

Chapter Three

UNDERSTANDING MEANING: THE HERMENEUTIC PROBLEMATIC

1. INTRODUCTION

The representationalists¹ search for meaning was guided by the idea of a common element that makes linguistic understanding a possibility. Meaning, for them, as we have seen, provides a domain in terms of which they can dissolve the differences and disparities that make the uses of language problematic. But hermeneutic tradition, on the other hand, focuses on these differences and disparities and attempts to solve the problem of understanding by analysing the latter. The whole of hermeneutic tradition has consistently patented the term understanding in the process of its development.

From the viewpoint of a philosophy of language the problem of understanding is intimately associated with the problem of meaning. And it is in its approach towards the question of meaning that the hermeneutic tradition differs significantly from that of the representationalists. Representationalism, with the presupposition of an objective semantic element that makes language a picture of the world, looks for the former in a language where the world of facts is perfectly pictured. The representationalists thus idealised the language of science where the representational functions of language are more prominent. The rest of human language, they conceived as imperfect and therefore, not suitable for objective communication. We have seen how thinkers like Wittgenstein, Quine and the like have undermined this conception. What acquires prominence is the crucial role the various uses of language have in determining meaning and its comprehension. While meaning is connected with the situations of use, understanding is associated with the perspectival horizon of each language user, a

conception that raises serious doubts about the very idea of identifying objective scientific understanding with the understanding of language in general.

The hermeneutic problem of understanding meaning has originated from the problem of understanding the "understanding of historical text". Here the cognitive intellect is not exposed to a set of objective complex phenomena, the simple constituents of which can be successfully cognised by decoding them with the logic of representationalism. Moreover, here language hardly derives its significance by means of its competence in representing an objective state of affair. The intentional and imaginative categories have valuable roles to play here. And an active presence of these categories prevents the possibility of an immediate objective comprehension of what is being expressed. The problem of understanding in this context has to be evaluated keeping this factor in view.

The representationalists with their prototype of scientific language, naturally directed their enquiry towards the factor which ensures objective communication and comprehension. This is essential, they thought, since the very practice of science derived its justification from such a conception. The notion of semantic content or meaning provided them this justification. But such a hard core notion of objectivity is a practical ideal for scientific practice and has an application within that sphere of activity alone. In other words, it is never a central idea as far as the day to day practice of language use is concerned. And hence a theory of understanding, which has to provide an account of the whole of linguistic practice cannot limit itself to the conceptual parameters laid down by the representational model.

This recognition led the philosophers of the hermeneutic tradition to turn away from the language of science to other forms of language-games where the representational model has the least possible application. Schleiermacher specifically deals with the issues that are relevant in our attempting to understand the literal documents of antiquity and Wilhelm Dilthey seeks to analyse the very activity of understanding the historical and cultural phenomena. Here the object of reference radically differs from that of natural science, both in terms of nature and in kind. Unlike the object of study of science, which claims to have a transcendental significance, the historical and cultural phenomena exist cut off from us, making their objective comprehension impossible. There exist an obvious temporal and socio-cultural gap that makes these language games different from what we are familiar with. Dilthey thus makes a distinction between pre-hermeneutic understanding and hermeneutic understanding, as in the latter the encounter is with a cultural tradition which is foreign or alien to us. This is to recognise, as we have seen in the first chapter, an altogether different kind of knowledge which takes into account the organic nature of human actions and not merely sticking to the observation model and the causal explanation paradigm. All these ultimately point towards the limitations of the representational model as far as the problem of understanding is concerned. As Dilthey says, "... the uniformities which can be established about society fall far short of the laws which can be established about nature based on the certainty of spatial relations and the properties of motion".¹

This chapter is dedicated to examine the evolution of the hermeneutic model of understanding meaning. It therefore, explicitly analyses the notion of historicity, which lies at the core of the model. Subsequently, the different concept of knowledge that becomes relevant in this situation also will be examined,

2. RECOGNITION OF HISTORICITY

The factor of historicity has to be accounted for properly in order to explain the nature of understanding and man's possible encounters with language and reality. The recognition of historicity as a necessary factor that intervenes in all our interactive encounters, naturally calls for a different conception of knowledge as well as a different notion of understanding. All human endeavours, be it scientific, religious or aesthetic, necessarily have their ultimate foundation in the day to day lives of individuals. This pre-theoretical context of life is the basis of all actions, experiences and judgements. It is the concrete life that makes human acts and projects legitimate. As Husserl puts it:

... . the life-world, for us who wakenly live in it, is always already there, existing in advance for us, the "ground" of all praxis whether theoretical or extratheoretical. The world is pregiven to us, the waking, always somehow practically interested subjects, not occasionally but always and necessarily as the universal field of all actual and possible praxis, as horizon.²

This factor places the entire wealth of human praxis historically and culturally situated. Even scientific practices which consists of objective categorisations are grounded in this fundamental life-world and therefore, represent the various projects that arise from within it as forms of knowledge that reflect the concerns of specific communities and serve their needs.

Dilthey develops a peculiar concept of knowledge from these Husserlian insights by focusing on the dialectical relationship between human praxis and the historically situated life-world. He adopts this model to explain the nature of historical reality as a process of evolution

out of the human intentional acts and also to explicate the phenomenon of knowledge acquisition in relation with historical reality. It is a process which involves mutual interaction and constitution. This factor makes the historical reality essentially different from the natural phenomenon, which is approached by a scientist objectively from outside.³

According to Dilthey, what make the historical phenomenon distinct are the intentional and imaginative categories that are at work for its constitution. As Richard Campbell points out, history consists of intentional human actions and natural events are events which might happen to people but are of historical significance only by virtue of their relation to the former.⁴

An examination of historicity thus has to start with an analysis of the essential nature of intentional acts. One can say that the historical reality lacks the precision and completeness of the factual world which is the subject matter of natural sciences. As we have seen in the first chapter, historical reality necessarily escapes the abstract conceptual grip of scientific enquiry. It is constituted out of the above mentioned intentional human acts and therefore it goes on making and remaking its own import. The experiences that result in historical knowledge form part of a whole, establishing an organic relationship between the past, present and the future. All experiences of the historical reality are influenced by the past experiences one had, as well as by the anticipation of future possibilities. New experiences suggest revision in the ways in which the past is understood and the future is anticipated. The anticipation of the future, in turn, stems from the past experiences. The experiences of the historical reality and the very possibility of historical knowledge in short, are constituted within such a circle of experience, interpretation and revision.⁵

