Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION
Jürgen Habermas, a German, is a leading second generation critical theorist and a well known philosopher in the contemporary scene. He has inherited the philosophical lineage from the pioneers of the Frankfurt school like Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm who were instrumental in bringing critical theory into prominence. Critical social theory or Critical theory is the name of the philosophical doctrine of the Frankfurt school otherwise known as Institute for Social Research (Institut für Sozialforschung), a movement founded in 1932 by Max Horkheimer, Karl Wittfogel, Friedrich Pollock, and Leo Lowenthal, and funded by Felix Weil, which later included Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, Karl Korsch and Frank Borkenau. Officially, Frankfurt school was attached to the Frankfurt University. The abundant academic and publicistic output of the school covered multifarious domains of humanities, science, philosophy, empirical sociology, musicology, social psychology, history of the Far East, the soviet economy, psychoanalysis, the theory of literature and law.¹

1.1 Characteristic Traits of the Frankfurt School

Though the origins of critical theory were Marxian, The Frankfurt theorists did not treat Marxism as the sole contender for the role of a critique of the society. Without any inhibitions, they sought the help of many non-Marxist strands of thought like that of Kant, Hegel, Freud, Mead, Durkheim, and Austin. The school, time and again, was critical of politics. The critical theory was in agreement with Lukacs and Korsch regarding reification as the ‘epitome of the problems of the modern world.’ But, they were not sweepingly par-
tial as Marx, who declared that the proletariat alone were affected, and took a broader view as affecting all strata of the society.

*Dialectic of Enlightenment* written jointly by Horkheimer and Adorno dwells upon the travails of the period after Enlightenment which was expected to bring about drastic changes in the entire fabric of the society. But, reason which ascended the throne of arbiter in all matters became more and more instrumental and great political and social renaissance expected of it failed to fructify. This proved as a crushing disappointment for the staunch supporters of the Enlightenment. Adorno and Horkheimer also lamented the rapid increase in industrialization with less and less emphasis on values. The society which was envisioned as free and fair with the reason at the helm gave way to a society ruled by science and technology which called itself value-neutral.

Horkheimer was particularly critical of viewing social sciences from a scientific angle because he felt that natural sciences aimed only at the end-result, whereas social sciences were highly conscious of the means of observation too. The point of variance with Marxism was his acceptance of the functional value of theory and its autonomy. In order to avoid reductionism, he was against the traditional pairing of concepts like 'phenomena' and 'essence', 'subject' and 'object', 'base' and 'superstructure'. Hence, he emphasized the need for constant mediation.

The Frankfurt theorists were apprehensive of logical necessity and
technological rigour because both can abet authoritarian tendencies as was the case with religious authority till the dawn of reason. Horkheimer foresaw totalitarian symptoms in the approach of science sans any humane face. Critical theorists indicted the mass media for its destructive influence on culture, art, and the society. They resembled Nietzsche in defending elite values. They also bitterly criticized the society for being a passive spectator and thereby, allowing professional bureaucracy to manipulate the masses. This applied to both Fascist and Communist totalitarianism and to the western democracies. Aesthetic and nomological disciplines accommodate varied interpretations whereas science aims at structured explanations without any room for preponderance. The Frankfurt theorists were disturbed by this approach which brooked no failure and treated humans as automatons.

Excessive objectivation of human activities lead to a controlled environment which could be manipulated to suit the needs of a chosen few. At one stage, science became the measuring frame for even social activities since people started looking up to science for approbation. Thus science abstracted knowledge from society and created an idea that it was independent of any social grounding. Kolakowski cites Horkheimer:

Perception cannot be isolated from its social genesis; both it and its objects are social and historical products. The individual observer is passive vis-a-vis the object, but the society as a whole is an active element in the process, unconsciously so. The facts ascertained are partly determined by the collective praxis of human beings who have devised
the methods used to observe the facts. Objects are partly
the product of concepts and of collective praxis.²

Critical theory views society not as a natural necessity thrust upon
us. It views the society as a mosaic of subjective, objective, and the
fusion of both the subjective and objective, i.e. intersubjective in
Habermasian parlance. Thus the inhabitants also actively contribute
to the betterment of the society and, hence, the social processes are
not irrevocable and can be altered.

Critical theory criticizes society by analyzing its categories. In
the words of Horkheimer:

Critical thought is motivated today by the endeavour genu-
ingenly to transcend the situation of tension, to remove the
opposition between the purposiveness, spontaneity, and ra-
tionality of the individual and the labour conditions on
which the society is based. It implies that man is in conflict
with himself until he recovers this identity.³

Unlike other theories, critical theory acknowledges the possibility of
its own judgements being coloured by established beliefs of the soci-
ety in which it is housed. But it also reposes unflinching trust in the
power of reason to rise above and scrutinize the customs, manners,
and beliefs prevalent in the society. This trait, Habermas uses in
the debate aimed at norm formation. Critical theory aims at social
progress along with the intellectual progress. This would strip the
social life of its quasi-natural 'external' character and accelerate so-
cial progress by instilling the self-belief in man. For this to become
a reality, subject-object-society relationship must be redefined.
Critical theory is a critique of the existing society in the Marxian sense, a tirade against market-oriented capitalistic political system which was perpetrated in the name of democracy. Even in democracies which hold the best hopes for human freedom and expression, money making capabilities are considered to be synonymous with success. People seek external source to quench their thirst for recognition and identity. Frankfurt school accepts the need for democracy as the only avenue for all-round development of the mankind. But it disagrees with the manipulating tendencies of the business interests and affirm its faith in the Enlightenment ideals of freedom, justice, and happiness. It pronounces that the ultimate ideal is the emancipation of the human kind from the bonds of external necessities.

