through the process of normalisation and disciplinary power. Moreover, to make the case worse, this domination is felt by the victim as fulfillment' of his/ her essential nature and attainment of cherished values such as 'freedom' and 'truth'.

So, it is seen that Foucault's genealogical analysis could play a major role in articulating the predicament of the marginalised groups and such sections of the society. It could reveal strategies such as relationship between knowledge-power adopted by the dominant (state, corporate, etc) against the marginalised groups. This acceptance of the relation between knowledge and power in political studies should lead us to rewrite the history of the subject. That would unearth the economic, political, and social contexts accompanying the development of knowledge/ power agenda.[559] It can also explore the role of intellectuals and other professionals in this process.

[559] John R Gibbons and Bo Reimer, *The Politics of Postmodernity: An Introduction to Contemporary Politics and Culture* (London, Sage Publications, 1999), 169-170

Since the language plays an important role in these knowledge/ power strategies, genealogical orientation could play its role in revelation of the implicit linguistic devices used in the discourses. It could make explicit the rhetorical nature of linguistic devices such as voices, vocabularies, texts, authors, canons, genres, conversations and dialogic methods. Such an analysis would extend the study of politics from a set of core notions such state, rights, justice, etc. to a whole gamut of topics such as domestic labour, media, sexual activity etc. that are usually not tackled by mainstream political science.

In fact, this approach has been adopted by some thinkers/ activists in articulating their concerns with regard to feminist, post-colonial, environment, movements among others. According to Jana Sawicki, 'feminist appropriation of Foucault has relied principally on genealogies of power/ knowledge. Some of these use analyses of disciplinary power to isolate disciplinary technologies that subjugate women as both subjects and objects of knowledge. Others acknowledge domination but centre on culture and strategies of resistance to hegemonic regimes of power/knowledge.'[560] She cites Sandra Bartky as the example of first strategy, and Susan Bordo as the proponent of the latter way of analysis.[561] Another feminist, points out that, Sawicki influenced by Foucault is Judith Butler. In her 1990 book, *Gender Trouble*, Butler draws on and criticises the work of Michel Foucault, Simone de Beauvoir, and Jacques Lacan. She criticises earlier feminists for making a distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender contending that such an approach still adheres to essentialism. Instead, the term 'woman' should be viewed as a debatable category which is complicated by class, ethnicity, sexuality, and other facets of identity. She suggests that gender is performative. This argument leads to the conclusion that there is no single cause for women's subordination and no single approach towards dealing with the issue.[562] Another feminist, Dorothy Smith, in her book on discursive construction and negotiation of both femininity and mental illness has used Foucault's genealogy in order to examine the way individuals negotiate with structures rather than simply submit to them.[563] Hence, we can see that Foucault's genealogical orientation could contribute substantially to issues such as these raised in 'third-wave feminism'.

Postcolonial theories, which attempt to deal with the dominant-dominated relationship, especially in the cultural and ideological arenas in the erstwhile colonies of European powers in last two centuries, have also drawn on the works of Foucault. One of the main proponents of this school is

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[560] Jana Sawicki, 'Foucault, Feminism and Questions of ldentity', in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault,* Op.cit (Ed.) Gary Gutting, 291.Also see, Jana Sawicki, Disciplining Foucault, (NY: Routledge 1991.)

[561] Sandra Lee Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity and the Modernisation of Patriarchal Power' in *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*, (NY: Routledge, 1990), 63-82. Also, Susan Bordo, Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathological as the Crystallization of Culture", in Diamond and Quinby, (Eds.), *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance*, 87-117. Both have been quoted by Jana Sawicki, Opcit., 286-313.

[562] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of ldentity* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

[563] Dorothy Smith, 'K is mentally ill', in *Text, Facts and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling*

Edward Said who in his well-known book, *Orientalism*, showed how the West or Europe identifies its former colonies as its 'Other' and inferior of what it is not. The East thus becomes the repository or projection of those aspects of themselves which Westerners do not choose to acknowledge (cruelty, sensuality, decadence, laziness, and so on). Ironically, at the same time, the East is seen as fascinating realm of the exotic, the mystical and the seductive. It also tends to be seen as homogenous; people there being anonymous masses rather than individuals, their actions determined by instinctive emotions (lust, terror, fury, etc.) rather than by conscious choices or decisions. In introduction to his book, *Orientalism*, Said acknowledges that his use of the notion of discourse was inspired by *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *Discipline and Punish* by Foucault.[564] Another post-colonial critic, Ashis Nandy in his book *The Intimate Enemy* adopts Foucault's analysis of power to account for the consequences of the colonial encounter.[565]

The subaltern studies, which is a kind of South Asian offshoot of the post-colonial theories, also has used Foucauldian notions to analyse Indian societies from the perspective of non-elites or subalterns as agents of political and social change.

Amongst the adherents of this school include Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee, Sudipto Kaviraj, Gyan Prakash, Dipesh Chakraborty, David Arnold, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.[566]

In their well-known work, 'Hegemony and Socialist Strategy', Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe provided a theoretical synthesis of the Marxist tradition of Gramsci and Althusser with the structuralism of Saussure and the post-structuralism of Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida.[567] They attempt to go beyond an essentialist and homogenising view of politics and society. To achieve this, they devised a new framework for the manner in which identities emerge. They argue that an identity is not fixed in the sense that it is not reducible to the autonomous individual closed in upon himself. However, it is not equivalent to social structure either. Hence, identity is neither fixed nor completely fluid. Rather, it is the product of a contradictory tension between necessity (the social structure) and contingency (individual autonomy). The relationship between identities is the basis of social antagonisms. There is no underlying reason for antagonisms. However, these antagonisms are unavoidable precisely because identities can never be entirely fixed.

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[564] Edward Said, Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient (London. Penguin, 1995), 3. Original edition was published in 1978 by Routledge and Kegan Paul. Also See, Edward Said "Michel Foucault 1927-1984", in Reflections on Exile and Other Essays, (Ed) Edward Said, (NY; Penguin, 2001), 187-197. and Edward Said, 'Foucault and the Imagination of Power' in Reflections on Exile, Op.cit, 239-245.

[565] Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: OUP, 1983)

[566] Partha Chatterjee, "The Nation and its Women", ", *Subaltern Studies Reader 1986-1995*, (Ed.) Ranajit Guha, (Delhi, OUP, 1997).240-262. Sudipto Kaviraj, "Imaginary Institutions of India", *Subaltern Studies VIL*, (Ed.) Partha Chatterjee and Gyan Pandey, (Delhi: OUP, 1992), 1-39 Gayatri C. Spivak, " Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxist Interpretations of Culture*, (Eds.) Cary Nelson and Lawarence Grossberg, (London: Macmillan, 1988), 271-313.Gayatri C. Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, (Ed.) Sarah Harasym, (NY; Routledge, 1990). David Arnold, "The Colonial Prison: Power, Knowledge and Penology in nineteenth Century India *"Subaltern Studies Reader 1986-1995*, Op. cit 140-178.

[567] E. Laclau and C Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategist* (London, Verso, 1985).

Hegemony is the provisional fixity of identities in relation to other identities in the context of social antagonisms. Thus, the term hegemony is an example of floating signifier whose meaning is both contextual and also independent of any specific context Antagonism forms the basis of politics and politics is what keeps the social structure open. Political actions take place only in relation to a set of 'sedimented' practices. These sedimented practices are bequeathed by history and tradition. In context of these insights movements such as feminism, ecology, multi-culturalism can be understood as autonomously and contingently constituted, and as an inevitable manifestation of class etc.

So, it was seen that Foucault's notion of critique is very effective in bringing out the denial of otherness in our society. For this reason, it has been widely used to bring out the nature of marginalisation of certain groups or causes such as women, environment, etc in our society. However, the main weakness of this mode of enquiry is its dependence on the Nietzschean concept of 'agonism', the eternal contest between humans. This Nietzschean concept on which Foucault's notion of power, knowledge and freedom is based, as we have shown earlier, is incoherent and reintroduces metaphysics to the analysis of power and freedom in the form of metaphysics of conflict.[568] This results in one-sidedness in his interpretation of society and its history.