To be precise, the historical phenomenon cannot be approached in a detached manner. The being of man is organically related to it. All these imply a different kind of experience and knowledge for the historical phenomenon. It is because historical reality is a process which is under constant motion through interpretation and revision, and has to be understood by the human being who is also a party contributing in its making. This form of knowledge radically differs from that which relies on the subject - object relational pattern. Dilthey has derived insight from Husserl's phenomenology where a distinction is made between two forms of experience, *erlebnis* and *erfahrung*. Unlike *erfahrung*, which are the forms of experience that are characteristic of natural sciences (gained by imposing mathematical categories and physical laws on the natural world), *erlebnis* refers to the lived experiences, which are characterised by the "subjective" response to the world. The latter form of experiences are given immediately to the consciousness as things themselves in their subjective modes of givenness.⁶ According to Husserl, *erlebnis* present themselves as an already structured meaningful unity. This notion of *erlebnis* is relevant in the study of the historical phenomenon since it offers an anti-thesis to the atomistic epistemology which is directed exclusively towards the natural phenomena. This insight raises objections against the epistemological conception of an absolute split of the subject from the object and also against the notion of detached value-free observation. These two concepts are extremely pivotal as far as the question of understanding historical phenomenon is concerned. Such experiences constitute the very heart of the historical phenomena. This is to adopt an entirely different approach towards the natural scientific endeavour. An observation of A. T. Nuyen makes this point clear:

natural science is not concerned with the *meaning* that an object has for the person who is investigating it nor indeed with the *meaning of that* investigation for the investigator, not just as a matter of value but as a matter of fact.

To be precise, since the intentional categories of man constitute the very nature of the historical phenomena, it cannot be approached in a detached manner. As an entity which constitutes the historical phenomena, the being of man finds itself as a product of the same historical phenomena. Needless to say, the casual explanation model which is being successfully employed in dealing with the natural phenomena falls short in dealing with the phenomena that are historical. Natural sciences could conveniently proceed with such a model assisted by mathematical and ahistorical principles. Dilthey thus points out that the world of natural sciences, as Kant and the representationalists say, presents a wide range of objects for our understanding which are necessarily ahistorical. Because of this ahistorical nature those objects could be easily categorised by the cognitive intellect and could be made available for objective explanations. But, as Dilthey points out, the reality, which we encounter in the human sciences, is widely centered by intentional and emotional categories of concrete human beings. Hence we cannot relegate them into a non-self category. The fact that nature could be viewed as non-self and as constituted of impersonal objects (personally uncentered) makes the natural phenomena ahistorical and thus they could be categorised by means of mathematical abstractions.⁸

3. TIME AND HISTORICITY

The notion of intentional human action further points to another cardinal insight which reasserts historicity. It is the apparent independent nature of such acts. They are not originating

out of something which can be designated as a fixed human nature, which ultimately determines all the motives and actions of human beings. On the other hand, they derive their momentum from the very historical phenomena which are constituted by them. Heidegger thus develops this idea further by explaining the essential "way of being" of man. The being of man is thus conceived as evolving out of a constant self-making process. In other words, instead *of a priori* determined by a metaphysical essence, the being of man is constituted out of a constant self-making process, which is actually a process of becoming. It is a process which never achieves completion and hence proceeds endlessly in the domain of time. Heidegger thus interprets being in terms of temporality. The horizon of being, according to him, is time.⁹ It brings together in a peculiar way the three dimensions of time, the past, the present and the future. The present is formed out of the past and also projects the future to integrate the whole of its being. The past as well as the projection of the future constitute the present which reveals through a process of self-making

But this process of integration that happens in the self-making activity is never a completely independent activity performed by the individual. This process, on the other hand, necessarily happens in a particular situation; natural as well as historical. The natural situations do not suggest any significant change in the structural movement of the self-making process which reveals itself in the domain of time. But the historical situations, being themselves constituted out of human intentional acts, which involve the self-making and integrating acts, penetrate this temporality to determine the momentum of such acts. In other words, there exists a dialectical relationship between the being of man and the historical situations where he finds himself. The being of man as well as the historical situation where he finds himself is the

products of his self-making and integrating acts. This process which continues endlessly involves all activities of understanding meaning and constituting meaning.

In short, man's being and his situations are intimately interconnected. Human existence, as Heidegger contends, is irretrievably being-in-the-world. The possibility of detaching it from the world, as it is done in the Cartesian method (and also in the method of science), is not final and real. Reiterating this fundamental temporality of man's being and situatedness of all his endeavours, Gadamer makes this aspect more clear by introducing the idea of tradition. He says that man's being is essentially situated in a tradition. This concept is employed to describe, not only the essential finitude and historicity of human existence but also to make clear how all human endeavours presuppose interpretative encounter. We share fundamental prejudices with tradition, says Gadamer.¹⁰

This situation invites certain riddles which are in need of immediate attention. If meaning and understanding are associated with the dialectical relation between the human self-making process and the historical situation, then there cannot be an understanding of the text in the sense of objectively comprehending its meaning. This is because, meaning of the text in this context, depends on the nature of the dialectical relationship which will be different in different historical situations. The textual meaning, in other words, escapes the structure of this relationship. But then the text cannot have any meaning that is not revealed in the dialectical process.

This situation, therefore, demands a total reconstruction of the concepts of meaning and understanding. The representationalists did not encounter this issue, as they could envisage the availability of a common objective sphere of semantic entities, which in turn, necessarily points back to the logical structure shared by both language and world. Meanings are objective entities in their framework and hence their comprehension happens immediately and directly. But once historicity is recognised, this model of direct and immediate comprehension of meanings stands challenged. Any discourse on understanding meaning has to provide satisfactory accounts of human historicity. What is needed is an interpretative approach. Comprehension of meanings, thus, can no more be accomplished in a detached way, as it requires the interpretative interaction between the text and the one who tries to comprehend its meaning. The text, itself is a historical product. The interpreter also occupies a peculiar situation in history.