In his *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno attacked the foundational claims of philosophy and the over-eagerness to identify and categorize the concepts as derivative of one another. Such a habit of ordering things and branding them, feared Adorno, would lead to totalitarian and conformist tendencies. Adorno opined that in a structured society there were more chances for reification to sneak in. He also criticized Marxist-Lukacist position of the primacy of practice holding that theory was also as substantial as practice. Basically, he disliked any wholesome theorizing and any universal standpoint. Since he was a witness to the carnage during the World wars he was frustrated by all sorts of systematization which ultimately lead to forcible implementation of the dictates of the ruling regime and the tyrannical communist party rule, on the one hand. On the other hand, he was also critical of the soft-totalitarian societies of the west for restricting the freedom of choice by carefully manipulating the consumers to buy the products by adopting aggressive market-
ing strategies. Thus in his dialectics, Adorno repeatedly negates all existing descriptive schemata and all methods pretending to universality. "Total contradiction is nothing but the manifested untruth of total identification."4 The positive feature in Adorno is his steadfast adherence to non-reductionistic position and his refusal to pass a verdict on the ontological superiority of any one particular concept. He pictures the opposites as latent in each other; he sees theory in practice and vice versa, phenomena in noumena and henceforth. His contention is that the differences are to be apprehended but not to be absolutized.

In his critique of a society dominated by 'exchange-value', which reduces individuals to an ignoble level and a homogeneous anonymity, Adorno criticizes philosophy and logic for reducing the people to organisms. His main objection against science is that it identifies rationality with measurability; reduces things to quantities; and excludes qualitative differences from the scope of knowledge. Hence, he advocated a constant 'dialectical' association between objects and concepts in which primacy is obliterated. Finally, as all conclusions cannot be all inclusive Adorno had to embrace an idea of interlocked relationships between theory and practice regarding his socio-political objectives. Adorno writes:

For the right practice, and for the good itself, there really is no other authority than the most advanced state of theory. When an idea of goodness is supposed to guide the will without fully absorbing the concrete rational definitions, it will unwittingly take orders from the reified consciousness, from that which society has approved.5
Thus the definition of philosophy for Adorno can be only an express
negation of any systematic form of thought and thought itself is a
negation, just as the processing of any substance presented to us is
a 'negation' of its form.

Herbert Marcuse was appalled by the consumeristic American so-
ciety in which creative pursuits like art, music, painting, and sculpt-
ing were supplied as packages. Consequently, the natural urge and
interest of humans in such activities became increasingly money-
centred. The artists themselves increasingly saw themselves as good
marketable commodities and art became another lucrative industry.
Thus the rejuvenating function envisaged for art in a monotonous
and de-humanized society, in Freudian terminology, that of subli-
mating the repressed feelings, is defeated. Marcuse attributed this
to the increasing animosity towards anything general and abstract
like freedom, beauty, reason, and ideals. The attitudes of people
in all societies had undergone a sea change from one of contentment
with need-satisfaction to that of discontentment with the satisfaction
of one's needs. This points to an ill-boding increase in the craving for
more and more comforts and the sadistic pleasure in parading one's
possessions to stoke the embers of jealousy in others. From Marcuse's
angle, this portended the enslavement of the human consciousness
by the non-conscious entities and the servitude of mankind to which
it sought to create and make it do its bidding.

The concept of simple living and lofty ideals have been banished
for ever and people are swept into a whirlpool of pomp and splendour
to elicit deep sighs of avarice. Such a state of society prompted Mar-
cuse to long for the universal ideals even if they were non-empirical. This is from his *One-Dimensional Man*:

In the equation Reason=Truth=Reality ..., Reason is the subversive power, the “power of the negation” that establishes, as theoretical and practical reason, the truth for men and things that is, the conditions in which men and things become what they really are.  

For Marcuse, dialectic is that which maintains the tension between ‘is’ and ‘ought’. Dialectic is beyond formalization as it is determined by reality itself. It is deeper and normative and it critically evaluates the surficial apparent experience. While commending science and technology for improving the standard of living Marcuse reproaches them for fostering insensitivity to human feelings by employing reason in all spheres and, for this, he blames Aristotellean formal logic with its over-emphasis on reason. Citing Marcuse:

> Scientific-technical rationality and manipulation are welded together into new forms of social control ... Outside this rationality, one lives in a world of values, and values separated out from the objective reality becomes subjective.

Thus, Marcuse contemplates on how the ideas of goodness, beauty, and justice are deprived of universal validity and sidelined completely. Science engenders only a domination of nature and man, and philosophical theories like positivism harp upon the functional efficacy and not on normative validity. This one-dimensional attitude leads only to enslavement and thus it has become a victim of false consciousness. That more people flock to the system does not make it more rational. Marcuse claims:
The range of choice open to the individual is not the decisive factor in determining the degree of human freedom, but what can be chosen and what is chosen by the individual.6

