Broadening the Horizons of the Philosophy of Education:

An Enquiry into the Social and Pragmatic Dimensions of

Human Knowledge

Koichiro Misawa

Institute of Education

University of London

Thesis submitted to the University of London

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2011

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Koichiro Misawa

Word Count (exclusive of bibliography): 79, 795 words

Abstract

This thesis addresses the social dimensions of human knowledge by reference to recent developments in the theory of knowledge in the Anglophone analytical tradition. What might be called social epistemology is often open to the charge of relativism. However, a detailed analysis of the most basic conditions of knowledge that enable human beings to live as not merely evolved, biological creatures but as intellectual, sentient beings reveals the sense in which human knowledge is essentially social and has no necessary connection either with relativism or with the opposing but equally tenuous ideas such as strong realism and scientific naturalism.

The social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge shed light on its essentially educational nature. This broad sense of educational aspect of knowledge encourages us to see the prevailing outlook towards the relation between philosophy and education quite differently. This is not to suggest that the philosophy of education finds a new niche in academia but rather to suggest that it form the centrepiece of the philosophical enquiry into human knowledge.

Having set the scene for the subsequent chapters in Chapter 1, this thesis goes on to analyse several issues to do with human knowledge and education. Sufficient appreciation of the significance of the fully social dimensions of human knowledge makes it possible to grasp the central thrusts of these issues without collapsing into the familiar dichotomies: theory and practice (Chapters 2 and 3); truth and rational justification (Chapter 4); conceptual norm and empirical description (Chapter 5); and cognitive pursuits and their social organisation (Chapters 6 and 7). On the basis of the foregoing analysis, Chapter 8 presents a broadened conception of the philosophy of education as a key academic discipline concerned with human knowledge specifically and human development more generally, which is to be in dialogue with scientific and empirical investigations.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1-1. The Overall Scope of This Thesis: Aims and the General Theme

It is possible to identify a tension within the very phrase 'philosophy of education', namely, between the activity of questioning received knowledge and the activity of transmitting knowledge. This sort of commonsense (and stereotypical) understanding of philosophy and education may be partly responsible for their meagre interaction, which is widely felt not just by ordinary people but also by academic philosophers.[1] Another decisive factor that has contributed to this problematic relation between philosophy and education is the fact that education is generally less well-regarded than the traditional professions such as medicine, law and divinity as well as some of the more recent professions like science—at least in Western society.

This thesis is concerned to elicit an essentially intertwined relation between philosophy and education, thus broadening the horizons of the philosophy of education. This tight relation between philosophy and education will be brought to light by a close investigation into the nature of human knowledge. Both philosophy and education, no matter how they may be defined, are concerned with knowledge. Nonetheless, as mentioned above, there is a widespread tendency to see them as in tension with each other. This well-received view concerning the relation between philosophy and education derives, in my view, from a confusion

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[1] In this thesis, what I mean by 'academic philosophy (philosophers)', 'mainstream philosophy' and 'general philosophy' designates other philosophical areas—such as the philosophy of mind, language, science, etc. These are distinct from the philosophy of education insofar as they are taught in Departments of Philosophy. Note also that what I mean by 'epistemology' in this thesis almost entirely coincides with the conception dominant in the Anglo-American analytical tradition. (For this, see also footnote 4.). It should not be assumed, however, that philosophical problems exist in such a way that they are neatly lined up according to each 'branch' of philosophy. We therefore must not lose sight of how philosophical problems and puzzlement are *interconnected* across relevant philosophical 'branches'. The philosophy of education is no exception.

over two conventionally drawn distinctions that have long been accepted in the analysis of human knowledge. One is that philosophical enquiry is concerned with the *normative* dimensions of human knowledge whilst scientific enquiry deals with the *descriptive* aspects of it. The other is that philosophy—more specifically, epistemology, namely, the theory of knowledge—centres on the verb 'to know' whereas sociology—in particular, the sociology of knowledge—focuses on the noun 'knowledge'. In other words, philosophy tends to pursue the question of what it is *to know* (universally), whereas sociology is disposed to engage in the question of how *knowledge* is created, transferred and consumed in a particular society or community.

This thesis claims that, although the normative/descriptive distinction is not totally futile, the normative and descriptive dimensions of human knowledge presuppose each other and *pari passu* that the enquiry into the verb 'to know' cannot be conducted properly without some appreciation of the noun 'knowledge' and vice versa. It might be objected that philosophical enquiry into what it is to know can be undertaken independently of how knowledge is produced, disseminated and utilised. However, this accusation misfires. For *the question of what it is to know is inseparable from the question about the conditions for what we have come to see as knowledge and vice versa*. The articulation of this inseparability is actually what this thesis is all about and thus reveals the essentially educational nature of human knowledge.

A constructive appreciation of this point would have important implications for education in two ways. The first is that it turns out that human knowledge is of an essentially educational nature; the second is, accordingly, that fresh light is shed on the notion of education. These are, of course, in need of much further clarification and elaboration through the chapters that follow.

Before embarking on a concise but more specific illustration of what is discussed in the following chapters in 1-2, I will devote some space to setting the scene and directions for the subsequent chapters. After (i) touching upon a brief history of epistemology, I (ii) adumbrate my view on the theory of knowledge and

go on to (iii) defuse an anticipated charge that my view is anthropocentric. I then (iv) foreshadow a broadened picture of the philosophy of education and (v) delineate some conspicuous features of the present philosophy of education as a distinct academic discipline.

A Brief Sketch of the Theory of Knowledge

I begin with a very brief sketch of epistemology, i.e. the theory of knowledge in Western philosophy. Among philosophers, a traditional tripartite account of knowledge, which Plato arguably demonstrated in *Theaetetus* and *Meno*, enjoyed currency until very recently: that is, justified true belief (abbreviated as JTB). This classical formula of knowledge runs as follows: S knows that p if and only if p is true and S is justified in believing that p. To put this the other way round: (1) A false proposition cannot be known and therefore knowledge requires truth; (2) A proposition S doesn't even believe cannot be a proposition that S knows and therefore knowledge requires belief; and (3) S's being correct in believing that p might merely be a matter of luck, and therefore knowledge requires justification (Steup, 2005).

Modern philosophers in the 17th- and 18th-centuries initiated what is sometimes called the 'epistemological turn'. Richard Rorty pithily explains the outline of this turn as follows: it was triggered by Descartes, developed through Locke and authorised by Kant. Rorty claims that:

> We owe the notion of a "theory of knowledge" based on an understanding of "mental processes" to the seventeenth century, and especially to Locke. We owe the notion of "the mind" as a separate entity in which "processes" occur to the same period, and especially to Descartes. We owe the notion of philosophy as a tribunal of pure reason, upholding or denying the claims of the rest of culture, to the eighteenth century and especially to Kant... (Rorty, 1980, pp.

3-4)^2

In this way, 'philosophy-as-epistemology' came to the fore and took centre stage in philosophy. After Kant, the foundations of knowledge have come to be conceived of as *propositions* rather than *objects*^{3} (Rorty, 1980, p. 160, my italics). This shift in the focus of the theory of knowledge from objects to propositions has basically set the scene for epistemological discussions to the present. As a result, epistemologists' work has revolved around the following three questions which John Greco adduces: (1) What is knowledge?; (2) What can we know?; and, if we think we can know something, then (3) How do we know what we do know? (Greco, 1999, p. 1). Notable here is that the weight of these epistemological questions is placed upon our epistemic scope and the limits through which objects appear to us rather than on the nature of the objects known. Put another way, the central preoccupation of philosophers has been with the questions not about 'the world as it really is' but about the world as it is 'coloured' by our language, thought, concepts, experience and so on (although, obviously, questions about what we can know are, in an important sense, questions about how the world is).

This issue—i.e. Is Kant's '*Ding-an-sich*' unreachable for us or not?—is still a matter of controversy. This question is almost uniquely *philosophical* to the effect that science—in particular, natural science—is conducted on the assumption that the objects of research are 'things in themselves'. Scientists are tempted to suggest that philosophers complicate the issue by incorporating epistemic—especially, normative—aspects into the enquiry into the objects to be

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^{2} Another point worth adding is that, according to Rorty, 'the notion of philosophy as a *foundational* discipline which "grounds" knowledge-claims was consolidated in the writings of the neo-Kantians' (Rorty, 1980, p. 4, my italics). The question of whether philosophy can play an adjudicatory role *vis-à-vis* other academic disciplines is addressed throughout this thesis, especially in Chapters 3 and 5.

^{3} The pre-Kantian tradition saw objects as the foundations of knowledge. For example, 'Plato's theory of Ideas represents an early appearance of two persistent philosophical ideas: the idea that if a claim is objectively true, then there have to be *objects* to which the claim "corresponds"—an idea which is built into the very etymology of the word "objective"—and the corollary idea that if there are no obvious natural objects whose properties would make the claim true, then there must be some *non-natural* objects to play the role of "truth-maker"' (Putnam, 2004, p. 52, italics in original).

known by us. Of the three components of the JTB account of knowledge, it is precisely *justification* that makes epistemology a normative enquiry. Jaegwon Kim gives a succinct account of this point:

> [Justification] is the only specifically epistemic component in the classic tripartite conception of knowledge. Neither belief nor truth is a specifically epistemic notion: belief is a psychological concept and truth a semantical-metaphysical one.... But justification manifestly is normative' (Kim, 2000, p. 302).

While justification has been a central concept of epistemological discussions, it has come to invite sceptical lines of argument—e.g. the sceptical possibility that a belief fully justified at our cognitive level has nothing to do with truth. Many philosophers have struggled to overcome this predicament. Several attempts made to resolve this impasse will be examined later in this thesis, where the nature of human knowledge shall be explored: e.g. the abandoning of theoretical justification (by Wilfred Carr in Chapter 3), an explanation about the relation between rational justification and truth on the basis of 'fallibilism' (by Harvey Siegel in Chapter 4), 'non-normative naturalism' (by, say, W. V. O. Quine in Chapter 5) and 'normative-naturalism' (by, say, Alvin Goldman in Chapter 6). None of these approaches are totally wrong but they are all, I shall argue, far too restrictive in their respective ways. My main disagreement with these attempts is, broadly speaking, that they still have difficulties finding a way out from either a strong naturalism which leaves no room for *normativity* in our understanding of the objects to be known (and which is often associated with a peculiar form of realism) or a strong relativism, historicism or idealism which obscures the *ontological* aspect of the objects. Therefore, the view I want to develop and defend in this thesis is one in which the normative and ontological dimensions co-constitute our understanding of the world.

My View on Human Knowledge

In my view, illuminating light has been cast on this issue by several philosophers in various camps: e.g. Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Hilary Putnam, John McDowell and Robert Brandom. Pursuing their arguments and approaches in detail is beyond the scope of this thesis (and I prefer to write thematically). As mentioned in footnote 1, I rather focus on the discussions found in the (post-) analytical strand—particularly on Putnam's recent idea of the *interpenetration* between value judgements, descriptions of fact and human linguistic conventions as well as on McDowell's conception of *second nature*.[4]

Before expanding on the line of thinking that I propose to pursue, however, I would like to insert a brief note here about an important influence of Heidegger on the development of my argument. For various reasons[5] I have not been able to respond to this influence as fully as perhaps I might. Nonetheless, the affinity of the ideas presented below with some Heideggerian elements is evident primarily because of my frequent usage of expressions that have strongly Heideggerian connotations such as 'ontology'[6] and 'always already'. Hence, it would not be absurd to say that, in the drama I try to construct in the chapters that follow, Heidegger is waiting in the wings. In other words, albeit with little direct reference to these Heideggerian elements in this thesis, pursuing them may become a feature of my research in the future.

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[4] The three 'analytical' philosophers I refer to here (Putnam, McDowell and Brandom) have profited from 'other' traditions of philosophy. The fact that these and other leading figures in analytical philosophy are turning to, for example, Hegel, Heidegger or Gadamer, increases my sense that it is reasonable to open myself to similar lines of thought. Note also that it is a mistake to suppose that epistemological discussions are active only in analytical philosophy. Obviously, for example, French *epistemologie* has spawned a series of valuable work by the hands of, say, Jean Caveilles, Gaston Bachelard, Alexandre Koyré and Georges Canguilhem.
[5] The biggest reason perhaps has to do with the division in philosophy between analytical and continental traditions, a regrettable result of which is that if one is working in one tradition, one is unlikely to engage much with the other.
[6] It seems that the term 'ontology' is now fashionably and problematically used in education studies and the social sciences to imply something like truth or the real. This interpretation of ontology misconstrues the way it is to be understood in philosophy, especially in its prominent usage in Heidegger.

The line of thinking I shall present in this thesis runs as follows. The place we human beings inhabit is *always already* filled with meanings *sui generis* (to human beings). I call it *our world*. The key idea I want to put forward here is this: We human beings are not merely evolved, biological creatures but also, almost from the beginning, sentient and intellectual beings and thus *our* world involves a myriad of humanly-perceived states of affairs that are not shared by other non-human (almost) purely evolved, biological organisms. In this sense, our world is, from the outset, more than a meaningless environment that provides some background conditions and constraints under which alone humans and all other living things can live. To become one of 'us' is to become able to recognise a sufficient proportion of meanings and a sufficient degree of sentience which constitute the ways we live in our world. In this regard, a human is born as a biological entity and then becomes a human through a broad sense of education. (This claim, nevertheless, does not entail the unnerving thesis that new-born babies have no human rights or anything of this sort. This is because, for people living in the meaningful world who surround babies, the existence of the babies has meanings. In brief, babies are thrown into a world abundant in meanings whereas they have yet to be aware of them.)

It might be objected that this view is committed to (conceptual) idealism. The objection is misplaced, however. For the view I am sketching allows that the ontological aspects of our world are the foundation for our embracing of *realism*. (This is why I would never jump out of the window on the fifth floor.) The crucial point here is, nonetheless, that it is misguided to assume that *our* world consists of the two realms: the normative and the ontological. The fact is that they form a *totality* of our world and cannot be separable (albeit it is perhaps possible to talk about them separately but only for expediency's sake). In other words, it is egregiously wrong to suppose that at the base of our world lies a meaningless environment that is shared with other non-human living beings and then humans bring meanings onto that environment. The reality is that the normative (or the meaningful) and the ontological (or the meaningless), from the very beginning,

co-constitute a totality of *our* world, which is the very place where we human beings live not just as evolved, biological organisms but as intellectual and sentient beings—i.e. as the species which has stepped outside evolution in a crucial sense. This is not to imply that the ontological dimensions are human creations, and yet they cannot be intelligible apart from the point of view that is ours. (Imagine, say, ants' world which is predicated on ants' physical (and intelligent, if any) point of view. Their world would be totally different from ours—or, perhaps, it might be better to say that we cannot imagine such a world at all. Compare this case with the ways people in a very rural and 'primitive' village live. We can, albeit in varying degrees, imagine their life.)

What is important here is that the normative aspects of our world can shift when, for example, concepts come to have a different meaning in different historical and/or cultural contexts. This shift by no means necessitates a shift in the ontological structure of our world. However, it *can* happen that a shift in the normative sphere of our world bears on a *totality* of our world in which we live. To come to grips with this, it may be helpful to recall the fact that contemporary people adopting the heliocentric model of the universe see the 'same' world differently from people before the 16th-century who drew on the geocentric model.[7] (Western society employed the geocentric model for nearly 2,000 years.) In a nutshell, 'representation' which has been regarded as the mirror between mind and world is in fact always normative, a position that is worked out in detail below, especially in 4-2.

One corollary to this is that, while scientism is untenable, science is tenable. In other words, the view I am suggesting is completely compatible with acknowledging that (most of) the present scientific evidence and discovery tells us *truths* about the ontological dimension of our world. What is needed is to raise awareness of the distinction between the objects of, say, the natural sciences which are *extra-psychological* and the natural sciences themselves which are part

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[7] With regard to the bearing of the normative on the ontological, another example is offered in 6-3, which makes appeal to different versions of a world map.

of *a social system* socially and historically conditioned.

Provocatively, it can be argued that truths in *our* world are 'truths humanly speaking'. However, 'truths humanly speaking' are never human epistemic fabrications which have some distance from 'truths in themselves', but nevertheless they are *sui generis* in an important sense.

The Charge of Anthropocentrism

One expected criticism of the view I have described would be that it is anthropocentric. To be sure, I emphasise that human conceptual engagement with the (purely) physical world makes it *our world* and that we are almost always already in our world which is distinct from the environment which non-human other living beings—i.e. animals, plants, fungi, protoctista and bacteria—inhabit. In this sense, my view might be labelled 'anthropocentric'. Saying this, however, does not provide any reason for thinking that moral priority should exclusively be given to humans. Rather, this 'anthropocentrism' *increases the responsibility of humans* to the extent that it is only humans that can consider the environment shared by humans, animals, plants and other living things on the scale of the earth and even the universe, an argument that will be developed below.[8] It is impossible to expect lions to refrain from killing antelopes to preserve the desirable environment for the class Mammalia (to which both lions and antelopes belong).[9] On the other hand, we humans can concern ourselves with envisaging a better environment, taking into consideration a wide range of factors, conditions and situations.

To obtain some sense of this 'anthropocentrism', it might be helpful to remember that 'this' present world is filled with *artefacts* and that our daily life goes hand in hand with those artefacts—whatever simple life you may come up with, it would be virtually impossible to live your life without any sort of artefact.

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[8] I do not see any problem in the view that more priority should be given to our own species than to other species, though.

[9] I borrow this example, albeit considerably out of context, from Richard Dawkins's *The Selfish Gene* (p. 11).

This means that humans by no means live in a simply 'natural' environment (which would appear if all humans and accordingly all artefacts magically disappeared). The decisive difference between artefacts and natural kinds is that artefacts are, from the outset, 'embodiments of *meaning* and *purpose*' (Bakhurst, 2008, p. 427, my italics). This is why, to live *qua* humans, we need to learn to live *with* artefacts. David Bakhurst's account is illustrative:

> [T]o interact with the artefactual is to engage in activities that are not just elicited by circumstance but mediated by meaning. So the child enters the human world, the world of meaning. (Bakhurst, 2008, p. 426)

Of vital importance is the fact that we can create new artefacts and change the meanings and purposes of the existing artefacts—i.e. we can change the ways we are involved in those artefacts. Changes in artefacts do not cause a change in the most basic physical structure of our world such as natural laws but can be relevant to the normative terrain of it. For, first, artefacts, explicitly or implicitly, carry meaning and purpose; second, (new) artefacts might change how things strike us—e.g. the invention of X-ray made it possible for humans to observe what we could not observe before. In short, artefacts and how we live are deeply entangled with each other.

The following simple example might help to capture the essence of this thread of thought. With the development of artefacts (in accordance with a human conceptual development), we have come to be able to look at and consider the earth from the point of view of the universe, a point of view which is clearly *not* shared by other animals and even people in the past. One such point of view is shown in the picture below.

Thus, it is only half true to say that we live in one and the same world as animals, plants and other species. For no non-human living beings take the point of view from which we can conceive of the planet earth. This is precisely the point I want to make, the point that the material structure of the environment which humans and other living beings share is the same but nevertheless *our* world is radically different from theirs. This is specifically because human biological and conceptual engagement with the shared environment is quite distinct from theirs.[10] In order to stress this point, I often employ the term 'human knowledge' rather than simply 'knowledge' in this thesis.

An Expanded Role for the Philosophy of Education

If the view I am urging is plausible, then it follows that the philosophy of education reappears as an intellectual enterprise which has relevance to how our

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[10] For instance, this world is filled with flattened roads and streets for vehicles on wheels. These artefacts are designed uniquely for human purposes. For, from the point of view of ants, for example, those flattened roads and streets would *never* be flat at all.

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world may shift. There are two main reasons for this. First, nothing is more important than education in a broad sense at the stage in which humans as part of the biological species (e.g. as newborn babies) enter into the meaningful world where human modes of engagement with the world are required. Second, inasmuch as the meanings and purposes of our world can shift, we have to do our best to make our world *better*. For what direction the human community to take is not predestined.[11] If a greater world in the future is not guaranteed, it is not wise to allow the 'laissez-faire' development of human community. Although our human history casts some doubt on the validity of a strong 'social engineering' of the sort which some social sciences like economics and political theory used to aim at, there is still some room for intentional intervention in the 'natural' evolution of human community. If we grant that we are always in some sense *on the way* and thus the concept of *process* centres on human living,[12] then there is not the slightest reason for the philosophy of education to avoid engaging itself in the intellectual enterprise of offering better visions of human society and institutions as an academic discipline concerned with developing and advancing human knowledge particularly and human development more generally. This is precisely because *education lies at the heart of the concept of process*.

The Analytical Philosophy of Education (APE)

Contemporary philosophy of education, in my view, has not fully delved into the issue described above. In short, it has not adequately explored its full potential. Before beginning to develop an alternative conception of its role and nature, however, it would be of use in this chapter to delineate some salient features

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[11] Even in evolutionary biology, there is a consensus that evolution is not progressive in the long run. For example, Dawkins states that 'there's no sense in which evolution was ever aiming towards a distant goal of humanity' (Dawkins, 1996, p. 84); Stephen Jay Gould remarks that 'We're not marching toward some greater thing' (Gould, 1996, p. 52). Note that Dawkins and Gould belong to different 'camps' in evolutionary biology.

[12] This thread of thought may be reminiscent of A. N. Whitehead's so-called process philosophy. He argues, for instance, that 'the very essence of real actuality—that is, of the completely real—is *process*' (Whitehead, 1933, p. 316, italics in original). I do not object to its central thrust, although it is not a subject matter of investigation in this thesis.

which inform the philosophy of education as a distinct academic discipline in its current state.

It is noteworthy that the philosophy of education as an academic discipline is distinct from the 'educational thought' found in the writings of great philosophers such as Locke, Kant, Hegel and Russell. When it comes to their discourse on education, even great philosophers tend, as D. C. Phillips puts it, to express merely 'the author's views (or even prejudices) on educational rather than philosophical problems' (Phillips, 2008).[13] For example, Locke, in his *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, writes in a serious tone that 'Melons, Peaches, most sorts of Plumbs, and all sorts of Grapes in England, I think Children should be wholly kept from, as having a very tempting Taste, in a very unwholesome Juice' (Locke, 1989, p. 96).

According to some recent accounts (for example, Hirst and White [1998]; Blake, Smeyers, Smith and Standish [2003]; and Phillips [2008]), the philosophy of education in the English-speaking world began to establish its presence by several significant works around the mid-20th-century: from C. D. Hardie's *Truth and Fallacy in Educational Theory* (1942), through D. J. O'Connor's *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (1957) and Israel Scheffler's edited collection, *Philosophy of Education* (1958) to a sequence of works produced in the prolific 1960s—some exemplars are Sheffler's *The Language of Education* (1960), Richard Peters's *Education as Initiation* (1964) and *Ethics and Education* (1966). Followed by a multiplicity of works in the early 1970s—for instance, Peters's and Paul Hirst's *The Logic of Education* (1970) and Peters's edited book, *Philosophy of Education* (1973), the philosophy of education gained a firm footing as a distinct academic discipline. As for academic journals and societies, the American Philosophy of Education Society was founded in 1941 and its journal, *Educational Theory*, was launched in 1951. The philosophy of education

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[13] This should not be taken to mean, however, that these great philosophers' philosophical enquiry has been ignored in the philosophy of education. What it divorces itself from is their non-philosophical idiosyncratic fancy about education.

witnessed the appearance of a series of new journals such as *the Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *Studies in Philosophy and Education* and *Educational Philosophy and Theory* in the late 1960s. At the Institute of Education in London, which has made a salient contribution to the rise and sustained scholarship of the philosophy of education, the Chair of Philosophy of Education was created and Louis Arnaud Reid was appointed as the first Professor of Philosophy of Education in 1947 and then Richard Peters succeeded to the position in 1962 (Aldrich, 2002, p. 136, pp. 147-148). In sum, it would be reasonable to say that, through the formative period of the 1940s and 50s, 'by the late 1960s philosophy of education had been established as a discrete, clearly identifiable domain of philosophical work marked above all by *its powerful analytical methods*' (Hirst and White, 1998, p. 5, my italics).