Interpretation, by its very nature, eventually calls for a creative approach on the part of the interpreter. This factor forms the central thesis of the hermeneutic model of understanding meaning. Now the question is, how does interpretation take us to the understanding of textual meaning? The answer to this problem presupposes a clarification of the notion of meaning that is being propounded. Regarding the way this notion is conceived and the way it was linked with interpretation, there appeared to be at least two diverse approaches, and correspondingly two different conceptions of understanding meaning. If we take the text as having a definite meaning, then it is very much apparent that historicity as an unavoidable factor prevents us *from* comprehending it. In this context it can be legitimately argued that an understanding of the textual meaning requires an overcoming of this historicity, so that the real meaning of the text can be viewed in its own light. But if we emphasise the self-making process and the dialectical

relationship between it and the historical situations, the very notion of textual meaning will appear in a new light. Meaning here does not rely on the language of the text, or on the subjective contentions of the one who is trying to understand it. It rather appears as the property of the discourse which is the result of the dialectical and dialogical relationship between the two poles

A discussion of these two approaches is vital in our examination of the hermeneutical model of understanding meaning, as both give different accounts of how meaning is related to historicity. The first approach, more or less inherits a notion of meaning which is much in line with the traditional conception. Here there is agreement with the representationalists and the fundamental beliefs of the latter regarding the status of meaning are hardly challenged. But a total paradigm shift is being envisaged when meaning, its comprehension and truth are made historical.

4. HISTORICITY AND THE METAPHYSICS OF MEANING

We have seen how the representationalists conceived the notion of meaning in tune with the Platonic assumptions of fixed and unchanging essences. The notion of proposition provided them the conceptual foundation to posit a common entity as the meaning of linguistic expressions. Frege went even further, and by locating senses in the third realm, proclaimed the most radical form of the semantic invariance doctrine. The common assumption shared by all of them is the idea of fixed and unchanging meaning.

This conception evidently is the core idea that led to the formulation of a metaphysical theory of meaning. As far as our investigation is concerned, this conception presupposes two things

- 1) Meanings are fixed and unchanging
- 2) Meanings can be objectively comprehended.

The idea of fixed and determinate meaning ensures the possibility of methodologically isolating them from the multitude of contexts where language finds use.

Meanings are, according to the realists, independent of human actions and human cognition. The psychological counterpart of the cognitive process has no relevance as far as the understanding of meaning is concerned. Frege, for example, propagates his semantic realism by making meaning even independent of language. Located in the Platonic realm they make themselves known to the cognitive intellect which is sensitive to capture the abstract logical entities. Wittgenstein who made meaning the representational content of language, though did not isolate it from language, proclaimed its independence from the subjective acts of human beings by making language subservient to the structure of logic. The neo-empiricists, though made experience and psychological activity of cognition central to their theoretical framework, were also eager to make the net result of understanding meaning subjectively neutral and thus proclaimed the thesis of meaning invariance and objective understanding. It is possible to propagate such a semantic realism in the representational framework because, the phenomena with which they have associated meaning and understanding are the natural phenomena. Language, for them, is thus a talk about the world, a world from which they can methodologically isolate themselves in order to make the latter subject to impartial observation,

This methodological detachment ultimately enabled them to isolate the independent representational content of language and comprehend it objectively.

But in the purview of the human sciences, the notion of historicity poses an immediate threat to such an idea of methodological isolation and consequently to the idea of understanding meaning objectively. We have seen, to what extent the dialectical relationship between the human self-making process and the historical situation are relevant in the context of understanding human phenomena. In short, the factor of historicity necessarily intervenes in all our cognitive enterprises, and this in turn, results in a 'distancing' of the object of understanding from us. This situation led many to suspect whether genuine knowledge about the historical and cultural phenomena was possible at all. The hermeneutic model tries to prove that this is possible. Dilthey thus starts with the assumption that there is knowledge and truth in the historical phenomena and the meaning of historical texts can be objectively comprehended by adopting a methodological procedure by means of which the historicity of both the text as well as the one who is trying to understand it can be dissolved.

But for this, meanings have to be conceived as determinate and unchanging. Here the text's historical belongingness poses a threat. Meanings, therefore, have to be shown as existing independently of the text's historicity. An ahistorical location has to be identified for them outside the syntactical arrangement and the conventional usage pattern of the linguistic signs. In short, meanings have to be placed well outside the linguistic system, which is necessarily a historical product.

The representationalists, as we have seen, could pursue with their project of semantic realism, because a doctrine of semantic invariance forms the core idea of their theory. But it is evident from the very outset that the semantic invariance doctrine cannot be consistently pursued when the problem of understanding the historical texts is encountered. Yet an objective location has to be identified for them. Or in other words, it is required that meaning is always identical with itself. As E D Hirsch puts it.

If a meaning can change its identity and in fact does, then we have no norm for judging whether we are encountering the real meaning in a changed form or some spurious meaning that is pretending to be the one we seek. ... To the interpreter this lack of a stable normative principle is equivalent to the indeterminacy of meaning.

This view subscribes to the traditional metaphysical conception of meaning. Understanding presupposes such an idea of meaning, since only then can we suppose the possibility of reproduction.

This requirement further demands an explanation of the relationship between meaning and the language through which it is reproduced. Language of the text, being a historical product, makes the problem further complicated. The fact that textual language is indebted to the human intentional and imaginative categories and to the human self-making process that constitute the historical phenomena, points to the important ways in which meaning is related to the intentional life of the author. Dilthey thus identifies the human subjectivity as the location of textual meaning, following Schleiermacher who placed it in the total intentional life of the author. Hirsch reasserts these insights and proclaims that meaning is an affair of consciousness

and not of words.¹² Meaning, according to him is whatever someone has willed to convey by means of language.¹³

This process of locating meaning in the author's intentional life is, in effect, a process of taking meaning outside the language of the text and therefore, outside the historical and self-making process. Meaning is thus made ahistorical

But this idea does not imply that meaning is an exclusive product of the author's subjective will. That would eventually have made meanings non-comprehensible, owing to the unshareable nature of human subjectivity. Meanings, though located in the intentional life of the author, have to be somehow made objectively comprehensible. To materialise this, Schleiermacher attempts to show that there is an intimate relationship between the subjective and objective meaning (individuality and totality), by means of establishing such a relationship, both in the linguistic and in the psychological realms. Schleiermacher writes:

.. every person has a susceptibility to intuiting others, in addition to his sharing many human characteristics. This itself appears to depend on the fact that everyone shares certain universal traits.¹⁴

He found that all those factors that made up and determined the life of the author were pivotal to construct such a bridge. This included the author's total historical situation as well as the linguistic categories that fashioned his conceptual and intentional lives.

Meaning should not be searched for independently in a particular unit of language, as linguistic signs do not have any life in isolation. A word in isolation thus lacks any independent meaning, and it has to be viewed in relation with other words in the passage in which it makes its appearance. This passage again has to be further related to the total work, which derives its significance only from the context of a literary tradition of its time. Linguistically, textual meaning has to be searched for in the total literary tradition, where the work is essentially related with other works with which it shares certain common features in terms of historical contexts and situations.¹⁵

This emphasis on totality makes Schleiermacher's doctrine distinct from the various versions of intentional semantics, which also relates meaning to the author's intentional life. He no longer conceives life as a mere vehicle or instrument. In the framework of intentionalism meanings are the exclusive products of the subjective intentions of the purposive users of language. This is to deny both language and meaning their autonomous status.