1.2 Jürgen Habermas—Wisdom of the Past and the Vision for the Future

Jürgen Habermas accepted in principle Horkheimer's and Adorno's criticism levelled against Enlightenment reason for gifting its allegiance to technical interests intent on domination. Reason which was considered to be the acme of emancipatory power lost its supremacy to science considered to be the torch-bearer of rationality. And reason and science increasingly came to be identified with each other. For Marx, any social critique could only be practical with an eye on abolishing false consciousness thereby facilitating social emancipation. Reason being the bedrock of inter-personal communication performs a meaning-generating function which is the fundamental building block of any communication. It is impossible without a consensus on mutually accepted convention of meanings attributed to actions. Thus, Habermas welcomes the idea of praxis bereft of any technical stigma fastened to it but comprising of social aims not infused extrinsically but by virtue of its own rationality. Richard Rorty says, "Either all justifications, whether in matters of knowledge or morals, appeals to social practices or to illusory foundations."9 Habermas, therefore, seeks an intellectual faculty which synthesizes both theoretical and practical reason and thus neither can nor will it be neutral as regards its aims.
Habermas views ‘social practice’ as the starting point of any inquiry. He divides ‘social practice’ into labour (purposive rational action) and interaction (communicative action). While both natural sciences as well as the historico-hermeneutic sciences are driven by their interests, technical and practical respectively, the reason which operates can never be termed as neutral because of their express tilt towards their guiding aims. While the former indulges in dominating and fulfilling the desired ends the latter engages in preserving and enlarging the possible area of understanding among the human beings so as to improve communication. History is the repository of intelligible knowledge and all cognitive activities owe their validity to the interest by which cognition is governed. Interest operates in three spheres of ‘media’- work, language, and authority corresponding to the natural, historico-hermeneutic, and social sciences respectively. In self-reflection, interest and cognition coincide and it is in this realm that ‘emancipative reason’ takes shape.¹⁰

Habermas does not belittle the role of science but denounces only the paradigmatic claim of science as the only means through which all matters pertaining to human understanding are to be viewed. In short, he distinguishes scientific temper from that of scientific method. He attacks capitalistic society for reducing every thing to commercial exchange in which mutual benefits are the coveted motives. Politics becomes a pawn in the hands of the market which is being manoeuvred by science and technology. Thus, science and technology become ‘ideological’ in the sense that they produce an image of society based on a technical model. People are type-cast. The line which separates technical activity and human relationship has been deliberately obscured so that the transition is not difficult.
Habermas argues that only a return to 'praxis' could be the panacea as a category controlling social phenomena. This must be done with the exclusion of none, with human subjectivity very much reigning supreme propelling an improvement in communication, thread-bare discussion of existing power systems, and a fight against the depoliticization of life.

1.3 The Build-up to Communicative Action

In his *Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas elaborately dwells upon the challenges to a theory based on understanding. He weighs the consequences and installs various safe-guards like discursivity and hermeneutic approach to prevent reification and overt subjectivism, for which he borrows a lot from Lukacs and Gadamer. To map the whole territory of human communication, he introduces the concepts of truth, truthfulness, and rightness which respectively cover objective, subjective, and social domains. What prompted Habermas to relinquish consciousness and plump for language as the paradigm is the utter subjective leaning of the former and too much contentious and unaccounted for claims. In the case of language, it evolves inseparably entwined with subjective, objective, and social domains. Whatever irritants remain in the path of practising the time-tested conventions one has to only engage in a debate and work out solutions for problematic issues.

Without shirking his responsibility, Habermas concentrates on a number of issues like cognitive development, speech acts theory,
normative validity claims, communicative competence, linguistic-symbolic-gesture communication, archaic expressions, reification, alienation, systematically distorted communication et al. In this thesis, Habermas' phenomenal work of Theory of Communicative Action has been examined. Especially the volume dealing with the Reason and Rationalization of the Society has been taken for special attention. Habermas’ paradigm shift from the beaten path of consciousness to that of language-in-use has been analyzed. The development of critical theory from its inception till the time of Habermas has been analyzed.

Frankfurt theorists are also critical of philosophy which proclaims itself as the guardian of true knowledge. According to them, these unfounded claims resulted in philosophy being declared as a subject perpetrating the ideological hangovers of the past without offering anything new for the furtherance of the interests of mankind. The critical theorists were completely disillusioned by the failure of philosophy to bring about radical transformation along the expected lines. For them, any genuine progress in society is invariably linked with the realization of true freedom, justice, and happiness. However, they could not escape the dilemma whether to support scientific-technical development at the cost of moral-ethical development and vice-versa. Thus critical theory was assigned the unenviable task of ruminating over the past mistakes of philosophy and refurbishing it.

The Frankfurt theorists' aim was to moderate the objectives and inject life into the evaporated dreams of moral-ethical, socio-political,
and scientific-technical development. Habermas spent no time in grieving about the past. Keeping the dilemma of his predecessors in mind Habermas envisaged the role of social critique and interpreter for philosophy. In this way, philosophy attempts to find solutions for social problems through interpretation. Thus, it becomes more relevant socially in spite of being overshadowed by science. In offering ready-made solutions and material comforts science becomes more purposive than critical and approaches the social problems only at a surfacial level.

In order to reorient philosophy, the first step taken by Habermas was that of redefining the paradigm. He recognized and acknowledged the positive features of science. He observed that science was more objectivistic, result-oriented, and unfettered by mind-boggling theories. Moreover, science was eager to face and surmount the challenges posed by the ever-expanding borders of knowledge and in that it was a colossal success only served to firmly establish its supremacy over all other fields of study. Science was ready to rectify its mistakes and this saved it from falling a prey to dogmatism. In the case of philosophy, its glorious past was preying always on the psyche of philosophers. Habermas thought that the paradigm of consciousness was the main reason for philosophy to take a biased view of other subjects because of its concommitant relationship to subjectivity. Therefore, Habermas announced the paradigm shift from consciousness to that of everyday language. Language, for Habermas, is pregnant with possibilities. It is the repository of old and new tradition and culture. Language is the only dynamic element for which exchange is not an anathema. It reflects the mosaic of thoughts and actions. It does not spare any ineffectual ideas to linger on unless
proved invaluable. Effectiveness is the key-word for any viewpoint to survive.

