“Other minds” as an independent problem of epistemology appears only in the recent writings of the thinkers of the West. However, there were implications of this issue in the thoughts of the early thinkers too (even in the Indian domain). In this regard, to have knowledge about a basic history of any issue would be a true help to understand the issue with its source of ensuing. Hence, as per the history or origin of this problem of our knowledge of others mental states is concerned a simple discussion of it with reference to the recent writers would not reveal the true nature of this problem. Though the effort of these writers of contemporary age with regard to the explicit formulation as well as to its possible suggestions is enormous, our preliminary note to this problem must contain a brief referential study of the old thinkers in this regard. Therefore, to explore the true nature of the problem of other minds we are importantly considering here a brief history of its roots.

It may, further, be noted that this problem has huge implications in different thinkers of different ages. It may carry psychological, causal, conceptual, epistemological as well as philosophical (in a broad sense) implications the wholehearted consideration of which would not only distort our actual concern towards the problem but also would make it hazy and sidetracked. We, thus, concentrate here to this problem as a trauma of the epistemic theorists and thereby consider it centrally as an epistemological problem of knowing other
minds. However, the above mentioned issues may occasionally occur as referential in our discussion of the problem. It may, again, be noted that our historical enquiry to the other minds problem would include the analysis of western thoughts specifically as because the problem is reflectively more vibrant in the west than in the east. So, let us start a relevant chronological account of the origin of the problem of other minds from the dates of the very early Greek thinkers.

Section (2.1)—Greek Period of the Pre-Socratics:

Here, it may be observed that the early thinkers during the pre-Socratic era were mainly cosmos-centric and were least worried about the anthropocentric problems of philosophy. They were overwhelmed by the wonders of Nature and were busy in exploring the adventures of it. For them there was hardly any difference between man and nature and that is why they have considered life, world, and similar other elements/resources of nature as their central contents of research. The variety of inner processes including rational, volitional, emotional ones, complexities of man to man relation, questions of individual identity, etc., initially remained almost unnoticed and uncultured by these thinkers. That is why the very first question that struck the mind of the very first Greek thinker Thales of Miletus was that “What is the basic stuff out of which the world is made?” and, he found the answer in “Water”. Likewise, his contemporary thinkers of the same city, Anaximander and Anaximenes, considered “primary (formless and infinite) matter” and “air” as the basic constituent of this world, respectively. The later pre-Socratic thinkers such as
Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno, Heracleitus, Empedocles, Anaxagoras, Democritus, and the rest were also engaged themselves in searching after the nature of this Nature and also after the reality underlying this Nature. None were concerned either with the nature of the knower, the subject, who is the author, witness and recognizer of all these various theoretic perceptual formulations, or with the nature of the relation among various subjects of these experiences. It is only with the beginning of the Sophist’s period that the anthropocentric events came into notice. But even then, the motto of the Sophists was not much satisfying as per our need. Hence, the focus of the Sophists was not on the exploration of man or his specific nature or the questions of his identity or the condition of his possession of any mind or states of mind, or of his relation to his fellows and the like, but on to settle the problem of knowledge of the observable reality in perception as the only valid form of knowledge with reference to the role and activity of man in this regard. So, the talk on man in the Sophist’s system is chiefly referential to perceptual knowledge and not a focal point for questions of personal identity or of knowledge of one another’s mental states and etc. The Sophists note that all knowledge is based on perception in the sense that whatever a knower knows of an object of knowledge is not as what it is in itself but, as what it is when given in perception only, and notably, as it is given in his and only his, unique perception. Now, since perceptual knowledge takes place to a perceiver or a subject, the truth or validity of that perceptual knowledge is successfully recommended by that perceiver only. Therefore, what this perceiver knows
about an object via his perceptual acquaintance is very personal, direct, and immediate to him and him only, in the sense that he is the sole subject of that piece of knowledge. It is this personal truth of objects that only is valid form of knowledge as it is based on direct observation and individual verification in the context of reference. Here, Protagoras, the acclaimed Sophist, declared the master statement of his system referring to ‘man’ for the very first time in the history of western philosophy that “Man is the measure of all things” (Homo Mensura). This remarkable statement of the Greek trend by the Sophist may serve as the fulcrum of our search of the roots of other minds problem. In this regard, if the use of “Man” in “Homo Mensura” stands for the “universal man” representing the rational aspect of each individual man as a knower we hardly face any problem of “other minds”, at least in the sense of questions concerning their (of others) existences on grounds of acceptance of universality (the rational man being the universal agent). But, this is not true to the Sophist’s system as the Sophists discard the role of reason in knowledge as well as the universal applicability of any term (‘man’ for instance,) in this regard.