As is italicised in the above quote, one noticeable feature of the philosophy of education in its early days was its appeal to analytical methods. Hence, the analytical philosophy of education (APE). There is little doubt that this was a consequence of the then-dominant philosophy in the Anglophone (and German-speaking) countries: analytical philosophy. Put crudely, analytical philosophy puts the most weight on 'conceptual analysis' which 'aims at breaking down complex concepts into their simpler components' (Martinich, 2001, p. 1). Noteworthy, however, is that growing doubt about the notion of 'analyticity' and the dawn of the analytical philosophy of education overlapped. As will be touched upon later, it was as early as 1951 that the traditionally accepted distinction between analytic and synthetic statements came to be called into question, mainly through Quine's famous paper, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'. It was precisely in this period that the analytical philosophy of education formed itself as an academic discipline, armed with 'analytical' methods.

These opposite vectors in the philosophy of education and academic philosophy, it seems, suggest something worth mentioning about the topology of the philosophy of education. The philosophy of education is, as noted in footnote 1, distinct from many other branches of philosophy in that it is generally

conducted in Schools or Faculties of Education. It is likely that this has given rise to less mutual interaction than may have been expected between philosophers of education and mainstream philosophers. As a result, there can often be a lag of several years between work from one field being taken up by philosophers in the other. This limited interaction, it might be argued, has been corroborated by the fact that 'most philosophers of education have the goal...of contributing not to philosophy but to educational policy and practice' and thus that they, unlike their 'pure cousins', 'publish not in philosophy journals but in a wide range of professionally-oriented journals' (Phillips, 2008).

Gradually, the 'analytical' methods in a narrow sense in the philosophy of education began to run out of steam. Both internal and external factors were significant. The external one is, as noted, that the method of conceptual analysis itself came to be under severe scrutiny in general philosophy. More interesting is the internal factor which suggests that no sooner had the analytical philosophy of education gained currency than it turned out that there seemed little more to say about educational concepts. To borrow John White's words:

> It became clear that the specifically educational concepts were unlike the more deeply entrenched, and therefore more puzzling, ones that general philosophers had always studied: *knowledge, time, mind, rationality, pleasure, the good life*, and so on. (White, 2010, italics in original)[14]

Released from the confined method of conceptual analysis, the philosophy of education's research agenda and approach have gone through an increasing expansion from the 1970s onwards. So much so that Wilfred Carr, in his introduction to an anthology on the philosophy of education, describes the status quo as follows:

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[14] White goes on to claim that it is precisely these italicised concepts rather than the concepts peculiar to education with which philosophers of education have been preoccupied over the past fifty years.

[W]hat is most striking about the contemporary philosophy of education is the range of diverse and often conflicting ways of understanding 'what the philosophy of education is' that those professionally engaged in the discipline now adopt. (Carr, 2005a, p. 1)

Also in analytical philosophy as a whole, due to less reliance on the narrow sense of conceptual analysis, some issues that were relatively neglected between 1930 and 1960 in the tradition have come to be reinvigorated (Martinich, 2001, p. 4). Some examples are social and political philosophy in which area the most notable work is probably John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971) as well as ethics and moral philosophy where Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (1981) is a counterpart. In epistemology and the philosophy of mind, areas—which were also closely associated with 'analytical philosophy'—, a new horizon has come onto the scene in the 'post-analytical' phase—emblematic would be Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979). A parallel expansion of the range of issues hotly debated can also be found in the philosophy of education. In addition, so-called postmodernism, post-structuralism and other strands in philosophy constitute the diverse and complicated current circumstance of the present philosophy of education.

This thesis, as noted, is mainly concerned with the theory of knowledge, which, in the 'post-analytical' scene, has thrown fresh light on age-old epistemological issues. This does not mean that this thesis sets aside either social and political philosophy or ethics and moral philosophy. Rather, my claim is that the new focus in the theory of knowledge, which elicits what I call the social and pragmatic nature of human knowledge, will provide an illuminating perspective on the issues discussed in these areas. It is beyond the remit of this thesis to fully spell out the implications for these matters, but what I hope to establish is that human knowledge is essentially social (and pragmatic) and that the philosophy of education can accordingly have an important relevance not just to the

development of social theory but to the more practical and pressing issues which have bothered policy-makers as well as educational practitioners.

1-2. Chapter Outline

In order to provide the reader with a sense of what is at issue in the subsequent chapters, I will sketch a very brief outline of each chapter.

From Chapters 2 to 4, I discuss the work of three epistemologically minded philosophers of education: Paul Hirst, Wilfred Carr and Harvey Siegel. By focusing on the work of these leading figures in the philosophy of education, I bring to the surface the recent trajectory of epistemological discourse within the discipline, which I would summarise as a growing awareness of the 'social' and 'practical' dimensions of knowledge, and their implications for education. The broad picture I draw is something like this: The so-called later Hirst has welcomed the enormous attention to the 'social' and 'practical' aspects of knowledge, drawing chiefly on Aristotle's work. Carr's line of thinking can be interpreted as radically extending the Hirstian line. Although both Hirst and Carr are unwilling to welcome the existence of some purported affinity, it seems that they share the conviction that traditional epistemology and its constituents—such as theoretical reason and justification extolled especially in modern times—have reached a stalemate (for different reasons). It is Harvey Siegel who should be conceived as their polar opposite precisely because he poses a challenge to the trend of an increasing attention to the social and practical dimensions of knowledge by an appeal to the validity of 'Western, Modernist, Enlightenment epistemology' (Siegel, 1997, p. 142) and its value for education.

Although the later Hirst's and Carr's shift in focus is a crucial step forward in the analysis of the bearing of knowledge on education, much of what they say has plausibility only if what I mean by the 'social' and 'pragmatic' dimensions of human knowledge adumbrated in the previous section is properly appreciated. Therefore, I shall argue that what Hirst and Carr have in mind by the terms

'social' and 'practical' still lacks an appreciation of a particular conception of 'social' and 'pragmatic' that I shall defend here. On the other hand, while Siegel's argument is very logical and apparently watertight, it is too restrictive to the extent that he appears to simplify the issue of rationality and reason by disregarding the social and historical conditions that have placed them where they are.

In Chapters 2 and 3, Hirst's and Carr's views are examined mainly through a critique of their stance towards theory and practice. Hirst's recantation of his former views on knowledge and education has surely assisted in bringing to the fore a social and practical dimension of knowledge. However, it is notable that Hirst has not abandoned the commitment to his earlier position with regard to 'forms of theoretical knowledge'. What he has come to call into doubt is the relevance of forms of theoretical knowledge to the practical life and accordingly their implications for education—especially, schooling. This raises some suspicion as to whether Hirst is not fully aware that the relationship between theory and practice is more tangled than he suggests, inasmuch as they presuppose each other. The same form of criticism is also directed against Carr. I agree with him that theorising *per se* is a form of practice. I further find instructive his aspiration to draw our attention to the cultural and historical particularities and contingencies inherent in practice by dismissing 'a view from nowhere' or 'God's eye view' which potentially lends tacit support to a currently dominant view. Yet, nonetheless, I cannot resist the temptation to point out that his discourse is sometimes confused in many ways. For example, in his articulation of the thesis of 'education without theory'—the view that the whole enterprise of educational theory should come to a 'dignified' end—, he uses the term 'theory' in a dual sense—both in its modern sense and in a further, distinct sense. This seems due in large part to his insensibility towards the organic and interpenetrating relation between theory and practice, in spite of his predilection for Aristotelian notions such as practical reason. Because of the lack of attention to the substantive nature of theory and reason on Carr's part, his discourse seemingly cannot avoid the

danger of collapsing into sheer relativism. Another way of making the same point is to remark that (theoretical) reason is, in some sense, both immanent and transcendent in the sense that it enables us to live as if we stood both within and outside our particular social practices at one and the same time—i.e. it operates both as a premise and the conclusion of the 'contentful' ways of living in our world.

In Chapter 4, Siegel's defence of traditional epistemology with fallibilism is critiqued. His assault on claims of Carr's sort is persuasive. Siegel points out that the criticisms of rationality, for instance, rest on rationality and *ipso facto* that any kind of enquiry presupposes rationality and a recognition of the force of reasons. This criticism on Siegel's part is valid. Yet, this is far from the final word in our enquiry into human knowledge. Siegel's discourse seems to reiterate the trivial point that we are always already in our world filled with meanings where rationality and reasons are of primary importance inasmuch as it would not make any coherent sense to have meanings without them. This point is certainly critical but nonetheless it does not go far enough. To follow it through, it must be recognised that we are always in some sense on the way—i.e. our world is shifting. Due to his indifference to the latter point, Siegel's understanding of human knowledge may arouse the impression that rationality and normativity, for instance, are of inert nature and accordingly that his preferred views on education based upon a traditional epistemology are also limited. That is, Siegel's articulation of the philosophy of education falls short of exploring future visions of human society and institutions to which it can have pertinence.

Chapter 5 turns to a wider philosophical context beyond the philosophy of education community, since what I call the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge is not fully incorporated into the recent discourse within the philosophy of education. It is the theme of what comes after First Philosophy that characterises much philosophical discussion in the last decades (in the (post-) analytical tradition as well as in the post-analytical philosophy of education). From this context, two influential strands have come to the fore: scientific

naturalism and the 'death-of-epistemology' argument. This chapter makes it clear that First Philosophy is untenable but that the resulting deadlock does not necessarily amount to either scientific naturalism or to the end of epistemology. The kind of scientific naturalism this chapter grapples with is 'non-normative naturalism' (often associated with Quine). This scientistic naturalism is tenuous simply because it fails to concede that what enables the conducting of the sciences is already embedded in something normative. While the objects or phenomena to be known by us through, say, the natural sciences exist or occur independently of us, the natural sciences themselves are part of a social system socially and historically conditioned. Scientific naturalism generally loses much of its force if it develops its account without special regard to the fact that what aspects of reality become possible objects of our knowledge at least partly depend on the manners of our enquiry in particular and on how we live in our world in general. Similarly, the 'death-of-epistemology' argument (associated with Rorty) is not unproblematic in that it does not appreciate the subtle relation between the natural and the normative. Rorty is right to say that there are many language games rather than only the one correct, scientific description of Reality. However, a complex mix of his linguistic idealism and confused naturalism seems to divert him into some confusion about the degree to which the normative is entangled with the natural. A regrettable consequence is that Rorty's discourse often appears to give a philosophical endorsement to an extreme form of incommensurability among different (linguistic, cultural, historical) communities. Key to evading this pitfall is to pay due attention to the interpenetrating character between the conceptual powers of the mind and the 'external' world (or, between our conceptual engagement of what is thought and an empirical description of what it is thought about).

Chapters 6 and 7 move on to the research programme called 'social epistemology'. Social epistemology places emphasis on the social dimensions of knowledge, which this thesis aspires to address. Broadly, there are two paradigmatic social epistemologies worth mentioning: one is philosophical and

the other is sociological (which are investigated in Chapters 6 and 7 respectively). Another motivating force to pursue these social epistemologies is that both of them recognise education as a main subject matter to be tackled within their respective frameworks.

The social epistemology addressed in Chapter 6 accrues from the (post-) analytical context in Anglophone philosophy. I thus refer to this as analytical social epistemology (ASE). This social epistemology has developed from an awareness that epistemic subjects obtain knowledge through the *testimony* of others (hence, 'social' epistemology). By measuring the *reliability* of the interpersonal testimonial processes against the standard of *truth*—by means of scientific methods and/or theories of probability—, analytical social epistemology claims to accommodate two features which cannot be encompassed either by traditional epistemology or non-normative naturalism: namely, the normative aspect (the preservation of the notion of justification) and the appeal to scientific means. There is certainly some insight in this argument (and some implication for education), but there is also a limit to this approach. First, the analytical social epistemologist, like the non-normative naturalist, remains unimpressed by the notion that what enables the conducting of science is always embedded in something normative. Second, they simplify the issue by sharpening the dichotomies between individualism and collectivism with regard to the primary epistemic subject as well as between internalism[15] and externalism in epistemic justification, without attempting to weave together the mutually dependent parts of a single complex totality. Third, the central temptation of analytical social epistemology to replace reasons with reliability by deriving the ground of normativity from truth misses the crucial fact that the notion of reliability presupposes not only the notion of truth but also that of reasonableness. These limitations are obstacles to delving into a detailed analysis of the organised forms

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[15] Internalism is the view that one's internal conscious state is sufficient to formulate a set of epistemic principles by which to find out whether one is justified in having a true brief. It sees the Cartesian individual as the ideal model of the knowing subject.

of knowledge in a wider community relevant to the formation, dissemination and consumption of knowledge. To put this the other way round, analytical social epistemology is still haunted in a certain sense by analytical philosophy's idiosyncratic inclination—i.e. the enquiry into how a subject knows something without giving much thought to the conditions that make that possible. As a result, it may well be that analytical social epistemology has not yet had a great impact on the discourse in the philosophy of education in particular or made a remarkable contribution to education studies in general.

Chapter 7 focuses on the social dimensions of knowledge seen from a 'sociological' social epistemology, namely, Steve Fuller's philosophically-grounded social scientific perspective. Fuller's social epistemology is in stark contrast to analytical social epistemology in many respects. While analytical social epistemology's concern is with examining the verb 'to know' and thus employs what Fuller calls the '*inside-out*' strategy' (i.e. how individuals know something), Fuller's social epistemology is concerned with the noun 'knowledge' and thereby handles the '*outside-in*' strategy (i.e. how knowledge is created, distributed and consumed in society). These differences make it possible for Fuller's social epistemology to cast light, without being bothered by the above philosophical pathology, on some issues such as the institutional dimensions in knowledge processes and products which have not adequately been brought to light in the enterprise of analytical social epistemology. Insofar as Fuller's sensibility to the inseparability between cognitive pursuits and their social organisation underlies his enquiry into collective knowledge and into the knowledge-bearing organisations in society such as universities (which is taken up in 7-2), Fuller's social epistemology is a vital prelude to developing an interdisciplinary meta-critique of educational issues. Another novel aspect of Fuller's scheme is to bring another sense of normativity to the forefront, which has historically been ignored in Western philosophical tradition as 'mere policy-making and technical applications'. His criticism of the 'always-already' thesis in philosophy is also incisive, namely the criticism that philosophers tend to

simplify things by claiming that we are 'always already' rational or normative. For, to be sure, the 'always-already' thesis does not necessarily preclude the possibility that it lends theoretical support to the presently dominant views. Although I agree with some of Fuller's key leitmotifs, his social epistemology involves a set of its own problems. Fuller's relative lack of attention to the potential philosophical contributions to revising and shifting the unity between cognitive pursuits and their social organisation engenders his unnerving 'naturalism'—i.e. the idea that sociological explanations can supersede philosophical enquiry (once philosophy first sets the stage for science). This misunderstanding on Fuller's part is due in part to the fact that he underestimates a deeper sense in the 'always already' dimensions of our life. That is, all that figures now as the 'always already' dimensions has and involves a relation to human history. The 'always-already' dimensions are never static or inert but instead they shift and develop. In this regard, we are always in process and fluid. Given this, it turns out that philosophy not merely sets the scene for the sciences as an underlabourer but contributes to envisaging a better community of thinking and minded beings, along with the sciences, technology and many other fields. In this sense, philosophy and science go together.[16]

In the concluding chapter, Chapter 8, I spell out the expanding horizons of the philosophy of education as an academic discipline concerned with human knowledge particularly and human development more broadly, on the basis of what has been discussed in the foregoing chapters about what I call the social and pragmatic nature of human knowledge. Broadly, from the philosophical discussion in the former half of this thesis, it follows that human knowledge is essentially of an educational nature. Thus two pillars of education come to the fore: (i) as an initiation of human animals into *our* world filled with meanings which are *sui*

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[16] This point is hardly acknowledged by policy-makers. The following situation surrounding education research epitomises their insensibility to it: 'The most lively contemporary debates about education research…were set in motion around the turn of millennium when the US Federal Government moved in the direction of funding *only rigorously scientific educational research*—the kind that establish causal factors which could then guide the development of practically effective policies (Phillips, 2008, my italics).

generis to human beings and (ii) as an enterprise to make our ongoing world better without repeating the failures of historical forms of social planning. The analysis in the latter half of this thesis is of benefit to future visions of human society and institutions in the light of how human knowledge is to be developed and advanced. That is, enquiry into how individuals know something and into how knowledge is formed, distributed and utilised are interpenetrating rather than contradictory, which means that philosophical enquiry and empirical investigations should persist in dialogue with each other. Raising awareness of this interdependence is necessary in considering educational issues in particular and developing human knowledge as a whole. The crucial thrust of this thesis is to draw more attention to the recognition that not only the former task but also the latter task—i.e. to academically engage in advancing human knowledge and development in society—is what the philosophy of education should be concerned with. This is precisely because the inclusive sense of education is deeply entangled with how the human community of thinking and minded beings has evolved and how it can and should develop in the future.

Chapter 2

A Growing Awareness of the Social and Practical Dimensions of Knowledge: The Case of Paul Hirst

In Chapter 1, I offered a concise overview of my preferred view on human knowledge. In the sketchy account, I adumbrated what I term the social and pragmatic nature of what it is for humans to know. The crux of it is that when we become aware that we know something we are *always already* in the world filled with 'contentful' meanings which have public standards and criteria of 'correctness'; put another way, when humans live *qua* humans, the world people inhabit is, from the outset, not a meaningless world, but *our* world, which is distinct from the environment where non-human living beings live. (Note that this distinction in no way entails that the physical structure of the ontological aspect of our world is human conceptual fabrications or implies that it is not shared by non-human living beings.) This view inevitably brings the significance of *education* into attention. For, first, education enables humans who are born as part of the biological species to become human beings; second, because our world is always on the way in some sense, education serves not only to reproduce our world but also to produce a better world.[17] (Strictly speaking, the first dimension entails the second one precisely because our world is in some measure shifting all the time. Thus, even 'reproducing' our world necessitates the concept of process.) In brief, what I dub the 'social' and 'pragmatic' aspects of human knowledge contain 'educational' dimensions.

What I set out to do in this chapter and the subsequent two chapters is to analyse the recent trajectory of epistemological discourse within the philosophy of

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[17] It should not be taken to mean, however, that we can create a new world from the start. For we are always already live in *our* world filled with meanings which are embodiments of how humans have conducted our ways of life. All we can do is to make our world a better place *from within* our present world, not to make an ideal world by utterly disenchanting the present world. The fact is that the latter tack is *impossible*. This issue shall be elaborated later in this thesis, especially in Chapter 3.

education in order to investigate what is at issue and examine how far what I call the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge are reflected and incorporated there. For this purpose, I will focus on three leading epistemologically minded philosophers of education: Paul Hirst (in this chapter), Wilfred Carr (in Chapter 3) and Harvey Siegel (in Chapter 4). The focus of my attention is placed upon these three thinkers because their views epitomise some distinct lines of thinking within philosophy of education discourse in relation to the shifting intellectual contexts to some epistemological issues such as rationality, normativity and justification.

To provide some sense of the way in which the three chapters proceed, I begin by making some preliminary remarks about the three philosophers in question. Hirst, Carr and Siegel all possess elements with which I find affinity, more or less. In respect of Hirst, I think that his later views deserve mention insofar as they have invigorated awareness of what might be called the social and practical dimensions of knowledge in relation to education; as regards Carr, I basically share his view that the philosophy of education now has little purchase on actual educational issues as well as on policy-making; and as for Siegel, I find worth examining his strenuous defence of a traditional epistemology and its implications for education before hastily judging traditional epistemology to be outmoded. However, the sympathy I feel with them does not necessarily imply any full agreement on my part with their thinking and ideas as a whole. In other words, viewed in the light of what I call the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge, none of their tacks is sufficient (for different reasons). As regards Hirst, I find problematic his (even the later Hirst's) understanding of the relationship between theory and practice—concomitantly, between the theoretical and the practical, academic disciplines and social practices and so on; In respect of Carr, some of his interpretations of (a complex mix of) the philosophical strands on which his views are based seem implausible; and as for Siegel, he appears to ignore one of the two main senses of education I mentioned above by reiterating only the universally applicable aspect of rationality and the force of

reasons.

The picture above is painted with a very broad brush. What I try to do in this as well as the following two chapters is to refine and develop it. As noted, I begin with a critique of Paul Hirst's argument.

2-1. Hirst 1[18]: The Primacy of the Theoretical over the Practical

In the academy, courage is needed to express one's change of mind and views. Even among academics, who are supposed to be exposed to critique and criticisms and have much time for reflection, it is in fact not easy to find the kind of people who readily welcome accepting such changes thorough critique and criticisms both from others and themselves. In philosophy, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Hilary Putnam—both referred to in this thesis—are two of the most impressive examples exemplifying such a sincere attitude. Paul Hirst, one of the founders of the analytical philosophy of education, is entitled to join them.

Hirst shifts his focus, as he himself admits, away from a liberal education based on seven (or eight) forms of knowledge (mathematics, the physical sciences, the human sciences, history, religion, 'literature and the fine arts' and philosophy (Hirst, 1973)) to a social practices view of education. After a transitional period in the 1980s, he arrived at a new philosophical position by the early 1990s (Hirst, 2008, p. 9). In this thesis I want to call Hirst before and after this shift Hirst 1 and Hirst 2 respectively, for expediency's sake. The aim of this chapter is to clarify what Hirst's later view consists in and consider the extent to which the shift is compelling. My diagnosis is that his break with the former stance is plausible but

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[18] The reason I choose Hirst—not, say, Richard Peters, another founding father of the analytical philosophy of education— is that the former is more epistemology-oriented. Concerning their academic disposition and background, Jae-Bong Yoo says that 'the focus of Hirst's liberal education is on epistemology and its application to curriculum, whereas Peters' concern lies in philosophy of mind and social/moral education [*sic*]' (Yoo, 2001, p. 625). Hirst himself remarks that: 'Our [Peters's and Hirst's] areas of philosophical interest complemented each other and his [Peters's] position on many matters was even more Kantian than mine. He had both a strong scholarly background in classical studies and a firm grasp of the history of philosophy both of which I seriously lacked' (Hirst, 2008, p. 6).

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that because of his misconstrual of 'forms of theoretical knowledge', it is questionable how far he is able to formulate anything convincing in terms of 'forms of practice'.

Four Key Ideas in Hirst 1

The key ideas to understanding Hirst 1's stance are the following four: 'rationalism', 'foundationalism', individualism and 'a transcendental argument'. Woven together, these ideas constituted his famous idea of 'forms of knowledge' which he believed should lie at the heart of liberal education. As is often the case with oft-used terms, these four ideas tend to be employed by different people in different ways.[19] This is why a brief account of them might help to clarify what is meant in Hirst's scheme by these ideas.

'Rationalism' is roughly to be understood in Hirst's discourse as follows: Reason takes the form of *theoretical* reason in its core; it can only be couched in terms of *propositional truths*: and propositional truths are quintessentially typified in the seven (or eight) theoretically constructed distinct forms of knowledge and understanding listed earlier. Of service here might be to recall the historical usage of the term 'rationalism'. In philosophy, the term is probably most often associated with a certain kind of epistemological position, represented by, say, Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz—which has long been the rival theory of empiricism. The 'rationalism' that Hirst 2 and I attribute to Hirst 1 does not exactly accord with this rationalism. However, it shares with epistemological rationalism a general view that the operations of the faculty of reason take precedence over experience. To do full justice to Hirst 1, nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that his emphasis on 'rationalism' did not necessarily foreclose from his 'educational theory' the elements that could have rather direct implications for the practical conduct of education.[20] Yet, it is certain that under

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[19] I use scare quotes in referring to the three ideas other than individualism. For, as shall be made explicit in the text that follows, these three seem to be meant in Hirst's conception in a way slightly different from the orthodox meanings associated with these terms.

[20] In effect, compared to his predecessors, Hirst 1 was more attentive to roles that practical

the scheme of Hirst 1, much more focus was placed upon *theoretical* reason, knowledge and understanding *vis-à-vis* their *practical* counterparts in the establishment of 'educational theory'. On Hirst 1's view, educational theory is 'concerned with the formulation of the principles of educational practice, principles whose rational justification can come only from the findings of work in contributory *academic disciplines* such as philosophy, psychology, sociology and history' (Hirst, 2008, p. 6, my italics). Looking back from Hirst 2's standpoint, Hirst pejoratively calls 'hard rationalism' this kind of educational theory that is shaped and guided exclusively by theoretical reason and accordingly by academic disciplines.