Yet, the text is not understood in terms of its objective contents. It has the nature of an artistic thought which is always individualistic. Though Schleiermacher grants language its structural independence by means of viewing it as essentially related to literary tradition, the meanings expressed through it are not completely independent of the author who makes those utterances. Meaning, in other words, is not exhausted with the linguistic signs employed to convey them.¹⁶ These signs require primarily a unifying subject to give them life by performing the necessary act of intending which is necessary to make the textual unity a possibility. This reference to individuality is the mark of an artistic thought. The linguistic system and the wide

range of vocabulary it provides are peculiarly organised by the author in terms of his unifying insight. As Gadamer puts it.

What has to be understood here is not a common thought about an object, but individual thought by its very nature is a free construction and the free expression of an individual being¹⁷

Thus the author is the ultimate locus of meaning, as his total intentional life is behind all his acts of intending by means of language. This intentional life, yet, is not an isolated island. All individuality is conceived as a manifestation of universal life and hence everyone carries a tiny bit of everyone else within himself.¹⁸ Meaning, thus is ultimately located in the total intentional life of the author, which in turn, is determined by the totality of his inner and outer lives.

Understanding the meaning of the text in this context consists in reaching out the author's total intentional life. The possibility of such an act is assured from the very outset, as Schleiermacher conceives the individual as the manifestation of the universal. But practically this process has to begin with an understanding of the discourse to which both the author and the interpreter are intimately related during the process of textual interaction. In Schleiermacher's words.

As every discourse has a two-point reference, to the whole of language and to the entire thought of its creator, so all understanding of speech consists of two elements [*Momenten*] - understanding the speech as it derives from the language and as it derives from the mind of the thinker.¹⁹

We have seen how Schleiermacher located meaning in the inner and outer lives of the author, which themselves refer back to the two-point reference of language and thought.

Since meaning is located in the total intentional life of the author, understanding consists in equating oneself with the author. This identification with the author can be materialised only by understanding the discourse, which being a manifested thought, has the two-point reference. This process thus consists in a search for meaning, both in the linguistic and in the psychic realms. This search is to be carried out by means of subjective and objective reconstructions. The objective reconstruction chiefly consists in a linguistic talent which demands a comprehensive knowledge of the language as the author and his original audience used it. In short, it requires knowledge of the literary tradition to which the text belongs. The subjective reconstruction calls for a divinatory method where the interpreter imaginatively transforms himself to the author's inner life²⁰. Since both the realms together contain the textual meaning comprehensively, it can be successfully comprehended by employing the comparative and divinatory methods. Schleiermacher thus asserts that, by means of these methods the interpreter can understand the discourse, just as well and even better than its creator.²¹

Meanings are thus made independent of the subjective will of the author who intended them. Schleiermacher here propounds a doctrine of objectivity of meanings. Understanding is the interaction of the linguistic and the psychic elements. The interpreter by employing the two methods can then locate meanings in the total intentional life of the author. He is in a better position than the author to understand the discourse which has a two-point reference. This is because, the latter's act of creation happens more or less unconsciously, as the linguistic

categories he inherits and his peculiar psychic constitution influence him in the most natural ways, about which he himself is unaware. These factors may add more meanings into his acts, which an interpreter can decipher by means of the application of a comprehensive methodology. With the comparative and divinatory methods he can conclusively establish the required relationship between individuality and totality.

What is central to this explanation is the transcendental presupposition that individuality is only a manifestation of the universal life. It is the individuality that makes the text peculiar and distinct and also poses problems to the interpreter in grasping the textual meanings. The author's act of intending is vital for the creation of the text and intending is nothing but an act of individuality. But this problem can be overcome since the individuality of the author could be reduced to the universal life to which both the author and the interpreter equally belong. The problem for Schleiermacher is, as Gadamer observes, not that of historical obscurity, but the obscurity of the "Thou".²² In other words, historicity and its overcoming are never raised as genuine problems by him.

But resolving the problem of understanding meaning of historical texts leaves out many things unexplained. Therefore it fails to make a correct evaluation of the ways in which meanings are interwoven with the historical process, and the ways in which the intentional acts of the author are related to the latter. Dilthey thus conducts a detailed examination of the act of intending of the author, which ultimately leads to the creation of textual meaning.

Dilthey redefines the connection between individuality and totality, taking Schleiermacher's insights to their logical conclusions. Schleiermacher, while discussing the

problem of relating discourse with understanding, speculated about the availability of a circular movement. The comparative method he suggested called for an understanding of the linguistic meaning of the text in the light of the whole linguistic tradition. And the psychological method he propounded asserted that the significance of the discourse was located in the totality of the author's life. The individuality thus related to the totality, itself had contributed to the creation of the latter. Understanding textual meaning, therefore, necessarily, involves such a circular movement. This is the culminating point of viewing the problem of understanding as a question of apprehending the individual creativity in the light of totality.

But Schleiermacher, as we have seen, further moved towards transcendentalism and ultimately concluded the possibility of universal life which was ahistorical. Dilthey, on the other hand, was not prepared to dissolve historicity with such a transcendentalism. He made the circular movement of the whole and the part relevant, not only for the understanding of textual meaning, but also for the very creation of the latter. This circular movement constitutes the very core of the historical process,

The historical reality, as we noted earlier, itself is a creation of the human intentional acts. Dilthey proceeds by highlighting the disparities between the spiritual and the natural worlds²³. In the former, unlike the latter, the one who is studying history is himself the one who has created it. This is to present the notion of the given in a new light. The historical reality is not something which is 'given' to the human intellect for immediate objective comprehension by means of conceptualisation and psychic categorisations. What is given here to the human mind is something which it has created itself. Historical reality, in other words, is necessarily a

process which is constantly under the making and remaking of its own import. It thus lacks the precision and completeness of the factual world. This incompleteness is due to the constant circular movement out of which it is constituted. The historical reality, therefore, is related to the human mind in the most intimate manner. On the one hand, it is the context and source of all the acts of intending. These acts would become insignificant and directionless in the absence of such a sphere of activity. But the historical world itself is nothing but a world which has originated out of the individual intentional acts. In other words, it is the world which is constituted and formed by the human mind. This idea is the foundational assumption in the entire thought of Dilthey.

The circular movement which relates the human intentional acts with historical reality thus conclusively locates the textual meanings in the mind of the author. The author's act of intending thus consists of two activities.