Again, if it (‘man’) has a reference to the particular men or different subjects of experience, i.e., if it stands for the distributive use of “man” who is the measure of all things as per his (of each) sensory data, we find a point of reference towards the assumed “existences” of others in the field of knowledge, leaving the question of “knowledge” of these assumed existences open. If, on the other hand, it restricts the general existence of men with reference to one single subject of perception, i.e., the solitary individual who witnesses his
world experience, we find the uprising of solipsistic tendencies and consequently of the problem of other minds.

However, an analysis of his above mentioned well-known dictum shows that Protagoras introduced man as a mere performer in the acquisition of knowledge. Hence, in his well-known dictum that "Man is the measure of all things" the use of "man" may be taken in the sense of the second alternative as per the Sophists contention in so far each man is empowered in the Sophists system to be the "sole" authority of judging his own states of perceptions only. Taken in this sense, there seem very strong implications of the "épistemic" problem of other minds. For, to be the sole authority of one's own states of perception discards the possibility of authentic claims to knowledge of others states of perception or even of minds.

Further, in the writings of Gorgius, the another important name in the history of Sophists philosophy, we find skeptical as well as relativistic conclusions of the Protagorian account of Homo Mensura from which too we may identify the implicit germs of the other minds issue. It is, thus, suggested that since man forms the standard of every perceptual judgment each and every opinion (of man) is momentary, in itself useful and equally significant as per its subjects' perceptual consent (relativism). Moreover, no perceptual experience is same for two subjects yet, no two views or opinions of a given set of perception are contradictory; all are true, all false, contextually. So, all opinions contain possible or probable truths (skepticism). But, whatever opinion is developed by a particular subject in accordance with his perceptual experience is in no way
communicable to any other subject of experience. For, there is no route between language and things. This non-communicability of one's thought and experience via language carries the indication of its (language) personal use, or, what is more commonly referred to as private use of language. Whether such a use of language is possible or not is a debatable issue. However, its possibility is the logical implication when this phase of non-communicability is considered in the Sophist's system.

In this context, it is also important to note that when the Sophists argued for man's knowledge in the sense of his individual and un-communicable perceptual knowledge there is a hint towards the restrictions of knowledge by perception as well as the restrictions of interpersonal dialogues, of shared ownership of experiences and the like. But still, the Sophists seem not to question the existence of other individual human beings as they recognize the others opinions as equally significant in context of any knowledge under the ground that each man is the measure of his own perceptual content.

However, their account is caught to be contradictory when they break communication of persons on the one hand and incline to persuade their listeners on the other; in this regard, if nothing can be communicated from one man to another the act of persuasion loses its point.

Despite all these considerations it may further be noted here that for the Sophists "other minds" did not typically constitute any problem because they were engaged mainly in sorting out the problem of knowledge which they marked as perception. But the notable point is that some of their philosophical outlines
Some troublesome ideas with regard to this. In short, it is not the existence of others but the knowledge of the mental states of others that the Sophists might have questioned if they seriously concerned themselves into this aspect of epistemology.