Taken in this way, it is clear that 'rationalism' is closely related to what I here dub 'foundationalism'. Foundationalism is originally a philosophical idea argued in narrowly technical discussions on the epistemological question of how propositional knowledge can be justified by a knower—namely, a view 'concerning the *structure* of the system of justified belief possessed by a given individual' (Alston, 1992, p. 144, italics in original). Yet, quite often, the term 'foundationalism' is used in a much broader sense: the sense in which philosophy can serve as an 'arbitrator' or 'referee' *vis-à-vis* other academic disciplines including the sciences. As noted in footnote 2 of Chapter 1, this line of thought, which could be described as 'First Philosophy', was consolidated by the hands of the neo-Kantians who saw 'the notion of philosophy as *a foundational discipline* which "grounds" knowledge-claims' (Rorty, 1980, p. 4, my italics). There would be little problem with regarding Hirst 1 as basically on a par with such a 'foundationalist' line of thought. That is, he saw theory as of most fundamental importance in hope of establishing the principles of educational practice which he

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factors play in 'educational theory'. For example, for D. J. O'Connor, one of the leading philosophers referring to education one generation before Hirst 1, 'the word "theory" as it is used in educational contexts is generally a courtesy title' (O'Connor, 1957, p. 110) in the light of the logic and accuracy required for 'theory' to be called so. In other words, whereas O'Connor held that 'educational theory' does not qualify to be called 'theory' to the extent that educational theory has many elements that are not 'purely' theoretical, Hirst 1 was more tolerant about those elements in his consideration of educational theory.

thought resided *outside* purely theoretical considerations. In brief, under Hirst 1's scheme, there was a fixed hierarchy between the theoretical and the practical. He regarded theoretical reason, knowledge and understanding as primary to their practical counterparts. In other words, even if he considered that practical matters could not always be reducible to theoretical ones, there is little doubt that he saw practical issues as added, and subsidiary, to theoretical ones.

The third idea ascribed to Hirst 1 is individualism. Hirst 2 later remarks that 'the radical individualism' is inextricably tied up with the 'radically "rational" approach to education' (Hirst, 1993) and *ipso facto* renounces it. For his views have moved away from the idea of 'the autonomy of the self' or 'the autonomy of the individual' to the insight that 'we exist as individual entities with given *inter-related* physical, psychological and *social* needs and with parallel wide-ranging capacities' (Hirst, 1993, p. 128, my italics). To put it another way, Hirst 2 breaks with the Cartesian subject by foregrounding the essentially social character of individuals.

The fourth point to note is that Hirst 1's position is perhaps not far removed from a species of Kantian-style transcendental arguments,[21] to the extent that Hirst 1 sought logical and necessary conditions for the possession or employment of some kind of knowledge for the human good life. Whereas it is questioned whether "Peters' or Hirst's [arguments] are really transcendental in the Kantian sense" (Winch and Gingell, 2008, p. 216), there is little question that the primacy of theoretical reason, knowledge and understanding over their practical counterparts was, in their minds, based on a sort of arguments which are seen to hold transcendentally or universally.

All of these characteristics that inform Hirst 1's views on philosophical enquiry into education—'rationalism', 'foundationalism', individualism and a

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[21] For instance, Yoo, in a paper focusing on apparent Hirst's shift, canvasses Hirst 1's (and Peters') basic view as follows: 'education is linked with the good life; the good life is a rational life; for a rational life, the pursuit of rationality is necessary; therefore, the pursuit of knowledge and understanding is central in education; and the ground for the pursuit of rationality relies ultimately on a Kantian transcendental deduction' (Yoo, 2001, p. 625).

'transcendental argument'—have been the subject of controversy in the contemporary academic world. Such critical reflections on the ideas Hirst 1 upheld have led Hirst to Hirst 2. I agree with Hirst 2 that, given the tide of recent scholarship, there is a sense in which Hirst 1's endorsed views have been sidelined, but this never indicates that Hirst 2's views follow straight from the rejection of Hirst 1's views. A detailed analysis of this is the central issue of the next section.

2-2. Hirst 2: Towards Socially/Practically-Infused Discourse

Thus far, I have sketched the views embraced by Hirst before his conversion—the views stressing the primacy of theoretical reason, knowledge and understanding over their practical counterparts on the assumption that the former is *more basic* than the latter. Hirst 1's scheme was underpinned by trust in, say, rationality, individual autonomy, the primacy of the theoretical over the practical and universally applicable principles. With historical hindsight, Hirst 2 summarises Hirst 1's views as follows:

> Under the spell of the rationalist climate of the time [in the 1960s], the aim of education was seen as providing the foundations of a good life for everyone by promoting their development as rationally autonomous individuals. To that end it was seen as necessary to initiate them into the achievements of reason in knowledge and understanding and to promote the application of such knowledge in all areas of experience and action. (Hirst, 1996, p. 167)

In this passage, the four components which I attribute to Hirst 1 in the last section can be found: 'rationalism', 'foundationalism', individualism and a 'transcendental argument'.

The 1960s that Hirst describes as the time of 'the rationalist climate' was in fact the period when the value of universally transcendent rationality began to be questioned. For example, mainly by an appeal to historical case studies, some

advocates of what was then called the new philosophy of science—such as Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend—, and proponents of Nietzschean genealogical enquiry such as Michel Foucault arguably triggered the scepticism about 'rationalism' of the sort depicted in the last section.[22] This sceptical line of argument with regard to 'rationality' has spawned much sociological work on the social and cultural conditions that place (particular kinds of) 'rationality' where it is.

The point here is that the notion of (purely theoretical) rationality, Hirst 2 claims, comes under serious threat and accordingly that the other three components constituting Hirst 1's enterprise are seen to be unsatisfying since these components are intertwined with one another. This section thus aims to clarify the ways in which Hirst 2 has departed from Hirst 1—in particular, concerning 'rationalism' and individualism[23]—and to consider the extent to which his shift is convincing. The following argument will be conducted to make clear that the break with Hirst 1 is certainly plausible but obviously a separate argument is required to support the idea that the line of thought suggested by Hirst 2—which might be summarised as a growing focus on social and practical dimensions of knowledge in relation to education—is a promising line to take.

From Theory-Centred to Practice-Centred Views

I want to begin by looking at a confession Hirst 2 made *vis-à-vis* Hirst 1's ideas:

> I...consider the notion of Liberal Education for which I argued in the 1960s and 1970s to be misconceived... The main error in my position was seeing theoretical knowledge as the logical foundation for the development of sound

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[22] Note, however, that, like Hirst 2, Kuhn and Foucault are not against rationality and the exercise of reason as such. It is Feyerabend who is most radical in this respect, for he posits the 'anything-goes' principle as opposed to the objective and absolute rationality as something to be vindicated (Feyerabend, 1975).

[23] The remaining components of Hirst 1's views—'foundationalism' and a 'transcendental argument'—are discussed in some detail in Chapter 3, which addresses Carr's challenge to them.

practical knowledge and rational personal development. Education in theoretical forms of knowledge was seen as *ultimately fundamental* to everything else in education (Hirst, 1993, pp. 196-197, my italics)

In this confession, Hirst 2 expresses the regret that Hirst 1 prioritised what I have called in this thesis 'rationalism' and 'foundationalism' backed by the erroneous idea of the supremacy of the theoretical over the practical. Diagnosing Hirst 1's views as inadequate and misguided, Hirst 2 provides a prescription to his earlier views—a prescription which is in effect quite simple. That is, Hirst 1's framework, Hirst 2 asserts, should diametrically be reversed: i.e. the idea that the theoretical is prior to the practical should be replaced by the opposite idea that the practical is prior to the theoretical. Thus, Hirst 2 claims 'practical knowledge to be more fundamental than theoretical knowledge' (Hirst, 1993, p. 197); and 'it is the primacy of practical over theoretical reason in all matters of education and teaching that must be our guide'. (Hirst, 1996, p. 178).

Hirst's recantation was encouraged by his rethinking of 'the whole character of reason' on the basis of 'Aristotle's distinction between theoretical and practical reason' (Hirst, 2008, p. 8). Needless to say, Hirst 2 is not alone in reconsidering the character of reason in philosophy and related fields. Indeed, this is a theme that has come into sharp focus in recent decades. For instance, the works of Gilbert Ryle, Michael Polanyi, Alasdair MacIntyre and Joseph Dunne have been stimuli to such renewed attention to the distinction between the theoretical and the practical. As Hirst himself admits, it is precisely in this context that Hirst 2's views have taken shape. To come to grips with the refocusing on pre-modern Aristotelian modes of understanding, I here draw attention to Dunne's historical exposition of the nature of 'reason'—the exposition that accounts for the way in which theory-oriented 'modern' reason emerged in a particular historical context and has centrally come into play in many societies.

Joseph Dunne, a philosopher of education working vigorously on the issue of practical reason in connection with Aristotelian practical philosophy, gives a

lucid and succinct account of the nature of 'modern' reason. According to this account, 'modern' reason has its roots in the seventeenth-century Scientific Revolution and has become dominant within the Western intellectual world, including 'modern epistemology'. From the outset, reason arising in this context is 'quite inhospitable to practice' (Dunne, 2003, p. 195). Under the scheme underpinned by this kind of reason, a *detached third-person* perspective and *objectivity* gained through that perspective are seen as of most value; but, in contrast, 'the context-dependence of first-person experience' is suppressed (ibid.). Conceived along this line, it is no accident that nomological knowledge—whose instantiation is natural scientific knowledge—has come to acquire general currency as the only model that could claim *rational* status (ibid, p. 196) and that 'prediction and control' have come to become the basic aspiration and preoccupation of modern civilised societies by tying up with economic interests. On the other hand, 'older forms of practical knowledge', Dunne is telling us, 'came to seem hopelessly inadequate', subjected to charges of being 'unreliable, makeshift, unaccountable, and elitist' (ibid.). As a consequence, this amounts to the view that 'the practical should be absorbed into the *technical*' (ibid.).

The previous paragraph briefly canvasses how 'modern' reason appeared and has come to enjoy the monopolistic status in modern societies both within the intellectual world and beyond it as exclusively concerned with objective knowledge and rationality. As time goes by, however, a number of problems with this kind of modern reason have arisen: for instance, the incongruity of technical feasibility and practical desirability—whose impressive example is the production of atomic bombs; and the growing doubt about the generalisability of theory. With the increasing suspicion of reason of the sort just mentioned (often in the guise of criticism of 'scientism'), Dunne argues, 'the defense of practical reason, and the counter-attempt to articulate its irreducible otherness, has become a striking leitmotif in recent philosophy' (Dunne, 2003, p. 196). In short, the practical domain that cannot simply be reduced to the theoretical one has been brought to light. It is this sort of philosophical awareness of the practical that has initiated the

enormous attention to Aristotle's work in the present philosophy of education community—Hirst 2 and Carr included—in the form of, say, refocusing MacIntyre's Aristotelian orientation towards specifically education issues like morality, a good life and a fulfilled human being.

I oppose scientism—the view that only scientific knowledge occupies the monopolistic access to rational claims *vis-à-vis* other forms of knowledge[24]; and I agree with the charge that a procrustean application of universalistic theoretical principles to practical issues misses a good deal. In this regard, therefore, I share with Hirst 2—and with Carr as will be mentioned in the next chapter—a dissatisfaction with Hirst 1's 'rationalism'-driven view.

From Individualism to a Social Practices-Based View

Another conspicuous feature of the shift in Hirst's views is his negation of radical individualism. Radical individualism has served as a paradigm case of the subject in epistemology especially since Descartes. This is true, *inter alia*, for epistemology in the analytical tradition, which is the main target of this thesis and from whose tradition the so-called analytical philosophy of education originally emerged. This point deserves mention inasmuch as other traditions in philosophy had already noticed the significance of *social* dimensions in their account of knowledge, prior to Anglophone analytical philosophy. Steve Fuller, a leading sociologist pioneering a movement called (sociological) 'social epistemology' with which Chapter 7 is concerned, points out: that 'from the nineteenth century onward, epistemologies descended from French positivism and German idealism have consistently stressed the systematic and collective character of knowledge. In contrast, analytic philosophy has remained wedded to the Cartesian individual—now occasionally presented as Darwinian—as the paradigm case of the knower' (Fuller, 2007, p. 1).

With the increasing doubt as to Cartesian individualism in the analytical philosophy community, Hirst has also come to cast a suspicious eye upon it.

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[24] I shall elaborate on how scientism is untenable in Chapter 5, especially in 5-2.

Accordingly, Hirst 2 reproaches Hirst 1's individualism as 'impossible individualism' for being haunted by an illusion, one that we are 'all in essence isolated, free, atomic beings, associating with others in pursuing our individual interests only insofar as we choose' (Hirst, 1996, p. 172). In place of this individualistic picture, Hirst 2 has reached the view that[25]:

> [W]e are by nature dependent on physical and social relationships with others, so that *from the start every aspect of our lives is socially structured.* (Hirst, 1996, p. 172, my italics)

As clearly shown here, suspicions of radical individualism have driven Hirst to recognise the necessarily social character of human beings themselves as well as of human practices like education.

To sum up, by pushing aside Hirst 1's ideas—especially what might be called 'rationalism' and individualism—, Hirst 2 has made a great contribution to raising awareness of what I term a 'practical'[26] and 'social' shift within philosophy of education discourse. To put it more concretely, just as the importance of practical reason, which cannot be accommodated in theoretical reason, has attracted scholarly attention in the contemporary philosophy of education, so the growing awareness of the centrality of the social dimensions of human nature, it seems, has been built up—in place of the traditional brand of Cartesian radical individualism—as the starting point of the philosophical enquiry into education.

To prevent possible misunderstandings, it would be worth adding here that

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[25] For clarification, I quote another passage on this view of his: '[W]e are not constituted as the individual persons we are simply by nature and what we add to that by way of knowledge and understanding. Rather we become who we are only by the exercise of our individual capacities in relating to others and by participating in, or reacting to, all manner of socially constructed practices of which we are the heirs. All that we are as persons publicly and privately we become by way of our response to features of our publicly shared social world of languages and practices'. (Hirst, 2008, p. 8)

[26] I choose this term to indicate that this view gains a foothold within the Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy.

the aim of education Hirst embraces never changes throughout his career. That is, education should be directed at 'the development and promotion of a person's good life as a whole' (Hirst, 1999, p. 124). What has changed during his intellectual path is his views on the way in which that goal is to be achieved. Thereby, Hirst's emphasis in terms of the content of education has accordingly shifted from knowledge-acquisition based on 'theoretical forms of knowledge' to the primary importance of 'initiation into certain substantive social practices' (Hirst, 1993, p. 195). What Hirst 2 means by a social practice is 'a pattern of activity established *traditionally* or by deliberate *institution* that is engaged in for achieving the satisfaction of our needs and interests' (Hirst, 1999, p. 127, my italics).

As indicated earlier, I appreciate Hirst 2's recognition that the nature of human beings as well as of practices like education is essentially social. However, there still remains some room left to be rectified in Hirst 2's picture. For Hirst 2 by no means attempts to take a further step towards the idea that 'forms of theoretical knowledge' also contains a social aspect. This means that even Hirst 2's picture works with an implicit and unnecessary dualist presupposition of theory and practice, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

2-3. Some Reflections and Comments on Hirst: An Analysis of the Theory-Practice Issue

I have outlined Hirst's turn from his early to later thought that has had an impact on the research frontier in the philosophy of education circle. In 2-2, I specifically mentioned two salient aspects that mark Hirst's later thinking. I want to summarise these two as follows respectively: (i) a 'practical' turn within philosophy of education discourse, which is often associated with (neo-) Aristotelian philosophy; and (ii) a 'social' turn within it, based on the negation of Cartesian individualism or the autonomy of the individual. As far as the inadequacy and misconception of 'rationalism' and individualism are concerned, I

stand in line with Hirst 2's break with his early views. This does not imply, however, that I am in full agreement with the alternative views Hirst 2 offers—(i) the suggestion that the priority of the theoretical and the practical should simply be reversed; and (ii) the idea that, in conjunction with (i), social practices underlying human life override purely theoretical academic disciplines in education. This section is concerned to examine how persuasive these alternative views are. In what follows, I will reveal why these two views—i.e. Hirstian practical and social turns— are still inadequate by bringing what I call the 'social' and 'pragmatic' dimensions of human knowledge to light. Thus, this section is also aimed at eliciting the similarities and differences between what could be called the 'social' and 'practical' orientation found in Hirst 2's view and what I dub the 'social' and 'pragmatic' dimensions of human knowledge. The 'social' and 'practical' elements co-constitute Hirst 2's picture and so this section proceeds without taking up each of them separately.

As we saw, Hirst 1's emphasis was placed upon the purely theoretical aspect of reason. Guided mainly by MacIntyre's work (and that of Dunne), Hirst 2 has gradually raised awareness of 'the importance of Aristotle's distinction between theoretical and practical reason' (Hirst, 2008, p. 8). This has led him to reject Hirst 1's picture that the theoretical is prior to the practical—namely, the picture that individual actual educational problems and agendas are to be addressed in the light of the theoretical principles that have been worked out independently of, and prior to, practical considerations. To put it the other way round, Hirst 2 has become sensible to something in reason which bears an irreducible relation to theoretical reason:

> What it is rational to do in practice is… not something we can work out theoretically first in terms of propositional principles and then act on accordingly. (Hirst, 2008, p. 8)

This view obviously dismisses what I have called the forms of 'rationalism' and

'foundationalism' that inform Hirst 1's programme. The conviction that theory cannot lay claim to an incorrigible and universally generalisable guide to actual practices has widely spread in several academic areas.

Granted this, however, the relationship between theory and practice is still a matter of controversy (as ever before). As intimated earlier, I believe that even Hirst 2 does not grasp the heart of the theory-practice issue. In the remaining part of this chapter, I shall clarify and defend this position.

What prompts Hirst 2 into the suspicion of infallible and universal theory prior to practice relates to his denial of the autonomy of the individual—to put it another way, his emphasising of the socially embedded nature of the individual. The web of social practices underlying the life of every human being is so diverse, complicated and interrelated that there is no extracting each social practice by recourse to theoretical knowledge and principles prior to such social practices.[27] Human beings, Hirst 2 duly puts it, are *always already* embedded in the web of social practices and thus they are not guided by theory prior to, and independently of, such a social web. Viewed in this way, rational action in practice comes to the surface as something that cannot be construed properly by Hirst 1's rationalist account. For, as noted, 'rationalism' is based on the idea that rational action derives from rational principles that are configured by purely theoretical enterprises epitomised by academic disciplines; that is, 'rational action is seen as *necessarily premeditated*' (Hirst, 1983, p. 10, my italics). However, for Hirst 2, rational action and practice are not something waiting for revelation by means of justified theoretical knowledge and principles, but instead:

> *Rational practices are 'practices' justified in practice itself*, and their creation, conduct and development are possible only by virtue of the exercise of reason in this practical mode. (Hirst, 1999, p. 129, my italics)

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[27] Why we cannot know every and all social practices in a neutral manner is in need of further clarification. I deal with this issue in 3-3 and 4-1. 3-3 touches upon why it is impossible to unpack every and all interests and concerns; 4-1 deals with the same issue with regard to standpoint in greater detail.

The central thrust of Hirst 2's views is therefore that rational practices are not guided by theoretical principles, prior to the actual practices; but they are *internally* justified in practices themselves. Indeed this view accords with our received wisdom better than the 'rationalist', 'foundationalist' account—for example, football players, when kicking a moving ball, do not need to solve a set of differential equations to predict its trajectory.

Thus far, I have few quarrels with Hirst 2's line of reasoning. Yet, a further analysis clarifies the fact that Hirst 2 still adheres to the old picture in the consideration of the theory-practice matter—the picture that theory and practice are two unbridgeably separate things belonging to essentially different regions. It is this view that I see as problematic.

On Hirst 2's view, theory is degraded to a secondary position complementary to practice. Considering that practical reason guiding rational practices is different in character from theoretical reason and that, in his scheme, the former is more basic than the latter, it is no coincidence that theory is unseated from the primary position. As a corollary to this, Hirst 2 holds that academic disciplines—the incarnation of theoretical knowledge, understanding and reasoning—exert only an *indirect* influence on the conduct of a good life. For, in Hirst 2's view, the conduct of a good life requires a good command of practical reason in social practices that cannot exhaustively be described by propositional truths at which academic disciplines aim. As the complementary task to the practical, in Hirst 2's conception, the theoretical—e.g. academic disciplines—is expected to provide 'the *universal* understanding' which sets out 'necessary limiting characteristics of *the very framework* in which practical reason must operate and in which rational practices can be pursued' (Hirst, 1999, p. 129, my italics). In a nutshell, it is given a 'second-order'[28] role of critical reflection on

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[28] In this regard, it can be argued that Hirst throughout his career has been within the ambit of the Oxford line of linguistic philosophy in which a residue of logical positivism can be found. Gerard Lum points out that: 'they [Hirst and Peters]… adopted the Oxford line that "getting clearer" *is* the priority and that the proper role of philosophy *is* precisely to be concerned with

the nature, purposes and presuppositions of 'first-order' educational practices (which is precisely the thesis Wilfred Carr challenges, as will be seen in Chapter 3).

Given a practice-oriented character of the philosophy of education as an academic discipline, it would be no accident that castigating theory-driven views like Hirst 1's as an 'overintellectual myth' (Hirst, 1996, p. 169) has earned a degree of popularity. Yet, as mentioned earlier, Hirst 2's formulation of the relationship between theory and practice still has its own set of problems. I want to highlight some difficulties in Hirst 2's views by drawing an analogy from Hilary Putnam's collapse-of-fact/value-dichotomy argument. I hope, thereby, that the relationship between theory and practice is to be better recognised, especially in the philosophical study of education.

I have repeatedly remarked that not only in Hirst 1's views but also in Hirst 2's is the distinction between the theoretical and the practical sharply drawn. For example, 'theoretical reason', Hirst 2 asserts, means 'the creation and use of conceptual schemes for the achievement of *propositional truths as abstracted from all non-cognitive needs and interests*' (Hirst, 1999, p. 129, my italics). From this premise, Hirst 2 concludes that: 'Theoretical knowledge and understanding is, I suggest, of its nature incapable of generating rational practices' (ibid.). If the antecedent is valid, Hirst 2's inference is probably valid—namely, the consequent is also valid. I concur with Hirst 2 insofar as what I have called 'foundationalism'—the idea that theoretical knowledge discovered or worked out by theoretical academic disciplines can 'provide the "material" from which practical knowledge can be built' (ibid.)—is tenuous. However, the proposition Hirst 2 sees as axiomatic is far from the truth, the one that the theoretical and the practical are sharply distinguished—from which Hirst 2 infers that the latter outweighs the former in (the study of) education and that their relationship is inert and indirect. The source of his misconception resides, I argue, in his acceptance of

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these "second-order" kind of questions' (Lum, 2009, p. 30, italics in original). This fundamental outlook towards philosophy has remained in Hirst 2's picture.

the above antecedent—the claim that theoretical reason means 'the creation and use of conceptual schemes for the achievement of propositional truths as abstracted from all non-cognitive needs and interests'.

Hirst 2 insists that the practical reasoning, knowledge and understanding inherent in practices should be prioritised over their theoretical counterparts which, in Hirst 1's view, were expected to guide rational actions in practice, prior to, and independently of, each practice. I basically agree with the idea that in many cases theoretical enquiry alone—in our day, scientific enquiry is the exemplar—cannot provide a concrete recipe for desirable practices in social practices such as education; and yet, I do not consent to the view that functioning reasoning underlying the theoretical and that underlying the practical are sharply cut off from each other. For, as long as underlying reasoning—whether in theory-construction or in practice itself—relies on the notion of 'good', 'justified', 'reasonable', etc, then, there does not exist a difference in kind between practical and theoretical reason. The point to be made here is that notions such as 'good', 'justified', 'reasonable' *cannot be specified or grasped by the idea of representations—representations in the sense of copies—of mind-independent things and phenomena*. Therefore, Hirst 2 is right to claim that the practical is not to be deduced from the theoretical; but he fails to acknowledge that theory also cannot be 'identified' or 'discovered' independently of human practices. To be sure, theory indeed concerns itself with representations of human mind-independent things and phenomena in a certain sense, and yet what kinds of theory we obtain have something to do with the ways in which we are engaged in such human mind-independent things and phenomena. As touched upon in Chapter 1, the plain fact that the objects and phenomena to be known by humans through, say, the natural sciences, are extra-psychological must not be confused with the unwarranted idea that the theories about those objects and phenomena are to be worked out independently of how we conduct our enquiry.[29] This means

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[29] This point is one of the key claims I want to make in this thesis. Thus, it shall be reiterated and sharpened throughout this thesis.

that the natural sciences, for example, are part of social practices, social practices to which many human beings have given credit in the course of *human* history. The moral to be drawn from the perspective I am urging is as follows: theory and practice are by nature inextricably imbricated and interrelated.