- 1) The act of experiencing the historical reality.
- 2) The act of recognising its own role in the constitution of the historical reality.

The activity of intending, which is the source of textual meaning is the result of the human mind's experiencing the historical reality. It is this act of experience that forms the basis of historical knowledge. Historical knowledge, therefore, is limited to experience. This idea constitutes a significant moment in Dilthey's thought. It coincides with his rejection of Hegel's philosophy of history which envisages a purely rational construction of world history.²⁴

The whole programme thus makes an appeal to Husserl's intentionality doctrine and the implied notion of experience. The act of experience that precedes historical knowledge should

not be identified with the notion of experience that was relevant in scientific investigations. When Dilthey speaks of experience, he refers to consciousness in its indivisible form. Experience here does not exhaust with the objective categories of detached observation. It, therefore, is not separated into an act and a content. All consciousness is consciousness of something, says Husserl, and the thing and the act of consciousness forms a fundamental unity which makes experience possible.

In his search for a theory of experience in the framework of the intentionality doctrine, Husserl came to recognise this vital feature of human consciousness. He wanted to undermine the sensualism attached to the notion of experience. Experience, according to him, was not confined purely to sensations which are necessarily private, and were directed outwards. Experience, therefore, would appear as intentional and was related to things other than sensations. For the hermeneutic model which tries to give a satisfactory account for the notion of objective knowledge in human sciences, this concept of intentionality and experience thus offered a breakthrough in its attempt to undermine the universal validity claim of the model of atomistic epistemology.

The most vital feature of this intentionality thesis is the view that, within this framework of experience there is a structural indivisibility between the subject and the object of experience. This feature makes it an ideal model in explaining the notion of experience that makes historical knowledge possible. The historical consciousness, as Dilthey points out, does not entertain the epistemological subject-object bipolarity. It does not allow the sustenance of a subjective entity

with objective universal categories. Husserl asks to take the conscious life completely without prejudices, just as what it quite immediately gives itself, as itself, to be. He continues:

Here, in immediate givenness, one finds anything but color data, tone data, other "sense" data or data of feeling, will, etc.; that is, one finds none of those things which appear in traditional psychology, taken for granted to be immediately given from the start. Instead, one finds, as even Descartes did (naturally we ignore his other purposes), the *cogito*, *intentionality*, in these those familiar forms which, like everything actual in the surrounding world find their expression in language. . . . Here we find nothing other than "consciousness of" - Consciousness in the broadest sense, which is still to be investigated in its whole scope and its modes.²⁵

The internal relationship between the acts and objects of consciousness is conclusively asserted .

Neither the acts can be separated from the objects, nor the objects can be detached from the acts.

This idea of an intimate relationship between the subject and object, therefore, is an anti-thesis to the notion of experience that is idealised by the atomistic epistemology of representationalism.

Dilthey employed this concept of experience to explain the process of individual historical being

experiencing and assimilating the significance of the historical process. This process of

experience is, at the same time, a process of creation. This amounts to a circular movement that

explains, on the one hand, the individual acts of intending in relation with the phenomenological

relationship with the historical reality, and, on the other hand, the very evolution of historical

reality out of such intentional acts. Since the acts of intending is the creative endeavour in this

circular process and since these acts are performed by the human mind, Dilthey asserts that the

historical world is a world constituted by the human mind.²⁴ In this process of assimilation and

creation the historical reality exhibits a continuity of its own. Owing to the human mind for its

very origination this continuity exhibited by the historical reality is necessarily a psychological

continuity.

The individual acts of intending are thus located in this continuity and they occupy a definite place in it. In this sense, meanings, to be understood are, situated in the particular historicity of the author. It is removed from us in terms of both time and history. The act of intending, therefore, is not an absolutely independent act of the individual. Rather, it is an act which conforms to a historical situation which is unique and peculiar.

The intimate relationship between the author's intentional acts and his historical situation helps Dilthey to escape the extreme subjectivistic conclusions even after maintaining the author's mind as the real and sole locus of textual meaning. The way the author's historicity forms part of the continuity of the historical process ensures that the former is not an isolated moment in the eternal flux of history, but is rather a part of the chain which is related to the whole by means of vital inner connections. This situation consequently justifies the availability of determinate meanings which can be objectively comprehended. To understand meaning is, then, to locate a particular part of the chain - the historicity of the author - which contributes to the continuity. Each part of the chain has its own individuality, though it forms part of the whole. Similarly, each period in history is unique and exists of its own. This will explain the uniqueness of the author's creativity

In short, meaning is located in the author's individual creative act, which is subsequently related to his historical situation and to the continuous process of the existence of historical reality. Here, understanding meaning calls for a process of reliving the author's intentional life. It is a reproduction of the author's meaning by imaginatively transforming to his historical situation.²¹ Schleiermacher contended that such a reliving was possible, as both the author as

well as the interpreter partake in the common universal life. Due to this participation, the individuality could be consistently dissolved in the universality. But, for Dilthey, the problem of interpretation is how to overcome historicity that separates the author from us. To relive the original experiences of the author is to make a direct access to the author's historicity which incidentally lies removed from the interpreter.

5. UNDERSTANDING MEANING

Since meanings are determinate and fixed, to understand it is to understand it in itself, that is, to comprehend it objectively. Some representationalists, for instance, took the factual reality as the represented data, and subsequently ascribed sense experience a vital role in the comprehension of meaning. Deriving insights from the model of natural sciences, they asserted that, the problem of meaning was linked up with the problem of empirical knowledge and this was demonstrated in the light of a continuity that was the result of the necessary causal relationship persisting in the natural world.

Dilthey faithfully inherited the notion of objectivity handed down by the epistemological tradition and attempted to develop an alternate version of epistemology with a different notion of experience and knowledge.²⁹ What was central to this conception was the necessary homogeneity of the subject and object of the epistemological poles

Moreover, the causal relations appear irrelevant here. But objective knowledge, be it about natural facts or about historical facts, presupposes a peculiar structural continuity in the light of which certain necessary conceptual connections are established. The empiricist

epistemology appeals to this apparently visible structural continuity of the factual reality and articulates it in terms of casual connections. But the hermeneutic model deals with the language which is no more representational and therefore, points to the historical continuity, which does not conform to the cause-effect pattern, but is by its very nature, a psychological continuity. The structural patterns of this continuity, as we have seen, are not determined by the temporal succession, but are the products of certain internal and spiritual connections.