Habermas did not approve of the grandiose claims of philosophy but he was keen to highlight the hidden potentialities in philosophy to smoothly assume the role of an interpreter. While Marx, Weber, and Lukács were attracted to science and in it they saw the realization of their cherished dreams while Weber was resigned to the stranglehold of the instrumental or purposive rationality which made the moral-aesthetic realm redundant. He was of the firm view that rationalization was possible only as cognitive-instrumental. But Habermas was of the view that for any social theory, cognitive-instrumental dimension was too narrow, and normative and expressive moments were also to be taken into account.

As he was not disheartened by the failure of the Enlightenment, Habermas did not have to jettison Kant, Hegel, and Marx from his scheme of things. Kant’s practical reason is very much relevant for Habermas if he has to keep at bay the purposive rationality from consigning the domains of morality and art to the irrational. Moreover, Kant’s synthetic a priori and critique of ideology were corner stones which any defense of philosophy cannot do away with. He is also quite conscious of Hegel’s critique of Kant for constructing his epistemological and metaphysical edifice on unexamined presuppositions which he calls phenomenal. Hegel’s metacritique provided Habermas with the dialectic which as a method which is undogmatic and non-ideological. The dialectical method is a possible barrier against reification. Since the contradictions inherent are periodically recy-
cled or eliminated and only those ideas which survive the ravages of
time and history are allowed to live. This dialectical method is the
best combination of historical and human factors.

Marx’s acrid criticism of Hegel dwelt upon the reluctance of Hegel
to ground philosophy historically and his allergy towards social real-
ity. By positing an Absolute entity, Hegel relinquished the responsi-
bility of social critique. But he recognized the domination of nature
and the manifestation of labour in the activity. Marx saw a hesita-
tion on the part of Hegel to forecast a social revolution in which the
status quo would be changed and the hitherto exploited class will
hold the reins of the society. But Habermas was not also entirely in
agreement with Marx as he saw the problems of exploitation, reifi-
cation, and alienation as affecting all the strata of the society. Ac-
cording to Habermas, it was a misconception on the part of Marx to
have staunchly advocated only the praxis as the sole means of social
change. He expected a proletariat revolution to erupt as a result of
the tensions endemic to the capitalistic society. But Marx’s predic-
tions were proved wrong. On the contrary, the protagonists of social
revolution were themselves trapped in the web of capitalism. Thus,
Marxism failed to realize its dream of liberating the society from reifi-
cation, exploitation, alienation, and ideology. Along with this and
the problems created by the paradigm of consciousness which was
too elusive for any conceptualization prompted Habermas to make a
break with the tradition and posit the language as his paradigm.
1.4 Flexibility and Dynamism of Language

Habermas chose the medium of language for the following reasons:

1) It is formal-pragmatic.

2) It exudes propensity for universalization.

3) It is the common possession of all and the sole possession of none.

4) It houses both the past and present and it is bristling with life for a future.

5) It is natural as well as a product of honing skills.

6) It is a direct route to freedom, justice, and happiness.

Furthermore, Habermas invests the reason with the emancipatory intent. The wish to communicate and share the experiences make man a social being. The communicative competence and the natural urge to communicate with the other strengthens the yearning of man to achieve understanding and lead a life of consensus. And exclusively, in this thesis, Habermas' interest in interaction is analyzed, though he divides any social action into labour and interaction. The communicative competence with assistance from reason acquires a rationality which aims at arriving at an understanding through argumentation, debate, or a discourse. This communicative rationality proceeds towards a communicative action. Habermas repeatedly exhorts that it is only in communicative action that the intentions and declaration of intentions cohere giving no scope for purposive-rational and strategic manoeuvres.
In his project of communicative action, Habermas affirms his support for John Austin’s theory of speech acts. Austin’s speech acts were not intended for social theorizing, but were intended rather for linguistic analysis. But Habermas utilizes the illocutionary force found in the illocutionary speech acts to further the cause of communicative action which has to function as the binding force between the objective, subjective, and social realms. Moreover, in order to make the communicative action fool-proof he chose the illocutionary speech act because of virtual absence of any variance in its utterance as an action and conception. Even if one were to disobey a promise, which is the prime example of Austin for illocutionary speech act, the promise as speech act is irreversible. But only its action consequences are distorted. This leads to infelicities in Austinian parlance. Searle, not happy with Austin’s classification of speech acts, set about the task of rearranging them and recommended the usage of illocutionary point from which the utterances derive their force. The illocutionary point is more contextual and it is a crucial component of the illocutionary force.

Habermas chose the method of argumentation for norm formation which presupposes a linguistic and communicative competence on the part of the participants to engage in a meaningful dialogue aimed at norm formation. The knowledge of the lifeworld situation, which includes culture, society, politics, and religion is assumed in any competent social subject. But, in the case of contestable claims, an ‘ideal speech situation’ which is both internal and external is imperative. In order to conduct a democratic dialogue this ‘ideal speech situation’ is necessarily presupposed.
1.5 Habermas’ Emphasis on Argumentation

Habermas employed the method of argumentation for norm formation. Such a method presupposes:

1) a competence on the part of the participants,
2) a will to engage in a fair discourse,
3) receptive to others views and welcoming criticism,
4) readiness to alter one’s views when proved untenable, and
5) conscious reflective discursive enterprise.