It is not only the natural sciences that have been forged and refined in human history. By appropriating Putnam's parlance, I want to highlight the sense in which such notions as 'good', 'justified', and 'reasonable' themselves, which are vital to both the practical and the theoretical, have also been *historically conditioned*. By 'historically conditioned' I mean a broad conception of *human flourishing*, including, as the term 'flourishing' indicates, a moral connotation. To put this in Putnam's words: 'cognitive values…are simply a part of our holistic conception of human flourishing' (Putnam, 1990, p. 139). Cognitive values—good, justified, reasonable, beautiful, coherent and many others—are surely not something which is out there prior to, or independently of, human engagement with the world. Given that these evaluative values are implicitly presupposed in doing the natural sciences,[30] for example, it makes no sense to cut off practice from theory. Once fully grasped, it turns out that *descriptions of facts* are *not* the representations of 'the way the world really is'. Rather, to put this *à la* Putnam, value judgements, descriptions of fact and human linguistic conventions are all *interpenetrating* (Putnam, 2002, p. 14). To employ the terms I introduced, descriptions of fact make sense only in *our* world, even though they are about the meaningless environment which human beings share with other living beings. To come to grips with this point, the following example Putnam uses may help:

> Wittgenstein says that "This chair is blue" (imagine he had a blue chair in front of him) corresponds to reality, but he can only say to what reality by using the sentence itself (Putnam, 1999, p. 197).

The same holds for, say, the seemingly trivial descriptions of fact: e.g. 'The

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[30] This point will be articulated with more focus in Chapter 5.

mountain is high' and 'She has brown hair'.[31]

This line of thinking rejects the views to which Hirst 2 still seems to cling, that the theoretical is specifically concerned with something which is out there universally and is not directly related to human social practices and thus that theoretical enquiry—the philosophy of education included—has only secondary and indirect relevance to the study of human practices such as education.

There is no problem with Hirst 2's view that there exist human practices which cannot be satisfactorily couched in propositional truths. Yet, it is misguided to infer from this that there are theoretical regions on the one hand and practical regions on the other and that their boundary is sharp. For, as has been echoed, theory and practice presuppose each other, as it were. Neither theory nor practice is prior to each other. That is, a practice figures only in the light of a theory (or a set of theories) that makes that practice count as that practice; a theory does not automatically spring to mind in some natural sense, independently of practices. The fact that this interplay between theory and practice is thoroughly deep-rooted and inclusive makes it artificial to attempt to illustrate this with a particular example in the limited space here. To do full justice to such an example would take extensive historical and ethnographic work if it were to be in keeping with my argument for the inextricable connection between theory and practice. Any practice (such as bird-watching, wine-tasting, teaching mathematics) more or less already draws upon relevant theories—theories in a broad sense—that bear on what that practice is. For example, the practice of observing the platypus in the presently acknowledged sense is not independent of the zoological theory that the platypus is a mammal, not a bird. The interdependence of theory and practice has reciprocally enriched our understanding of what the platypus is (and such

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[31] There are a number of technical details that need to be cleared up to properly appreciate the picture I am here suggesting. For example, it might be objected that this thread of argument gives an inkling that the above-mentioned notions—such as, 'good', 'justified' and 'reasonable'—are relative to each history that individual societies and communities respectively have. In each chapter that follow, I grapple with this kind of possible criticisms and misunderstandings offered in various ways. As for the charge of relativism or a thoroughgoing historicism, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 deal with them.

interrelations and such distinctions may on occasion have possibly produced systematic ignorance). What these mutual relations between theory and practice make room for is the possibility of, for instance, practical wisdom that goes well beyond a simple application of theory to practice.

It is perhaps helpful here to recall Kant's insight: the world has *no* language of its own. Thus, the question of what things in themselves really are is a tempting but empty question. For, in my terms, what becomes the content of our knowledge (in our world) draws on the tapestry of what exists independently of humans *and* human modes of understanding. This is by no means incompatible with the fact that our world's ontological aspects exist independently of human linguistic capacities or concepts. There is surely a temptation to suppose that objects exist 'naturally' and phenomena occur 'naturally'. Yet, behind this apparently trivial supposition, there are a myriad of interests, inferences and presuppositions that have almost nothing to do with the objects and phenomena to be observed. As Catherine Elgin poignantly claims, '[p]henomena do not dictate their own descriptions. We need to decide in what units they should be measured and in what terms they should be described' (Elgin, 2006, p. 204).

An analogy can be drawn to human practices. In order for practical reason, knowledge and understanding to make sense, humans' engagement with practices is the desideratum. Without human conceptual commitments, a practice never counts as a practice. To put it the other way round, even if we concede that practical reason, for example, is justified in practice itself, *this does not mean that practice justifies practical reason*. Nuanced attention is needed to grasp this. If we take the above Kantian dictum seriously, then it turns out that the part couched in an affirmative voice—e.g. 'practice justifies practical reason'—does not make any meaningful sense; by the same token, if the former part written in a passive voice—e.g. 'practical reason is justified in practice itself'—seems to express something meaningful, it is just because we (unconsciously) read this sentence by complementing an expression which is left out in the original sentence. The expression would be something like: *by human conception, language, cognition*

or intelligence, namely, by theory—theory in a broad sense. Viewed in this way, it is clear that, contrary to his official statement that 'the two [practical reason and theoretical reason] are necessarily interrelated in complex ways' (Hirst, 2008, p. 9), Hirst 2 does not pay due attention to the complexity where theory and practice are *ab initio* intertwined.

In other words, he appears not to realise the full implications of the point, that just as theory cannot be identified or discovered independently of human practices—i.e. theory *never* springs to mind from human mind-independent things or phenomena—, so practice does not figure 'in its own right', so to speak. Put another way, what Hirst 2 misses grasping is that theoretical knowledge and principles which he holds are established by academic disciplines are part of the products yielded by social practices. If we grant that a social practice is, as Hirst 2 himself defines it, 'a pattern of activity established *traditionally* or by deliberate *institution* that is engaged in for achieving the satisfaction of our needs and interests' (Hirst, 1999, p. 127, my italics), academic disciplines are nothing more or less than a species of social practice. Among other things, philosophy is a self-reflexive academic discipline which has acute awareness of the entangled relation between problem-finding and problem-solving. Besides, given that education, as I explicated in Chapter 1, is concerned with the way in which our world is shifting, there is good reason to think that the philosophy of education as a 'theoretical' academic discipline is, *contra* Hirst 2, in a position to have a *direct* relevance to what Hirst 2 sees as the primary aim of education—namely, a person's good life. For, a large task of the philosophy of education is to address the issue of how human modes of life are developing, which is loosely determined by a complex interaction between various forms of social practices. (As the chapters go on, sophistication of the argument for this thesis will increase.)

That Hirst 2 does not relinquish the sharp distinction between the theoretical and the practical is well illustrated in his following remarks:

As distinct from the achievement of successful practices, theoretical reason is

directed to the achievement of theoretical truths, of propositions expressing in detached, objective, spectatorial terms what is the case. To this end *concepts and propositions are developed solely in understanding and explaining our world in the pursuit of truth irrespective of any practical purposes.* Concepts are formed identifying objects and qualities of situations and events *independently of their significance for human needs or interest* other than those of the desire to understand and explain. This very *abstraction* from other practices is of the essence of theoretical reason and means that its achievements are in themselves incapable of generating successful practices of a different character. (Hirst, 1996, p. 171, my italics)

This quote, it seems, corroborates the fact that Hirst 2 is still captivated by Hirst 1's scheme in a certain respect, to the extent that enquiry concerned with theory and enquiry with practice are two radically different enterprises as well as the fact that all Hirst 2 strives to do is little more than to overturn the priority—from theory-based enquiry to practice-based enquiry. On Hirst 2's view, the importance of knowledge-acquisition based on theoretical forms of knowledge combined with individualism is replaced by that of the exposure to social practices with a view to preparing the way for a good life.

I do not object to the emphasis Hirst 2 places on a sort of 'socialisation'. Given the fact that human animals are born as part of the biological species and then become human beings through the acquisition of a sufficient range of meanings and a sufficient degree of sentience which constitute the ways we live in our world, the initiation of children into our world, which is from the outset social, is of vital importance. What is missing in Hirst 2's picture, I would argue, however, is the respect in which theoretical enquiry can *never* be developed irrespective of human practices, but rather theory reflects some central dimension of human practices. I am not saying that all practices, at the end of the day, will become describable or interpretable in the form of theoretical propositions. Instead, what I am urging is that when Hirst 2 asserts that practical reason is

justified in practice itself, such a justification presupposes something that has been shaped and honed by the entangled development of theory and practice in the course of human history. This is not a profound or esoteric insight at all. This is simply to claim that the practice relating to a chair, for example, requires us to know in advance 'what chairs look like, what we use them for, and what it is like to sit on one' (Putnam, 1995, p. 12), even though the practice of sitting on a chair is 'immediate' in the sense of arising from no conscious conceptual thought. To put it the other way round, a chair *per se* never talks voluntarily; namely, no chairs make sense without such (human) meanings and purposes imposed on chairs. There are two provisos to be noticed here. One is that I am not arguing that the human mind makes (the physical structure of) chairs—in short, I am not trying to reduce ontology to epistemology. The other is that meanings and purposes are not fixed unambiguously, but they can shift in accordance with the ways of our engagement with objects like chairs.[32]

In short: What is wrong with Hirst 2's views is that he has not abandoned the commitment to his earlier position in respect of 'forms of theoretical knowledge', while calling into doubt their relevance to the practical life. Fuelled by the conviction that academic disciplines concerned with theoretical truth and propositions do not have direct bearings on social practices like education, Hirst 2 has come to see the overall aim of education as initiation into 'forms of practices' in which a good life can be developed (Hirst, 1999, p 132). In this way, even in Hirst 2's conception, the dichotomy between academic disciplines and social practices is still in play. However, as I have reiterated, academic disciplines are a species of social practice, which have been forged and developed in accordance with the ways we human beings have conducted our particular mode of life in the course of history. To put it simply, Hirst 2 appears to miss acknowledging the essentially organic interrelation between theory and practice, which I have

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[32] The same, in principle, holds for non-artefacts such as trees and stars, albeit this is controversial. (This is very subtle because using the terms ,'trees' and 'stars', is already committed to a particular mode of categorisation.) This delicate issue shall be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 at some length.

attempted to elicit by recourse to Putnam's argument that fact, value and human (linguistic) convention are inextricably interpenetrating.

It seems that a growing consensus has been formed in the philosophy of education community, one that Hirst 1's views based upon what I term 'rationalism', 'foundationalism', individualism and a 'transcendental argument' are no longer satisfying. Nonetheless, it is open to discussion how, and to what extent, 'social' and 'practical' factors can be incorporated into philosophical arguments (on education). As the discussion in this chapter, I hope, has revealed, Hirst 2's alternative views also face an impasse. In order to further address the question of how, and to what extent, 'social' and 'practical' factors can, or cannot, be incorporated into philosophical discussions on education issues, then, I want to call attention to the arguments by Wilfred Carr and Harvey Siegel. My intention is not to show my loyalty to either of their views; but rather that a critical analysis of these two thinkers will help to articulate the way forward and help us indicate a direction in which what I call the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge could adequately be addressed within philosophy of education discourse. Carr and Siegel react to the line set by Hirst 2 in contrastive ways: in a sense, Carr, in my view, radically extends the Hirstian line—a social and practical shift within philosophy of education discourse in the guise of a reinvigorated awareness of Aristotelian practical philosophy—in a way that is clearly beyond Hirst's own intention; Siegel, on the other hand, is determined to defend a traditional epistemology with its base in individualism and universalism, almost as if to say that the shift from Hirst 1 to Hirst 2 has had little impact on the underpinnings of the Enlightenment project of education. The next two chapters are devoted to looking closely at Carr's and Siegel's views respectively.

Chapter 3

A Radical Version of the Social and Practical Focus Emergent within Recent Philosophy of Education Discourse: The Case of Wilfred Carr

In the preceding chapter, I described the shifting intellectual contexts surrounding the epistemological discussions in the philosophy of education community, through analysing Paul Hirst's dramatic shift in his views on knowledge and education. That shift has been in tandem with a growing suspicion of what I called in Chapter 2 'rationalism', 'foundationalism', individualism and a 'transcendental argument'. I basically agree with the now prevailing doubt about these four ideas, insofar as they are interpreted in the way I have argued. As reiterated in the previous chapter, by 'rationalism' I mean the thesis that purely theoretical knowledge, understanding and reasoning are worked out by reason prior to, and independently of, human practices; by 'foundationalism' I mean the view that, conceived in the above rationalist lines, theory is inevitably taken to be fundamental to practice—i.e. practical issues are to be tackled through application of theory; individualism is the idea that sets the Cartesian subject as the threshold of enquiry (in the philosophy of education); and by a 'transcendental argument' I mean an argument which is in search of logical and necessary conditions of the possession or employment of some kind of knowledge for the human's good life.

Fuelled by his disillusion with these four ideas which he assumes have haunted and impaired philosophy of education discourse, Hirst 2—as, for the sake of simplicity, I have called the later Hirst—has striven to raise awareness of the need of a social and practical turn of the discourse. In criticism of the above four ideas, I stand in line with Hirst 2 to a large extent, and yet I stand in conflict with a certain essential feature of Hirst 2's thread of thought. The pivot of my disagreement with Hirst 2's views lies in the fact that, in both Hirst 1's and Hirst

2's schemes, the demarcation line between theory and practice is sharply drawn and fixed. Therefore, Hirst 2's suggestion that the primacy of the theoretical over the practical should be reversed, in my view, does not exorcise the familiar anxiety, the anxiety over whether a *theoretical* discipline of the philosophy of education can bear on a social *practice* of education. This thesis proceeds in the direction in which the dividing line between the theoretical and the practical is to be blurred. However, it is far from clear what it exactly means to blur the distinction between them. This, in an important sense, is the central focus of this thesis.

To explore this theme, I will look at Wilfred Carr's discourse in this chapter and Harvey Siegel's in the next. For their reactions to the Hirstian line—an increasing awareness of the social and practical elements within philosophy of education discourse—are in a stark contrast to each other's. As already alluded to, my view is at odds with both of their views (for different reasons). The aim of this chapter as well as the next is therefore to bring to the surface a direction which I think is desirable through a critique of Carr's and Siegel's views. This objective will be approached by mainly eliciting how and where they begin to proceed in the wrong direction with reference to what I term the 'social' and 'pragmatic' dimensions of human knowledge.

Wilfred Carr is treated in this thesis as a theorist who radically extends the picture Hirst 2 draws. As will be looked at below, there is a debate between Hirst and Carr over such issues as the theory-practice issue, the role of the philosophy of education and the interpretation of practical philosophy. Nevertheless, I find a certain affinity identified in their thought, although I admit that they would be unwilling to welcome the existence of such a purported affinity. Carr's line of thinking, in my view, however, can be interpreted as an extension of the view suggested by Hirst 2 through taking social and practical aspects of knowledge further forward. Moreover, it is tempting to say that Carr gives credit to a sort of relativism by calling into question the conventional components of traditional epistemology such as abstract rationality and objective knowledge. Despite Hirst's abhorrence of relativism, it is true that a kind of relativistic view—or, at least,

elements implicitly associated with it—could be detected in Hirst 2's discourse to the extent that he shifts his focus from theoretical reason to practical reason which he holds is justified only in each practice itself. Even though Hirst feels frustrated with Carr's arguments, the source of this frustration originates, I would argue, in his own discourse in the development of his later view—i.e. in Hirst 2's picture, the theme of how the theoretical bears a tangled relation to the practical is no more fully examined than in Hirst 1's picture. By focusing on Carr's discourse that takes Hirst 2's line of thought to its extreme, this chapter, it can be said, explains how the Hirstian line might potentially be developed.

3-1. Carr's Negative Discourse:
A Severe Attack on Foundationalist Epistemology-Centred Philosophy

Like Hirst 2, Wilfred Carr, albeit in a somewhat different manner, sees the four ideas in question as hopeless: 'rationalism', 'foundationalism', individualism and a 'transcendental argument'. The way he denies these ideas and proposes a new mode of enquiry into education constitutes the basic thrust of his views. This section is, therefore, concerned with the former negative insistence—i.e. with clarifying the way in which Carr casts doubt on the above ideas, all of which Carr groups as the foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse (which is nearly identical with what is termed 'First Philosophy' in some later chapters, especially in Chapter 5); and the next section is concerned with the latter affirmative insistence—i.e. with illustrating and scrutinising what Carr's prescription is and how it is different from Hirst 2's.

To begin with, it should be borne in mind that Carr shares Hirst 2's dissatisfaction with Hirst 1's views. However, as soon as he places Hirst 1's views in his own terms, Carr's confused argument begins to appear. That is, the whole picture of Hirst 1's views is interpreted by Carr sometimes as 'epistemologically-centred philosophy' (Carr, 2004, p. 63) and sometimes as 'theoretical philosophy' as a whole (Hirst and Carr, 2005, p. 622). To put it

another way, Carr uses the term 'theoretical philosophy' in *two* ways, both of which he rejects: as (a) the approach identical to the above-mentioned 'foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy' and as (b) the approach that contrasts with (his understanding of) 'practical philosophy'. In principle, of course, it is possible to use the term 'theoretical philosophy' in either way, as long as it is defined clearly enough. Still, it would be a mistake to see the two uses of the term as identical, even if one is to repudiate both uses. Some confusion in Carr's arguments lies, in my view, in his insensibility to the distinction between them, as will be seen below.

Broadly speaking, Carr's whole argument runs as follows: 'educational theory', which the contemporary philosophy of education has been keen to work out, has been inspired and obsessed by 'theoretical philosophy' of version (a); but, it transpires that 'theoretical philosophy' of version (a) is now at a standstill; and thus 'theoretical philosophy' of version (a)-based philosophy of education should be transformed into 'practical philosophy' that draws much on Aristotelian notions such as 'practical reason'. What is striking is that Carr's argument for this sort of practical philosophy sounds as if there is little room for *any* theoretical form of enquiry to occupy. That is, 'practical philosophy' here appears to be seen as the opposite concept of 'theoretical philosophy' of version (b). Obviously, it is a leap of logic to extend the sphere of 'theoretical philosophy' of version (a) to (b). On Carr's account, because 'modernity' unduly changed the whole character of theory, it is not contradictory to regard rational reflection in pre-modern practical philosophy as irrelevant to theory in the modern sense. However, his view (and Hirst 2's view alike) lacks attention to the tangled relationship between theory and practice, the relationship that enables us to live as though we stood both within and outside our particular social practices at one and the same time. Much of Carr's argument for the social and practical dimensions of knowledge and education has plausibility only if this deeply entangled relationship is properly appreciated. This essentially interwoven relationship between theory and practice is precisely what I try to articulate by what might be called the 'social' and

'pragmatic' dimensions of human knowledge—these dimensions, as will be made explicit, are of an essentially educational nature.

Before proceeding to spell out Carr's argument with a finer brush, I want to remind the reader of the two main points that merit mention: one is his negative discourse that criticises modern Enlightenment epistemology which he asserts has engrossed and shaped the fundamental aspiration of the philosophy of education to form an 'educational theory'; the other is his affirmative discourse that values pre-modern Aristotelian practical philosophy and which suggests transforming the contemporary enterprise of the philosophy of education into a new form of practical philosophy based on Carr's interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy. I will begin with the former, negative discourse—i.e. Carr's negation of 'theoretical philosophy' of version (a): foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy.

By 'epistemologically-centred philosophy' Carr means the kind of philosophy which 'was founded primarily...on Descartes' search for the *a priori foundations* on which *certain knowledge* could be erected' (Carr, 2004, p. 63, my italics). Carr goes on to say, drawing on Richard Rorty's explication of the history of philosophy, that it is Kant who crucially formed and promoted this strand:

> [W]hat was to play a crucial role in shaping the academic culture of nineteenth and twentieth century modernity was Immanuel Kant's attempt to provide the philosophical foundations for universal principles of rational justification that are independent of *particular historical, social or cultural circumstances* and that are grounded in the capacity of enlightened human reason to achieve objectivity and truth. (Carr, 2006, p. 143, my italics)

It is against this background originating in Descartes and promoted by (neo-) Kantian thinkers that Carr's criticism comes into focus. What underlies the background is precisely what Carr calls 'foundationalist discourse'.[33] His critical

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[33] Here again, 'foundationalism', 'foundationalist discourse' and similar expressions, are used in a much broader sense than in the original context of epistemic justification of propositional

perspective is clearly shown in the following quote:

It is quite bearable to give up on the notion of certainty espoused in the Cartesian view of rationality, or on the idea that there are logical 'foundations' to which philosophical appeal can be made, or on the idea that a *positive* science or philosophy can yield human progress... (Carr and Kemmis, 2005, p. 354, italics in original)

Carr rejects foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy, which, to borrow a phrase from Rorty, appreciates the 'Kantian need for an over-arching permanent matrix within which to "place" and criticize past and future inquiry'[34] (Rorty, 1980, p. 266). In other words, Carr, with Rorty, is dismissive of crediting philosophy with the status of the 'queen of the sciences', or 'First Philosophy'.[35] For Carr, as for Rorty, philosophy does not have the burden of serving as a foundation for anything else. Criticism of the search for such an 'Archimedian point'—whose origin is often ascribed to Descartes' project and which is said to have been the kernel of modern philosophy—is now commonly accepted in the philosophical community.[36] However, there are variations abound in these arguments as to how and to what extent the components constituting the foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy—such as abstract rationality, theoretical justification, infallible certainty, theoretical reason, objective knowledge, universal truth, the *a priori*, etc—face difficulties. Carr's proposal is quite radical insofar as he suggests giving up on almost all such components of

knowledge.

[34] It is debatable whether this interpretation of Kant by Rorty is indeed Kant's actual views.

[35] I discuss this issue at length in Chapter 5.

[36] This does not mean, however, that criticism of it has started quite recently. On the contrary, Hegel, nearly 200 years ago, denounced the idea of such an Archimedian point—the point 'from which epistemology could judge all of our scientific, legal, moral, religious, etc. beliefs (and set up standards for all of the special subjects)' (Putnam, 1983, p. 229). As Hilary Putnam puts it, Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore—two of the central figures of analytical philosophy in its formative period—'ignored these strictures of Hegel (as they ignored Kant), and revived "foundationalist epistemology"' (ibid, pp. 229-30).

Enlightenment epistemology.[37]

Carr has come to question the 'foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy' on similar grounds to those on which Hirst 2 relies—the grounds I sketched in 2-2 by reference to Joseph Dunne's articulation. According to Carr's understanding, 'modern reason' has its roots in the 17th-century Scientific Revolution and has come to power as the only model that can deserve the *rational* status and claim the *detached third-person* perspective as well as *objectivity* in the modern Western world and the societies influenced by it. However, the Enlightenment values and ideals emanating in this way have long ruled out 'practical reason' which had admittedly existed in the pre-modern, namely, Aristotelian worldview. Given this, if it turns out that 'modern reason' can no longer pretend that it dispenses with 'practical reason', then, Carr contends, it follows that the legitimacy of Enlightenment values and ideals, especially of foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse that has been expected to provide the basis for them, would not be undeniably absolute. For the standards of Enlightenment rationality can mask other kinds of rationality.