Section (2.2)—Socrates:

Now, after the Sophists era it was the time for Socrates to make his entry on the scene and divert remarkably the boat of scientific study of nature towards a subjective or internal study that includes the study of man whose essence consists in the possession of a personal non-material element namely, reason, the substratum of which is a soul. In this respect, the revolutionary sentence of Socrates was—"Man! Know thyself". This utterance of Socrates opposes the Sophists’ theory of the relation between man and things, treating man as at the centre of things. But, for Socrates man possesses a rational soul such that it constitutes his potential and pristine knowledge of the moral structure. And, through this immanent knowledge of his he can define his true nature as well as can frame knowledge of things of the world too. In acquiring this knowledge of one’s self i.e., of the nature of humans, Socrates believed that there is the need of a social effort, a friendly and open minded attitude at the discovery of truth. Hence, differing from the Sophists in this regard Socrates stated that whatever can be known of human nature is to be known through the intellectual participation of persons in the form of conversation or dialogue. Unlike the Sophists, it is evident therefore that, Socrates not only recognized the role of

[20].
reason or intellect in knowledge, but also valued communication of the thoughts of different persons via friendly conversation as a true method of philosophy. The contents of these conversations rest in the exploration of some ethical concepts because these are characteristically associated in the human realm only in the sense that man is primarily a moral being having his own responsibility towards his acts and deeds as these have direct impact on the society he belongs. In other words, Socrates could point out that morality is essential to man's being and therefore, any knowledge of man has to be connected necessarily to the concepts of morality. Thus, the study of man through concepts is not a mere theoretic study, but a practical participation of different individuals in intellectual dialogues with different arguments as per their innate potential. This intellectual participation of different persons is free from any despotic pressure and is based on mutual friendly venture (teacher-taught relation type) of arriving at truths. Because Socrates believed that there are latent possibilities in the other person. So, unless and until different possible notions by different individuals are discussed in a friendly surrounding no absolute knowledge of concepts relating to man and life can validly be arrived at. All these implications show positive signs towards the possibility of knowing other minds. When Socrates makes it possible that in the acquisition of knowledge the participation of others is a must, the existence of others is not questioned by him. Participation of others presupposes the existence of others. Moreover, when Socrates talks of the potential knowledge of each individual in context of constitution of a general knowledge or knowledge of concepts

[21]
(moral) the assumption of generality and the means of this generality (the other person’s inherent rational participation in friendly discourse intimating a contribution to the knowledge which is absolute and general knowledge of concepts) show positive indications toward the knowledge of other minds, although Socrates is not explicitly talking in that line. But, if we sum up Socrates’ philosophy we would find implications that neither the existence nor the knowledge of other minds is a deception. Rather, it is more and more elevating in the gradual continuity of dialogues among persons.

Section (2.3)—Post-Socratics:
After Socrates in both Plato and Aristotle the notion of “friendship”, i.e., relation among selves, seems to be the order of morality and this is what separates man from other lower species. In fact, the assumption of ‘morality’, ‘society’ or a ‘state’ along with a perception of “mutuality” is the source to their implicit assumption of other persons. In Aristotle, this assumption of persons does not work as a theoretic assumption, but is a matter of our “practical wisdom” that ensures our actual living with others with essential linguistic participation. Besides, Aristotle’s “Nicomachean Ethics” is a treasure of the explanatory formulation of relations among persons. Thus, there is hardly any direct, explicit or straightforward mention of or emphasis on either the existence or the knowledge of other persons in the writings of these two celebrated philosophers of philosophy’s history.