But an epistemological project aiming at objective knowledge, cannot do away with certain assumptions. It has to primarily make a bifurcation between the subjective and the objective poles. This will have to be followed by an explanation of the way the two poles are brought together. Dilthey thus places the author's historicity at one pole and the interpreter at the other pole. Representational epistemology connects the two poles by referring back to the possible experience of a common factual world. Dilthey's counterpart for this assumption is the notion of historical continuity and the continuity exhibited by life. The historicity of the interpreter can be overcome because of this continuity.

Dilthey speaks about taking a reflective posture towards the tradition that lies separated from the interpreter, owing to his historical situatedness. It is the ability to reflect on the voice that reaches from the past by successfully locating it in its original context. The real task is to practically carry out this procedure, since the phenomena we try to interpretatively comprehend are, as it were not earlier, the data which address us in our concrete life situations. It is the reflective posture adopted by the interpreter that enables him to reproduce the original import of the text as it is intended by the author.³⁰ In other words, interpretation aims at comprehending

every historical moment in itself, and not by simply submitting it to the measure of the historical situation that conditions the interpreter. The interpreter, therefore, has to disengage himself from his own situation in history As Gadamer observes:

For Dilthey, the real task of historical consciousness is a victory gained over its own relativity, thus justifying objective knowledge in this domain.³¹

This victory is achievable because historical consciousness is not a mere unreflective relation with itself and with the tradition to which it belongs Historical consciousness has the ability to free itself from the conceptual parameters prescribed by understanding it has of its own life Moreover, the essential nature of historical reality also assures the objective comprehension of any period in history by means of re-living It is the historical reality, which is the foundational background where the individual expresses and discovers himself. And what constitute the historical reality are precisely the objectifications of life The category of life comprises of all kinds of way or style of life, as well as the family, civil society and law. Everything which the interpreter encounters in his concrete historical situations is understood as the expressive forms of life It is from this primary category of life that concepts that make historical knowledge an intelligible possibility are derived. Life is said to be unfolding itself and forming itself in intelligible unities. It is the ultimate stuff of historical reality that is formed out of individual human intentional acts.

A more detailed analysis of the hermeneutic model is not our immediate concern. What is central to this standpoint has already been discussed On the one hand, it imposes the traditional approach towards meanings and its arguments target to legitimise a different concept

of knowledge and understanding which conceptually appears as an anti-thesis to the representational outlook. It, therefore, introduces the notion of interpretation as a necessary requirement to understand textual meanings which are peculiarly rooted in the author's intentions and also in an alien historical horizon.

Yet, in harmony with the representational conception, this model conceives textual meanings as fixed and determinate, in order to assure its objective comprehension. The recognition of historicity posed a threat before them, as it would undermine the possibility of objective comprehension of meanings. Overcoming historicity, therefore, becomes a necessary requirement. To ensure the objective comprehension of meanings, a location for them has to be identified, which is independent of any historical belongingness - neither of the author nor of the interpreter. The representational model thus makes meaning extra-linguistic. But such a situation may make the relationship between language, meaning and understanding accidental.

We have, therefore, come to a point where we can more clearly analyse the different concept of meaning that acquires prominence, when we move away from the logic of representationalism. It directly deals with the role of language in determining meaning and in comprehending the latter.

6. LANGUAGE AND MEANING:

We have seen that the hermeneutic problem of understanding meaning conceives the alienness of the text as a central issue. It was the enquiry directed towards the nature of this

alienness that led to the recognition of historicity, and this consequently pointed towards the necessity of an interpretative approach.

The aim of interpretation is to achieve an access to the meanings by means of establishing a relationship between the text and the interpreter, and the essential medium of this relationship is nothing other than language. Here we come across a dual issue. First since language formed the medium of interpretation, we had to be clear how meanings to be understood were related to the former. Secondly, what would be the role of language in the process of understanding meaning? The answer to the second question follows from the answer to the first question

The relationship between meaning and language can be explained in two ways:

- 1) Meaning is outside language as it is extra-linguistic
- 2) Meaning is an essential property of language.

If we take meaning as extra-linguistic, then the relationship between meaning and language will become accidental. Traditional theories of meaning and most of the representationalists conceived meanings as extra-linguistic - fixed somewhere outside language. The purpose was to free meanings from getting entangled with the arbitrary conventional uses of language. In short, if we could find an objective sphere and fix meanings in it, then we could overcome the problem of meanings getting determined by the historically arbitrary ways in which language was used.

The representational tradition, thus, postulates the notion of proposition which guarantees the determinism of linguistic meanings in the midst of the multitude of ways and contexts they

find expression in language. We have seen how Frege located the senses or thoughts in a Platonic realm in order to proclaim their unchanging nature. The fact that ordinary language hesitates to accommodate such semantic determinism prompts them to envisage the availability of a logically perfect language which can represent the semantic contents deterministically. Similarly Dilthey, following Schleiermacher, conceived a fixed domain to locate meanings - the author's intentional life or his historicity - to propagate semantic determinism. Here also meaning is made ahistorical and, therefore, independent of language which is a historical product.

But this objectivist position cannot deny the fundamental fact that language is the only common medium which brings together the text and the interpreter who are situated in two different historical and cultural horizons. What is reflected in all these objectivist doctrines is a dualist conception of language where the latter is being conceived as a medium. Accordingly, language is conceived here as a medium by means of which meaning is communicated from one pole to another. A well-known analogy is with air which functions as a medium for sound waves to travel from one pole to another. The medium cannot be part of the message communicated as it is only a vehicle. Dilthey and other objectivists in the hermeneutic tradition thus came to conceive language of the text as a vehicle, through which the author's intentional meanings are transmitted. Schleiermacher even argued for the learning of the literary tradition to which the text belonged.

But there is at the same time this language of the interpreter which has got its own historical roots. Representationalism dissolved this problem, as for them the essential logical

structure of language was common to both the speaker and the hearer. Dilthey who emphasises historicity could not adhere to a similar assumption. He, therefore, had to assume the possibility of the interpreter temporally switching over by means of imagination to a different historical epoch. by freeing himself from the conceptual grip of his language, in order to assimilate the author's meaning in itself. This was possible, because, the fundamental order of things in the historical reality conformed to a psychological order, determined by the human mind, and all linguistic expressions could be conceived in principle as objectifications of life. Meanings, therefore, are not essentially related to language, though the latter is essential for their transmission

But if we ascribe a more vital role to language in the determination of meaning - meaning as an essential property of language - we immediately encounter certain other problems. This is especially because, if meaning is the essential property of language, then the linguistic categories we inherit will have an essential bearing upon all our thoughts and actions. They will necessarily intervene in all our interactions with the text. These inherited linguistic categories are not something from which we can detach ourselves according to our will. They are rather related to the very way of our being, or in the words of Heidegger, language is the home of being

This leads to the recognition of a more appropriate dimension of human historicity. Neither the author of the text, nor the interpreter can come out of their respective historical horizons and free themselves from the linguistic categories that determine their very existence. And if this is correct, then we cannot raise the issue of objectively comprehending the author's intended meanings. There cannot be a meaning for the author in the subjective sense, as it will

be a product of the latter's historicity - his way of being in the world, as Heidegger puts it. Similarly, the interpreter finds himself in a peculiar historical situation and cannot go out of it to make an access to the author's intentional life and historicity. His interaction with the text, in this context, necessarily involves presuppositions which are derived from his historicity and linguistic categories. This will simultaneously explain the very nature of his way of being in the world.