Despite their congruence in terms of a call towards a reinvigoration of Aristotelian practical philosophy, it is only up to this point that Hirst 2 and Carr go in tandem. Their different prescriptions for the drawbacks to foundationalist epistemology-centred enquiry take them along different paths in their respective views. While Hirst 2's point is that theory cannot exhaustively account for practice and so that the primacy of the theoretical to the practical should be reversed in considering human practices like education, he does not go so far as to

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[37] However, care is needed here. For Carr does not intend to abandon all Enlightenment values and ideals. It is 'the Enlightenment's universal, *a priori* and absolutist conception of reason' (Carr, 1995, p. 80) that he calls into question. This kind of reason corresponds to what I in Chapter 2 described as 'modern reason' in the overview of Dunne's explanation. In contrast, Carr claims that 'emancipatory ideals' inherent in the Enlightenment narrative are still worthy of being vindicated (ibid, p. 81). As will be discussed at length in Chapter 5, in this regard too, Carr's view runs along with Richard Rorty's, which tries to retain Enlightenment liberalism while dropping Enlightenment rationalism. What Carr and Rorty have in common is the aspiration to dissuade people from clinging to timeless and ahistorical epistemology-centred philosophy and instead draw their attention straight to ongoing human practices—e.g. politics, democracy and actual education practices.

feel the need to rethink the nature of theory and practice; on the other hand, Carr goes further in questioning the nature of theory itself by *relativising* the above-mentioned components of foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse to social, cultural, historical (and various other) *contexts*. To put this in a more concrete way, whereas Hirst 2 considers that theoretical enquiry, albeit as a subsidiary activity in education, still has some room, Carr judges Hirst 2's view to be 'outmoded' by emphasising that;

> Questions of 'truth', 'rational validity', 'objective knowledge', 'theoretical justification' or 'conceptual clarification' that Hirst assumes can be answered through the exercise of theoretical reason, are inextricable from the *parochial social and historical contexts* in which they are posed and addressed. (Hirst and Carr, 2005, p. 623, my italics)

This passage encapsulates the basic thrust of Carr's views—which is at odds with modern, Enlightenment, foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse but rather which is on a par with so-called 'post-modernism', if post-modernism is interpreted as follows: a characteristic feature of post-modernism is 'to display a profound scepticism towards the fundamental presuppositions concerning rationality, knowledge and truth which constitute the epistemological foundations on which analytical philosophy of education has been erected' (Carr, 2005a, p. 6).

As noted, Carr stresses that the Enlightenment values and ideals stemmed from *a particular, contingent historical context*. In the same fashion, Carr tries to make us aware that 'educational theory' in the present sense and the philosophy of education as a distinct academic discipline (namely, APE) also appeared from the soil cultivated by such Enlightenment values and ideals; in a nutshell, what we now call 'educational theory' is, on Carr's view, merely a contingent product of modernity, especially of 'the foundationalist discourse of late nineteenth and early twentieth century modernity' (Carr, 2006, p. 136). Key to understanding Carr's discourse is his firm belief that we live in a *post-modern* world insofar as the basic

conditions underlying the modern Enlightenment period, in Carr's observation, have come to lose much of their force.

The recognition that the Enlightenment values and ideals, which worship and promote the detached third-person perspective—i.e. objectivity—, are merely historically *contingent* products leads, Carr maintains, towards the thesis that objectivity-oriented enquiry highly regarded in the Enlightenment culture is, from the outset, self-contradictory. For such enquiry unduly presupposes a transcendental and universal perspective as something that may generate the particularities and contingencies of human affairs but not vice versa. There is no good reason, in Carr's view, that particular values and ideals prevailing in the Western modern Enlightenment era still continue to be seen as the only standard by which to guide society and education in this 'post-modern' era. His conclusion, then, is that the present understanding of education and the philosophy of education, based on the Enlightenment project, should come under review and then be abandoned, inasmuch as such underlying conditions that have shaped foundationalist epistemology-centred enquiry have lost most of their force. To put this in Carr's own words:

> I am …going to argue that *no such authoritative, external and independent source exists* and hence that educational theory is nothing other than the name we give to the various *futile* attempts that have been made over the last hundred years to stand outside practice and that *we should now bring the whole educational theory enterprise to a dignified end.* (Carr, 2006, p. 137, my italics)

If this death sentence is valid, then, on Carr's view, two conventional but still prevailing questions in the sphere of the philosophy of education concomitantly go astray. That is, the following questions no longer need to be asked, or, accordingly, to be answered: (i) 'What is the epistemological basis of educational theory?'; and (ii) 'How does educational theory relate to educational practice?'

(Carr, 2006, p. 139)

Carr's challenge to foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse is not news to the philosophical community and its neighbouring fields. For example, as seen in Chapter 2, Hirst 2 in a different style puts into doubt the underlying components of such a discourse—in the case of Hirst 2, I have called them 'rationalism', 'foundationalism', individualism and a 'transcendental argument'. Today, the central thrust of their suspicion of foundationalist discourse is reflected among much of the work of philosophy (of education) in the form of, say, the adoption of fallibilism and the denial of a God's eye point of view. It goes without saying that different theorists incorporate such critical elements differently into their discussions. In the case of Carr, he summarises such a critical position from which to attack foundationalist discourse as 'postfoundationalism'—whose advocates, according to Carr's categorisation, range from Heidegger and Gadamer to Foucault and Lyotard; from Wittgenstein to Derrida; from Quine to Rorty and Putnam; and from Kuhn to Eagleton. As touched on earlier, from among a variety of post-foundationalist discourse, Carr favours a resurrection of Aristotelian practical philosophy as Hirst 2 does (although it may be questionable to see Carr's views as Aristotelian, as shall be discussed in the remainder of this chapter). When put in the context of the philosophy of education, his interpretation of such practical philosophy takes a startling shape: that is, 'education without theory'. It is high time now that we moved on to Carr's affirmative contention.

3-2. Carr's Affirmative Discourse: Education without Theory

In the previous section, I provided an overview of the way Carr questions the Enlightenment project-driven discourse, which can be called 'foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse'. The target Carr levels at, it was argued there, overlaps with that which Hirst 2 calls into question, albeit they employ different locutions. Such a difference in their parlance reflects the difference of reasons they allocate to their criticisms of 'foundationalist discourse'. The difference

becomes most conspicuous when we cast an eye on their alternative views to foundationalist epistemology-centred enquiry. This section, therefore, aims to elucidate Carr's affirmative discourse rather than his negative discourse. His affirmative discourse, like Hirst 2's, draws attention to Aristotelian practical philosophy, but their contestations differ from each other radically. As I pointed out in 2-3, Hirst 2's alternative is unsatisfying insofar as it still operates with a false dichotomy between theory and practice and he strives to surmount the impasse by simply reversing the priority of the theoretical over the practical. In short: Hirst 2 fails to grasp dynamic and interlocking skeins of theory and practice to the extent that he leaves the conventional view on the nature of theory and practice as it is. On the other hand, Carr goes so far as to argue that 'theory' is merely a red herring and so simply of no use in the consideration of human practices like education. Because practice is justified internally, Carr claims, there is no room for 'theory' to intrude. What is meant by 'theory' when Carr makes this point? As alluded to at the beginning of 3-1, I suspect that he interchangeably uses 'theoretical philosophy' of version (a)—where theory is designated in foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse and that of version (b)—theory of any kind. If Carr unduly conflates these different uses of the same term, that will undermine the plausibility of his alternative view—i.e. 'education without theory'. This section as well as the next shall ascertain his conflation.

As has been repeated thus far, Carr's argument runs as follows: The premises of 'epistemologically oriented philosophy' are now open to doubt, and accordingly 'foundationalist discourse' aimed at basing other knowledge and practices on such underlying infallible foundations has reached an impasse in the post-modern era. This critique of 'foundationalist discourse' is made from the point of view of what he calls 'postfoundationalism'. Carr sets about formulating the crux of post-foundationalism as '[showing] how any idea that we can occupy a position outside of history and culture is a myth—that we are *always interpretively situated* within, and constrained by, the particular discourses learned and acquired in becoming a participant in a historical culture' (Carr, 2006, p. 146,

my italics). Looked at from this perspective, it turns out, he argues, that 'educational theory' is merely a contingent product of modernity, which is bound by a set of particular conditions and constraints rather than free from them. Carr illustrates this point:

> [E]ducational theory's aspiration to govern practice from the neutral perspective of an abiding general rationality is a futile aspiration because the norms, rules and conventions governing its own practice are themselves local rather than general, contextual rather than abstract and derive from educational theory's own contingent history. From this perspective, educational theory cannot *inform* practice because it is itself a *form* of practice. (Carr, 2006, p. 147, italics in original)

On Carr's view, thus, the preoccupation with 'educational theory' within contemporary philosophy of education is of little service to inform educational practices to which it is desperate to contribute. One consequence of this, Carr argues, is a syndrome in which the philosophy of education as 'an autonomous sub-area within academic philosophy' (Carr, 2004, p. 60) has resulted in the insulation of philosophy from education and vice versa, in the sense that the theory-seeking/constructing enterprise required in scholarship is of very little help to those to whom the philosophy of education is primarily to be directed. In other words, the preoccupation with 'educational theory' has caused a now widely felt sense that philosophy lacks the appropriate impact on educational practitioners and education policies (Carr, 2004, p. 55).[38] As has already been noted, Carr judges this sort of absorption in 'educational theory' to be misguided, by an appeal to post-foundationalism. Carr includes as proponents of post-foundationalism many thinkers as diverse as Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Quine,

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[38] Rorty, as shall be discussed at length, also warns against the over-philosophic attitude in addressing educational issues. He asserts: 'I am dubious about the relevance of philosophy to education, for the same reason that I am dubious about the relevance of philosophy to politics' (Rorty, 1990, p. 41).

Kuhn, Rorty, Derrida, Foucault and others. Even if their arguments converge in terms of criticising foundationalist discourse, however, their prescriptions for it diverge. Among those views, it is in a resurrection of Aristotelian practical philosophy that Carr finds potential.

Carr puts this line of thought forward by drawing on, amongst others, MacIntyre and Rorty[39]—both of whom, despite the differences in their insistence, were originally trained in the analytical philosophy community and afterwards have striven to move beyond the framework; and on Gadamer and Habermas—both of whose work, Carr says, has clear affinities with the work of such 'post-analytical' philosophers as MacIntyre and Rorty. Inspired by these philosophers, Carr denounces 'modernity', for the reason that its hegemony has obscured *the Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy* in the Western intellectual world, the tradition which, in Carr's picture, is precisely what should be revived in order to surmount the difficulty of insulating 'theory' (e.g. the present philosophy of education) from 'practice' (e.g. actual educational practices). Carr expounds this as follows:

> ...[T]he period of 'modernity'...has its roots in the 16th century and was, in part, facilitated by the demise and eventual collapse of the Aristotelian tradition of 'practical philosophy', the classical mode of inquiry that enabled practitioners to reflect philosophically on the inadequacies of the understanding of how to conduct their practice supplied by the prevailing culture supplies [*sic*]. (Carr, 2005b, p. 340)

The last three lines of this quote reveal why Carr pays attention to Aristotelian practical philosophy. As echoed, Carr's dissatisfaction with the present concept of 'educational theory' is based on his view that it is orientated towards an ahistorical, transcendental perspective across cultures and contexts. The resulting insulation of (theoretical) philosophy from (practical) education motivates Carr to

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[39] Obviously, the basic thrust of Rorty's views is not Aristotelian, though.

reinvigorate a sound relationship between philosophy and education by casting light on a narrative which covers many aspects neglected within the framework of analytical philosophy of education. In this way, Carr brings Aristotelian practical philosophy into sharp focus.

Education without Theory

The thread of argument so far is not very unusual in the contemporary philosophy of education and, broadly speaking, Hirst 2 is on a similar track. The conclusion Carr draws from this line of argument, however, involves a quite radical demand that the philosophy of education should take a new shape as an academic discipline in the 'post-analytical' culture where the foundationalist educational theory project is dysfunctional. The kernel of this view is specifically instantiated in the thesis which he calls 'education without theory', in which 'theory' is a red herring and thus is to be abandoned. To make better sense of what Carr says by 'education without theory', it may be helpful to compare this idea with Hirst 2's interpretation of Aristotelian practical philosophy.

In proposing his version of a 'post-analytic philosophy of education'—i.e. 'education without theory'—Carr seems, as Hirst 2 points out, to offer an unprecedented form of philosophy of education. This means that it will willy-nilly take an essentially different form from academic philosophy as well as from the conventional analytical philosophy of education which is part of the former. Contaminated by a philosophical culture, in such traditional academic domains, '*non-theoretical forms of reflective philosophy* have been discarded' (Carr, 2004, p. 67, my italics). However, for Carr, various kinds of enterprise which attempt to succeed the analytical philosophy of education—Hirst 2's version included—are far from fruitful. This is because such a 'post-analytic philosophy of education still conceives of its relationship to education as one of offering a detached theoretical commentary upon the activities and judgements of educational policy makers and practitioners' (Carr, 2004, p. 67). In other words, what underpins Carr's argument is the conviction that the desirable post-analytical philosophy of

education must not be infected by a 'culture of philosophy'[40] (ibid.). Those appreciating Aristotelian practical philosophy are critical of 'epistemologically oriented philosophy' on the grounds that, in such a theory-oriented scheme, theory and practice are regarded as two substantially separate entities and the latter comes into play only through the guide of the former. Aware of this defect, Hirst 2 makes an attempt to overturn their priority. On the other hand, Carr goes so far as to abandon the former, theory, not least because theory is itself a form of practice and practice is justified internally. That is, once it is fully recognised that a practice is justified in the self-conclusive ongoing practice itself, it then follows, Carr asserts, that there is no room that 'theory' occupies either inside or outside of the practice. For, it is *unnecessary* for theory to occupy a position inside practice; and it is *impossible* to occupy a position outside of it.[41] Remember that, while Hirst 2 also accepts that practice is justified internally, he still allows for some room for theoretical philosophy of version (a)—where 'theory' is similar to 'theory' used in epistemology-centred philosophy. In Hirst 2's picture, theory is still accorded a 'second-order' role of critical reflection on the nature, purpose and presuppositions of 'first-order' educational practices. In contrast, Carr argues that it is impossible to provide 'theory' with such a 'second-order' status, insofar as giving such a status to theory ignores specific, social, cultural, historical and other contexts that make 'theory' count. That is, on Carr's view, since it is impossible to take an external vantage point that transcends any contexts and factors, a call for such a perspective—this is the very attempt that has haunted the modern theory-seeking project of foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy—should be abandoned.

The full recognition that seeking such a vantage point in the form of a

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[40] This view is obviously similar to Rorty's view on the shape of future philosophy, although Rorty rejects any attempt to create a successor discipline to the conventional epistemology-oriented philosophy. I will take up this issue in 5-3.

[41] The same logic runs here as in his argument seen in 3-1 that abstract, universal principles that 'modern reason' worships cannot be pursued, independently of social, cultural, historical and various other contexts in which those would-be principles have been contrived and developed.

theory-searching project is futile, Carr goes on to claim, leads to a re-awakening of Aristotelian practical philosophy, which was diminished by the emergence of 'modern rationality'. Aristotelian practical philosophy is, in Carr's interpretation, an inward-looking enquiry that makes us aware that practices are *internally* justified, without recourse to an external, namely, theoretical, vantage point. He says that: practical philosophy 'aimed to develop and improve the kind of 'context-based' practical reasoning that was employed in the conduct of a wide range of morally informed human activities' (Carr, 2004, p. 61). According to Carr's account, this and only this kind of practical philosophy can justifiably cope with the local, historical and contextual character of existing norms, rules and constraints, where the only kind of justification available is 'practical justification' (Carr, 2006, p. 155).

I have laid out Carr's affirmative insistence—a re-awakening of Aristotelian practical philosophy that never has 'the aspiration to create a body of educational theory that can inform and guide educational practice' (Carr, 2006, p. 155); but instead which 'enables each generation of practitioners to make progress in achieving excellence in their practice and, by so doing, ensure that the tradition constitutive of their practice continues to develop and evolve' (Carr, 2004, p. 63). Is it really the case, however, that his understanding of practical philosophy succeeds in obliterating only the kind of theory in foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse without undermining the essence of more inclusive sense of 'theory'—theory which, in conjunction with practice, enables us to live as though we stood both within and outside our concrete social practices at one and the same time? My sense is a negative one. I will say more about this in the remaining part of this section.

One certain thing in Carr's argument is that the new form of the philosophy of education he is suggesting no longer requires theory or philosophy in the usual sense. In this respect, his philosophy of education is in line with 'a

'dephilosophised' or 'postphilosophical' educational strategy'[42] (Carr, 1995, p. 89). As already noted, Carr repudiates the second-order character of theory and sees no such a double-stratified form in Aristotelian practical philosophy. But it is precisely this point to which Hirst raises an objection:

> [Carr] seems at times to be saying that the practical discourse of education is in itself, of its own nature, a new form of philosophical discourse. But why is such practical discourse some form of philosophy at all when it is generated in practical activity? (Hirst and Carr, 2005, p. 619)

For Hirst, who preserves the clear distinction between theory and practice in terms of their role, Carr's insistence makes no coherent sense at all—the insistence that practical philosophy no longer requires theory. In other words, practical philosophy in Carr's sense seems to Hirst 2 to be simply self-contradictory, because practice and philosophy—an exemplifying activity concerned with theory—cannot be dissolved into one form. Indeed, Hirst 2 admits that practical reason, which is markedly distinguishable from theoretical reason, is justified in practice itself. However, as discussed in 2-3, the view Hirst 2 offers, which I think is problematic, is an unnecessarily hierarchical one: While the practical—e.g. practical reason—is provided with the prior importance as something which is self-structured 'in its own merits', the theoretical is left with the secondary significance as something which bears only indirect relevance to the development of human practices like education, where it just helps to study the 'framework' in which the nature, purpose and presuppositions of ongoing human practices are embedded. As has been looked at, Carr negates this kind of theory, on the grounds that studying such a framework as such is embedded in various sorts of particular

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[42] As regards the issue of the anti-philosophy movement, more details will be looked at in 5-3 in relation to Rorty's slogan of 'the end of epistemology'. Needless to say, the attitude of asking for a change in our whole style of thought—from theory-construction aimed at formulating systematic philosophical doctrines to disenchanting therapy based on seeing ongoing practice—is traced back to the later Wittgenstein.

contexts—such as social, cultural and historical factors—, and thus that it is impossible to conduct such an 'external' enquiry that needs a perspective from outside the realm of actual practices. This is the heart of his 'education without theory', as I understand it. Carr's argument may be *prima facie* more compelling than Hirst 2's to the extent that Carr determinedly puts an end to 'theory' of the sort to which Hirst 2 still seems to cling while showing an aspiration towards 'practical'-aspect-based philosophy of education.

To use the term I introduced, I appreciate the point of which Carr raises awareness that it is never possible in o*ur* world to wipe away the legacy of history—the legacy that has been embodied and repositted in tradition and language. However, Carr's discourse also faces difficulties, difficulties of the same kind that Hirst 2 confronts when claiming that practical reason is justified in practice itself. In a similar way, Carr argues that 'practical justification is the only kind there is' (Carr, 2006, p. 155). It would suffice to recall the argument I offered in pointing to the inadequacy of Hirst 2's view on this issue in 2-3: Practice has no language of its own and thus the statement—'practical reason is justified in practice itself'—is slightly misleading. The misleadingness becomes clearer when we try to rewrite this sentence in active voices. One option would be: 'Practice justifies practical reason'. Yet, as noted, practice has no language of its own—which is a simple corollary to Kant's insight that the world has no language of its own. As I explained in the previous chapters, humans' engagement with the world makes the world *our* world. The point here is that it is misguided to ask what the world as such is by bracketing our world embedded with human conceptual meanings and our biological perspectives. For our world is a *bona fide* world behind which there is no such a thing as 'the world as it really is'.[43] In other words, just as it is fallacious to suppose that we can talk about 'things in themselves' without special regard to human engagement with them—not because

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[43] Immediately some philosophical questions would arise: e.g. 'Is the world relative to conceptual schemes?'; 'Does the mind constitute the world?' I do not concur with the tenuous idea that a human conceptual scheme or the mind makes the material world. I will delve deeper into this issue in some following chapters, especially in Chapter 4.

there exists nothing without human observers, but because it simply makes no sense to consider 'how things are' without any human conceptual content[44]—, so it is erroneous to suppose that we can talk about 'practices in themselves' without reference to conceptual content 'inherent' in experiencing those practices. In brief, assuming something like a literally 'intrinsic' property in practices without any consideration of human historical commitments to those practices is going in the wrong direction. Therefore, I would somewhat provocatively rewrite the above sentence in question in the following way: 'Theory justifies practical reason and practice'. Note, however, that it should not be assumed that this justification is one-sidedly applicable. This is to indicate that theory, practice and practical reason are from the outset *interpenetrated*. This essentially interdependent relation between theory and practice is precisely what both Hirst 2 and Carr fail to acknowledge. To repeat the point I emphasised in Chapter 2, theory surely concerns itself with representations of human mind-independent things and phenomena in some sense, and yet what kinds of theory we obtain are deeply entangled with the ways in which we are engaged in such human mind-independent things and phenomena—namely, practices. In short, what to know in our world and how we live there go in tandem. To put it the other way round, theory *never* springs to mind from human mind-independent things and phenomena. Thus, theory and practice go side by side with each other. Theory as I have striven to articulate is not a form of 'theoretical philosophy' of version (a)—that represented by foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy. But, nevertheless, in order for practices or practical reason to be justified, something worthy of the name of 'theory' is *necessary*.

Looked at this way, it turns out that Carr's claim that 'practical justification is the only kind there is' is misleading, insofar as this claim almost indicates that theory of *any kind* is unnecessary for practical justification. To put this another

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[44] My view here goes with John McDowell's insight that experiences and impressions—i.e. 'impingements by the world on our sensibility' (McDowell, 1996, p. 10)—*already* have conceptual content.

way, Carr's argument for practical justification is unsatisfying in the sense that *it cannot be mistaken.* What is crucial here is that saying that there is no way of justifying educational practices from outside while standing within them does *not* necessarily mean that (theoretical) reason and (theoretical) justification have no place within the educational practices. For, as echoed, theory, in conjunction with practice, enables us to live as if we stood both within and outside our particular social practices at one and the same time, namely, to live in *our* world where public standards and criteria of 'correctness' of meanings (unique to human beings) have been shaped in the course of human history. The problem with 'practical justification' of the sort Carr is urging is that it falls short of providing the ground upon which to judge which practice is better and which is bad from *within* practices in themselves—the ground for *objectivity*. Carr's argument gives an inkling that each practice has its own internal property in its own right. It may not be far from the truth to think that this view of Carr's is along the lines of relativism.

By interpreting Aristotle's discourse in a way that theory is dissolved into practice, Carr seeks to get rid of the second-order character of theory in (his) practical philosophy. On the other hand, Hirst 2 takes it that Aristotle, in rumination on practices, engaged in the same activity as one in which we—contemporary philosophers—are engaging, namely, the activity categorised as 'second-order'. Hirst 2 makes a remark that:

> All the philosophy that Aristotle did on matters of practice seems to me to be precisely what we in modern terms know of as academic, theoretical philosophy, and not something different in character and still waiting to be understood and developed that might best be distinguished as practical philosophy. (Hirst and Carr, 2005, p. 619)

Carr objects that in Aristotelian practical philosophy, unlike in other types of ancient Greek philosophy, philosophy was never given a second-order character

and that modern thought attenuated this desirable tradition, resulting in a sharp demarcation between theory from practice. However, it is difficult to resist the temptation to say that Aristotle was not doing 'practical philosophy' of the sort Carr is delineating; but, instead, what he was doing was *theoretical* reflection, even if it is open to debate whether what he was doing and what contemporary philosophers are doing under the name of philosophy are identical. In fact, Carr himself implicitly admits this elsewhere:

> The classical *theoretical* vindication of practical philosophy was, of course, provided by Aristotle whose *Nichomachean Ethics* articulated a range of conceptual distinctions that was to provide 'practical philosophy' with its major source of *theoretical* intelligibility and support. (Carr, 2004, p. 61, my italics)

Alas, Carr is admitting that Aristotle's work is *theoretical* (even though its claim is that theory and practice inhabit the same space).

As has been seen so far, Carr's aspiration for 'non-theoretical forms of reflective philosophy', as opposed to foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy, began to take a wrong path and has culminated in a thesis that requires purging all forms of theory from philosophical reflection. As emblematically found in the above quote, Carr's discourse is, in effect, filled with internal tensions. This is, in my observation, largely due to his extreme proposal to give up on the notions which he holds have taken central stage since the advent of modern philosophy—such as abstract rationality, theoretical justification, infallible certainty, theoretical reason, objective knowledge, truth once and for all, the *a priori*, a tight and rigorous species of formal logic, etc. There is no problem with his basic aspiration to raise awareness of the historical and contingent contexts that have placed these notions where they are. Still, there is little doubt that his argument seems to claim more than the aspiration. As a result of obliterating rather than reconfiguring those notions above, he clearly faces

difficulties in arguing for his own project. This is where his discourse stumbles; this is where some confusion in his discourse becomes explicit.[45] After writing over twenty pages, he closes the article, 'Education without Theory', by saying that:

> Whether or not my argument will have any significance for the future of educational theory is therefore a contingent question depending entirely on whether I have been successful in persuading educational theorists to take it seriously. I hope that I have. (Carr, 2006, p. 156)

I am afraid that he has not.