However, the Socratic emphasis of the subjective consciousness as the ground of morality instead of the objective materiality of the world, and the Aristotelian
concept of man as the compound of soul and body, again, open the way for the development of the notion of individuality in the Christian era. So, it is in the hands of these Greek thinkers that the discussion on man receives its primacy over the cosmos centric assumptions of the pre-Socratic theorists. However, in the Christian era which is identified as the middle age of western philosophy, the focus was not on man to man relation but on man to God relation. St. Thomas Aquinas as a renowned figure of this age, for instance, offers some ontological account of the relation between Being and beings in place of accounting for any epistemological problem of the relation among beings as individual subjects of experience. One of the central characteristics of this era is consideration of man as a substance as different from other substances as well as from God. In fact, the position of man from the Greek theories as a part of the world is elevated in this era as forming the image of God. So, the relation of the (human) self to its “other”, the real model (God), is a usual feature of the middle ages. Here, one important aspect of the medieval philosophy as of the relation among selves in friendship could have served as a good source to the implicative relation between beings and the Being where the latter could be the node of the former’s commonality of existence as different from and subjugated into “It” possessing the unique character of “devotion” and the like. But, there is hardly any focus on this aspect due to the mystical assumptions as made to conform to the man and God relation. Hence, the mysticism of the middle ages could not significantly develop any query

[23]
concerning the point of man to man commonality and consequently no stress is found on the knowledge cases of others mental states.

Looking back to the traditional theorist’s deal of “man” and his relation to his fellows we find only an affirmation to the existence of persons as co-subjects of experience. These philosophers of tradition seem not to find any problem with regard to the existence, or even knowledge, of other persons and their various mental orders (cognitive states). They even hardly thought of a necessity to doubt this or even to have a separate talk on this besides their practical pursuits of knowledge (of the perceptual world). As a result of this there was no systematic formulation of the problem of other minds in the writings of these thinkers despite their innocent assumption of the objective world as well as the co-subjects of experience. They were satisfied with the mode of joint philosophizing and had virtual faith in the existence of each other. Thus, the “other minds” issue seems not to be of a prevalent character within their systems.

Section (2.4)—Sceptics:

Now, the issue of knowledge of other minds is generally assimilated to be a sophisticated jargon of the sceptics. However, so far the age of traditional sceptics is concerned the other minds problem cannot be assigned to Pyrrho, the earliest name in the history of skepticism. For, the Pyrrhonian kind of scepticism questions the virtuality of our ordinary way of explaining the external world of objects and does not make any sceptical assumptions concerning our virtual knowledge of the states of mind of each other. The academic sceptics
like Archesilaus, Carneades and others also do not concern themselves with this problem. Their main object is to guard against the unguarded arguments of the Stoics for whom there are perceptions the truth of which stands beyond any dispute because of their clarity and persuasiveness. Thus, from the above search of the origin of “other minds” as a problem in the Greek thought to the dates of early sceptics results in the negative. Only in the system of the sophists, importantly, Protagorous and Gorgious, that the germs of this issue may be caught. But, so far a significant formulation of this issue of knowing other minds is concerned it is only recently that under a conceptual framework it gets developed with reference to the concept of mind as a storehouse of consciousness that is graspable within the range of a subject’s inward experience only. Such an assumption of the problem has its roots in Descartes’ philosophy with the declaration of “Cogito ergo sum”. “Cogito” here contains the unquestionable meditative element of subjective awareness of the ego that presents a clear line of distinction between this aspect of the subjective consciousness and the rest of the world of things. This distinction puts doubt not only to our knowledge of the external physical world, but to that of other co-subjects in so far the declaration of the “cogito” asserts the supremacy of the “I” as a sole indubitable fact that the light of reason reflects; all other things and beings fall consequently under the umbrella of Cartesian methodic doubt. This is the point of solipsism. Thus, in the hands of sceptics of modern age like Descartes the knowledge of other minds as a problem gets
developed. Let us see how the Cartesian skepticism and method of depicting the mental cause to restrict the knowledge of other's mental states.