Taylor's hermeneutical conception is able to offer a better way out of this metaphysics. The chief reason for it is the continental philosophical themes inspired by Hegel, Heidegger and Gadamer informing his work. Heidegger has been the key influence in formulation of Taylor's notions related to the study of politics. Heidegger's insight that human beings are self-interpreting animals is the ultimate ontological ground for his refutation of atomist form of liberalism such as that of Robert Nozick. This insight also forms part of his understanding of the distinctive Quebecois version of liberal democracy, as well as vision of identity that generates his politics of recognition. [569]The most important Heideggerian insight that becomes part of Taylor's philosophical style is the idea of philosophical exploration as a process of articulating horizons. According to Heidegger, there is no such thing as self-sufficient or self-contained mode of human understanding. Human understanding is always a situated phenomenon. Even the simplest and basic claim about a given phenomenon is itself oriented by/a pre-understanding of its subject and forms a broader vision of that subject. It stands in a relationship of mutual support to a number of other claims about it. Moreover, any given articulation of this broader totality of interrelated claims, pre-suppositions and entailments would reveal a broader context or horizon

[568] Tan Burkitt, 'Overcoming Metaphysics: Elias and Foucault on Power and Freedom'; in *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 1993; 23; 50Deep

[569] Mark Redhead, *Charles Taylor: Thinking and Living Deep Diversity*, (Rowman & Littlefield, NC. Maryland, 2002).

of unthematised assumptions and commitments in which it is embedded. We need to articulate our unthematised assumptions to have a deeper understanding of what is under investigation. Hence, our grasp of any particular perspective on the world should be essentially as worldly, temporal, and historical beings in a context. Each attempt to articulate 'horizon' in its full depth and breadth would open up further vistas whose articulation will further illuminate its object and prompt a re-articulation of the elements of the perspective that have already been revealed.[570] In other words, Taylor's attempts to understand specific moral and political views and theories are informed by the assumption that such understanding requires the identification, articulation, and willingness to rearticulate the broader horizon or context within which alone their human significance can become properly manifest.[571]

In order to counter his rivals, Taylor takes recourse to this Heideggerian insight of articulating the broader background or horizon so as to reveal the inadequacy of their conception of 'good'. The idea is not to show the rival's conception of goods to be wrong. Those too are attempts to arrive at some moral vision to attain goods. [572]However, due to inadequate articulation or formulation of the goods, their striving for achieving goods could be misdirected. Once we probe deep enough by articulating the unformulated themes of their horizon then we can show them their inadequacies and, perhaps, indicate to them a way to fuller and richer conception of the goods they are trying to achieve. In this process, we also probe our pre-judgments and presumptions about moral good. This also enriches our own conception about our moral goods. If our vision is superior to that of our rivals, then we should not only be able to show their inadequacy but also show how our conception of goods is able to account for their conceptions in a fuller way. Taylor has worked out these insights into working of various values or goods such as rights, freedom, democracy, recognition, etc., in the modern political context. The strength of his hermeneutical approach lies in his analysis of the philosophical presuppositions and social conditions and difficulties associated with the working of moral goods. This could be very effectively used in the study of contemporary political issues. In fact, Taylor himself has applied such hermeneutical insights for analysing current political issues.

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[570] *Stephen Loxton, Dialogic Life: Charles Taylor and The Ethics of Authenticity: An Introduction and Guide*, (New Generation Publishing, 2022).68.

[571] Stephen Mulhall, 'Articulating the Horizons of Liberalism" in *Charles Taylor* ed. Ruth Abbey (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press,2004), 122-123. Charles Taylor, Patrizia Nanz and Madeleine Beaubien Taylor, Reconstructing Democracy: How Citizens are Building from the Ground up, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2020).

[572] Hubert Dreyfus and Charles Taylor, *Retrieving Realism*, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachsetts,2015).102-130.

Taylor, for example, uses this mode of analyses in tackling the seemingly irreconcilable question about rights versus social goods.[573] Taylor claims that we cannot ask questions about individual rights without also taking into account social goods. He points out that in liberal democracies we balance individual rights and social goods all the time. For instance, the right to contribute to political campaigns against the need to protect politics from the influence of wealth, etc. He is not simplistic to suggest that social goods should always be preferred. But simply that falling back to a discourse of individual rights or social goods only is too restrictive. By revealing that procedural liberalism too often underplays the intensity, frequency, and importance of these trade-offs between goods. Taylor warns against the potential danger of too quickly prioritising individual rights to avoid the dangers of communal authority. Thus, he argues effectively for the importance of explicitly asking the question of social goods each time we consider individual rights. Such an analysis could be very useful in understanding our modem political discourse with its mind baffling variety of sources for moral goods.

Taylor applies these insights to critique Robert Nozick's variant of liberal individualism.[574] He places Nozick's thoughts in a tradition of liberal theories called 'atomism' which follows social contract theorists such as Hobbes, Locke, etc. It vouches for a society that is constituted by individuals primarily for the fulfillment of individual ends. It includes some variants of utilitarianism and contemporary theories that give primacy to individual rights over obligations. These theories accept a principle ascribing rights to men as binding unconditionally. On the other hand, obligation to belong to or sustain a society or to obey its authorities is considered to be a derivative. Like Locke, Nozick too makes individual rights a fundamental principle in politics and then proceeds to discuss whether, and in what conditions can we legitimately demand obedience to a state. Taylor argues that, given the truth of certain ontological claims about the priority of society over individuals, Nozick's position is not defensible.

Taylor begins his argument by trying to see the motivation behind Nozick's ascription of rights to human beings. Before seventeenth century, this kind of position would have been considered counter-intuitive as Aristotle's dictum, 'Man is a social animal', was then a truism. The reason behind such motivation is that these theorists came to regard human beings to have certain potentialities or capacities that are valuable and hence worthy of respect. It is the nature of these capacities that determines the shape of their proposed schedule of rights. Taylor points out that the right to freedom involves a capacity to make free choices. Like other human capacities, it is not given to individuals fully formed at birth but needs to be developed and matured in society.

[573] Paul Saurette, 'Questioning Political Theory: Charles Taylor's Contrarianism', *Political Theory*, Vol. 32 No. 5, (October 2004): 723-733.

[574] Charles Taylor, 'Atomism' in *PHS*, Op.cit .187-210. See also Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1974)

Further, the agent's mature capacity for free choice requires certain background conditions to be in place. Therefore, an agent has to belong to a society. Without society, there would be no maturation of the capacity for freedom in an individual. Taylor calls this 'social thesis'.[575] We can thus see that the right to freedom of an individual cannot be divorced from his 'obligation to belong'. Acceptance of this assertion entails the fact that we cannot commit ourselves to the sustenance and protection of individual freedoms without at the same time committing ourselves to sustenance and protection of the institutions and practices that makes it possible. It would be absurd to affirm individual rights unconditionally with 'obligation to belong' as an optional extra. Taylor's idea behind this kind of exercise is to demonstrate that even the 'most determined theoretically minimal form of liberal individualism will draw on a far broader horizon of value judgments and strong evaluations than it is willing to acknowledge'.[576]

In response to such kind of critique, Will Kymlicka, has criticised Taylor for subsuming the individual under the community.[577] He points out that Taylor is biased in his description of the way in which individuals acquire and judge their self-defining project. For Taylor, life projects are acquired only by treating communal values as 'authoritative horizons' which set goals for us., According to Kymlicka, Taylor underestimates the capacity of individuals to detach themselves from communal practices. In a free, liberal society, individuals can determine their life projects and are under no natural obligation to conform to cultural horizons that are 'given'. Hence, Taylor's depiction of the relation between the individual and community is arbitrarily weighted in favour of actually existing communities and is conservative in its moral and political orientation. It is wrong both at the descriptive and normative level.

However, one can see, Kymlicka misconstrues Taylor's position as he fails to distinguish between two levels, the transcendental level and the empirical level.[578] Taylor does not refute the individual's capacity for self-determination as such but sees it as a failure to appreciate the ontology required in making sense of this capacity. He does not claim that the individual must 'side' with the community in any particular case. It is up to the individual to endorse any practice as he/ she sees fit.

From Taylor's point of view, the kind of freedom that the liberal individualist values, is one by which human beings are capable of conceiving alternatives and to define their ends. This free individual or autonomous moral agent can only achieve and maintain his/ her identity in a certain type of culture. This specific and complex ideal of autonomy does not come into existence

[575] Nicholas H Smith, *Charles Taylor: Meaning, Morals and Modernity*, (Cambridge, U.K: Polity, 2002),145.
[576] Stephen Mulhall ' Articulating the Horizons of Liberalism" in *Charles Taylor* ed. Ruth Abbey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,2004), 110
[577] Will Kymlicka, *Liberalism, Community and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)
[578] Charles Taylor, 'The Validity of Transcendental Arguments' in *PA*, Op.cit,. 20-33. Also see Sabina Lovibond, *Realism and Imagination in Ethics*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983)

spontaneously at each successive instant. It is maintained in a network of institutions and associations. This ideal is acquired by moral autonomous agents through civilization via their families. So, the freedom which is so highly valued by Nozick could not have come into existence without the support of a web of institutions and a political community of certain type in a certain civilization. Hence, those who value such freedom cannot avoid an obligation to support and sustain its social preconditions.[579]

Similarly, a related set of questions about liberal conceptualisation of freedom is addressed in Taylor's critique of Isaiah Berlin whose clarification of distinction between positive and negative freedom in his classic essay, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', has become an important component of liberal self-definition.[580] According to Berlin, an individual is free on a negative conception of freedom when he/ she is free from interference or constraint by outside sources. It is secured when nothing is done to individuals against their consent. The positive conception of freedom focuses on empowering individuals to achieve goals or realise purposes once the agent has achieved self-mastery or self-direction. Because of the manner in which the conception of positive freedom has been misused by totalitarianism regimes, Berlin emphasises on the conception of liberty that focuses on maintaining individual spheres of non-interference, that is, negative liberty.