The nature of this way of being - *Dasein*, in the language of Heidegger - necessarily involves interaction and will ultimately explain how meaning is located in the linguistic interaction, and not in the language of the text or the interpreter. Textual interpretation is a continuous process, which not only happens in the historical context where the text finds its original expression. The language of the text contains the possibility of being a subject of interpretative encounter, a process according to Gadamer, presupposes a dialogic process. In the context of such an interaction, meaning cannot be conceived as being attached, either to the language of the text or to that of the interpreter exclusively. It rather has to be understood as evolving out of the dialogic interaction between the text and the interpreter. This process can no more be a matter of reproduction, as it was conceived by the objectivism nor can it be a matter of submission to the interpreter's subjectivistic and relativistic concerns. This is because the way of man's being, from which the transmission as well as reception of meaning takes place, is always characterised by a thrownness - facticity, situatedness, historicity etc. Man is always related to the world in an intimate manner and the nature of this relationship will explain the depth of his historicity.

7. HISTORICITY AND INTERPRETATION

Man's situatedness in the world speaks about a peculiar relationship that exists between man and world. Representational outlook also gives an account of this relationship and often posits a subject, who is in a representational relationship with the entities of the world. This picture contradicts the notion which emphasises human facticity which eventually presupposes a primitive or natural viewpoint of the world. The epistemological division of the subject-object scheme conceals this natural viewpoint.

The intimate way man is related to his situations is not revealed in the scheme, as it assumed a methodological isolation of the subject from its most natural surroundings. Language, we have seen earlier, is an independent medium in this framework. But the being of man, when conceived as characterised by its facticity, suggests a fundamental practical relationship with things in the world. This relationship is characterised by a 'concern' where the use of entities we encounter in our life situations acquires prominence.³³ This pre-theoretical natural attitude, resists the possibility of viewing something which we encounter in our life situations as a mere 'thing' which can have an existence of its own, in terms of its independent properties, casual and spatio-temporal relationship. Rather, it has to be approached like a tool or equipment which will serve some of our practical purposes. An equipment is not a thing which has certain properties, but is something which has a use and which we can employ in a project. To make this point clear, Heidegger distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge (1) where a thing is viewed as an equipment which we use. Our relationship with an equipment or tool consists in our knowing how to use the thing in different contexts. Here we are *concerned* with it practically and

consequently cannot detach it from our practical concerns and life. (2) where the thing is viewed as an object and here it is context independent.³⁴ He emphasises the first kind of knowledge to explain man's being in the world.

The world is related to us in an intimate manner and we are in a 'knowing how' practical relationship with the latter. * Here we cannot avoid the intervention of value in our interactions and, therefore, our engaging in an interpretative relationship with the world. In other words, we always understand the world in relation to ourselves and our language. But evidently this process of continuous interpretation is characterised, not only by an understanding of the world in terms of one's concerns and practical purposes, but also an understanding of oneself in terms of one's possibilities. *Dasein* is constituted by its being-ahead-of-itself, towards its possibilities, says Heidegger³⁶ The way of being is constituted here by its possibilities for being and not by being a thing of some sort. Human life, in short, is a continuous process and product of interpretation. And understanding through interpretation in this manner is an essential mode of man's being in the world. Understanding, in other words, is a matter of projecting one's own being on one's possibilities.³⁷ This involves a hermeneutic circle, where one's being is said to be constituted out of one's understanding of oneself and this understanding of oneself, in turn, is derived from one's understanding of the world in terms of one's purposes and projects. This circular nature of understanding becomes more prominent with Heidegger's analysis of the temporality of *Dasein*'s being.

This feature of *Dasein*'s mode of existence reveals the impossibility of imaginatively transmitting oneself in time and historical contexts to grasp textual meanings objectively. Here,

the past is not an objectively pre-given unit which can be directly cognised. Rather, it acquires its meaning in the light of present experiences and anticipations about the future. At the same time, the meaning of the present and the way future is meaningfully anticipated is conditioned by the way in which the past is already understood. In Heidegger's terminology, it is the projection of a future for oneself. This projection of one's future is the projection of one's own possibilities. To project oneself into future in terms of possibilities is to understand one's own possibilities, which is nothing but self-understanding. As Gadamer observes, "... in the end all understandings are reducible to a common level of an "I know how to go about it", that is, a self-understanding in relation to something other".³⁸

All understanding presuppose and involve such a projection of possibilities. These possibilities are constituted out of Dasein's fore-having, fore-sights and fore-conceptions. A person in his interpretative encounter with the text necessarily projects a meaning for the text, and such a projection is essential for his proceeding to understand the textual meaning. Gadamer observes in this context that, we must understand a text as an answer to a question and to do this we must acquire the horizon of the question which includes other possible answers³⁹. All questions raised by us are rooted in our peculiar situatedness and hence reflect our purposes and possibilities.

In the context of textual interpretation, this hermeneutic circle, which is constituted out of the web of interpretative interactions, apparently involves a dialogic process, where the context and the interpreter comes to an agreement in terms of a common language. Language here is an

ontological medium, and reality happens precisely within language. Language, here, is something which encompasses the linguistic categories of both the text and the interpreter.

The more language is a living operation, the less we are aware of it. Thus it follows from the self-forgetfulness of language that its real being consists in what is said in it. What is said in it constitutes the common world in which we live and to which belongs also the whole great chain of tradition reaching us from the literature of foreign languages, living as well as dead. The real being of language is that into which we are taken up when we hear it - what is said.⁴⁰

It is within this encompassing language that the dialogue between the text and the interpreter takes place. This dialogue will inevitably involve what Gadamer calls prejudices and will ultimately lead to an 'understanding' of meaning in a "fusion of horizon".