Section (2.5)—Modern Era:
Thus, when the reality of the cogito is asserted within the Cartesian framework of mind's knowledge of itself, the problem of our knowledge of other minds develops instantly. And, this seems to be a kind of radical skepticism. Descartes, however, does not seem to attend to this aspect of our knowledge of others minds. His concern is the knowledge of the self, the mind, the witness of all experiences along with the innate idea of God. So, in none of his writings we find any special impetus to either bring forth the suspicion or plead for the existence of persons besides his initial methodic doubt towards a scientific discovery of indubitable truths. However, his wholehearted discussion on the indubitable truth of the "I" as a "thinking substance" momentarily may invite a question concerning the status of others in this zone. But, a thorough understanding of his writings would help us to see that the Cogito is a premise of Descartes noble pursuit of truth from the clearness and distinctness of which he reaches to different other conclusions of his system. These conclusions include the assertion of the body (human, animal, inanimate and others), of God, of other men, and etc. But to consider only the basic premise of Cartesian philosophy as the whole of it is to start with (on our part) as well as end in half truth. Actually, in his progress with the methodic doubt Descartes initially suspends the unclear nature of everything including the world, other men, his own body and etc. The origin of the problem of other minds can be
stressed into this part of Descartes’ philosophical endeavor. But, Descartes scarcely engages himself to assert that knowledge of other’s possession of minds is particularly problematic. Rather, we find him document the following observations in his second *Meditation*:

> But when I look from the window and see man passing in the street, I do not fail to say at the sight of them that I see some men...yet what do I see from the window, except hats and cloaks which might cover artificial machines which moved only by springs? But I judge that these are men.

Now, what would be the principle of judgment here to distinguish between the bodies of men and that of machines? Descartes’ answer to this may be noticed in the *Discourse* where he suggests two ways of distinction between men and machines.

First, machines cannot make use of language to convey it’s “thought” to us; and even if they can, to some extent are so fabricated to, make use of certain limited signs and words, they are never in a position to make significant desired variations, transformations, or other relevant systematizations of our language to sort out the meanings of every phenomena surrounding them.

Secondly, machines lack reason, “a universal instrument, applicable in every sort of circumstance”, with which we men are empowered to act and react variously. But, machines work in accordance with their structural mechanisms and cannot respond variously beyond that structural sphere.
The above two criteria of distinction between men and machines may also be noticed in the sphere of the distinction between men and animals as noted by Descartes.

Besides, the application of these criteria as characteristic to human nature could present the Cartesian recognition of other men as co-subjects of experience and the consequent avoidance to any problem concerning these rational subjects. This is implicative in many passages of his *Discourse* where the participation of others in the discourses of the scientific enquiry is earnestly welcomed by Descartes.

From the above it is clear that in stead of being skeptical about the mental possessions of persons Descartes’ philosophy is a boon to the challengers of skepticism of other minds. He, in fact, stresses on communicability which can be a source to the possible assertion of other minds.

……to communicate faithfully to the public all of the little I had found, and to urge people of intelligence to try to proceed further by contributing, each according to his inclination and power, to the necessary experiments,……and thus joining the life and the labours of many, we might all together advance much further than each individual by himself could do.

Thus, these types of statements in Descartes’ writings are symbolic of his positive assertions to the minds of others. So, the issue of “other minds” has a genesis in the Cartesian skeptical model, although it does not stand as an independent and special problem of his philosophical concern, and arises only as a result of his initial skepticism.

[28]
In the rationalist tradition, we further find that in the system of Spinoza the aspect of communicability finds roots in the assertion of a non-dual God who is the ground of all modes of communication among persons, God being the all-inclusive substance of which individual men are finite modes of the infinite attributes of God. So, in Spinoza's spiritualistic system there is no place for dualism or materialism, or even solipsism. Consequently, he cannot be charged with creating any special problem of knowing "other minds" apart from the knowledge of the infinite substance.

In the monadic system of Leibniz we may note the non-communicable aspect of the other minds issue when Leibniz declares his monads to be windowless. Each individual human soul is a monad like any other monads in the total sphere of monads and is fundamentally non-interactive to any of these other monads. Hence, when the route to each soul is closed the knowledge of them becomes absolutely checked. So, in Leibniz there are imprints of the knowledge problem of other minds, although there seems no problem concerning the existence of minds within his pluralistic system. But, in his spiritualistic metaphysics, however, there is hardly any specification of the epistemological problem of minds.