It is not difficult actually to identify the self-contradictory expressions that Carr uses to explain his own discourse. Harvey Siegel, for example, is one of the philosophers of education who criticise Carr's argument by debunking such self-stultifying locutions on Carr's part. This chapter has so far tried to clarify the inadequacy of Carr's argument—i.e. while 'theory' in foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse is moribund, 'theory' of another kind that is from the outset deeply tangled with practice and which constitutes, and is constrained by, the ways we look at the world *cannot* be dismissed. The last section deals with the extent to which and ways in which Carr's main theme has plausibility beyond a mere wordplay over whether the way Carr talks meets the requirement of what he argues for.

3-3. Some Reflections and Comments on Wilfred Carr

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[45] If Carr really requires relinquishing the notions in question, then it turns out that there are too many expressions which are not to be used. For example, a countless number of expressions, *ex hypothesi*, are not allowed to be used—e.g. 'it is true that', 'it follows that', 'the fact is that' and many others. However, Carr himself breaks this rule at times: for instance, he employs the expression, '*it is undoubtedly true that…*' (Carr, 2006, p. 149). If Carr is entirely to be faithful to the rule, he will be forced to choose his words very carefully in order to avoid even logical forms of argumentation!

In 3-1, I delineated Carr's negative argument: that foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy encounters predicaments in addressing human practices like education. Apart from the way he points to the inadequacy of such foundationalist discourse, I (with Hirst 2) am basically sympathetic to the crux of his argument that foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy in the conventional sense is of very little help in the study of education. In 3-2, I pursued Carr's affirmative argument: a reinvigorating of Aristotelian practical philosophy drives us not only to raise suspicion of the sharp divide between theory and practice but also to put a 'dignified end' to theory in the modern sense by foregrounding the internally self-justified character of practice. This contention is in contrast to Hirst 2's prescription for 'foundationalist discourse'—the prescription that, while the practical should take precedence over the theoretical, the basic nature of theory and practice is left as it is.

I have no quarrel with Carr's ideal itself—the ideal that by resurrecting the importance of practical reasoning, he expects 'each generation of practitioners to make progress in achieving excellence in their practice and, by so doing, ensure that the tradition constitutive of their practice continues to develop and evolve' (Carr, 2004, p. 63). However, as discussed in the foregoing section, it is doubtful whether Carr gets to grips with an intertwined and interpenetrating relationship between theory and practice. Therefore, even if his idealised aim—which expects practitioners to critically reflect on the practices in which they are engaged—is desirable, the way he argues for that aim is far from convincing, for 'critical reflection' presupposes some kind of theoretical stance. To repeat, the essence of my criticism is that just as it is erroneous to expect *pure theory* to inform human practices, so it is misleading to suppose that *(pure) practice* has internal properties independently of any kind of human (implicit) conceptual engagement.

As seen in 3-1, Carr makes his discourse look as if it suggests giving up on the notions that he believes have unnecessarily taken centre stage since the rise of modern philosophy—such as abstract rationality, theoretical justification, infallible certainty, theoretical reason, objective knowledge, absolute truth,

conceptual clarification, etc. Having prohibited reliance on these notions, it is hardly surprising that Carr seems to have difficulty articulating his own views. Notwithstanding his effort to do full justice to his own argument, quite often he faces occasions where he has no choice but to draw on the notions that he strives to repudiate.

To be sure, I have highlighted the sense in which we human beings live in not a meaningless environment but in *our* world which is always already filled with meanings intelligible only to us and those meanings are shifting. However, this is a long way from the unnerving thesis that there is almost nothing certain, rational, objective and foundational. Rather, given that we live as if we stood both within and outside our particular social practices at one and the same time, there is a crucial sense in which we actually draw on something which is virtually both immanent and transcendent—i.e. it operates both as a premise and the conclusion of the 'contentful' ways of living in our world. Whatever we may call it, the vitally important point to appreciate is that there is something like a basic network which enables us—concept-employing, self-conscious creatures—to live in our world—a network which may not be able to be specified but which *functions* as if it were *certain, rational, objective, true, a priori* and even *foundational* insofar as it cannot be intelligible to doubt it. As implied, what weaves this network is tradition and language (In my reading, Gadamer and McDowell are the representative embodiments of this idea).[46] This is part of my point to which I will recurrently advert in the following chapters, especially in Chapter 4. Looking here at the way Carr argues would serve as preliminaries to addressing the theme. By adducing some concrete examples, I want to make clear that Carr's negative argument above goes too far, either if the argument really requires abandoning such notions as rationality, universality and certainty or even if it simply claims that the relevance of these notions are constituted only in various particular contexts.

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[46] With respect to the relation between tradition and language, McDowell says that '[l]anguage serves as a repository of tradition' (McDowell, 1996, p. 184).

As shall be discussed at length in Chapter 4, Siegel's discourse is in sharp contrast to Carr's, in the sense that Siegel endorses what he calls 'Western, Modernist, Enlightenment epistemology'. This means that Siegel tries to defend what Carr tries to abandon. To begin with, it may be useful to draw attention to Siegel's critique of Carr's locution—locution, not content, because Siegel's aim is to demonstrate that the content of Carr's argument crumbles by clarifying the inconsistency of the way Carr argues.

Siegel, in castigating Carr, adopts his favourite strategy to criticise the incoherence of a variety of postmodernist thought. Siegel points out that Carr relies on the very presumptions that he himself purports to reject. For example, Carr uses the prohibited tactics, in declaring that 'rationality is *always relative* to time and place' (Siegel, 1998, p. 31). This assertion which Carr makes to claim that there is no transcendental rationality which is immune from any particular contexts, Siegel maintains, has to be *relative* in itself, if Carr is to do justice to every discourse including his own. That is: (i) if the very sentence is really relative, then the sentence does not deserve special attention; (ii) if the very sentence is not relative, then the sentence betrays its content, since the sentence is *absolute*.

I will take one more example. In face of Carr's remarks that objective truth is illusory and that all discourse is historically contingent,[47] Siegel objects that such statements on Carr's part themselves are proposed, rather naively, as 'objective' truth and 'ahistorical' discourse. In reply, Carr responds that he never exempts his own discourse from this rule or deploys this as some species of higher-order statement, but instead that what he is trying to do is simply to persuade people *rather than justify* the rightness of his discourse.[48] Such a

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[47] Numerous similar remarks are made by Carr: for instance, 'there are "no unmediated facts", "no neutral observation language", "no telling it as it is", "no view from nowhere", "no escaping politics"' (Carr, 2006, pp. 145-46). It can seem that Carr makes these statements from a perspective which ignores *particularities and contingencies* that Carr insists bind every statement.

[48] In the final paragraph of his 'Education without Theory', he says: "Although I have argued that it [the educational theory project] should [be abandoned], I have carefully resisted any suggestion that this is a recommendation that is 'justified by' or 'follows from' my argument"

position, Carr goes on to argue, is not contradictory precisely because 'postfoundationalism is not an epistemological thesis that "rejects the possibility of objective knowledge" but an explanatory thesis about how objective knowledge emerges' (Carr, 2006, p. 151). In the literature in a wide range of disciplines including education studies, it may be a platitude to claim, as this contention of Carr's does, that it is impossible to have objective knowledge by virtue of various kinds of 'biased' factors and 'interests'—such as power and class—which have affected and directed our perception of knowledge. However, this line of argument has a tendency to miss one important point: that if it is impossible to reach objective knowledge due to 'biased' factors and 'interests', then, by the very same token, it follows that it is *also* impossible to reach knowledge of such 'biased' factors and 'interests' as such. Frederick Schmitt duly makes this point, in a slightly different but surely relevant context: he responds to the pressure to abandon scientific knowledge insofar as social and political factors and interests should be taken into account in the consideration of scientific knowledge, as follows:

> One might be tempted, after reaching skepticism, to give up on rationality and epistemic evaluation altogether and turn to social and political criticism of science instead. But I can see no way to make this approach coherent. If interests prevent us from getting straight about electrons, *they will also prevent us from getting straight about interests* (Schmitt, 1994, p. 26, my italics).

This point raises a warning flag for espousers of the so-called genealogical enquiry. When Carr defines his discourse as 'an explanatory thesis about how objective knowledge emerges', it may be unproblematic to see it as a species of Nietzschean genealogy. However, it should be borne in mind that there is at least one weak point in genealogical enquiry. That is, it *cannot* offer another *more* legitimate alternative to a view or system it is criticising, even if it could unpack

(Carr, 2006, p. 156).

the lack of the 'legitimacy' of the presently dominant view or system. In other words, even if they unveil sly secrets of an ongoing view or system to a quite large extent, genealogists *can never* stand in a neutral, transcendental position—which means that they are carrying out genealogical enquiry from a specific perspective embedded in countless interests and concerns that *can never* be specified.[49] A series of Carr's arguments, it seems, sometimes forget these premises. In a nutshell: Carr at times does not take necessary care to avoid the 'God's eye viewpoint' that he does not allow his opponents to take. Put differently, he often seems to offer his discourse not as an explanatory, genealogical thesis, but as an 'epistemological' thesis that he tries to denounce.

In this way, there is something suspect about Carr's defence of his own discourse from Siegel's criticism. Such a suspicion looms large, when we turn to Carr's response to Siegel's criticism. Carr asserts that:

> The only appropriate response to Siegel's criticism is simply to point out that since it is a criticism that can only be made from within a mode of discourse that presupposes that knowledge must be either 'objective' or 'relative', it is a criticism that presupposes, and is only intelligible within, the kind of foundationalist discourse that postfoundationalism repudiates and rejects. (Carr, 2006, p. 152)

This rejoinder of Carr's to Siegel's criticism, at best, takes us nowhere; and, at worst, leads us in the worst direction for philosophy. What I have in mind by 'the worst direction' is the argument like this: that people employing different modes of discourse cannot communicate with one another.[50]

There are two points to be made here. First, if Siegel's criticism makes

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[49] I will elaborate on this point in 4-1.

[50] This kind of argument is often made by an appeal to the notion of 'incommensurability'. As will be discussed in the text that follows and subsequent chapters, I think that incommensurability is an untenable thesis, if it designates the impossibility of communication between people belonging to different modes of discourse—i.e. different 'paradigms'.

sense only in 'foundationalist discourse' as Carr claims, then it would naturally follow that 'the only *appropriate* response' Carr is providing also makes sense *only* in a mode of discourse that Carr is employing. Second, it should be recognised that Carr and Siegel *are communicating* with each other at a basic level, although they surely in many cases seem to be mis-communicating. What enables them to communicate is, in my view, near to what Siegel tries to defend, namely, what Carr tries to abandon. Earlier I wrote that: there is something like a basic network which enables us to live in the world as concept-employing, self-conscious creatures. The network, as I noted, may not be able to be specified, but it functions as if it were certain, rational, objective, true, *a priori* and even foundational insofar as it cannot make any coherent sense to doubt it. As shall be analysed in greater detail in the next chapter, Siegel highly appreciates this and associates with it some notions such as rationality (but, he is inclined to see such a basic sphere as rather fixed or static). In contrast, Carr, while being aware of this fundamental domain, does not put much weight on it by placing much more emphasis on the negation of anything universal or transcendental. Intriguingly, at the very first sentence of 'Education without Theory', he touches upon this issue:

> [W]hat is really fundamental are the beliefs that make the debate possible and that are not therefore in dispute at all. (Carr, 2006, p. 136)

At the deepest level, Carr admits, lies something fundamental. Regrettably, however, after this part comprised of as few as 21 words, he *never* returns to this matter of the most basic human beliefs which make our communication possible by instead going straight in the direction in which 'there is no foundation', in spite of the fact that it is precisely over these most basic human beliefs that Carr and Siegel begin to dispute.

While Carr does not go into the detailed analysis of 'what is really fundamental', Siegel puts it at the centre of his argument. As will be argued in Chapter 4, I do not wholly consent to Siegel's views. However, it does seem that

Carr engenders pseudo-problems such as sheer relativism or idealism by bracketing the most fundamental beliefs that make the debate possible. For it is far from clear why Carr considers such most fundamental beliefs axiomatic rather than socially, historically, culturally contingent, given his view that the Enlightenment concepts—e.g. abstract rationality, theoretical justification, infallible certainty, theoretical reason, objective knowledge, absolute truth, the *a priori*, conceptual clarification, immediate universality—are simply contingent products of modernity. Another extract from Carr may illustrate his confused insistence:

> It follows…that the activity of 'theoretical justification' always occurs against *the background of an unarticulated set of presuppositions that cannot themselves be theoretically justified because they are the indispensable prerequisite to the philosophical activity of theoretical justification taking place*. And the inevitable conclusion that follows from this conclusion is that there are no impersonal standards of rationality, no universal criteria of truth, no rigorous philosophical methods that are wholly independent of philosophy's own historically contingent language, culture and practice. (Hirst and Carr, 2005, p. 623, my italics)

Neither the first nor the second sentence in itself is particularly contentious. However, this passage sounds as if theoretical justification has to be abandoned because an indispensable set of presuppositions that make 'theoretical justification' possible cannot themselves theoretically be justified. Yet, this is simply a *non sequitur*. For, a nonsensical conclusion would follow from this, the conclusion that any communication must be discarded *for the same reason*—the reason that any communication comes into play on the basis of 'an unarticulated set of presuppositions' that cannot be explicable in a communicable way.

In this regard, the following idea Siegel reiterates is worth serious attention inasmuch as it is only under this condition that Carr's argument makes any sense:

that 'any attempt to engage in questioning, criticism, and inquiry presupposes rationality and a recognition of the force of reasons' and thus that '[c]riticism rests on rationality, including the criticisms of rationality itself' (Siegel, 2003, p. 192). The proper appreciation of this point tells us that it is misguided to assume, as Carr does, that there is, on the one hand, an unarticulated set of presuppositions that universally make our communication and intellectual activity possible; and that there is, on the other hand, a series of notions such as rationality, certainty and truth which we have *contingently* constituted. What Carr is doing seems to attack the notions which he thinks belong to the latter sphere by an appeal to the very notions that he purports to reject, contrary to his original intention to criticise them by appeal only to something which he holds belongs to the former sphere. I am tempted to say that drawing such a demarcation line between them is futile. For what is at issue here is never intelligible apart from the fact that we human beings are essentially concept-employing creatures. The particularity of being human beings does not allow for *a priori* incommensurability among the same species. This is precisely the reason why I have highlighted the sense in which human knowledge makes sense only in *our* world, or, to use the term of contemporary philosophy, only in what Wilfrid Sellars calls 'the logical space of reasons'. According to the perspective I am urging, such notions as abstract rationality and theoretical justification are, *pace* Carr, deeply interlinked with a basic network which enables us to live in our world of the space of reasons, or with something which Carr describes as follows: what is really fundamental are the beliefs that make the debate possible and that are not therefore in dispute at all. Only with some appreciation of this point, does Carr's emphasis on socially, culturally, historically contingent aspects of human knowledge begin to be enlightening to epistemological discussions.

I will close this chapter by summarising the pros and cons of Carr's views and setting the scene for the next chapter. To begin with, I am in sympathy with Carr's dissatisfaction with the inadequacy and limits of the present philosophy of education in terms of its having little bearing on education policies and

educational practitioners. Second, in regard to his negative discourse that foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy must be abandoned, I concur with his view only insofar as it denies that 'pure theory' can inform actual practices. Third, with respect to his affirmative discourse, I am willing to grant that thinking of practice in itself is a kind of practice; and I am ready to accept that not all knowledge is necessarily couched in propositional forms. (These points appear to be already built into many arguments within contemporary philosophy (of education).) Once Carr takes a further step to saying more than this, however, I do not follow it. Carr's argument at times gives the impression that he is putting forward the unnerving thesis that theory is utterly helpless in education and thus that all we need is practical reflection. As noted earlier, however, I somewhat provocatively argue that practice has no language of its own. This means that in order for practice to come into play, human conceptual involvement is *requisite*. That is, theory and practice are essentially *interpenetrating* and thus go hand in hand.

At the beginning of this chapter, I said that Carr's discourse could be located at the far end of a line suggested by Hirst 2—the line which I have called a social and practical turn of philosophy of education discourse. As indicated there, one of the aims of this chapter is to see what such a social and practical orientation would be like, by seeing Carr as radically extending the Hirstian line. The conclusion to be drawn is, as has been examined, not sympathetic to this line.

Nonetheless, this conclusion does not entail that an increasing focus on social and practical dimensions of knowledge and human actions within philosophy of education discourse is of no help. Indeed, the way Carr argues for his discourse often betrays the content of what he argues for, as we have seen. However, this does not necessarily indicate that what he argues for is totally nonsense. For example, Siegel derides the following statement on Carr's part as self-contradictory: 'rationality is *always relative* to time and place'. Certainly, Siegel's criticism is convincing. But, at the same time, *Siegel's criticism is never the final word on this issue*. For, not being able to claim that 'rationality is always

relative to time and place' *never* reassures us that 'rationality is universal across contexts, cultures and epochs' in an unambiguously fixed way. To put it another way, such notions as abstract rationality, theoretical justification, infallible certainty, theoretical reason, objective knowledge, absolute truth, conceptual clarification, immediate universality are no longer anchored in the Cartesian modern philosophical sense. These notions can be shifting—i.e. *fallible* and *revisable*—over time and across cultures. As already alluded to, Siegel takes a quite strong position as a defender of 'Western, Modernist, Enlightenment epistemology', though he endorses the so-called fallibilism. In the context with which this thesis is concerned, Siegel argues as if there was not much need of a focus on social and practical aspects within philosophy of education discourse. Therefore, I will in the next chapter discuss Siegel's argument in great detail, with the purpose of bringing my own view—namely, the 'social' and 'pragmatic' dimensions of human knowledge—into sharper focus. For there is a vast amount of potential to be explored between Carr's and Siegel's discourse, which cannot properly be addressed by dichotomising their views as sheer relativism and strong realism, respectively.

Chapter 4

The Limits of Traditional, Western, Modernist, Enlightenment Epistemology: The Case of Harvey Siegel

This chapter will address the key issues discussed so far, from a diametrically opposite direction by focusing attention on Harvey Siegel's work. In the last two chapters, I discussed how recent work in philosophy of education has raised awareness of the social and practical dimensions of its subject matters, in particular of knowledge, paying specific attention to Paul Hirst's and Wilfred Carr's discourse. By 'social' and 'practical', I broadly mean something like the following. In contemporary philosophical scholarship, a growing consensus has been reached; namely, that there is no transcendental realm from which theory can be worked out independently of what is going on in the actual world and then can universally apply to individual practices across contexts and epochs. This consciousness draws the attention of many philosophers of education to various non-purely-theoretical factors such as social, cultural and historical ones. In a similar way, a related view has attracted much attention, namely, that such an inadequacy of (pure) theory needs to be supplemented by the practical—e.g. practical reason and practical justification—that has putatively been ignored in modern Western scholarship. This thread of argument that brings the practical to light often takes the form of a resurrection of Aristotelian practical philosophy.

Despite the stark differences in their insistence, Hirst and Carr, in my view, run on the same track insofar as they appreciate such a social and practical focus emergent within recent philosophy of education discourse. However, it is far from clear how and to what extent such social and practical elements can be incorporated into the philosophical discussion of knowledge and education. As demonstrated in Chapters 2 and 3, I take it that neither the later Hirst's discourse nor Carr's is conclusive enough to orientate the direction in which such a social and practical turn of philosophy of education discourse should be heading. Hirst's

view is defective to the extent that he leaves the nature of the theoretical and the practical almost as it is while insisting that the priority of the former over the latter should be reversed; on the other hand, Carr's view is deficient insofar as his endorsed thesis of 'education without theory'—the assertion that the philosophy of education should do away with 'theory' in the modern sense (but, in fact, 'theory' of *any* form) by attending to the practical, which Carr derives from the rejection of 'foundationalist epistemology-centred discourse'—seems a *non sequitur*. What both Hirst and Carr fail to acknowledge in common is that practice as such does not speak voluntarily, so to speak. Accordingly, they do not have a proper appreciation of the other side of the same coin: namely, that theory as such is not a copy or representation of mind-independent things or phenomena. In other words, they appear to miss the point which I have attempted to articulate by introducing the notion of 'our world' and which shall be sharpened in this chapter, the point that our world filled with meanings and sentience (which are forged and maintained by means of language and tradition) affects the way the world is *for us* not in terms of its material structure but in terms of how we perceive and understand it. To put it the other way round, 'the world as it really is' by no means presents itself to us as *this* world in which we live. This point strikes me as analogous to the relationship between theory and practice. If the analogy can be drawn, it turns out that every practice has a conceptual history, however intrinsic each practice's properties look. Both Hirst and Carr, it seems, fail to concede this sort of dynamic and organic *interpenetration* between theory and practice.

I, for my part, favour an increasing focus on the social and practical side of things in the philosophical study of education as well as of what it is for humans to know. But, as has been mentioned, the social and practical turn of the Hirstian or Carrian sort is unsatisfying and thus I will develop my preferred view by taking care to avoid the pitfalls into which Hirst and Carr fall. The view I want to suggest, as sketched, might be best described as a focus on the 'social' and 'pragmatic'—rather than 'practical'—nature of human knowledge. I appreciate the increasing attention to the 'social' to the extent that taking the Cartesian brand

of individualist epistemology is stepping onto an unpromising philosophical treadmill; and I choose the term 'pragmatic' rather than 'practical' in order to emphasise that we are *always already* in *our* world, which is, as intimated earlier, never an aggregate of entities or natural kinds. Employing the term 'pragmatic' indeed risks being easily associated with pragmatism which, like many other much-used terminologies, is referred to by different people in different ways. But I have yet to find a better term to stress the point that we cannot step out of our world or completely disenchant our world so as to seek or establish 'purer' laws, theories or principles—i.e. human knowledge is, *pace* a rampant Platonism, never legitimated from outside the human conceptual domain. What I have in mind by the term 'pragmatic' is therefore close to the image that Hilary Putnam assigns to pragmatism: the idea that standards and practices develop together (Putnam, 1987, p. 79).

Harvey Siegel, the central figure of this chapter, is a representative who does not value the recent shift in research in the philosophy of education towards such social and practical dimensions of knowledge. Siegel more vigorously than any contemporary epistemologist of education endorses 'Western, Modernist, Enlightenment epistemology' (Siegel, 1997, p. 142). Put another way, in many respects, Siegel stands in contrast to Carr. The chief purpose of this chapter is, then, to evince my endorsed social and pragmatic nature of human knowledge, through a careful scrutiny of Siegel's forceful defence of conservative, modernist epistemology against some challenges towards it.

In the foregoing two chapters, I attributed the central trigger of Hirst's and Carr's break with modern epistemology-centred philosophy of education to their repudiation of what I called 'rationalism', 'foundationalism', individualism and a 'transcendental argument'. Siegel, in contrast, does not abandon these ideas except 'foundationalism'. In other words, Siegel's discourse grounds itself on the trust in rationality, individualist epistemology and universally applicable arguments. How Siegel conceives these ideas will be examined in detail in a way that brings into the fore the following three significant notions in the philosophical

enquiry into human knowledge: rationality, justification and normativity (this chapter is mainly concerned with the first two and the next chapter with the latter, though these three are intertwined with one another). This is because I think of these three notions as crucially important to our understanding of what it is for humans to know as well as because Siegel makes frequent reference to them.

This chapter runs as follows. Through a detailed investigation of Siegel's critique of some challenges to traditional epistemology, I will elicit both his views with which I agree and ones with which I disagree. I will term those challenges, for expediency's sake, 'standpoint epistemology' and 'post-analytical views'. In 4-1, I consider the former, arguing basically for Siegel's criticisms; and, in 4-2, I tackle the latter, arguing against his perspective. In 4-3, I will address Siegel's aversion to pragmatism and Wittgenstein's/Wittgensteinians' view in the light of how much is to be granted as securing normative domains immune from rational enquiry. Reflecting on both tenable and untenable points that Siegel makes, I will bring to the surface my endorsed line of thought concerning the social and pragmatic nature in our understanding of human knowledge. This view, I think, opens the door to seeing the putatively weak relationship between philosophy and education differently. That is, it enables us to see that the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge revealed by philosophical enquiry essentially involve *educational* aspects. The additional benefit of this line of thought is to make us aware of an inclusive sense of education with which the concept of the philosophy of education could concomitantly be extended, towards which this whole thesis is leading.