8. CONCLUSION

The hermeneutic conception of meaning thus asserts the prominent role of language in the constitution and understanding of meanings. It thus takes meanings from the extra-linguistic world to the very heart of language. In its evolution towards such a conception, the hermeneutic model highlighted certain conceptual themes.

1) Historicity of meaning and understanding:

It is the recognition of this factor that ultimately led to the postulation of a different conception of knowledge and understanding. But understood in its real sense, this recognition demands a total reconstruction of the notions of meaning and truth.

We have examined how the notion of meaning had been conceived by the hermeneutic model in its various formulations. Ultimately an intimate relationship between meaning and language is asserted and this makes the former historical. Historicity of meaning naturally leads to the conception that truth also is historical. We shall examine this aspect in the next chapter before we come to deal with the problem of understanding.

2) Reconstruction of the notion of objectivity:

Once historicity was kept in limelight, the traditional notion of objectivity would come under threat. This may immediately lead to relativism which is self-refuting. Hence the dialogic structure of understanding acquires prominence.

3) Location of meaning in language.

Language emerges as the common platform where the text and the interpreter can dialogically interact. Meanings to be understood are, therefore, located in this language. This language is neither the language of the author, nor the language of the interpreter, but the language that evolves as the result of a dialogic interaction between them. It is, therefore, not the language of the text, nor that of the interpreter, but a common language that acquires prominence here.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Dilthey, Wilhelm. *IHS*. p.88.
- 2 Husserl, Edmund. *CES*. p. 142.
- 3 Cf Dilthey, Wilhelm: *Op Cit*. pp.56-77. Dilthey here conducts a detailed examination on the nature of human sciences and its relationship with natural sciences.
- 4 Cf. Campbell, Richard 1992, *Truth and Historicity*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, p.399.
- 5 This aspect becomes more clear with Heidegger's analysis of the being of man in relation with the concept of time Cf. Heidegger, Martin: *BT*.
- 6 Cf. Wanrke, Georgia. 1987, *Gadamer. Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, pp.26-28.
- 7 Nuyen, A. T.: 1990, 'Truth, Method and Objectivity: Husserl and Gadamer on Scientific Method', *Philosophy of the Social Science*, Vol.20, p 439
- 8 Cf Dilthey, Wilhelm- *Op Cit*, pp.56-77 and 192-206.
- 9 Cf Heidegger, Martin *BT*. p.38
- 10 Cf. Gadamer, H. G.. *TM*. p.262.
- 11 Hirsch, E. D.: 1967, *Validity of Interpretation*, New Haven, Yale University Press, p 46.
- 12 *Cf. Ibid.p4*.
- 13 *Cf.Ibid.p.3l*.
14. Schleiermacher, F. D. E.: 1990, 'The Hermeneutics: Outline of the 1819 Lectures', in Gayle L. Orniston and Alav D. Schrift (Eds.) *The Hermeneutics Tradition, From Ast to Ricoeur* (hereafter *HT*), Albany. State University of New York Press, p.98.
15. *Cf.Ibid.p.94*.

16. Cf. *Ibid*, pp 93-94 Also see Gadamer, H. G.: *TM*. p. 164. Gadamer argues that, though Schleiermacher views both grammatical and psychological interpretation as important, the latter's particular contribution is psychological interpretations. This stresses the importance Schleiermacher ascribes to the individual act.
17. Gadamer, H. G.: *Op Cit* p. 165.
18. Cf. *Ibid* p.166.
19. Schleiermacher, F D. E.. *Op Cit*. p 86.
20. Cf. *Ibid*, p.93
21. Cf. *Ibid*. p.93. Dilthey, while discussing the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher brings out this aspect more clearly and argues that this idea is the necessary consequence of the doctrine of unconscious creation Cf. Dilthey, Wilhelm: 1990, 'The Rise of Hermeneutics', in *HT*. p 113 Also see Gadamer, H G.:*Op Cit*. p. 169.
22. Cf. Gadamer, H. G.: *Op Cit* p. 168.
23. Cf Dilthey, Wilhelm: *IHS*. p 56-76. Also see Makkreel, Rudolf. A : *Dilthey Philosopher of the Human Studies*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, pp.247-262.
24. In this context, Gadamer observes that the conflict in Dilthey lies in the intermediate position of the historical school between philosophy and experience. He opines that, this conflict led Dilthey to explore, in opposition to the Hegelian method, the categories of the historical world that would be able to support its construction within the human sciences. Dilthey thus tries to answer the question, how historical experience can become a science. Cf. Gadamer, H. G.: *TM*. p. 193 & 194.
25. Husserl, Edmund: *Op. Cit*. p.233.

- 26 Cf. Dilthey, Wilhelm 1985 'The Understanding of Other Persons and Their Life-Expressions', in Kurt Mueller-Vollmer: *The Hermeneutics Reader*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell. pp 152-64.
- 27 *Cf Ibid p.159.*
- 28 Cf. Dilthey, Wilhelm: *IHS*. pp 438-39.
29. Gadamer discusses this issue in detail and observes that for Dilthey historical consciousness is not an unreflective expression of real life Life carries in it reflection, says he. Cf. Gadamer, H. G.: *PHC*. pp 121-22
- 30 *Cf. Ibid p 121*
- 31 *Ibid p.121.*
- 32 Cf, Gadamer, H. G.. *TM*. p.341
- 33 Cf. Heidegger, Martin- *BT*. The chapter VI of *BT* introduces this concept to characterise the being-in-the-world of *Dasein*
- 34 Cf *Ibid* and also Heidegger, Martin 1985, *History of the Concept of Time*, tr. Theodore Kisiel, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, pp.209-11. Heidegger here explains how the being-in-the-world, as concerned and understanding discloses the world as meaningfulness.
- 35 *Cf. Ibid.* Gadamer observes in this context that Heidegger's concept of understanding carries an ontological weight. It signifies a "knowing how", an "ability", a "capacity" to carry out a task at the practical level. Cf. Gadamer, H. G.: *PHC*. p. 130.
36. Cf. Heidegger, Martin: *BT*. section 31 of this book explains that *Dasein* is not something present-at-hand, but is primarily Being-possible. Possibility as an *existentialis*,

according to him, the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which *Dasein* is characterised ontologically.

37 Cf *Ibid*

38 Gadamer, H. G.:PHC. p.130.

39. Cf. Gadamer, H. G.: *TM*. pp.338-39.

40 Gadamer, H G.- 1976, *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (hereafter *PH*), tr. & Ed. David E. Linge, Berkeley, University of California Press, p.65.