In response to Berlin's conception, Taylor does not ground himself exclusively on a contrary normative endorsement of positive over negative freedom. He argues that Berlin's argument, like Nozick's delineated earlier, is based on inadequate conception of the background distinction it presupposes. In Berlin's account of liberty, conceptions of negative liberty are exclusively based on an opportunity concept of freedom, whereas conceptions of positive liberty are exclusively exercise concepts.[581] According to Taylor, this misrepresents the real complexity of the idea of negative freedom which can be articulated as both, an exercise concept and the usual evocation of it in terms of opportunity concept. In fact, says Taylor, no simple opportunity concept of freedom is defensible because such conceptions do not draw distinction between types of action and hence types of constraints on action. What is significant is not that people are free to pursue some particular goals or ideals but that they should be free to pursue whatever they themselves consider to be a worthwhile goal or ideal. In reality, no person can do without distinguishing between some constraints on action as more significant than others. In order to illustrate this,

[579] Charles Taylor, *PHS*, Op.cit, 205-6

[580] Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in *Four Essays on Liberty* by Isaiah Berlin (Oxford, OUP, 1969) 118-172.

[581] See Charles Taylor, 'What is wrong with Negative Liberty' in *PHS*, Op.cit. 211-229. Linked to the notion of negative liberty, opportunity concept of freedom is evoked when freedom is matter of what is open to us to do, regardless of whether we do it or not. Exercise concept is evoked when one can exercise control over one's life. It is linked to notion of positive liberty.

Taylor gives the well-known example of Albania which is as follows: In Britain, people have freedom of religion but there are lots of traffic lights. In Albania, there are very few traffic lights but people do not have freedom of religion. Which of the country is freer? In Britain, one constantly has one's freedom restricted by traffic lights, whereas in Albania there is only one thing one cannot do, practice the religion one believes in. In purely quantitative terms, Britain appears to restrict the freedom of its citizen more than Albania.[582] But, Taylor explains, this conclusion is absurd. Hence, it is clear from this example that no meaningful notion of freedom can avoid distinguishing between some constraints on actions as more significant than others. The repression of right to political expression and the implementation of traffic lights are not equally significant ways of restricting our actions.

According to Taylor, Berlin fails to recognise that conception of negative freedom must operate within the broader background of attributions of significance and strong evaluation. Berlin also presents an oversimplified and monolithic conception of the distinction between positive and negative conceptions of freedom. He exaggerates the depth and necessity of conflict between the two conceptions of freedom. Finally, Berlin misidentifies the true source of dispute between liberals and non-liberals with respect to freedoms. The key issue is that the conception of positive liberty should not be related only to totalitarian regimes, but we must also explore the possibility of it being followed in other societies without the excess of totalitarianism. We can see that Taylor's re-articulation of the issue of positive and negative freedom is not meant to determine a particular answer to the normative question that Berlin poses, but to provide a framework within which such answers might be more profitably pursued. This is the strength of his hermeneutical way of understanding and can be applied to other political issues as well.

We have seen that Taylor does not reject liberal individualism. As a moral vision it appeals to him. He, however, argues that liberal values (rights) are not in conflict with social good (obligation or participation) but they presuppose such concerns.[583] Therefore, the kind of change Taylor proposes is one internal to liberalism rather than one devised to move us beyond that tradition. Hence, thorough liberal individualism is intimately related to community concern. They cannot be seen separately. By this account, he should be termed as a communitarian liberal. However, Taylor says that there is great confusion about liberal and communitarian issues often leading to a misunderstanding about the positions participants are espousing in the debate.[584]

Taylor clarifies his point in his well-known essay, 'Cross Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate'. He claims that the confusion is about two different sets of issues around which the

[582] Charles Taylor, *PHS* Op.cit, 219.
[583] Stephen Mulhall, 'Articulating the Horizons of Liberalism', *Charles Taylor*, (Ed.) Ruth Abbey (Cambridge University Press,2004,105-126.
[584] Charles Taylor, 'Cross Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate,' *PA* Op.cit.181-203,

debate between liberals and communitarians has been conducted. These two sets of issues are 'ontological 'and 'advocacy issues'. 'Ontological issues', concern what you recognise as the factors you will invoke to account for social life. Or, put in the formal mode, they concern the terms you accept as ultimate in the order of explanation.[585] With regard to this set of issues, Taylor is a 'holist' and an opponent of atomism. On the other hand, 'advocacy issues' concern the moral stand or policy one adopts.[586] On this set of issues, the spectrum of positions runs from those who give primacy to individual rights and freedom to those who give priority to community life and the good of collectivities. There is less sharp polarity of opinions (except at extremes) on advocacy issues than on ontological issues. Taylor points out that standard discussions on the issue have simplistically linked up atomism and individualism on one side and holism and collectivism on the other. However, the relation between these two sets of issues is much more complex. He emphasises that 'they are distinct in the sense that taking a position on one doesn't force your hand on the other. Yet they are not completely independent in that the stand you take on the ontological level can be part of the essential background of the view you advocate' [587]

Taylor's reformulation of these issues involved allowing for four possible complex positions: atomist individualists (such as Nozick), holist individualist (such as Humboldt), atomist collectivist (such as B.F. Skinner) and holist collectivists (such as Marx). He places himself as 'holist individualist' as someone who is 'fully aware of the (ontological) social embedding of human agents, but, at the same time, prizes liberty and individual differences very highly.[588] Evaluating liberal principles from the perspective of a holist ontology produces a different picture of conditions of those liberties than that presented by atomist individualists.

Taylor observes that moral or political individualism is likely to be unviable if holistic ontology is ignored. This, he claims, would be true for the kind of procedural liberal theories that are associated with the works of Rawls, Dworkin, Habermas and others. These theories are problematic because of their blindness to ontological issues of community and identity. Any society which embodies no conception of the good and is unified only by subscription to a set of procedures is unlikely to be able to secure the allegiance of its citizens. The problem with procedural liberalism, according to Taylor, is that it does not take into account the fact that citizen's willingness to make necessary sacrifices depends on their identification with the polity.[589]

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[585] Charles Taylor, *PA*,Op.cit, 181
[586] Charles Taylor, *PA*,Op.cit, 182.
[587] ibid.
[588] Charles Taylor, *PA*, Op.cit, 185.
[589] Charles Taylor, 'Democratic Exclusion (and its Remedies?)', in *Multiculturalism, Liberalism and Democracy*, (Ed.) Rajeev Bhargava, A.K Bagchi and R. Sudarshan, (New Delhi: OUP, 1999), 138-63.

In contrast to procedural liberalism, Taylor evokes the tradition of civic humanism, a kind of republican political thought that combines freedom with a substantial sense of political community. This tradition lays emphasis on the patriotic identification of citizens with their polity. Freedom is considered a common irreducible good and associated with a self-governing polity.[590] In this polity, citizens 'are politically active in shaping the public life of their community.' It's ideal is one of the self-government of a free people. This idea of a common good is much stronger than what atomist or procedural liberalism can accommodate.

In response to such criticisms, John Rawls in his work, 'Political Liberalism,' has acknowledged that his view of society embodies and requires a societally endorsed common understanding of what is of value in a political community.[591] But this common understanding of Rawls is of the right and not that of the good. It is the common good of the rule of law and of respect of one another's rights as citizens. It could also form the basis of a powerful notion of patriotism. However, from Taylor's perspective, it still leaves out any form of citizen identification that is based on a broader common conception of the good like that is embodied in political institutions and actions. In case the procedural liberalist goes in for such a broader conception of good life then it would violate the citizens' rights to equal respect under law.

According to Taylor, even such sophisticated forms of procedural liberalism as Rawls face problems. If no value is placed on participation for its own sake on ruling and being ruled in turn, then the governors of society and its citizens may well become locked in an essentially adversarial relationship in which the structures of political decision making are the objects of manipulation rather than identification. Moreover, claims Taylor, procedural liberalism is ethnocentric. It is based on the political tradition of the US as its sole test case and example. It is possible that procedural liberalism best fits that country's traditions but would be ill-suited to other political communities where patriotism centres on a national culture (such as France, Belgium and The Netherlands). In such countries neutrality between competing conceptions of good life is a non-starter because cultural-linguistic orientation cannot be considered to be a matter of political indifference. Hence, we can see from the above arguments that liberals who neglect the need to recognise a common good stand the risk of losing a viable political community capable of generating sufficient attachment on the part of its citizens to support and defend it.

[590] For the discussion of the notion of common good and how is it different from convergent goods see Charles Taylor, ' Irreducibly social goods', in *PA* Op. cit, 127-145.

[591] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), especially Lecture V.

In order to cope with this theme of ethnocentrism in the liberal discourse, Taylor turns to develop his notion of multi-culturalism and nationalism and hence the politics of recognition.[592] His basic claim about this issue is that identity is partly shaped by recognition and misrecognition. Individuals and groups can suffer serious damage if the people or societies around them mirror back a confirming or demeaning picture of themselves.[593] Taylor states that recognition operates at two levels. One, the intimate, in which selfhood is constituted through exchange with 'significant others' (those with whom we have close bonds) and the other, the public sphere.[594] The modern preoccupation with identity is due to two social tendencies. The first is the collapse of traditional social hierarchies which has been replaced by universalist and egalitarian conception of the dignity of human beings. This development has taken place in concurrence with the growth of democratic culture. The second is the process of individualisation' with emphasis on uniqueness and authenticity.[595] There is potential tension between these two tendencies. The first tendency emphasises 'sameness while the second tendency stresses particularity and uniqueness.' According to Taylor, the emergence of identity politics is to be understood in terms of this conflict and the tension between the two politics/ principles which these two tendencies generate.