In the empiricist trend of thought the issue of other minds' knowledge is visible in the writings of Locke and Berkeley. Locke, for instance, maintains

There are but two sorts of beings in the world that man knows or conceives.
First, such as are purely material. . . Secondly, sensible, thinking, perceiving beings, such as we find ourselves to be.  
However, Locke in the later part of his Essay distinguishes between the inappropriateness of 'knowledge' to be ascribed to the cases of other minds and appropriateness of a kind of opinion to be applicable to the same. As he observes,

... the having the ideas of spirits does not make us know that any such things do exist without us, or that there are any finite spirits, or any other spiritual beings, but the Eternal God. We have ground from revelation, and other several reasons, to believe with assurance that there are such creatures; but our senses not being able to discover them, we want the means of knowing their particular existences... And therefore concerning the existence of finite spirits... we must content ourselves with the evidence of faith... that all the intelligent spirits that God ever created do still exist, yet it can never make a part of our certain knowledge.  

From this it is clear that standing within the empiricist framework it is not possible for Locke to justify the existence of other minds that include not only the human mind but also all small and created spirits. However, the question of their existences does not concern him much as he is evidenced by their linguistic communications and other active participations in the life's divergent spheres. Actually, Locke is not centrally concerned with the way we come to know the existence of finite beings but with the explanation of knowledge, kinds of knowledge as well as difference between knowledge and belief, of
which the latter part (belief) of the latter contains probable truths only. In this discourse of knowledge Locke occasionally talks of the existence of other living beings here and there in his *Essay*. So, he hardly devotes a specific and comprehensive section on this question of knowledge of minds other than his own. Thus, whatever ideas of other minds we find in Locke is a matter of faith that, of course, is evidential in nature.

Looking into the domain of empiricism further other minds knowledge as problematic is most effectively brought in to focus by the Irish bishop George Berkeley. Berkeley's idealistic assumption paves the way for solipsism, the latter being resulting into the knowledge problem of other minds. When existence is preconditioned by perception, the existence of minds in others really becomes problematic in so far ordinarily, minds, notably minds of others, are not being proper objects or contents of perception. Berkeley, however, clarifies progressively in his writings that the objects of perception are no things but ideas as representative of things. For, whatever we perceive does not have any independent subsistence without a mind or spirit which is the ground of the perceptual occurrences. And, what most can a mind or spirit perceive is but an idea or as an idea, in the sense that our perceptual contents are actually some qualities and not any unthinking substratum underlying these qualities. And, since qualities are sensed no other way than by means of ideas, ideas are the proper objects of our immediate perception.

Now, perception follows some sensory states which cause stimulation from certain "sensible marks" that are constitutions of multiple qualities in different
The fact that these qualities are perceivable only through ideas which are proper contents of knowledge justifies that there is no perceptible substantial existences besides qualities. Moreover, it is the existence of sensible properties that only is bound by the principle of ‘Esse ist percipi’. This principle of ‘Esse’ is not, therefore, applicable to anything else than these qualities of perception. Here, a question may arise—what is the status of the immaterial souls or spirits in Berkeley’s idealistic system where his significant idealistic principle is restricted to the world of perceptible qualities? The outline Berkeley lays in this regard is that the existence of spirit is only substantially real which stays beyond the realm of ideal knowledge. For, to quote Berkeley from clause 7 of his Principles of Human Knowledge,