This in nutshell is an “ideal speech situation”. The justification for any argumentation lies in the discursivity and redeeminability of validity claims. Habermas, after proceeding from the communicative action which establishes understanding, aims at providing emancipatory thrust with the help of a communicative ethics which is the boundary condition of a practical discourse. Moral-ethical aspects are problematized only in a practical discourse. In this thesis, the role of argumentation in fostering understanding and the importance of communicative action for the validation of normative claims, the hermeneutic claim to universality and the stellar role of hermeneutics in interpreting the texts and social situations in the context of the lifeworld, meaning assigning and retrieving are taken up. Habermas’ critique of Gadamer for his views on method of science and language, and his unswerving allegiance to tradition are also discussed. He also anticipates the limitations of hermeneutics in deciphering systematic distortions and psycho-somatic disorders. Therefore, he freely solicits the advice of psychoanalysts like Freud, Selman, Kohlberg, Piaget and Mead.
In the first chapter titled CRITICAL THEORY: ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT various strands of influences like Kant, Hegel, and Marx are discussed. Critical theorists were particularly influenced by German idealists, and continental philosophers exerted only a secondary affectation. Kant himself was deeply fascinated by Rousseau’s ‘General Will’ which was to take shape as the ‘categorical imperative.’ The ‘Good Will, the only good-in-itself for Kant, has more than just accidental proximity to Rosseau’s ‘General Will’. Kant’s program was to crown philosophy as the Emperor of sciences and so he ventured into an analysis of the cognitive faculty. His aim was to make philosophy to take precedence in ear-marking territories for other disciplines. By this, he sought to make philosophy the highest arbiter. By laying down the rules governing the most fundamental function of understanding Kant cleverly superseded other disciplines, at least in his ingenuity, by making philosophy ontologically prior.

Hegel, Marx, Positivists, and Critical theorists, like Adorno and Habermas himself, who labels Kant maitre pensieur i.e., magician of the false paradigm, criticized Kant for arrogating authority, unilaterally without any locus standi, to philosophy. This made it appear as if only philosophy has the sole right to probe into the operations of the mind and others only have to meekly accept the recommendations of philosophy. Habermas watered down the role of philosophy to that of stand-in interpreter and a social critique. Whatever Kant aspired to achieve was done with the sole aim of reinstating philosophy on the throne of deciding authority. Kant’s critique of ideology and thorough examination of the functions of understanding ushered a new dawn.
What Kant did was undoubtedly an impartial analysis of the traits of the cognitive faculty with the intention of revamping the whole system and in this he succeeded tremendously. If one honestly considers whether philosophy became any richer in content the answer could only be negative. What Kant did benefitted all disciplines and philosophy was shown its place because his inquiry was a-philosophical. Philosophy became more and more speculative and diffuse. Kant’s own schemata became a double-edged weapon and philosophy suffered. Thus, Kant’s plunge into the secrets of understanding and the enterprise of philosophy have to be considered separately, though in Kant they are inseparable.

In this light, Hegel’s stinging attack on Kant hovers on Kant’s reluctance to disband the monological primacy of the subject even though the object was not relegated to the sidelines. This meant that whatever creativity the mind was invested within the space of action seemed severely restricted. Hegel attacked Kant for holding aloft the epistemological as the foundational enterprise and for being the tallest figure of such an enterprise. Instead, Hegel suggested “immanent critique” which involves constant revision of concepts which is the salient feature with emphasis on continuous refinement. ‘This path of alternating criticism and amendment is the ‘dialectical’ way of the Phenomenology of Spirit, where each position establishes itself as superior to its predecessor purely through the force of argument.’

Marx’s criticism of Hegel is on neglecting the social factors in the conception of the subject, experience, and knowledge in which errors are viewed as merely intellectual. The maladies afflicting the society have to be eliminated successively and each stage has its residue of contradictions. Marx’s contention was that the prognosis and diag-
nosis of the problem should be found in social reality. Habermas puts it as:

The theory gives an account both of the content in which it itself arises (its Entstehungszusammenhang), along with all the inadequacies of existing conceptions and reality, and of its context of effective application (its Verwendungszusammenhang) as a guide for changing what exists.\textsuperscript{16}

Habermas resembles Hegel a lot in his criticism of unproven assumptions of philosophy and he does not spare even Kant for his coronation of subject in the throne of knowledge. Habermas appreciates Kant for his critique of ideology, 'categorical imperative', practical reason and approbation of the role played by the external world in the knowledge episode. He criticizes Kant for his condescending attitude towards other disciplines. Kant seemed to project an idea as if philosophy alone could stake claims for unravelling the mysteries of knowing and allocate domains of research for other subjects.

For Hegel, the transition of consciousness which includes social is from less to more advanced stage. 'Philosophy only arrives at a retrospective understanding', in the famous image of the preface to the Philosophy of Right, the Owl of Minerva flies only at the dusk.\textsuperscript{17} Thus, Hegel subsumes social critique in his dialectic in which reason finally delivers the society from all contradictions. For Marx, unmasking of the irrationality imbedded in the society is the prime task and transformation ensues only in its aftermath. For Hegel, thought must reconcile us to a rational reality. For Marx, it has to unmask existent irrationality and guide its transformation.\textsuperscript{18} Marxism has to evaluate both levels of contradictions, in the historical realm in
the society as well as the conceptual framework of the individuals. Kortian says:

If it tries to abandon the first level and to develop a 'science' of society which would make no reference to conceptions and aspirations as integral to or partially constitutive of our institutions, then it just becomes just another would be positive science,...