The first principle with its emphasis on the sameness of all citizens, regardless of race, class, gender, etc. (the principle of universalism), often comes into conflict with their need to be recognised in their uniqueness (the politics of difference). In mainstream liberalism (liberalism-1), the politics of universalism is often conducted by the exclusion of a politics of difference.[596] Taylor argues that in liberal thought, equal respect is limited to the equal potential inherent in all human beings, but this does not entail equal recognition of accomplishments of human beings, as individuals or as groups. In fact, liberalism's commitment to 'difference-blind' polities often secretly 'negates identity by forcing people into a homogeneous mould that is untrue of them'[597] Moreover, this mould is often that of a hegemonic culture, whose own values override and alienate the social identities of minority groups. This is so because this kind of liberalism ignores the fundamentally dialogical character of human life.[598] In order to overcome this hegemony of dominant culture over minority, Taylor proposes an alternate model of liberalism (what Walzer termed liberalism-2), that includes the notion of 'group rights' in balance with individual rights.

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[592] Charles Taylor, "Politics of Recognition", in *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, (Ed) Amy Gutman, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992, 25-74

[593] Charles Taylor, "Politics of Recognition, Op.cit,25.

[594] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1991) 43-54.

[595] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, Op.cit, See Part IV.

[596] Michael Walzer, 'Comment, 'in A. Gutman (ed.) *Multiculturalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 11-12. Liberalism 1, according to Walzer, is concerned with the neutral state and individual rights while in Liberalism 2, state promotes survival and flourishing of particular culture and religions.

[597] ibid.

[598] Charles Taylor, "Politics of Recognition", Op.cit., 32.

This conception actively seeks to recognise the collective identity-related goals of cultural and social groups.

Hence, we can see that Taylor is also able to account for the 'denial of otherness' through his hermeneutical approach. Not only is he able to show the inadequacies of the mainstream liberal politics by pointing out at what is implicit in its conception but not recognised so, he is also able to suggest changes from within it. Hence, he is also able to broaden its scope so as to minimise the denial of otherness in it to make it a better moral vision. This approach could be very useful for articulating the issues of aboriginals, immigrant, some strands of feminists, nationalist movements and proponents of identity politics. This model of political activism has been growing in popularity ever since its inception in 1990s. Taylor himself has applied this model in the analysis of the problem of Quebec in Canada. He maintains that Canadian Federation's survival depends upon acknowledging the deep diversity at its heart (at the second level); a diversity which goes beyond the first-level diversity of individual differences. For him, Canada would have to be a mosaic identity combining deep diversity, the legal recognition of cultural differences, with a sense of belonging to the same community. Unless it does so, claims Taylor, genuinely democratic decision making is impossible since one part of the country would continue to feel excluded from what holds the rest together.

The strength of Taylor's hermeneutical approach can be gauged from the fact that Jurgen Habermas, one of the foremost proponents of the sophisticated version of procedural liberalism along with Rawls, had to revise his position in response to Taylor's criticism. Habermas had to modify his moral theory and soften his Kantianism in order to accommodate the logic of strong evaluation.[599] Influenced by Taylor's insight that identity shaping values are not arbitrary, Habermas has drawn on Taylor's concept of strong evaluation to explain the 'ethical' use of practical reason. In the ethical use of practical reason, we strive to clarify the strong values that define our identity. According to Habermas, the goal of ethical use of practical reason is 'hermeneutic self-clarification', the clarification of our conception of the good.[600]

In recent years, Taylor has broadened his horizon from humanitarian themes of modernity to spiritualism and religion.[601] He attempts to understand the process of secularisation in the West in order to reframe the questions concerning the understanding of the self in our age. Taylor

[599] Nicholas Smith, *Charles Taylor*, Op.cit, 107. For another attempt at incorporating the notion of strong evaluation within broadly Kantian framework for thinking about justice, see Paul Ricoeur, *The Just* tr. David Pellauer (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000).

[600] Jurgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Reason*, tr. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge: Polity, 1990) and J Habermas, *Justification and Application* tr. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge: Polity, 1993). Habermas defines two other kinds of practical reason as pragmatic or prudent use of practical reason and moral use.

[601] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, Michigan,2014)

claims that there are three kinds of theories about secularisation in the West.[602] One that describes the process of secularisation as the decline of religion, beliefs, and practices, which he calls Secularity 1. The second, Secularity 2 is the view that considers secularisation to be the retreat of religion from public space. In contrast to these two perspectives, Taylor proposes a third position, Secularity 3, which refers to a modern context of understanding in which belief and unbelief coexist uneasily. In this understanding, one believes or refuses to believe in God, a cross-pressured condition in which our experience of and search for fullness occurs. Thus, Taylor attempts to answer how it is possible for many Europeans and their cultural heirs around the world 'to experience moral fullness, to identify the locus of our highest moral capacity and inspiration, without reference to God, but within the range of purely intra-human powers'.[603] Taylor insists that transformative political and spiritual changes, rather than merely economic ones, have contributed to the constitution of this modern moral order. This new religious life under 'secularisation' is thus characterised by/both a continuous destabilisation and re-composition of religious forms. By this analysis of secularisation, Taylor attempts to articulate moral sources that have the potential for empowering people to act morally and provide orientation to their lives. It could also inform us how people could go wrong about identifying their moral sources and could take recourse to violence as a means to achieve their moral fulfillment, as fundamentalists do.

One can see from the above account that Taylor's hermeneutical orientation towards society can be effectively used for the study of politics in our times. This can be seen by various analyses and critiques of the political issues of our times that he himself has made. Taylor's approach is not to show his rival's conception to be totally wrong but to show its incompleteness. He considers his rivals' orientation as failing to acknowledge some aspects of their moral vision. It is implicit in one's 'horizon' but unacknowledged.

When these unacknowledged aspects of our moral vision of good are acknowledged by articulation, they can indicate us the way to a fuller and richer conception of good. In this process, we also probe our pre-judgments and presumptions about moral good. This also enriches our own conception about our moral goods.

Taylor has worked out these insights into working various values or goods such as rights, freedom, democracy, recognition, in the modern political context. The strength of his hermeneutical approach lies in his analysis of the philosophical presuppositions and social conditions and difficulties associated with the working of these moral good. Hence, it is seen that Taylor's Post-Heideggerian hermeneutical orientation towards the study of politics is well-suited

[602] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*,), op.cit. Jocelyn Maclure and Charles Taylor, *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience*, trans. Jane Marie Todd, (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2011.)
[603] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Op.cit, 244-45

for the explanation of political and social life. By this approach he avoids the unfounded optimism of extreme radicalism of trying to change everything at once without giving in to an attitude of perceiving our predicament as unrevisable completely. Following Hegel, he calls this way of orienting to reality as 'situated freedom' and, perhaps, a way out of our predicament.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, a comparative evaluation of the writings of the two interpretive modes of inquiries: hermeneutics, as articulated in the writings of Charles Taylor, and genealogy, as expressed in the work of Michel Foucault has been undertaken. The main problem addressed is whether pursuing interpretation as a mode of enquiry means abandoning our ability to set standards for judging changes in society/ politics as good or bad and succumbing to relativism. In naturalism this is not a problem as we assume that there is a reality independent of language used to depict it which can act as a standard for theories to be compared. However, in an interpretive mode of enquiry our sense of reality is formed by the language we use to depict that reality and thus there is no independent reality to compare with the former. Our sense of reality is internally generated by the language categories used to grasp that reality. If we have two or more different sets of categories to grasp reality, then they would generate different senses of realities that may be incommensurable to each other. Hence, the problem of relativism seems to be intimately related to the interpretive approach.

Taylor and Foucault have approached this problem of overcoming naturalism and the issue of relativism in radically different ways through hermeneutics and genealogy respectively. Each has different implications for the study of politics/ society. Taylor claims that despite our sense of reality being internally generated by language we can still determine one interpretation to be superior to another and consequently endorse one way of life as superior to another. On the other hand, Foucault takes a value-neutral stance and claims that there is no way we can claim one description of reality to be superior to the other as they are effects of arbitrary power-knowledge strategies. Two rival thinkers have been compared with their key themes being ‘coherence’ and ‘discontinuity/ rupture’ respectively. They do not have any apparent common criteria to arbitrate between them.

The notion of practical reason inspired by Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor has been invoked in this thesis to compare the two thinkers. According to this notion, we can compare two seemingly incommensurable positions by arguing not in absolute terms for all times but in relation to each other as rival positions in a specific context. If one can show that the movement/ slide from one position to another is an epistemic gain (more clarifying and error-reducing) and that the reverse cannot be true, then we can claim that the second position compares favourably in relation to the first position. The second position is able to account for what was outside the scope of the original standard of the first position.