...an idea to exist in an unperceived thing, is a manifest contradiction.¹⁴

Hence, so far as spirits are concerned these are different from perceptible qualities on the one hand, and from ideas on the other in so far these spirits are the agents of perceptual experience. They are the perceivers as well as producers of ideas of whom thus, no ideas can be formed, although we may have a “notion” of a spirit and its activity in a loose sense that justifies the understanding of the meaning of the word. Thus, the existence of spirit “…consists not in being perceived but in perceiving ideas and thinking”.¹⁵ These imperceptible thoughtful substances are known from their operations and activities, in short, from their effects. Berkeley hardly distinguishes between the nature of himself as a spirit and that of other spirits in so far both being essentially active substantial principles who are created as finite by some infinite
and all inclusive spirit or God. His account of knowledge of these different spirits, however, is not coextensive. Regarding self-knowledge Berkeley considers only immediacy of experience that results in a notional (in a wide sense) knowledge and speaks nothing more specific on this. Regarding the knowledge of other finite spirits Berkeley notes that since we do not and cannot have any idea of spirits our knowledge of them is generated by the idea of their bodies which is the medium of reflection of active states in others which is the criterion of existence of spirits. As Berkeley writes in clause 145 of his *Principles*:

...it is plain that we cannot know the existence of other spirits, otherwise than by their operations, or the ideas by them excited in us. I perceive several motions, changes, and combinations of ideas, that inform me there are certain particular agents like myself, which accompany them, and concur in their production. Hence, the knowledge I have of other spirits is not immediate, as is the knowledge of my ideas; but depending on the intervention of ideas, by me referred to agents or spirits distinct from myself, as effects or concomitant signs.

This is true of not only human spirits but also all other non-human animal spirits too. So, in Berkeley, unlike Descartes and like Locke, we find a grant towards other spirits along with human ones. Berkeley, however, makes a distinction between human and animal spirits in the way Descartes did, i.e., on the point of reasonableness of human souls unlike animals that is expressed by means of speech or communication. Berkeley, in fact, takes speech or participation in linguistic usage as an evidential argument of the existence of...
other finite spirits. As his *Alciphron* echoes his position in the following way:

...I have found that nothing so much convinces me of the existence of another person as his speaking to me. It is my hearing you talk that, in strict and philosophical truth, is to me the best argument for your being.

Berkeley, again, sometimes makes statements on the knowledge of other minds which appears to be analogical in form. As he writes in clause 140 of his *Principles*:

Moreover, as we conceive the ideas that are in the minds of other spirits by means of our own, which we suppose to be resemblances of them: so we know other spirits by means of our own soul, which in that sense is the image or idea of them, it having a like respect to other spirits, that blueness or heat by me perceived hath to those ideas perceived by another.

Analysts like Anita Avramides notes that this is not properly an argument from analogy in so far Berkeley is not asserting any ground of similarity of the causes of bodily movements from my own case to that of others. On the other hand, Berkeley is finding out the causes of the ideas of bodily movements as excited in us from these bodies of others, and this, results in the belief in other spirits. Hence, Berkeley's argument can stand mostly as a causal argument of the existence of other finite spirits. Again, when regarding the knowledge of God Berkeley states that it is much more obvious than the belief in other finite spirits, his argument on other minds seems to be arising out of a comparison between the knowledge of finite and infinite spirits as significant to clarify the supremacy and immanence of "the Author of Nature". For,
From the above it seems that Berkeley is certain of the existence of his own spirit due to its immediacy as well as that of God whose existence is demonstratively known from the infinite and innumerable effects the influence of which do not exclude even a single act of nature and of other spirits. And, it is only to explain the apparent cause of the ideas of motions as external to his being Berkeley reasons the existence of other minds. But, by placing God as a primary locus of our ideas in the sense that he is the prime mover of bodies and ultimate cause of all our ideas as leading to the shifting of other spirits in the place of secondary source to our ideas Berkeley is understating the argument for other minds. In fact, other spirits are the occasional dimensions of God's willful acts.

In Three Dialogues Berkeley writes that even though on occasions other spirits stand as the cause of our ideas of movements etc., we can hardly perceive those ideas that seem to remain in the mind of others. That is why we perceive ideas of other minds by medium of our own "notion" of minds or spirits. Therefore, even if Berkeley grants mediating form of knowledge of others such a knowledge seems strictly to be a matter of faith and opinion and not a certain piece of knowledge as we have of our own selves and of God. From this it, again, follows that in Berkeley, finally, only the certainty of the self and
God are asserted such that knowledge of others becomes only reasonably, and not sufficiently, true.