4-1. Unitary Epistemology and Standpoint Epistemology

Of contemporary philosophers of education, Harvey Siegel is conspicuous to the extent that he puts epistemology and components of epistemology—e.g. knowledge, truth, justification and rational enquiry—at the core of the philosophical approach to education. More unusual is his enthusiastic defence of

'traditional, "conservative," Enlightenment epistemology' (Siegel, 1997, p. 152). As found in Chapters 2 and 3, the traditional analytical epistemology (of education) has come under suspicion. Siegel raises objections to many new challenges based on varying 'post-analytical' perspectives which mark the recent discourse in the philosophy of education circle: e.g. post-modernist views, (neo-) pragmatism, arguments for 'epistemological diversity' exemplified by feminist epistemology and 'social epistemology'. Siegel renounces these new challenges to the Enlightenment philosophical tradition insofar as they imply that the central constituents of traditional epistemology—abstract rationality, theoretical justification, infallible certainty, theoretical reason, objective knowledge, absolute truth, the *a priori*, conceptual clarification, immediate universality and so on—have lost much of their force.

Whilst signing up to traditional epistemology, however, Siegel is not an uncompromising defender of all its claims. He rules out 'infallible certainty' from the components of traditional epistemology. In a nutshell, Siegel takes it that traditional epistemology is, *mutatis mutandis*, the starting point of our philosophical enquiry into knowledge and education. That is, what he advocates can be depicted as traditional epistemology *with fallibilism*. Fallibilism is, Siegel defines, the thesis that '*all* claims are fallible and open to challenge, and *no* claims are certain' (Siegel, 1997, p. 121, italics in original) and, obviously, his call for fallibilism derives from his rejection of infallible certainty. Armed with this kind of traditional epistemology with fallibilism, Siegel describes one significant aim of education, among other things, as follows:

> [I]t is educationally important that students gain *knowledge*, and the ability to engage in rational enquiry; and that students develop an appreciation of such enquiry, and (insofar as they are able) conduct their believing, judging and acting accordingly. That is, students should be led, in their education, to value enquiry, and the *justification* that the evidence thereby produced offers to candidate beliefs, judgements and actions. (Siegel, 1998, p. 20, italics in

original)

Siegel's endorsing of traditional epistemology leads straight towards his acceptance of the Enlightenment-inspired view on the aims of education of the kind quoted here. Siegel puts this view forward by highlighting the importance of 'critical thinking' which he sees as 'the educational cognate' of rationality (Siegel, 1988, p. 127), on the following four grounds: 'morality and respect for persons, self-sufficiency and preparation for adulthood, initiation into the rational traditions, and the requirements of democratic living' (Siegel, 1988, p. 61). It is perhaps not far from the truth to point out that Siegel's general stance towards the aims of education is consonant with the Kantian Enlightenment project insofar as they place supreme emphasis on the mere *form* of giving universal law by abstracting from a subject's particularities and contingencies.

I have no objection to Siegel's manifestation above, as long as such an aim is formally expressed. However, I begin to have some quarrels with it, when some concrete contents are given to the formal expression. In other words, I cast a somewhat suspicious eye on Siegel's discourse to the extent that he seems to pay scant attention to the interpenetrating relation between form and matter.[51]

The recent challenges to traditional epistemology and to analytical philosophy of education associated with it are diverse. Some are completely refuted by Siegel; others are not. What I set out to do is to reveal what aspects of new drifts cannot stand Siegel's counter-arguments from the side of traditional epistemology as well as what aspects urge a reconsideration of Siegel's position. As noted near the start of this chapter, I roughly divide such recent challenges into two kinds: 'standpoint epistemology' and 'post-analytical views'. What this chapter will clarify is that 'standpoint epistemology' cannot replace traditional epistemology (in this section), but 'post-analytical views' involve some potential

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[51] I will return to the issue of form and matter in 7-1, where the sociologist Steve Fuller draws the form-and-matter analogy to the relation between philosophy and sociology. I do not think that this analogy is totally wrong, but the price of drawing this parallel would be to underestimate the sense in which neither form nor matter exists in isolation.

to prompt a rectification of traditional epistemology (in the next section). I begin with standpoint epistemology.

'Standpoint Epistemology'

An emblem of Siegel's argument is that critical thinking is 'a fundamental educational ideal' (Siegel, 1988, p. 127) as an instantiation of central notions constituting traditional epistemology—in particular, of rationality and justification. He claims that 'critical thinking is best seen as coextensive with rationality, and rationality is concerned with reasons' (Siegel, 1988, p. 59). What is distinctive of Siegel's discourse is his firm belief that critical thinking is 'fully generalizable' (Siegel, 1997, p. 37), at least in theory. He goes so far as to say that:

> [P]articular ideals—in my case, critical thinking—are in fact applicable to *all* societies and the people within them, *whether or not those ideals are in fact endorsed by particular societies or their members*. (Siegel, 2008a, p. 182, my italics)

This is underpinned by Siegel's general views which are 'firmly based in the "Enlightenment" philosophical tradition, and [which] aspire to establish *univocal* analyses of rationality and of the educational ideal of critical thinking—analyses which pay *scant* attention to the differences among the "concrete others" who are our students (and ourselves)' (Siegel, 1997, p. 7, my italics). The challenge that will be taken up below in this section emanates from the perspectives that centre on such 'differences' to which Siegel pays only 'scant' attention.

The focal point of the dispute between Siegel and his opponents is whether to approve the following proposition Siegel is urging: '[C]ritical thinking is overwhelmingly generalizable' (Siegel, 1997, p. 37). It may be helpful to look at the classification made by Siegel to explore this issue. Critical thinking, Siegel explains, has (at least) two central components: (i) 'a *reason assessment* component, which involves abilities and skills relevant to the proper

understanding and assessment of reasons, claims and arguments'; and (ii) 'a *critical spirit* component, which is understood as a complex of dispositions, attitudes, habits of mind, and character traits' (Siegel, 1997, p. 27, italics in original). According to Siegel's account, his opponents have paid exclusive attention to (i)—the issue of reason assessment—and claimed that skills, principles and criteria of reason assessment differ from one standpoint (case, domain, subject, society, culture and the like) to another and thus that the generalisation of them is a lost cause.

The way Siegel disputes such claims deserves mention. The reason assessment component, Siegel explains, can further be divided into two kinds of sphere: one realm allows for variation in accordance with standpoint (and the like): but the other is a 'fully generalizable' terrain which Siegel calls 'the epistemology underlying critical thinking' (Siegel, 1997, p. 28). He adduces some examples of the criteria which constitute such an underlying unitary epistemology and which extend across standpoints and the like: 'criteria of deductive validity, inductive strength, observational adequacy and explanatory power' (ibid., p. 36).

With regard to (ii)—the matter of critical spirit—, which Siegel thinks has been little discussed, he holds that it is fully generalisable. The exemplars of critical spirit that Siegel refers to are: open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, non-question-begging evaluation, openness to objections and alternative points of view, habits of reason seeking and evaluating, a rejection of partiality, arbitrariness, special pleading, wishful thinking as well as of other obstacles to the proper exercise of reason assessment and reasoned judgement and so on (Siegel, 1997, p. 35; 2006, p. 5, p. 9). These, Siegel argues, are all Enlightenment mode of principles.

Setting aside (ii)—critical spirit—for the time being, I focus on (i)—reason assessment—and then proceed to (ii) with insights gained from a close analysis of (i). As mentioned, I group a variety of views objecting to Siegel's universality-based position altogether into 'standpoint epistemology'. Broadly, the challenge of 'standpoint epistemology' towards traditional epistemology runs as

follows: that knowledge from '*S*-knows-that-*p* epistemology'—i.e. traditional epistemology—reflects privileges; advances the interests of culturally dominant groups (like men); marginalises and oppresses members of non-dominant groups (like women); and therefore that accounts of knowledge must take *subjectivity* into account to overcome this problem (Siegel, 2003, p. 308; Siegel, 1998, p. 24). Standpoint epistemologists, in brief, take it that there is no transcendental viewpoint from which different standpoints can be compared or understood. Siegel calls this position 'epistemological subject specificity' and describes it as:

> [T]he idea that different fields utilize different, *incompatible* criteria for the determination of the goodness of reasons, so that what counts as a good reason in one field does not so count in another, and therefore that principles and skills of reason assessment must differ from field to field and so be taught in the context of the subject matter of each field. (Siegel, 1997, p. 19, my italics)

If 'standpoint epistemology' is actually like this, it cannot be vindicated. However, my worry is whether Siegel simplifies the issue by setting out to make such an unfriendly formulation of 'standpoint epistemology'. In the remainder of this section, therefore, I first go into the details of where standpoint epistemologists of the sort Siegel describes begin to go in the wrong direction, following Siegel's critique of it. Nevertheless, second, I also demonstrate that the idea of 'standpoint' as such is *not* entirely nonsense. The relative effects that the notion of standpoint can exert make me somewhat hesitant to wholly agree with Siegel's assertion about the generalisability of the underlying unitary epistemology.

Then, first, what is wrong with 'standpoint epistemology'? Siegel points to its difficulties in two ways, both of which I basically agree with, although the first point is in need of much more sensible care. In the first place, what enables the insistence of 'standpoint epistemology' to obtain at all is the existence of an *underlying unitary epistemology* which Siegel claims 'underlies and sanctions our regarding criteria of all sorts as appropriate criteria of reason assessment' (Siegel,

1997, p. 34). In the second place, a 'standpoint' is defined *only by arbitrary and relative interests and concerns*. I will grapple with them in turn.

'Standpoint epistemology' can be seen as the thesis that does not admit of an underlying common epistemology. Against such 'standpoint epistemology', Siegel objects that it is not until we rely, consciously or unconsciously, on an underlying unitary epistemology that 'standpoint epistemology' comes into play.[52] On Siegel's view, standpoint epistemologists more or less argue that different standpoints are *incommensurable* because of the *incompatible* criteria each standpoint employs. If it is the case that 'standpoint epistemology' takes the guise of this kind of outright relativism, then there is no hope of vindicating it. For speaking transcendentally across different standpoints from within one particular standpoint betrays their own doctrine that one cannot correctly understand another standpoint from a specific standpoint. If one standpoint is utterly impervious to another, we cannot even put forward anything like the standpoint epistemologist's contention. In order to realise that a standpoint is different from another, in effect, we need a means shared by both standpoints. The shared criterion is what Siegel calls a unitary epistemology.

As shall be expounded, I think that there is still some room for the idea of 'standpoint'. Yet, if the gist of 'standpoint epistemology' is something of the sort just considered, I, with Siegel, disavow 'standpoint epistemology'. For this train of thought simply confuses 'epistemology' with 'a point of view'. Predicated on this confusion, standpoint epistemologists seem to allege that different points of view constitute alternative epistemologies that are different from traditional epistemology. However, as noted above, to identify difference as difference, we have to *share* something. Siegel argues that if we take into consideration the person/people's subjectivity in question we still need an analysis of knowledge (Siegel, 1998, p. 25). In short, '"subjectivity-inspired belief" is, whatever it is, not

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[52] The reader might recall Siegel's criticism of Carr's suggestion that the components of traditional epistemology should be abandoned. That line of criticism is offered in a way analogous to the one under consideration.

sufficient for knowledge' (ibid.). He claims that:

> [T]o say that we...have *two different epistemologies* at work ...is to fail to distinguish between different epistemologies, and different criteria of reason assessment. When we have two different criteria of reason assessment, which we utilize to establish two different sorts of claims, we nevertheless have only one epistemology. In both cases, a good reason is that which warrants a conclusion. The *epistemology* across these alternative and varied criteria of reason assessment is the same. (Siegel, 1997, p. 32, italics in original)

For Siegel, what is missing in the argument of 'standpoint epistemology' is due attention to the underlying unitary epistemology. Obviously here it is assumed that this unitary epistemology is immune from contexts—i.e. *it is unambiguously fixed and neutral in the sense that it is a context-independent formal framework*; and that the fundamental epistemology is operating, irrespective of what criterion of reason assessment is utilised.

Viewed in this way, 'standpoint epistemology', as Siegel puts it, turns out tenuous—if the kernel of its argument is really something like sheer relativism. For we human beings *can* understand another standpoint from a different standpoint to a considerable degree, if we have enough motivation and imagination to learn it. Nonetheless, my inclination here is to find a deeper insight in 'standpoint epistemology', as opposed merely to disputing it as a species of utter relativism. To throw light on this point, I will borrow an imaginary but telling example from Terry Eagleton. Eagleton says that:

> [T]here is an obvious difference between recounting a fact, such as 'This cathedral was built in 1612,' and registering a value-judgement, such as 'This cathedral is a magnificent specimen of baroque architecture.' [*sic*] But suppose I made the first kind of statement while showing an overseas visitor around England, and found that it puzzled her considerably. Why, she might ask, do

you keep telling me the dates of the foundation of all these buildings? Why this obsession with origins? In the society I live in, she might go on, we keep no record at all of such events: we classify our buildings instead according to whether they face north-west or south-east. (Eagleton, 1983, p. 11)

I will provide an illustration of the two points mentioned above: First, there is no room for sheer relativism; second, nevertheless, the first point is perfectly compatible with acknowledging that the difference in standpoints may alter our dealings with the object under consideration.

I begin with the first point. In this situation above, ordinary English people and the overseas visitor clearly take different points of view about the cathedral. It is also granted that this difference is due in large part to different kinds of social, cultural and other contexts. But the crucial point here is that we—including myself (Japanese)—*can* no less understand a criterion of the visitor's culture than this visitor can understand the English criterion that values the chronological explanation. The recognition that different standpoints *are* intelligible to a considerable degree raises awareness that the real complication does not reside in the misconceived idea that different standpoints are incommensurable. But rather the complication is rooted in the plain fact that there are a huge number of standpoints that *can* be intelligible but which are little noticed because of the dominance of a particular standpoint that acquires currency due to a complex mix of social, political, moral, cultural and various other factors. The proper lesson to draw from the considerations so far is: that a standpoint is universally intelligible does not assure us that it should be universally applied as the only standard; we should not confuse universal intelligibility with the 'legitimacy' of universal applicability.

Next, I move on to the second point: The difference in standpoints may alter our perceiving of the object under consideration. Siegel would affirm, I am sure, that, *by means of the underlying unitary epistemology*, English people can understand the criterion of the visitor's culture; the visitor can understand the

English criterion; and the reader can follow this ongoing discussion. In a nutshell, he indeed allows for different points of view that are shaped and influenced by social, historical, cultural and infinite other factors, but he also claims that such different points of view can be assessed by the same standard, namely, by the underlying unitary epistemology. This is the central thrust of Siegel's endorsing of pluralism, not relativism, as I understand it. So far so good. However, if Siegel's argument intimates the simple dichotomy between standpoint-relative sphere and underlying unitary epistemology, it might be slightly misdirected. For the dichotomy between standpoint-dependent and standpoint-independent runs the risk of slipping into unconscious support for the currently dominant views.

To shed light on this issue, I draw on Siegel's own example to do with the matter in question. Siegel divides justification into two kinds: doxastic justification and propositional justification. According to his account, it is only doxastic justification that is subject to a 'believer's context', namely, believer's epistemic conditions. On the other hand, propositional justification is *transcendent* in the sense that 'the status of any belief as propositionally justified does not depend upon the believer's view of its justificatory status, or of the belief being sanctioned by standards the believer (and/or her community) accepts'; that is, '*P* can propositionally justify *q* even if *no one* thinks it does' (Siegel, 1997, p. 123, my italics). Deductive relations of statements are one emblematic exemplar of propositional justification.[53] Siegel elucidates propositional justification as follows:

> This sort of justification is independent of context, and involves strictly the epistemic status of, and relationships between, the relevant beliefs. Propositional justification (when put in terms of claims or propositions) is

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[53] An example of propositional justification is the following: Suppose a situation where I believe both that the probability of England winning the football World Cup in 2014 is less than .20 and that the probability of Argentina winning the football World Cup in 2014 is greater than .20. The following belief of mine is propositionally justified: that Argentina has a better chance of winning the football World Cup in 2014 than England.

exactly *"justification independent of reasoning agents."* (When put in terms of beliefs, "believing agents" are required, since there can be no beliefs without believers....) (Siegel, 1997, p. 123, my italics)

I concur with Siegel that, but for deductive relations of statements, virtually no linguistic and conceptual systems of human knowers would work. I also grant, of course, that there are extra-psychological objects and phenomena in the world. Yet, as touched upon in 2-3, it is slightly misleading to suppose that there is a domain which is humanly context-dependent on the one hand and there is an *extra-psychological* sphere on the other.[54] For what entities or relations become the possible objects of our knowledge are not built-in properties on the side of 'the world as it really is' or Mother Nature. It is a little surprising to see Siegel simply taking epistemology itself to be an extra-psychological enterprise. This point seems in need of further clarification.

As alluded to earlier, Siegel adduces the following as constituting the common epistemology: deductive validity, inductive strength, observational adequacy, explanatory power, etc. Even in deductive inference, neither premises nor conclusion can be made sense of, if there is no human engaging in the inference. Siegel would object that it is only premises in deductive inference that are dependent on human conditions and that a conclusion emerges 'automatically' from premises. He gets it half right. It may be useful to recall that neither machines nor (most) non-human animals can inferentially deduce conclusion from premises as humans do. In this regard, humans are a *sine qua non* even for conclusion in deductive inference as well as for premises. Certainly, deductive inference itself is valid across societies and epochs, even if the contents of premises are radically different, from, say, society to society. However, at the same time, it should be properly understood that what kinds of deductive and logical inference figure or are 'discovered' at least partly depend on what modes of society are run or on what lines of organised research are pursued. Put simply,

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[54] More attention will be focused on this issue in 4-2.

whereas dudective and logical inference, once recognised, turns out to be valid across societies and epochs, it is particular humans and societies that 'discover' or cast light on particular modes of deductive and logical inference. For example, Fermat's Last Theorem is valid across societies and epochs. Now we can say that it has been valid even before Andrew Wiles's proof was published in 1995 and, in fact, *even* before this theorem was first predicted by Pierre de Fermat in 1637. Yet why this theory was conjectured at all by Fermat and why so many attempts to prove it have been made for more than 350 years are never independent of the way particular people in particular societies have lived. (It is not difficult to imagine a world where Fermat's Last Theorem has not been proved, nor is it even a subject of focus at all. Similarly, it is not difficult to imagine a world where a countless number of theorems that do not see the light of day or even have not ever been conjectured in the present world figure.) The conclusion to be drawn from these considerations echoes the point made above: that is, the universal intelligibility of a particular mode of deducitive and logical inference is one thing and what kind of deductive and logical inference figures is another thing. These two different things cannot be adjudicated by deductive or logical inference, which I suspect is not in view in Siegel's discourse.

When it comes to the other constituents of the underlying unitary epistemology Siegel refers to—in particular, observation and explanation—, Siegel's formulation of the overarching unitary epistemology as transcending particularities becomes less stringent. For, again, even though Siegel foregrounds the neutrality of logical forms of criteria for inference, what qualifies as sufficient explanatory power, for example, might *not* coincide among, say, different societies. To revert to the above example, it would be nonsense to assume that the English standpoint and the visitor's standpoint differ *only* in terms of origins and emplacements of buildings. In other words, just as the priorities they give *vis-à-vis* a building are different, so it would be natural to suppose that their attitudes towards many aspects in their lives—e.g. in terms of what objects obtain for observation and of what constitutes relevance of evidence for one issue—also

differ with varying degrees and forms. There is, thus, a sense in which those differences may change how a building strikes an English person and the visitor.

As recounted in the criticism of Carr's views in Chapter 3, however, I am not denying something like Siegel's underlying unitary epistemology. Something like that is a desideratum in order not to fall into sheer relativism. Put differently, the fruitful contention should begin with the realisation that we human beings *can*, while living under different conditions, communicate with one another to a considerable degree. However, I do not adopt the term 'underlying unitary epistemology'. For, the term gives an inkling that what makes us communicable is fixed or inert[55] and that it is possible to specify the elements that constitute such an underlying unitary epistemology—e.g. deductive validity, inductive strength and so forth. Instead, as mentioned in Chapter 3, I prefer the expression 'a basic network' to describe what enables us to live in *our* world as concept-employing and self-conscious creatures—a network which cannot be specified but which functions as if it were certain, rational, objective, true, *a priori* and even foundational insofar as it cannot make any relevant sense to doubt it. The connotation which I hope this expression takes on is that the basic network is elastic and organic in the sense that it grows and alters in accordance with how we human beings develop our mode of life.

On the Notion of Standpoint

I have devoted some space to illustrating the two points concerning 'standpoint epistemology'. One is that there is nothing whatsoever wrong with denying 'standpoint epistemology' if its central thrust is along the lines of sheer relativism; the other is, nevertheless, that the first point is by no means incompatible with acknowledging that the difference in standpoints may alter our dealings with the objects under consideration. In what follows, I sharpen these two points by focusing on the notion of 'standpoint'.

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[55] To be sure, Siegel asserts that the unitary epistemology is not fixed insofar as it is fallible. However, his view of fallibilism has its own set of problems, which shall be addressed in 4-2.

In whatever ways it may be formulated, the biggest theoretical drawback of 'standpoint epistemology' is as follows: *It is impossible to neatly align every standpoint in a neutral line*. As looked closely at in Chapter 3, Wilfred Carr disputes 'a view from nowhere' or 'a God's eye view' by asserting that we should take into consideration various particular and contingent factors from which no one can escape. Carr's view is, it can be seen, a variant of relativist 'standpoint epistemology' insofar as he disapproves of taking an external point beyond particular and contingent bounds that constitute and constrain people's perspectives within them. Still, as I referred to in 3-3 by taking a cue from Frederick Schmitt, it is *impossible* to specify and disclose entangled factors which constitute a particular standpoint in a neutral line. For a perspective *per se* from which to debunk non-universal aspects of an allegedly universal or transcendental view is bound by a complex mix of such factors. In a nutshell, the thesis of 'standpoint epistemology' does not make full sense unless all possible standpoints are known. Yet, there is no hope of making all possible standpoints lined up. Going along with an example of 'standpoint epistemology' helps to illuminate this point.

Epistemology from a non-European point of view is an exemplar of such 'standpoint epistemology'. Needless to say, however, it is absurd to assume that there is *the* particular point of view which is non-European. A Japanese point of view and a Nigerian point of view, for instance, are both non-European but obviously different. Yet, the previous sentence itself is already problematic. For it is clearly not the case that we can specify *the* Japanese point of view or *the* Nigerian point of view (In the same way, it is not actually possible to specify 'the European point of view'). No two Japanese people are the same in terms of gender, class, family, academic background, income, occupation and a countless number of conceivable respects. Conceived in this way, it finally would turn out that it is only each individual who can have a standpoint distinguishable neatly from other standpoints. Even saying this may be unsatisfying inasmuch as it is, strictly speaking, not accurate to say that what you were yesterday, what you are at the

moment and what you will be tomorrow have exactly the same standpoint. It goes without saying that such a radical individualist or solipsistic line of thinking would not be the thesis many adherents of 'standpoint epistemology' want to put forward. One conclusion to be drawn from here is that a 'standpoint' *can* be defined *in whatever ways* according to arbitrary interests and concerns—e.g. a standpoint can arbitrarily be stretched from 'science' to 'radio turning off for a single radio'[56] (Siegel, 1997, p. 30).

We must not throw out the baby with the bath water, however. For, the fact that a 'standpoint' can be defined arbitrarily does not entail the thesis that the notion of 'standpoint' is of no use. In the remainder of this section, I try to demonstrate that the notion of standpoint, despite my agreement with the charge that it is impossible to specify or line up all standpoints, has a *relative* but *substantial* effect.

No other notion is, I suspect, more appropriate than Wittgenstein's 'family resemblances' to cast light on this point. Wittgenstein suggests *not* detecting 'something common' in what we call 'games' or 'members of a family'. Just because he says so, Wittgenstein is not claiming that game and family members are useless notions. What he draws attention to instead of something common is 'a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail' (Wittgenstein, 1998, § 66). A complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing is *enough*[57]; put the other way round, it is not necessary—presumably not possible—to specify and line-up the common characteristic traits of what we categorise as something

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[56] Siegel uses the term 'field' rather than 'standpoint'. But there is no doubt, I think, that both terms can be interchangeable in this context. The arbitrariness of 'standpoints' is reminiscent of many cases I have experienced. For example, when I was a state junior high school student—the students of the school came from four neighbouring local primary schools—, students, parents and teachers would often refer to the differences of 'culture' of the four primary schools. As epitomised here, 'culture' is an oft-used notion defined by arbitrary standpoints.