In this thesis, this notion of practical reasoning has been used in two cases. First, to prove that in the discourse of scientific explanation, the slide from naturalism to interpretive approach is an epistemic gain. Second, to demonstrate that Taylor's post-Heideggerian hermeneutics is able to better cope with demands for an effective, critical human/ social science than the Nietzschean-inspired genealogical approach of Foucault.

In the first instance, it is found that the nature of scientific explanation in its formal conceptions such as classical induction or D-N Scheme or falsification theory is riddled with methodological and philosophical difficulties. Attempts at overcoming these difficulties shift the discourse of scientific explanation from emphasis on logical and rational factors towards extra-rational and extra-logical factors (institutional, historical, sociological factors). Kuhn points out that scientific theories do not describe independent reality and 'facts' are perceived so because of the 'paradigm' used to grasp them. In other words, facts are internally generated by the paradigm. This claim is akin to the one made by the proponents of the interpretive approach in their constitutive theory of language. Similarly, Quine, in his notion of under-determination of theory by facts, claims that a proposition is true in a language or a conceptual framework rather than at the level of words or sentences, thereby having the whole language as the unit of meaning and truth. This claim again undermines the correspondence theory of language normally invoked by the proponents of naturalism and is closer to the claims on language by the interpretive approach. It is found that attempts at overcoming the inadequacies of the scientific explanation model lead us towards the basic premise of interpretive orientation such as the constitutive theory of language. The slide from nomologicalism towards interpretative orientation results in an epistemic gain, doing away with serious shortcomings of the scientific-explanation model. It better accounts for our scientific explanation practices. Therefore, Taylor and Foucault hold a prima facie case for interpretive social science vis-a-vis empirical social science and are well justified in challenging them on the ontological and philosophical grounds.

In trying to overcome naturalism, it is found that both these thinkers were attempting to go beyond the legacy of the Enlightenment project. In this endeavour, they both were greatly influenced by the path-breaking work of Heidegger. Following him, both rejected the notion of the disengaged self and the correspondence theory of language/ truth. They can be seen as 'anti-essentialist' thinkers trying to go beyond the 'essentialist' way of conceiving reality by the empiricist and rationalist approaches. Both approach history in a contingent manner that diffuses or disperses the subject in the history. Despite vast differences in their perspectives, Taylor and Foucault have similarities at this first/basic level because of Heidegger's influence. The differences in their orientations at the second level are due to different readings of two masters,

Hegel and Nietzsche in their works. While Taylor in his works gives primacy to Hegel, Foucault is a Nietzschean to the core.

The second instance where the notion of practical reason has been invoked, is in comparison of seemingly incommensurable modes of enquiries by Taylor and Foucault. The two thinkers have been evaluated on three key themes, namely, human subject (depth as achievement vs. depth as illusion/trap), orientation towards knowledge (non-deterministic teleology vs genealogy) and notion of critique (politics of accord vs politics of discord). We have found that Taylor's post-Heideggerian hermeneutics seems to make a much better case as a mode of enquiry for the study of politics/ society than Foucault's Nietzschean-inspired genealogical approach.

In our evaluation of the notion of self in the writings of Taylor and Foucault we have found that the notion of human subject implicit in the genealogical mode of enquiry is extremely inadequate for the study of human sciences. It totally undermines the active aspects of human agency because of its emphasis on study of the society/politics at the discursive level only.

The reason behind Foucault's emphasis on the study of human society at the discursive level was to counter the subjectivist conception of 'self' (e.g., Sartre) as completely rational, entirely coherent, fully aware and in absolute control of itself. He wanted to point out that self is a fragmentary and a multiple phenomenon that varies according to social circumstances and social position as well as the unconscious forces. In fact, the very idea of the human subject is a social construction, produced through social discourses. The subject is not entirely free but shaped by numerous determinations. It is constituted within the play of language (and discourse more generally) and the field of practices and power relations. It is a product of a number of cross-cutting discourses and practices. Similarly, it is found that while working out his notion of power, Foucault completely leaves out individuals. For him, power is a 'shifting network of alliances' of which people are simply conduits through which power operates, while also being produced by the power.

In an attempt to focus on discourses and practices, Foucault moves on to the other extreme. He conceives discourses and practices to be beyond the reach of the productive activities of human beings. The human self is denied any constitutive role in the circulation of power and production of social life in general. It is merely a product of power. The human subject is constituted in and by the play of power, discourses and practices. While this conception effectively brings out the nature of domination in modern society, it totally undermines the active aspects of agency. Human subjects come out as passive beings, totally determined by the discourses. In his later work, Foucault did attempt to rectify this defect to an extent by his notion of 'aesthetic of existence' in which a subject constitutes itself in an active fashion as a work of art. But because of his premature death Foucault could not adequately work it out and connect the two phases of

his work. In his work, there is no connection between the constituted and constituting self and it is not revealed how the technologies of the self-proliferate in the modern era.

Hence, the study finds that Foucault never really adequately theorized both sides of the structure/agency problem. He failed to interweave the two levels and give a full account of both, the structure and human activity. In order to counter the bourgeois myth of free, rational subject, he is found to have completely neglected the situated interaction or inter-subjective as the important domain. Foucault is correct in pointing out that the individual should not be viewed as the sole source of meaning and that discourses are also important in the production and establishment of meanings. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that it is the only valid level of analysis.

In fact, structure and action are intimately related. It is only through human actions that structure is constantly renewed. When the human agents fail to maintain practices, the structure is altered. Therefore, giving an absolute priority to structure makes as little sense as the equal and opposite error of subjectivism, which gives absolute priority to action. So, neither of the two, structure and agency, should be given complete priority over the other. The problem with Foucault and other post-structuralists is that they take the one-sided view of emphasising only on the structural level while totally ignoring the creative and transformative potential of human agents. For them, the relationship between structure and action is only one way, that is, from structure to action and not the other way round. This gives us the picture of a very passive subject who cannot escape modes of objectification and subjectification of discourses. In other words, it becomes impossible for us to evoke the notion of freedom which seems so indispensable for our social/ political life.

Further, structuralists and post-structuralists have been over-enthusiastic about the fact that any action requires a background language of practices and institutions to make sense; and that while there will be a particular goal sought in the action. Those of its features which pertain to its structural background will not be objects of individual purpose. This insight has also been articulated by other schools of thought such as post-Heideggerian hermeneutics without making the grave error of dismissing the subject altogether.

In contrast to Foucault, this thesis finds that Taylor is able to give an account that overcomes the defects of subjectivism and is also able to avoid the pitfalls of the post-structuralist over emphasis on the structural level. Taylor counters the 'disengaged view of agency' by emphasising that the self is constituted by the language. Language is not an accidental feature of our existence, nor is it a tool of the individual. Rather, we possess the world through language because we experience the world mediated through our concepts. It is the pre-condition of any truth and understanding. Language is by nature of the community, social and inter-subjective. It has 'disclosive' power but is not something that is completely at our disposal. Hence, an

individual is more than a 'solitary creature'; he/she is part of a community. It is 'I that is we, and we that is I'.[604] In making such claims, Taylor emphasizes on the structural aspects of the self. Moreover, this self is not fully transparent because language is not something that we can fully control or dominate. It precedes us. It is always more than what any particular use of language can encompass. Following Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, Taylor points out that we need a background or 'horizon' to grasp reality. 'The background or horizon of our understanding makes it possible for us to make sense of our experiences. We cannot have both the background and the experience explicit simultaneously.' These claims account for the unconscious by Taylor. Hence, it is found that all the major insights of post-structuralism concerning structural level are accounted for by the post-Heideggerian hermeneutics of Taylor.

Despite his emphasis on the structural level, Taylor does not neglect the role of agency in humans. According to him, an important component for this dimension is his notion of expression. There is a kind of *telos* working in the case of humans. 'We are creatures seeking "depth" as we have "potentialities" to move towards moral goods that are independent of us (strong goods/strong evaluations) and towards which our desires and feelings implicitly direct us.' Our desires or intentions are implicit in our tacit understanding of a situation. But they are unformulated and not choate or clear to us. When we make these implicit orientations and understandings explicit in a medium through articulation or expression, we bring out our motivation towards these objects of concern. We become clear and conscious about them. As a result, our feeling towards these objects of concern too changes, opening up 'plurality of ways' for us. Our articulation or expression thus shapes the horizon of our understanding and hence our identities. As we become conscious of our motivation towards our objects of concern the quality of our action too changes. Our actions become more effective in practice, and we attain depth. However, these articulations can never be made fully explicit because our articulations involve language, and we cannot fully articulate what we are taking as given (i.e., background). We can clarify one language with another, which in turn can be further clarified, and so on. But we can never articulate the background and the experience possible due to this background simultaneously.[605]

For Taylor, human actions can be seen as a continuum, ranging from unreflecting actions to highly conscious actions. In conscious actions the actors are highly aware of their motivation towards objects concerning them which results in more effective practice. Conscious actions are achievements of sorts. In achieving consciousness humans are able to transform the quality of

[604] 'I that is We, We that is I.', *Perspectives on Contemporary Hegal, (*Eds.) *Italo Testa and Luigi Ruggu* (2016).
[605] C Taylor, 'What is human agency?' in HAL Op.cit, 16-27. Charles Taylor, SS, Op.cit, 14-20. Stephen Mulhall, 'Articulating the Horizon of Liberalism' in Charles Taylor Ed Ruth Abbey Op.cit 104-11.

their actions. To become conscious is to be able to act in a new way. The 'mental' is the inward reflection of what was originally external. Self-conscious understanding is the fruit of an interiorisation of what was originally external. They attain depth and lead a more complex and a rich life. Thus, by articulating their predicament, becoming conscious of their motivations towards objects of desires/ concerns they can partially re-shape their situation or identity. Hence, for Taylor the human agency is a two-way process. Although shaped by the structure, yet humans can never dominate it but can partly reshape it through their actions. They do not have 'radical autonomy' or a situation of no freedom but a 'situated freedom'. An individual is not just shaped by the structure but in some ways is also a potential active producer of new meanings and new practices that shift his/ her determinacy from one to another form. They have the capacity to negate the 'objectivated forms' to become open to newer forms of life experience. Thus, Taylor does not neglect the active aspects of agency notwithstanding his emphasis on the structural level.