Habermas disagrees with Marx on setting aside theories after a critique and espouses an approach which is reflective and evaluative. He traces the roots of such theories of epistemology as engaging in a constant revision, lest the sleeping notions may creep in. Thus, he turns to Kant and Hegel. Habermas charts a different course by advocating plurality of interests which prompt knowledge claims. His transcendental inquiry leads to a theory of communicative competence which underlies an unadulterated urge to communicate. Hence, language becomes the paradigm.

Kortian calls critical theory a metacritique because of its critique of presuppositions of which it itself is not devoid of. The 'meta' is valid only if the critique does not fasten itself to any absolute standpoints. Hegel's enterprise was to deconstruct the structure of presuppositions. Kortian says, 'positive concepts which take over words from ordinary language epitomise these presuppositions which, according to Hegel, are so 'well-known' precisely because they are not 'known'. This knowledge is 'phenomenal knowledge' (erscheinenden des Wissen), which is the object of Phenomenology. Hegel, in stressing the speculative experience as the experience of absolute knowledge, criticizes Kant for holding knowledge as the tool for arriving at
the truth. He says that the medium or instrument of knowing incorporated into the process cannot be abstracted from it. Hegel says, "... Or if, representing knowledge as a medium, we learn the law of its refraction, it is likewise of no avail to subtract the refraction from the result..."21 In Hegel's critique of Kant, a distinct metacritical moment is palpable and his speculative experience is far more incisive though culminating in the cul de sac of the absolute knowledge. 'In speculative thinking, the negative moment of reflection belongs to the content itself, and is the positive, both as its immanent movement and determination and as the whole of this moment and determination.'22 While the phenomenal understanding processes external data, the speculative experience internally scrutinizes the content and the passive subject-object relationship is abandoned for a dynamic interface in the historical manifestation of reason. Speculative experience is produced by the Aufhebung of the difference between the phenomenal and the truth. Truth is the philosophical knowledge which is the self-reflective reconstruction of the phenomenal knowledge objectified by the transcendental-absolute concept. This is the absolute knowledge. But Marx's polemic against Hegel led to the dissociation of the whole project and also the project of the whole; i.e. 'the moment of recognition and appropriation of (anerkunnung and annignung) the phenomenalized totality of the absolute concept in its otherness.'23

Frankfurt school gladly accepted the the metacritique. Horkheimer added the social dimension to the Hegelian dialectics. Adorno especially employed metacritique ruthlessly to denounce any attempt at foundational enterprise in philosophy. He was unsparing on Hegel for capitulating his dialectic in the Absolute. For Adorno, the dialectic
is unending and its function is to continue unearthing falsity which alone is the unprevaricated truth. Horkheimer and Adorno call such a process materialism, which denotes the nexus between the dialectic and the socio-historic relationships. These relationships serve as lead weights around the neck and prevent emancipation as envisioned in the Enlightenment. Hegel attributes this 'pre-supposition of the unachieved end' to Kantian 'ought to be' or duty (*Sollen*).²⁴

Critical theory envisages emancipation as a product of both sociohistorical reality and the subjective perseverance of the human understanding. The introspection, the retrospection, and the deintellectualization of the theory and the deobjectivization of the praxis were at the top of the agenda for the Frankfurt theorists. The method recommended by Habermas is the practical discourse which propagates dialogical-dialectical understanding. Habermas also introduces the concept of interest into the reason supposedly neutral. This interest is the one which furthers the appetite for emancipation. Enlightenment confronts the problems of reason, dogmatism, and decision. The will to decide reasonably sets in motion the interest in emancipation.

In the second chapter titled HERMENEUTICS OF COMMUNICATION, 1) Habermas' acknowledgement of the contribution of philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer and his displeasure on certain other views of Gadamer, 2) the constructive part played by the hermeneutics in the interpretation of world-views and making them accessible to people in everyday language are taken for examination. Habermas agrees with Gadamer on his criticism of extreme
objectivity in the cultural sphere. In his *Truth and Method* (1960), Gadamer did not hide his distaste for the method of science to be applied in social sciences and went to the extent of saying that truth and method was an impossible pair. Holub writes, "... the question of truth for Gadamer is prior to or outside of methodological considerations." Another point of agreement between Gadamer and Habermas is regarding the foreknowledge or preunderstanding, which Gadamer surprisingly calls prejudice (*Vorurteil*), and the historicity and temporality of knowledge. Both Habermas and Gadamer accept the application of hermeneutic principles while interpreting texts from other languages and the common areas of similarity like grammatical usages. Habermas also agrees on the limitations imposed by the epoch, language, and subjective qualities on the interpreter while interpreting a text. It is the necessary precondition for any interpreter to have mastery over the language of the text, the foreknowledge of the historical setting of the text, and an insight into the course of thinking of the author. But Habermas openly disapproves Gadamer's conception of language and the role of traditional authority and his rabid antagonism of science and method.

Language, for Habermas is the real pointer to the social situation and it can be an instrument of labour and domination or emancipation. Language captures unerringly the maladies, healthy trends, systemic afflictions, and supplies us with all current information on the happenings in the society. Gadamer treats language only as existential.
This irks Habermas because the entire hermeneutic enterprise is intended for a dynamic evaluation of tradition, culture, and religion which are renowned for their dogmatic, ideological and stagnant beliefs. The dogmatic and ideological beliefs are transmitted through the language and entrance the masses with their historical allure. Habermas wants to critically scrutinize the past with the help of hermeneutics. This he makes use of for argumentation and dialogue to bring to limelight the living and dead ideas enshrined in the institutions of culture, religion, and tradition. Since Gadamer was preoccupied with the interpretation of the texts and in unearthing the original meaning of the classics which he considered the marvels of human creativity his vision remained within the 'horizon'. This was the farthest any historically situated being could view.