Moreover, the assertion of other spirits as the cause of external motions from one’s own “notion” of a spirit opens the way to the conceptual problem of other minds, since it intends to conceptualize or generalize my self notion of a spirit by extending it to others as the apparent base of these spirits. But, the gap between the self notion of a spirit in one’s case and that of another, though differentiated at the acquisition of knowledge, is not attempted to be bridged by Berkeley. And, without an appropriate criterion of conceptualization or generalization Berkeley’s arguments for the existence of other finite spirits takes up the radical version problem of knowing other minds.

Thus, in both Locke and Berkeley the existence of other mind is a matter of reasonable faith only. Within their pillars of empiricism both admit the non-possibility of certain knowledge of the “minds of others”. From this epistemic phase of empiricism, skepticism of other minds gets developed ultimately into the conceptually rigorous problem. In this regard, the name of Hume, a thoroughgoing empiricist as well as a skeptic, is hardly associated with the problem of “knowing” other minds. For, Hume sets a wide discussion in his Treatise on self and immaterial substance with consequent denial of the same, leaving no scope for any probability of discussing the existences of other selves or questions concerning their knowledge.

Therefore, in modern era, ‘other mind’ as a problem is limited chiefly in the philosophical assumptions of Descartes in the rationalist tradition and Berkeley
in the empiricist tradition, although some other of their followers, like Leibnitz and Locke, too talk about the issue of mind or spirit, but not saying anything as problematic in this regard.

Section (2.6)—General Observations:

From the above account of the history of the concerned problem it may be noted that the initial implications of the philosophical declaration of different thinkers of different ages point to the epistemological gap in the other minds issue. The Sophists, for instance, laid open the road for sceptical origin of the other minds topic in their measure of knowledge as perception. In the initial attitudes of Descartes and Berkeley also, as maintained above, the serious implications to it are notable. In this regard, though Berkeley manages later to settle the question of others in his attempt to escape solipsistic charges, Descartes' basic philosophical structure as Cogito remains the ever glowing source of the epistemic problem of other minds.

After Descartes the questions on the knowledge of other's mental states receive particular approaches from the recent writers of contemporary philosophical tradition. But their approaches do not evolve anything newly or differently problematic about it. Rather, most of them aim to discuss the already posited problem thoroughly and add suggestive measures in this regard from their philosophical perspectives. Thus, when many of the present day thinkers are busy attempting good points of justification to point towards the existence of others, there are others who refuse to accept it as a genuine problem at all.

[37]
This latter group, thus, do not put forward arguments to solve this problem of sceptical thought but simply dissolve it as a pseudo problem of philosophy by changing the total perspective towards it. With this historical background of the problem of other minds let us select among some of the relevant writers on the concerned issue in the following chapters and see how this problem of the philosophers comes to have been treated in their influential writings.

Notes and References:
1. e.g., the Jaina concept of manah-paryaya or entering the mind (of another) in telepathic cognition.
5. Descartes, R [n. d., ca. 1890], *Metaphysical Meditations*, Meditation II, p. 138
6. Ibid, pp. 66-67
7. Descartes, *Discourse*, pp. 71-74
8. Ibid, pp. 73-74
9. The italics are not originally used in Descartes'. These are used here intentionally to give stress to the relevant points.
11. Ibid, pp. 393-394


14. Berkeley, 'A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge', op. cit, p. 79

15. Ibid., p. 121

16. Ibid, p. 123


18. Berkeley, 'A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge', op. cit, p. 121

19 Avramides, op. cit., p. 125


Important Referential Abbreviations used in this endnote are as follows:

n. d......no date

cas........approximated date

* * *

[39]