In contrast to Taylor, the notion of expression is inadequately worked out in the genealogical approach by Foucault and is one of the major reasons for his neglect of the transformative potential of the agent/subject. Unlike Taylor for whom expression of human predicament enables them to veer towards strong evaluations (regarding reality/ moral goods towards which implicit desires direct them) and achieve potentialities for a better moral life, Foucault holds a very cynical view about the role of articulation in life. For Foucault, pursuance of 'depth' is entrapment of humans in knowledge-power strategies. Depth is not an essential quality of the human self but a dimension that comes into being as an effect of power. It is the dimension in which human beings are identified, interrogated, constituted, and even subjugated. In trying to gain more knowledge, and in seeking truth, humans do not become freer, healthier or wiser but become more and more entangled in the strategies of power. Depth is the space continually shaped by a variety of disciplinary and surveillance power strategies. Foucault claims that the conception of the self as a subject of deep truth functions to disguise the operation of power in which power plays an important part. Since humans think that truth originates within, they avoid examining the social, economic, and political practices in which truth and the subject are produced. Hence depth of the self, according to Foucault, is an effect of power and is a trap in the name of truth and freedom. Humans are constituted as not just beings with a depth, but become beings directed towards depth (i.e., develop teleology); or become beings that dwell in and grope through depth. Thus, Foucault gives a very bleak picture of the modern self with depth.

For Foucault, articulation of depth does not open up a plurality of ways but entwines the human agency further in power strategies. This is so because 'depth hermeneutics' attempts to recover hidden or real meanings of the events/text being studied. The revelation of hidden or deep

meanings involves comparing various truth claims to answer questions such as, ‘whether meaning is restricted or infinite’, or at ‘what level is meaning located’. Since no interpretation is primary and the meaning of the text lies not in its interiority but at the surface, in the small specific details and shifts in the form of practices, seeking depth becomes a never-ending task. Instead, Foucault suggests, 'pure description' or 'happy positivism’ as the alternative. This denies even the notion of causation. For him, the role of articulation is not in more faithful expression of human predicament but in being rhetorically disruptive to show the interest that shapes knowledge. By a clever mix of erudite knowledge with local memories, he arrives at lowly, contingent, origins of events to disrupt the smooth ‘unities' of the evolutionist narratives. Thus, for Foucault, articulation makes sense only in unsettling the 'unities’ of the previous knowledge-power strategies. It works well as a critique in contrast, but it does not affirm anything to offer positive content. Hence, Foucault assigns only rhetorical significance to articulation in language.

Knowledge, for him, is always related to interests and power; it's an imposition of order on a primeval chaos. Truth and other categories of discourses are 'unities' that become fixed over time due to power configuration. The metaphorical origins are forgotten, and they appear to us as 'objective truths'. Each episteme in history has its own version of truth. There are no abstract and universal truths for all times. Our sense of truth changes with the change in power-knowledge strategies. Truth is relative to episteme both of which are incommensurable to each other. The new episteme arises from ruptures in the ordering of the experience of the earlier one. Thus, there is never enough stability in reality to be able to talk about knowledge. This is the reason why Foucault himself never suggested any hope to overcome the dismal state of the modern disciplinary society. He totally sidesteps the significance of the notion of expression emphasised by the modern Romantic movement. Denial of the role of expression in human life thus pushes Foucault towards irrationality. Since he takes a value-neutral stance, there is no ground left for him to have standards to evaluate human actions and describe changes in practices as gain or loss. This is rather paradoxical as Foucault's genealogical studies are brilliant in exposing the negative aspects of the modern disciplinary society and yet they do not suggest ways to overcome them. In fact, he takes his arguments to the extreme and is dismissive of the humanitarian legacy of the West. For him, the concept of human is the creation of modern discourses of the last 200 years and would disappear with the advent of structuralism and post-structuralism. The notion of 'depth' is correlated with the notion of ‘man' and is the result of disciplinary power with normalizing gaze. The inward peep humans take because of depth makes them internalise power and wilfully become subjects of power, thereby intensifying the power strategies even further. Hence, it can be seen that Foucault's denial of significance of the notion of expression also results in passive conception of self and an anti-modern thrust in his work.

In the examination of the second key theme of comparison between Taylor and Foucault, that is, the mode of orientation towards knowledge this study finds Foucault's genealogy unable to meet several of the demands of a good explanation. Taylor's non-deterministic teleological hermeneutics makes a much better case than Foucault's pervasive power genealogy.

Due to Foucault's neglect of active aspects of agency in his work he had to attribute a 'purposefulness without purpose' to history. The expression 'purposefulness of purpose' means that there is a logic of the context itself that cannot be attributed to agents as their deliberate plan or conscious purpose. For Foucault, constitution and maintenance of the entire modern system of control and domination could be seen as an example of this conception. But, unlike some other cases such as Marxist 'invisible hand theories', in Foucault's case attribution of logic to 'events without design' does not make sense. He is unable to relate the underlying systematicity to the purposeful actions of agents. For adequate explanation we need to link the two levels as the strategic pattern cannot be just left hanging unrelated to our conscious action. It is true that not all patterns emerge from conscious action but that does not mean we have to give up our attempt to make all patterns intelligible in relation to our conscious actions. Because of his strong commitment to systematicity, Foucault does not even attempt this. Even if he had tried so, it would not have been possible for him unless he abandoned some or other parts of his declared position (e.g., micro-, macro- politics, etc.). Hence, Foucault's genealogical studies by describing events at structural level only and not linking them to individual conscious plans, end up assigning a 'purposefulness without purpose' to history and are extremely inadequate explanations.

This 'purposefulness without purpose' undermines the role of 'conscious actions' in the formation of structures. To overcome this defect, Foucault puts forth Nietzsche-inspired conception of power which is all pervasive. Even categories such as truth and liberation do not have independent significance but are effects of power operation. Because of such a conception of power Foucault is pushed to inescapable relativism. According to Taylor, Foucault does not judge between different forms of life/regimes (relativism of forms) because the notion of truth and freedom do not have any independent significance for him. Transformation from one regime to another cannot be a gain in truth or freedom as truth or freedom stand redefined in a new context. They are incomparable in different regimes of truth. One cannot judge a regime as true or false from within (monolithism of forms). Also, regimes of truths are totally identified with

their imposed truths. Thus, by a combination of two theses, namely relativism of forms, and monolithism of forms, Foucault ends up in a kind of inescapable relativism.[606]

Since Foucault's genealogical studies are excellent critique of modern disciplinary society his relativism is paradoxical. While his critiques show how some 'goods' are repressed or remain unrealized in the modern disciplinary society, he still refuses to suggest any ways to overcome these shortcomings. As shown by Taylor, there are three evolving lines of analyses in his historical works each of which is connected with a certain line of critique of our society. Surprisingly, goods implicit in each level of critique are repudiated by the next level of analyses, resulting in a kind of circular-denial. Different levels of analyses seem to cut each other out and result in no firm ground to judge.[607]

This defeats the very purpose of undertaking any analysis which is to make human social practices more effective. Foucault is seriously compromised on this issue as he refuses to assert that some change in human understanding could be a gain. As a result, many of the achievements of the modern humanitarian movement which most of us would take as irreversibly desirable have been described by Foucault in a value-neutral way, as any other change. For instance, Foucault refuses to accept the modern prison system with less physical violence as positive over the classical mode of punishment that celebrated brute violence.