While Gadamer’s views are directed towards the external Habermas is also simultaneously stimulated by the the activities of the psyche. The ‘lifeworld’, for him, is the web of everyday practice which effectively partakes in intersubjective communicative activity. And hence, whatever facilitates or militates against the dialogical-dialectical mode of exchange of thought is viewed with restraint. This to prevent any room being given for dogmatism, ideology, and distortion to sneak in. In this endeavour, Habermas has to guard against systematic distortions. The participants in the discourse are to be free from psychological disturbances like retardation, schizophrenia, psychosis, and neurosis. To overcome these deformities, Habermas seeks the help of psychologists like Freud, Selman, Piaget, Kohlberg, and Lorenzer. Gadamer did not take kindly to this and criticized Habermas for venturing into a territory out of bounds of Hermeneutics. Gadamer opined that the therapeutic relationship between a
psycho-analyst and the patient undergoing a treatment was a voluntary one and this should not be injudiciously used as an analogy in the social situation.

Habermas' trenchant criticism of Gadamer is on completely disowning the method of science and also his apathy towards the sweeping changes in the historical horizon in which science was the major contributor. Gadamer, as the advocate of historicity of horizon and understanding, should not have neglected this. Gadamer also faulted the Enlightenment for exhibiting animosity towards authority, tradition, and prejudice which Habermas attributed to distorted understanding. Habermas' project of critical hermeneutics is only a via media, for his theory of communicative action, to act as a protection against voluntary and involuntary acts of indiscretion which hamper free exchange of communication.

In the third chapter titled MANIFESTATIONS OF COMMUNICATIVE RATIONALITY, various hues of reason like instrumental or purposive, strategic and communicative rationality are discussed. Scientific-technical or purposive-instrumental rationality revels in discovering the secrets of the external world and helps establish a mastery over it. Thus, it becomes a purpose-oriented and goal-directed rationality. Habermas' communicative rationality is concerned with the transactions in the sphere of exchange of thoughts, ideas, and meaning forming activity which is the bedrock of any learning process which science does not take cognisance of. The aim of communicative rationality is social rationalization, social integration, and socialization. These are not mere affirmations of
truth and success but a protracted discursive and redeemable pro-
cesses in which arriving at a cherished conclusion is not the salvation.

Purposive rationality is concerned with truth claims and aims at achieving success. Though the reflective element in scientific-technical activity cannot be doubted it is affirmed only in the success or the efficiency of the action performed. In the case of a commun-unicative action, success or failure of the action is immaterial if the process of communication is authored under the canopy of reflection. What is coveted is the potential for unconstrained consensus purely based on the force of rational argumentation. Even if no consensus is arrived at in a rational argumentation the failure can be explained rationally. Communicative rationality is situated upon the reflective competence of the interacting subject to justify and defend his thesis and not in taking recourse to devious means. This pre-supposes a common-shared lifeworld of meanings which acts as the transcen-dental binding force which is beyond any presupposition because of its a priori character. This the purposive rationality assumes for granted ignoring its historical situatedness while communicative ra-
tionality justifies its procedure citing the transcendental expanse of the lifeworld and derive their strength from it as a sanction for its intersubjective communicative designs.

Habermas criticizes Kant for unilaterally dividing the domain of knowledge into science, morality, and art and anointing pure reason, practical reason, and judgemental reason to govern the respective domains. Though Habermas accepts the inherent relation between
Various concepts of reason, ironically, he had to resort to demarcating reason into purposive rational and communicative rational. It becomes imperative for Habermas to separate them because science applies a different standard of rationality and it would condemn moral-ethical and aesthetic to the irrational. Since social sciences have no external verifiers, the method of validation of claims is possible only through argumentation which Habermas describes as the systematic way of adducing reasons and grounds for the justification of validity claims.

Habermas, in order to distinguish the domains of science and social sciences recommends theoretical discourse in the case of the former and practical discourse in the case of the latter. As Habermas reiterates, his idea of practical discourse is not identical to moral discourse but the validation of normative validity claims, i.e. not only What is right?, but also, What makes it right? This is where the justification, discursivity, and redeemability of the validity claims surface. This makes an argumentation rational. Thus Habermas encounters no trouble in accommodating the therapeutic critique and aesthetic criticism. Another reason for Habermas to choose argumentative technique for expounding his theory of communicative action is its pragmatic character. Moreover, the theory of argumentation is open to criticism and it itself is not beyond scrutiny. This calls for an ‘ideal speech situation’ which also presupposes linguistic competence of the interlocutors.28

The contrasting approaches of the archaic and modern understanding and the preconceived notions of the modern interpreters
when analyzing the archaic world views are also discussed. Habermas opines that though the archaic world views cannot be completely divested of any rationality the considerations were not always rational. He says that the modern understanding is far more dialogical and accommodative. There was little or no separation between culture, religion, science and various symbolic practices in the archaic understanding. Hence, the need for demythologization and denaturalization of the society and only then would socialization be possible.

The concept of validity claims and their justification is possible only in a society with shared meanings with common linguistic and mental framework. The problems of truth and morality have to be released from the narrow perspective of justification on survival instinct and self-preservational strategy. Dialogue or argumentation is not possible in an atmosphere foreboding a threat to personal safety and this is not possible in a society where anarchy reigns. The term society itself symbolizes a rational community with mutually agreed upon laws to be administered for various social acts and conventions to be adhered.