Besides relativism, Foucault's notion of power seems to be problematic on other counts too. For one, as discussed above, the primacy assigned to power and description of other values as mere effects of power does not survive close scrutiny. Rather than mere appendages of power the notion of truth and freedom are in fact indispensable for the notion of power. These concepts belong to a semantic field and do not make sense when considered singly. They are related to each other in such a way that one cannot have a concept of power that leaves out truth and power from this semantic field. The notion of power requires a notion of constraint imposed on someone by a process related to human agency. Otherwise, the term 'power' loses all meaning. It requires some notion of constraint imposed on someone with regard to some significant desire. It requires a victim if not a clearly identified perpetrator of power. Otherwise, it is not clear that the imposition is in any sense an exercise of domination. Hence, power cannot be separated from some relative removal of restraint, from an unimpeded fulfillment of these desires/purposes. This

[606] Taylor, Charles, 'Foucault on Truth and Freedom', *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Ed.) David Couzens Hoy, Cambridge MA: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 69-102. Political Theory, 12 (1984), 152-83. Reprinted in Philosophy and the Human Sciences, 152-84.

[607] Taylor, Charles, 'Foucault on Truth and Freedom', *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Ed.) David Couzens Hoy, Cambridge MA: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 69-102. Political Theory, 12 (1984), 152-83. Reprinted in Philosophy and the Human Sciences, 152-84.

is exactly what is required in a notion of freedom. Hence, it is seen that Foucault's notion of power does not make sense without the notion of liberation.

Similarly, the notion of liberation requires the notion of 'truth'. This because power works by getting us to agree and concur in the name of truth. It foists illusion on us; proceeds by masks and disguises. When one talks about mask and falsehood then one also needs to consider the corresponding notion of truth. That means truth is subversive of power. It aids in lifting of impositions or in liberation. It can be seen that Foucault's notion of power requires not only correlative notions of truth and liberation, but also the standard link between them, which makes truth the condition of liberation. In denying the notions of truth and freedom while accepting primacy to power, the genealogical orientation is incoherent. Hence, the notion of truth and freedom are related to the notion of power. They belong to a common semantic field. If one evokes the notion of power, then one cannot deny the notion of truth and the notion of freedom.

Not only are key categories of Foucault's genealogy such as power, truth and liberation problematic but they are also justified by rhetorical strategies rather than sound arguments. For instance, Foucault conceives truth as imposition of forms upon material not designed to receive it. Since all truth is imposition, no change can be a gain. When one challenges this notion of truth by making statements about truths (more truth about truth), then Foucault points out that all truths are imposition. Thus, there is no space left for others to counter Foucault's notion of truth. Similarly, Foucault comes up with evidence only for claiming that certain historical regimes of truth are repressive. And from this claim he jumps to the conclusion that discourse is the violence we do to things and that all regimes are equally or incommensurably imposed through rhetoric. Thus, the possibility that some change in understanding of self could be a gain in principle is ruled out by him. He also rules out the possibility that rivals could have another language to make their case. Thus, in a rhetorical manner, Foucault concludes that whosoever is not in agreement with the genealogical mode of enquiry is suffering from a Panglossian belief in a teleologically ordered universe. Instead, he should have come up with sound arguments in a non-contradictory manner to clarify the issue of truth in a better way. Hence, it is not only the primacy assigned to power that is problematic but also that it has been justified on the basis of rhetoric rather than straight and sound arguments at the meta-theoretical level.

Foucault has had to take recourse to this problematic Nietzschean notion of all-pervasive power because he ignored the notion of ‘thrownness' that formed such an important part of Heidegger's phenomenology. He theorizes as if humans do not have any prior identity. Foucault ignores the fact humans have already 'become something' and have a history. Since humans have history, questions about truth and freedom can arise in the transformations they undergo or project. Humans are not just self-enclosed in the present but live in time that has a past which helps

define their identity, and a future which puts it (identity) again in question. This is why issues about truth and freedom cannot be put aside; these are indispensable conditions for human agency. By ignoring these significant issues, Foucault's genealogical mode of enquiry is seriously compromised/ constrained. Despite all its radical postures, on ultimate analysis, genealogy is found to be incoherent because it has not been able to explain the changes in society adequately. With no conception of change as advancement researchers are left nowhere and are at loss to make sense of their studies.

In contrast, Taylor hermeneutics is able to cope with these requirements much more adequately through its concepts of potentialities and telos in the human subject. Taylor claims that there is a kind of 'a priori unity in humans'. A basic condition of making sense of human life is to 'grasp our lives in a narrative'. Making sense of our lives as a story or narrative is not an optional extra. Our lives exist in a space of inescapable questions that can be answered only by coherent narratives. Further, we (humans) have inescapable temporal structure of our being in the world. From a sense of what we have become, among a range of present possibilities, we project our future being. Therefore, unlike Foucault, we cannot have just any interpretation to ourselves. But the very nature of ‘human existence' poses certain questions for us that we cannot escape. It imposes a certain kind of 'structure' on us through notions such as narrative identity, strong evaluation, etc. If we explore 'the conditions of intentionality' then we would find that language and holism are other indispensable features of human existence. Hence, **Taylor's teleology suggests a certain 'ontology of humans'**.

The reason one cannot do without such a notion of change as advancement is that we have 'rationality as an inescapable potentiality’ within us. This potentiality has been articulated in various manners in different cultures. Ancient Greeks have articulated this potentiality for the West. It makes a hierarchical ranking between the rational and non-rational so as to see change in life/history as 'gain/progress’. If one does not make this distinction, the potential for rationality, in humans, remains unrealized. Moreover, certain changes in history, of which the development of rational discourse is an example, once they come about, are more or less irreversible. They could be reversed only by a massive disruption in human society or by some natural or man-made catastrophe. But, normally speaking, humans don't want to go back on them. They become permanent and inescapable aspirations. Such ‘potentialities (other examples are invention of writing, rise of city-dwelling, etc.) are often grouped under the title 'civilization'. According to Taylor, we need some notion of potentiality to make sense of these changes. Those who have undergone these changes, tend to define them as development, evolution, or realization of the properly human. Therefore, we can claim that history has a shape; there is 'a before and after’, a ‘watershed'. History, in this sense, for the West, has a direction. However, to speak of

potentialities does not mean to suppose a unitary set of potentialities. We can and do increasingly recognise diverse lines of possible developments. While reading history, we need not restrict ourselves to a singular choice between progress or decline, fulfillment or loss. We can have elements of both loss and gain in the same reading.

The criticism of potentiality or teleology that it is not rational because it cannot question its own premises also does not hold true. As per this criticism, teleological account already has a bias of its own design implicit in it. It cannot question its own premises. Therefore, it is not 'science enough' as science must accept whatever evidence comes up. That the evidence does not fit into our perspective or is unpleasant should not impede our pursuance of science. Teleology fails on this count as it tends to make humans pursue 'purposes' as part of their 'essences' or nature. It tends to obliterate or marginalise otherness. Besides this Teleology is also often criticised for being inescapably deterministic, that is having a single line of unfolding of potentialities or unfolding of potentialities in fixed stages. In contrast, Taylor conceives teleology in a non-deterministic way. According to his teleological hermeneutics, understanding always involves questioning one's own premises besides taking the other's point of view into account. It is not simply projection of self's values onto the other but a 'fusion of horizon' which results in a new understanding of the self. This new self is neither ours nor theirs but one's modification of the self in relation to encounter with the other. It comes with a new language of 'perspicuous contrast'. Hence, this version of teleology does not have a bias as it reviews its own presuppositions when it encounters the other and comes up with a fusion of horizon.

Further, according to Taylor, the notion of potentiality is indispensable but other deterministic features of teleology such as single line of unfolding of potentiality or unfolding of it in fixed stages, should be done away with. This means that our conception of history would not be an inexorable unfolding of events in a necessary way but open-ended and contingent occurrences of events. It may not be simply gain or loss but loss and gain both, in the same reading. Hence, we need not hold on to the full-scale Hegelian theory of history to believe that some self-interpretations are less distorting or more clairvoyant than others. All we need is the notion of potentiality in us. Otherwise, we cannot make sense of change as advancement. We can see examples of such changes in our lives all the time. It involves the possibility of a change in life forms which can be understood, as a move towards a greater acceptance of truth. Such processes are at work in society and history all the time. We can give a convincing narrative account of the passage from one to the other as an advancement in knowledge, a step from a less to a better understanding of the social practice in question. There is a gain in understanding and as a result better grip over reality. On the other hand, a similar plausible passage from the second to the first cannot be undertaken. There is a kind of asymmetrical relation between them. Hence, while the

notion of potentiality is indispensable for making sense of the human subjects or history, in social sciences other deterministic features of teleology should certainly be done away with.

Taylor's non-deterministic teleology makes it possible for humans to have a rich and meaningful life. It enables us to talk about various potentialities of people which include significant values like reason, truth, and freedom associated with our civilization. One cannot envisage any meaningful human life without these potentialities. It also enables us to have 'standards' about these potentialities to be able to compare them and be able to judge our social practices as gain or loss. Hence, rather than impeding a good analysis of society, teleology actually makes our study of societies more effective as it enables us to talk of significant potentialities of human life. In contrast, Foucault's genealogical mode of enquiry is inadequate because the notion of power implicit in it is incoherent in ultimate analysis and is not able to explain the change in society as advancement.

Coming to the third key theme of the thesis, the comparison of notion of critique in the works of Taylor and Foucault, it has been found that Foucault's genealogical mode of enquiry, despite its radical postures, has some serious shortcomings. It does not encourage collective and sustained political actions. In contrast, Taylor's hermeneutics, in spite of all the criticism of encouraging politics of accord, is able to account adequately for both continuity and change.