The transition to language from symbolism must have been prompted by the pressing need to thematize and problematize conflicts without resorting to mortal combats. The natural expressive impulse which manifested in various pictorial and other symbolic artefacts must have been a substitute for the undeveloped linguistic apparatus. This is clearly illustrated by the research in child learning processes by Piaget, Selman and others. And in clinical psychology, of Freud, mental disorders are understood by recreating scenes similar to the ones which caused the disturbances in the patient. Such developments made possible exclusive research on systematic
disorders and non-systematic ones and exploded the myth of the mind being always conscious of its functioning. Such discoveries save the juxtaposition of one realm over the other and from queering the understanding. Habermas also allocates various types of understanding as pertaining to various action orientations. They are: 1) Teleological action, 2) Dramaturgical action, 3) Normatively regulated action, and 4) Communicative action. It is the communicative action on which Habermas bases his whole enterprise. It is replete with rational components of argumentation and norm formation. For being the unopposed candidate to be employed in the discourse, the reason adduced is its latent structural deterrent to guard against any manipulative use of language. The illocutionary speech acts constitute the communicative action. Austin describes the illocutionary speech acts as in saying which an action is performed and by retracing which the act cannot be dishonoured. Thus, idea and action cohere and theory and practice become identical, and in Habermasian terms, the intentions and the declaration of intentions merge.

In the fourth chapter called Rational Theory of Social Action, 1) Austin's classification of the speech acts and Searle's systematization and justification for rearranging Austin's classification, 2) Habermas' application of illocutionary speech acts in his theory of communicative action and, 3) his defense of deploying the illocutionary speech acts as the emissaries of formal-pragmatic approach which facilitate both transcendental and empirical analysis are discussed. Linguistic competence as an integral part of the communicative competence, which spans the entire gamut of interpersonal relationships, plays a major part in furnishing validity claims on which argumen-
tations are conducted. They are truth, truthfulness, and rightness claims. It is not so simple to mediate in the rarefied atmosphere of subjective likes and dislikes. Habermas is aware of the difficulties that would arise in a debate in which what is arrived at may not always be what is desired by the participants, whereas what is desired in science is what is most sought after. Habermas is most concerned about the judgemental portion of the discourse. Though not confined to statutes of the legal sphere alone it does not make things any simpler because it involves objectification of subjective ideas and opinions and make them explicit and the participants have to be unfazed by the severe dent that would be caused to the ego. In order to nullify any undue advantage that would accrue to the participants, because of any damage suffered by the ego and wounded pride, Habermas fore-announced the ideal speech situation in which no one has ownership over views.

While Habermas was insisting upon the need for communicative rationality Weber was decided in his view of disenchantment of the society. For Weber, whatever was possible was only as purposive rational which was the overpowering rationality of the epoch. Weber's ideas of increasing specialization of politics and outright consumerization were supported by the grim analysis of Adorno and Horkheimer. Since Habermas agrees that reification and alienation are both the main sources of the trouble he introduces discursivity and redeemability as the necessary condition for any norm formation through a discourse. He cannot discard tradition or culture because even though they are the cradle of all problems they are the corpus of all experiences. Not withstanding the confusion caused in the allocation of territories for various disciplines which is due to the
vagaries and limitations of subjective understanding, they unconcealingly mirror the problems from which remedial measures could be taken.

Argumentation is the reflective medium which is reared in the life world. Habermas has to reckon with the society as a system. In the latter, society regulates itself on action consequences to the human actions. In the life world concept, too much store is laid on the of the known and predictable. A kind of ideal democracy is unreflectively assumed. In this chapter, Weber's classification of action orientations and Habermas' alternative, the application of Austin's performative utterances, particularly illocutionary speech acts which act as the purveyor of communicative action in an attempt to free communication from perlocutionary effects are also discussed elaborately.

In the CONCLUSION, the prospects of Habermas' theory of communicative action and his project of communicative ethics are analyzed. Its practical application in aesthetics and everyday life-situation are taken for consideration. The difficulties posed by multicultural and multi-lingual societies for the success of his theory, especially with respect to India, and how the institutionalization of religion, culture, and language affect the norm-formation are discussed. Habermas also gives too great an importance to illocutionary speech acts. Paradoxically, he criticized Gadamer for not accepting the historical reality that science opened a new era while he himself failed to realize the importance of perlocutionary speech acts. This is because he assumed *apriori* that human beings are good-in-nature. The ar-
gument here can be that humans only possess the potential to bring about a society pervaded by freedom, justice, and peace but they are not absolutely good in the society. Thus, it is inevitable that in order that even the people with mal-intention are to be communicated with and for this illocutionary acts alone do not suffice.
NOTES


2) *ibid.*, p.352.
3) *ibid.*, p.353.
4) *ibid.*, p.360.
5) *ibid.*, p.366.
7) *ibid.*, pp. 408-409.
8) *ibid.*, p.410.


19) *ibid.*, p.15.
20) *ibid.*, p.27.
21) *ibid.*, p.36.
22) *ibid.*, p.39.
23) *ibid.*, p.41.
24) *ibid.*, p.45.
26) *ibid.*, p.57.
32) Austin, p. 95. Austin seems to stress that illocutionary acts are not to be confused with the consequences. Also, the coherence of the intentions and the declaration of intentions vests the illocutionary speech acts with property of excluding the consequences and it is validated only by the motives behind the acts. Any reneging on the part of the actor does not render the speech act inconsequential but leads to infelicities and abuses.(see page 158). He opines that intention alone does not bind an actor to comply with his undertaking. Only if the intention is declared the actor is bound to adhere to his undertaking. Austin lists these acts under commissives.