Foucault's critiques extend the 'discourse of emancipation' in the social/political sciences. His fluid conceptions of social reality captured the experiences of present times in a much better way. Earlier traditions such as liberalism and Marxism may have served their purpose well in earlier times, but they seem sufficiently inadequate in the new emerging situations. Their explanation turned out to be rigid, deterministic and reductionist. Foucault's genealogical conception, with emphasis on contingency, has enabled thinkers to talk about reality in a new way. Power was conceived as diffused and dispersed in the society and was always in flux, shifting from one region to another with no stable configuration. There was no privileged single category or a set of categories such as class or state to which it could be reduced. Any event to be explained involved several factors (multi-causal) such that any one factor or a set of factors as primary could not be singled out. There was also no fixed pattern of interaction amongst the factors to arrive at law-like regularities. It was difficult to pin down clear-cut or definite causes in the genealogies. Thus, Foucault's accounts were flexible, contingent and specific, and avoided the reductionism, determinism, and rigidity of the earlier discourse of emancipation. Foucault did not talk about reality in terms of content but as a historical process where things (which themselves were unstable) interact with each other in a contingent way. Events did not follow neat patterns but could unfold in a complex way depending upon the circumstances. Such a conception enabled one to better account for the shifting nature of power in society.

This avoided 'pseudo-problems' (one that arose out of frameworks attempting at fitting reality to its 'assumptions') of location and reduction of reality to some privileged entity or structure such as class. Foucault's contingent way of analysis side steps these pseudo-problems. Instead, it opens up the discourse to hitherto unrevealed aspects of reality which were denied expression or articulation in earlier discourses. These 'excess meanings' that came up in Foucault's analysis were 'silenced' in earlier discourses by the process of 'normalization' in the name of 'truth'. Thus, Foucault brings out 'denial of otherness that is done through disciplinary power in name of 'truth'. This has been brilliantly brought out in his case studies of madness, medicine, prisons and sexuality. It unsettles one by showing how 'deep' (at the level of unconscious) the domination of humans by social institutions through the process of normalization and disciplinary power could be. Moreover, to make the case worse, this domination is felt by the victim as 'fulfillment' of his/ her essential nature and attainment of cherished values such as 'freedom' and 'truth'. For these reasons, several of the new movements of our times such as feminism, anti-racism, and post-colonial struggles that encountered difficulties with earlier approaches such as Marxism and liberalism, found Foucault's way of conceiving reality very appealing.

However, despite all their brilliance, Foucault's analyses were extremely one-sided as these studies viewed all social relations only as dominations. While their strength is their insightfulness and originality in throwing light on usually neglected aspects, their weakness is that the other aspects have been denied altogether. For instance, Foucault reads the rise of humanitarianism exclusively in terms of new technologies of control. But these also are forms of genuine self-discipline that have made possible new kinds of collective action and more egalitarian forms of participation possible. Thus, collective disciplines can function in both ways, as structures of domination as well as bases for equal collective action.

The reason for one-sidedness is Foucault's notion of subjectivity because of which truth and knowledge appear as traps that entrench us even more in the power strategies rather than begetting freedom. It leads to one-sided interpretation of history which is conceived only as loss and hence ignores the positive developments in history (e.g., democratic institutions). Another troubling feature of Foucault's notion of critique is related to the notion of freedom implicit in his work. Since Foucault rejects the Romantic expressive understanding of nature as fundamentally a source of good, he takes recourse to a notion of liberation as a 'work of art' or ‘aesthetic of existence.’ As a result, he succumbs to a conception of politics which is extremely individualistic and without any potential alternative social form. This has been reflected in his views on 'governmentality' where instead of taking recourse to some group or institutional mechanism he prefers individual strategies of perpetual destabilization.

Further, due to his peculiar notion of power Foucault came up with a conception of resistance that is sporadic and ephemeral and undermines any sustained political action. He naively celebrates marginal and spontaneous acts of non-conformity. This can be seen in his rather extreme view on an issue like the Iranian Revolution of 1978 and the role of 'popular justice'. He has also showed utter disregard towards democratic legal system. For him, every legal code is to be seen in terms of the method of subjugation that it institutes. Foucault treats the ‘model of war’ as a paradigm for the analysis of society. He ignores the role played by the democratic legal system in the regulation of unhindered growth of tutelary powers. By reducing democratic forms to a precipitate of power, Foucault simplifies the paradoxes and antinomies of law and social control.

Foucault celebrates the spontaneous and marginal acts of non-conformity. The mode of protest or resistance is one of individualistic political destabilization rather than sustained political action of institutional form. This seriously underestimates the role of legal institutional practices in modern society. Foucault's disregard for these institutional mechanisms makes him prone to the charge of giving tacit support to violent modes of protests such as ultra-left militant groups and other anarchist tendencies such as the use of drugs in communes during the counterculture movement.

Hence, it is seen that Foucault's notion of critique, while being very insightful in bringing out the 'denial of otherness' in our society, is not very conducive to sustained political actions. Due to its peculiar notion of power, Foucault totally disregards the legal institutional mechanisms that further the 'rule of law' and make democracy possible. His mode of protest in the society is individualistic, celebrating marginal and spontaneous acts of non-conformity over sustained political actions of institutional kind. It rather ends up justifying several controversial positions such as ultra-left militant groups, new lifestyles of counter-culture such as drug consumption, sadomachochist (SM) practices, etc. It also totally disregards the advantages of the democratic legal systems and rule of law as mechanisms or mode of collective life. Hence, Foucault's mode of critique emphasises only one dimension of our social life.

In contrast to the one-sidedness of Foucault, Taylor’s notion of critique is able to explain both continuity and change adequately. When encountered with seemingly disparate values Taylor is able to arrive at a larger, complex and reconciled account of the problem because of his Hegelian mode of analysis. Taylor claims that human beings are always placed in such situations where there is a conflict between seemingly incompatible moral demands. However, these situations should neither be viewed as hopeless, nor should they succumb to relativism. Instead, we humans should struggle for a 'transvaluation' that could open the way to a mode of life, individual and social, in which these demands can be reconciled. However, Taylor, points out that ‘This cannot

be done by a formula that renders these opposing demands harmonious. Rather it is done by making difficult judgments in which these demands are balanced against each other, with some sacrifice to one or both. His solution is not reduction or simplification. While reconciling goods we need not sacrifice some goods in order to gain some other goods. Most, if not all goods, can be adequately pursued by reconciliation at a higher level of unity. This new description of goods at a higher level is much more differentiated than the earlier descriptions of those goods as it accounts for more features. At the higher level, choices are not of either/or kind but ones which carry a whole set of goods together. The focus is not merely on transformation or change in society but also retrieval of sources of social practices. It seeks transformation as well as appreciation of the significance of the present institutions. One cannot build the future by ignoring the present and past. The past shapes the presents and the present is projected on the future. The emphasis is on both, continuity and change. It tries to take into account all sorts of viewpoints. It does not consider any account to be totally wrong but only as partial fulfillment of the potential. For instance, the naturalist perspective is not wrong but simply misidentification of the nature of freedom as atomism. Such an approach assists in better identification of the individual with the community (or the whole). There is more and more fine-tuning of our social practices towards our (moral) ideals'. We have more clarifying and fulfilling social practices. Thus, the highest ideal for Taylor is the integration of otherness into the more perfect forms of identification with the will of the rational community. These would be truly self-governing communities. In cases where differences are too great for people to coexist; we should create more institutional space to allow others to exist through principles of recognition and multi-culturalism.

Such reconciliation of values results in criticism of Taylor that he encourages politics of accord. But this criticism can only be sustained if we presume that demonstrating the inherent rationality of a way of life is the overriding goal of his works. This certainly is not the case. Taylor does point towards the importance of rationality of practices, but he never insists that coherence and rationality are to be insisted upon at all costs. In fact, because of the conception of telos in his works, the transformative potential of the agents is also given due importance. Rather than insisting upon either of the two, continuity or change, Taylor is able to account for both in an adequate manner. This can be seen in his treatment of several dilemmas of our time related to modernity, democracy, liberalism, selfhood, community, secularisation, etc.

For Taylor, (moral) values are enmeshed in social/ political practices and constitute the pre-theoretical understanding of agents. In articulating these values through expression, we bring up these values to inform our practices at the conscious level. Language of the community plays an important role in this articulation. It defines our limits and possibilities. Hence, articulation of our

predicament also brings up the significance of present practices. These practices may not be up to our potentialities, but they are nevertheless a partial fulfillment of what we can be. This aspect of Taylor's analysis emphasises continuity. On the other hand, there is a kind of telos working in our social practices that can enable us to realise our human 'potentialities'. This constitutes the transformative dimension of our practices. It also serves as the 'standard' for us to judge our current practices. This aspect of our analysis emphasises change. Thus, Taylor's mode of analysis accounts for both continuity and change, making it a richer and more complex theory. Hence, we can see that Taylor's hermeneutical mode of enquiry is better able to account for the continuity and change in society.

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