[57] The notion of 'family resemblances' is not a panacea, however. Thus there remain opaque boundaries. For instance, some people might see romantic love as a game and others do not; and there might be a person who does not resemble any one of her family members. Nevertheless, these opaque boundaries are never a red herring that precludes human communication from the outset.

like 'game' or 'members of a family'. This insight of Wittgenstein's applies to our usage of 'standpoint'. In a nutshell, indeed, it is impossible to neatly align and enumerate every standpoint (because 'every' standpoint cannot make any coherent sense, given that 'standpoints' come and go according to varied interests and concerns), but nevertheless such standpoints do have a *relative* but *substantial* effect in much the same sense that such notions as 'games' or 'members of a family' do. Therefore, for example, Indians, the middle-class, women, Catholics (and Japanese and Nigerian points of view in our examples) all stand as having a 'standpoint'. However, I need to hasten to confirm that a 'standpoint' can be defined only *arbitrarily* rather than neutrally. Thus, it is a matter of various interests and concerns how individual standpoints are brought into focus. (An analogy to time may help here. No one can catch a durationless instant of 'now-time', for example, but everyone lives relying on the notion of 'now' by interpreting and understanding it arbitrarily but substantially—e.g. 'now' can indicate 'this moment', 'these days', 'this month' and even 'this century' or longer. What is important here is to realise that there is no point in striving to specify and enumerate individual 'now-times' and thereby grasp the essence—namely, something common—of now-time.)

Siegel, it seems, is putting his finger on such a barren enterprise when talking about the underlying unitary epistemology. In other words, it appears that he is keen to reasonably and formally capture the essence penetrating the unitary epistemology. This aspiration is backed by the basic thrust of the whole scheme that the criteria penetrating individual standpoints are the essence of the overarching epistemology and that they are, as it were, unequivocally formulated. However, as has been argued, the temptation to draw a sharp dividing line between the two spheres—one standpoint-relative and the other standpoint-transcendent—strikes me as too simplistic. I do not mean to suggest that there is no such thing as the difference in degree in terms of rigidity and elasticity of the way we look at the world. (Thus, I do not deny positing, for expediency's sake, a domain that is relatively susceptible to contextual influence

and a domain that is relatively reluctant to accept it.)

To sum up, in this section, I have argued that 'standpoint epistemology' is untenable, if the upshot of 'standpoint epistemology' is in line with sheer relativism. Siegel's critique of such a 'standpoint epistemology' alerts us to the dangers of slipping into outright relativism. The beginning of wisdom in this issue is the recognition that communication and interpretation between different standpoints are *possible* with varying extents. However, there is no need to follow Siegel if his reliance on an underlying unitary epistemology which he thinks makes different standpoints communicable is based on the view that such an univocal epistemology is unambiguously set up prior to, and independently of, actual humans' conceptual engagement with the world. Siegel's insistence, I suspect, may impose more than he anticipates on our understanding of the world under the guise of neutrality and universality of such an unequivocal unitary epistemology. The next section turns to another challenge to traditional epistemology, which I term 'post-analytical views'.

4-2. The Interpenetration of Epistemology and Ontology: Rational Justification and Truth

Siegel is, as he puts it himself, a typical analytical philosopher (of education). The aim of this section is then to intimate the limits of analytical philosophy and analytical philosophy of education as a derivation of the former through a critique of Siegel's views from the point of view of what I dub 'post-analytical views'. As noted, I classify some recent challenges to traditional epistemology as 'post-analytical views' (and 'standpoint epistemology'). In spite of the fact that what might be categorised as 'post-analytical views' is diverse, I take their essential feature to be similar to what I have called the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge. Thus, this section serves to bring to the surface my own views on human knowledge and its relevance to education by critically analysing Siegel's defence of traditional epistemology against such

'post-analytical views'.

I begin with Siegel's aspiration to secure 'reality' which exists independently of human cognition and its implications for education. This is embodied in the form of a sharp distinction between rational justification and truth. Siegel explicates this in relation to critical thinking which he sees as 'the educational cognate' of rationality in the following way:

> [The epistemology underlying critical thinking, namely, the underlying unitary epistemology discussed in 4-1] must...maintain a distinction between rational justification and truth, and hold that the critical thinker might justifiably believe that which is false, and unjustifiably believe that which is true. In other words, the epistemology underlying critical thinking must maintain *a "radically nonepistemic" conception of truth*, and hold that truth is independent of rational justification. (The theory of critical thinking, moreover, must regard critical thinking as aiming at rational justification rather than truth.)'[58] (Siegel, 1997, p. 34, my italics)

A question immediately arises: In what sense is it of importance for students to learn critical thinking if it directs at rational justification rather than truth which is independent of the former? The answer Siegel provides is as follows:

> The epistemology underlying critical thinking must recognize (despite their independence, just noted) the following connection between truth and rational justification: the *upshot* of rational justification is a prima facie case for truth; rational justification is a *fallible* indicator of truth (Siegel, 1997, p. 34, italics

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[58] Siegel recently professes his modification of the earlier view concerning the importance of rational justification and truth as aims of education. His sustained discussion with Israel Scheffler and Alvin Goldman urges Siegel to come to see that 'both true belief and rational belief (and, relatedly, critical thinking) are rightly regarded as crucial epistemic aims of education' (Siegel, 2005, p. 347). However, the problem of how rational justification and truth are to be mediated has yet to be defused. This is why the trouble, I think, still abides even in his present view.

in original)

This reply on Siegel's part does not suffice. For his rejoinder does not yet explain how rational justification which is a human *epistemic* activity[59] can be relevant to truth which he defines as radically *non-epistemic*. To delve deeper, I shift attention to Charles Taylor's challenge towards the assumptions of traditional epistemology and Siegel's critique of it.

The Heidegger-Taylor Line of Criticisms

Taylor's challenge is 'to views of knowledge which regard it as representing an independent reality, and which do not recognize that knowers are agents' (Siegel, 1998, p. 32). In his widely read paper, 'Overcoming Epistemology', Taylor declares that the whole enterprise of modern *representational* epistemology bound up with the faith in foundationalism—on the grounds of the 'disengaged subject' and atomism—should come to an end. Drawing on Heidegger's notion of 'being-in-the-world'—put crudely, the idea that 'we are not disengaged subjects, but *agents*, and that our knowledge depends upon this fact' (Siegel, 1998, p. 28, italics in original)—, Taylor claims that:

> The notion that our understanding of the world is grounded in our *dealings* with it is equivalent to the thesis that this understanding is not ultimately based on representations at all, *in the sense of depictions that are separately identifiable from what they are of.* (Taylor, 1995, p. 12, my italics)

At the heart of this sentence lies the rejection of the so-called representationalist theory or, as it is often called, the correspondence theory of truth. Today criticism of the conventionally accepted dichotomy between the knowing subject and the known object is widely recognised in philosophy. One vital result of this line of criticism, I believe, is that the lingering philosophical pathology—especially in

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[59] 'Rationality is, at bottom, an epistemic notion.' (Siegel, 1997, p. 4)

the empiricist epistemological tradition—of how human minds (or thought or concept) can be in touch with reality (namely, a non-epistemic physical, independent world) is exorcised to a large extent.

However, Siegel says that: '[Taylor's argument] in no way undermines the view that knowledge consists in beliefs which (among other conditions) accurately portray "an independent reality"' (Siegel, 1998, p. 28). Siegel then feels able to incorporate Taylor's point by adding 'infallible certainty' to the traditional constituents in modern epistemology which are under review—e.g. abstract rationality, theoretical justification, theoretical reason, objective knowledge, absolute truth, the *a priori*, conceptual clarification, immediate universality and so forth. As touched upon, what Siegel advocates is, therefore, traditional epistemology *with fallibilism*—the idea that '*all* claims are fallible and open to challenge, and *no* claims are certain' (Siegel, 1997, p. 121, italics in original).

I doubt that Siegel's argument fully reflects Taylor's point. Siegel, while embracing fallibilism, does not admit the necessity of repudiating the traditional correspondence theory of truth, although he argues that '[c]orrespondence cannot be a *criterion* of truth, for we have no independent access to an independent reality and so cannot tell when or whether the criterion is met' (Siegel, 1997, p. 206, italics in original). It is *a particular form of justification* that Siegel brings in as a means to mediate between us and the truth out there. He succinctly writes: 'Because we lack direct access to truth, we have no choice but to approach truth by way of justification' (Siegel, 2005, p. 352). Still, his understanding of fallibilism, justification and truth is not without its own set of problems. For it still tells us little about how rational justification (which is epistemic) can be in touch with truth (which is non-epistemic)—or, put another way, how mind can grasp an independent reality.

To illustrate what is at issue, let us turn to an instance about which Taylor and Siegel diverge. Taylor says that '[w]e can draw a neat line between my *picture* of an object and that object, but not between my *dealing* with the object and that object'; on the other hand, Siegel argues that 'I can...perfectly well

distinguish…between my *dealing* with the keyboard on which I am now typing, and the keyboard. (Siegel, 1998, p. 27, italics in original). Siegel fails, in my eyes, to fully comprehend the crucial point that one single object cannot be intelligible *to humans* while the object itself, of course, does exist ontologically (independently of the existence of human knowers). That the 'content' of an object makes sense only in one's *dealing* with the object means that it becomes intelligible only when one relates to it *by reference to the necessarily historically conditioned conceptual content of that relationship or engagement.*[60] This is how we live in *our* world. This also requires us, and always already, to know other objects—precisely as a condition for knowing that particular object itself. For, to understand, say, what a keyboard is, we need to know what keyboards look like, what we use them for, and what it is like to play one. Without being acquainted with this sort of (latent) *historical, practical and relational knowledge* of what dealing with a keyboard means, Siegel *cannot* understand it as having an *objective* meaning. In other words, Siegel obscures the full meaning of 'dealing with' in Taylor's terms; that is, 'dealing with' in Siegel's account seems to merely designate an action of fingers striking the keys.

To be sure, Siegel's view is worth attending to as a warning against the tendency towards an excessive relativisation and subjectivisation of discourse—which is not uncommon in educational research.[61] We do not need to regard Taylor's point, however, as tantamount to sheer relativism or subjectivism. For human conceptual commitment does not necessitate a repudiation of the notion of 'objectivity' as such. It is futile, therefore, to reduce this fertile philosophical view to an all-or-nothing issue by dichotomising possible ways of thinking into two kinds: One is the deviation of abstract and immediate

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[60] The same applies, more generally, to what counts as an 'object'. Another point concerning this line of thinking is that 'practical reason' and 'practical justification' which were examined in Chapters 2 and 3 should be considered in this context.

[61] It [the Rortian relativisation of knowledge] seems more widely accepted in education than it is within epistemology' (Winch and Gingell, 2008, p. 75). Carr's discourse, it can be seen, typifies such a relativist discourse.

universalism—i.e. the idea that objectivity is absolutely *non-epistemic*,[62] which is out there once and for all; the other deviation is to abandon the notion of objectivity by seeing it as merely relative to human *epistemic* differences. Siegel's insensibility to this nuanced interrelatedness between mind and world is typically found in his following criticism of Carr's views:

> Does it really follow, as [Wilfred] Carr's postmodernist alleges, that because my knowledge of trees, atoms and people is always situated within my conceptual scheme, that there aren't trees, atoms and people which exist independently of my scheme? Is it really being alleged that the stars were not in the heaven before there were people to declare their (the star's) existence in their (the people's) scheme? (Siegel, 1998, p. 31)

As discussed in Chapter 3, I take issue with Carr's views in many respects. But, Siegel's criticism here is obviously beside the point. Siegel is attacking a straw man. For nobody—few, if any—argues for a vulgar version of constructivism of the sort Siegel has in mind: that human concepts literally construct the material world. That is, no one argues that if we human beings all disappear then stars, for example, will disappear too or that there is nothing until we recognise it as an object of our knowledge. At stake here is a much more subtle and complicated interpenetration between mind and world. Siegel is right that the world we live in is by no means constituted by the human mind alone; yet, he seems to underestimate the sense in which the world we inhabit *qua* humans does not make sense independently of humans. What I dub the social and pragmatic nature of human knowledge is related to this point—namely, an awareness that we are always already in the world we live in, not in a meaningless 'natural' world. For clarification of this thread of thinking which avoids Siegel's formulation that

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[62] To do full justice to Siegel, I need to announce that, in private correspondence, Siegel objects that '[i]n my writing "objectivity" is indeed epistemic' in response to an earlier draft of this chapter. However, it is still unclear to me how the view that 'objectivity' is epistemic is fit into the whole scheme of his philosophy.

rational justification is epistemic whereas truth is non-epistemic, I find helpful Heidegger's (provisional) distinction between the *world* and the *earth*. (In my terminology, Heidegger's 'world' corresponds to my 'our world' and his 'earth' to my 'meaningless environment'.)[63]

In 'The Origin of the Work of Art', Heidegger offers a lucid distinction between the world and the earth. Although his discussion is complicated and poetically depicted,[64] my purpose here is just to borrow that distinction to illustrate my point by slightly interpreting it in my own way. That is to say, the world is where we actually live; the earth is a meaningless environment that is just there. In the world, there is everything we know: e.g. natural things, *physical human products, abstract and fictitious beings* such as, in order, cars, nation states and Sherlock Holmes, a memory and record of the past events and figures, *names* and *categories* of things, conceptual *relations* of things, *negation and contradiction*; on the other hand, on the earth, it is only natural things like stones, plants and animals that exist.[65] In other words, the world is where, in addition to artefacts, human conceptual commitment and inferential relations are already embedded. Therefore, for example, in the world, there are situations describable in negative and even contradictory sentences; by contrast, there is no negation or contradiction on the earth.

Should we, then, dismiss the earth from our discussion as something

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[63] After writing this part, I encountered Gadamer's distinction between 'the concept of the world' and 'the concept of environment' (Gadamer, 1975, especially pp. 438-56) to highlight 'the linguistic constitution of the world' as opposed to 'the world in itself' and McDowell's heavy reliance on this distinction to articulate his notion of 'second nature' which is 'explicit in Aristotle's account of how ethical character is formed' (McDowell, 1996, p. 84). The picture that these three philosophers—Heidegger, Gadamer and McDowell—strive to draw is at peace with what I want to delineate by the 'social' and 'pragmatic' dimensions of human knowledge by an appeal to the distinction between 'our world' and 'a meaningless environment'.

[64] His basic thrust is that '[i]n setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth', namely '[t]he work moves the earth itself into the open of a world and keeps it there.' (Heidegger, 1993, p. 172)

[65] This description is, strictly, not accurate. For, on the earth, there is neither name nor any category for understanding, say what a stone is. By the same token, the earth is *not* even the mere collection of physical entities. For the idea of collection, for example, already presupposes something belonging to the world.

intellectually unreachable like Kant's '*Ding-an-sich*'? Certainly not. The earth is the foundation for our embracing of *realism*. It is true that, as rehearsed in 4-1, we occupy a multitude of standpoints and, in this sense, each person lives in a more or less *different* world from that of others. However, the difference does not amount to total incommunicability. Now we can ascribe our communicability between different worlds to the existence of the earth, as it were. It is notable that a parallel can be drawn between mind and body—put precisely, between human *qua* human and human as purely physical. Our bodies are biologically convergent in that, for instance, no one can be 3 metres tall, see 5 kilo metres ahead or live for 200 years. Because of these kinds of biologically in-built constraints of our bodies and our conceptual capacities, we basically react to the earth in such a way that we can, in varying degrees, communicate with one another—even if people live in different cultures, using different languages.[66] Heidegger says that '[u]pon the earth and in it, historical man grounds his dwelling in the world' (Heidegger, 1993, p. 172). Furthermore, the earth is the ground of human mistakes. An aspect of the earth not yet disclosed may tell us that a human perspective that has been seen as right so far needs modifications. Put the other way round, the earth is a source for the infinite variety of human knowledge.

However, this distinction between world and earth should not be confused with the complete separateness of them. The account in the previous paragraph might invite the charge that I enrol myself as an advocate of a species of 'naturalism'. This accusation misfires. For, world and earth can be described distinctively for expediency's sake, but the essential point is that *they form a totality*—a totality of *our world*. This is the very reason why I prefer the term 'our world'—our world where the normative and the ontological essentially co-exist rather than exist in isolation. As will be seen, the concept of our world has much affinity with what Wilfrid Sellars calls 'the logical space of reasons' and what

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[66] In other words, as Brice Wachterhauser, in his paper on affinities between Gadamer and McDowell, puts it, there is no *a priori* incommensurability whereas there can be contingent incommensurabilities (Wachterhauser, 2002, p. 65).

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John McDowell dubs a 'the world of a second nature'.

Noteworthy here is that it is *impossible* for a person to try to inspect the earth by bracketing her world. Bald naturalism, it might be argued, is the idea that conceives of this inspection as possible. However, as the considerations thus far show, the earth *simpliciter* is not intelligible to humans, for the environment we inhabit is not the meaningless 'thingly' earth, but a human world. This signifies that the idea of 'truth' independent of humans can have no space in the world we live in, because it is misguided to assume that we have reality on the one hand and knowledge on the other.[67] What I have in mind here is akin to McDowell's discussion of 'nature'. That we live in the world of a second nature—i.e. we 'inhabit the logical space of reasons'—through 'acquiring command of a language', McDowell is telling us, does not mystify manifestations of the 'nature'. He argues that:

> [I]deas of phenomena that are manifestations of a second nature acquired in acquiring command of a language do not, as such, fit in the logical space of natural scientific understanding. But there is no reason why that should rule out seeing those phenomena as manifestations of nature, since *the nature in question can be a second nature*. Actualizations of conceptual capacities, which as such belong in the logical space of reasons, can be natural in a different sense from the one that figures in the admittedly well-drawn contrast with the logical space of reasons. (McDowell, 2009, p. 248, my italics)[68]

In line with this reasoning, to use a somewhat constructivist connotation, I would

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[67] Saying this is perfectly compatible with acknowledging that some theory we do not yet have will tell us a great deal about what exists independently of human beings.

[68] Robert Brandom and Putnam are basically along the lines of McDowell's conception. Brandom insists, inspired by Hegel, that '[t]he study of natures itself [e.g. physics] has a history, and its own nature, if any, must be approached through the study of the history.' (Brandom, 2000a, p. 33); Putnam, elucidating the impossibility of science as purely naturalistic, argues that '[o]ur views on the nature of coherence and simplicity [which enable the conducting of science] are historically conditioned, just as our views on the nature of justice or goodness are' (Putnam, 1990, p. 138). It should not be assumed, however, that these philosophers sign up for a thoroughgoing historicism.

argue that truth can be understood as 'truth *humanly speaking*'. Just because truth is nothing more than 'truth humanly speaking', nonetheless, it neither follows that truth is one-sidedly epistemic nor that ontology can be reducible to epistemology.[69] The crucial point is that we do not have to abandon the Enlightenment notions I adduced earlier such as objective knowledge, absolute truth, etc. However, these notions need to be recognised in the way just mentioned, rather than in the conservative, that is, Siegel's way. What we must bear in mind is the fundamentally organic and inseparable relation between world and earth. Heidegger says that:

> World and earth are essentially different from one another and yet *are never separated*. The world grounds itself on the earth, and earth juts through world. Yet the relation between world and earth does not wither away into the empty unity of opposites unconcerned with one another. The world, in resting upon the earth, strives to surmount it. As self-opening it cannot endure anything closed. The earth, however, as sheltering and concealing, tends always to draw the world into itself and keep it there. (Heidegger, 1993, p. 174, my italics)

I here want to emphasise again the dynamic and shifting character of the unity between world and earth.

Siegel adheres to the binary oppositions between rational justification as epistemic and truth as non-epistemic—i.e. independent of humans. As long as we oscillate between them, however, we will never be able to resolve the age-old difficulty of accounting convincingly for the relation between the non-epistemic character of truth (accordingly, 'an external independent reality') and the human epistemic capacity of rational justification (mind). Siegel adverts to 'an earlier Putnam' as considering truth 'radically nonepistemic' (Siegel, 1997, p. 216).

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[69] For an anticipated charge that my view is 'anthropocentric', see 1-1. I would be willing to accept that leveling to the extent that other non-human living things' 'understanding' of the world (if any) would be unimaginably different from ours.

However, in my understanding, Putnam these days has an outlook quite congenial to the story described above. The difference between Siegel and myself therefore becomes clearer by shifting attention to Putnam's views on this matter.

The Recent Putnam and a Renewed Attention to the Components of Traditional Epistemology

The most crucial point of the present Putnam[70] is, in my view, the insight that value judgements, descriptions of fact and human linguistic conventions are all *interpenetrating*, as referred to in Chapter 2. In other words, mind, body and world are, from the very beginning, interpenetrating. 'An earlier Putnam', with whom Siegel has an affinity concerning the concept of truth, embraced what Putnam now calls *metaphysical realism*—a doctrine that: '[T]he mind and the world are separated by an epistemological chasm. Minds respond perceptually to, and represent how things stand in, the world. Nevertheless minds are depicted as occupying a standpoint *outside* the world' (Heil, 2001, p. 402, italics in original). Clearly, Cartesian mind-body dualism is one extreme form of metaphysical realism. His gradual dissatisfaction with metaphysical realism drove Putnam 1 to the next stage, where he sees truth as 'idealised rational acceptability' rather than as 'radically nonepistemic'. Putnam 2 claims that 'there is an extremely close connection between the notions of *truth* and *rationality*; ...the only criterion for what is a fact is what it is *rational* to accept' (Putnam, 1981, p. x). His further shift to the present Putnam, I think, is a promising extension of the previous line that placed slightly too much emphasis on the internalistic—i.e. subjectivist—explanation of truth.

Obviously, Siegel is averse to the internal realist Putnam (Siegel, 1997, p. 216). In line with Putnam 1's scheme, Siegel holds the following view as to

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[70] There are at least three stages at which Putnam has deployed distinct views. Christopher Norris, calling the three Putnams Putnam 1, Putnam 2 and Putnam 3 respectively, describes Putnam 1 as a 'strong causal-realist', Putnam 2 as an 'internal realist' and Putnam 3 as a 'commonsense' realist (Norris, 2002, p. 25). I feel friendly towards Putnam 3, while Siegel towards Putnam 1.

critical thinking which he highly appreciates as 'the educational cognate' of rationality (Siegel, 1988, p. 127):

> [T]ruth is *independent* of rational justification: we can be justified in believing that q even though q is false; and we can be justified in rejecting q as false even though it is true. (Siegel, 1997, p. 18)

Based on this view, Siegel gives priority to rational justification rather than truth as the aim of critical thinking (Siegel, 1997, p. 34).[71] The view cited above is in tandem with his understanding of 'fallibilism'. I concur with fallibilism inasmuch as the epistemological programme of foundationalism as it is cannot be tenable.[72] However, I do not believe that there could be a total or massive failure in our recognition of truth, given that we live in *our* world or the world of a second nature rather than the meaningless 'thingly' earth. Everything in our world is bound up in complex ways within a social, historical and relational matrix, a *de facto* reliance upon which cannot possibly be dropped out of view, as one thing implies and is imbricated with many others. Nor can this complex interacting web be forgotten as a crucial condition of our ability to live in our world *qua* humans. As mentioned, the earth is always a source for our mistakes, but the mistakes are revisions and modifications, not a massive failure which proves that our engaging in our world so far is completely misoriented.

I do not mean to say that Siegel's fallibilism implies a massive or total failure. But, what seems to be missing in his account of fallibilism is the acuteness towards the present Putnam's subtler insight. When Siegel says that we can be justified in believing that q even though q is false, how can we arrive at a

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[71] As I mentioned in footnote 58, Siegel has come to regard both true belief and rational belief as crucial epistemic aims of education.

[72] I cast some doubt on the sort of foundationalism defined as follows: 'what all foundationalisms share in common is the belief that any adequate account of human knowledge must not only explain how our knowledge-claims about "the world" can be justified beyond all doubt, but also how we arrived at such an account of justification itself' (Wachterhauser, 2002, pp. 68-9).

conviction that q is in fact false despite our rational justification that q is right? His answer is that:

> Even very powerful reasons for or against some claim q can be wrong, misleading, or overturned by *evidence not yet available*. (Siegel, 1997, p. 18, my italics)

This reply seems *prima facie* good enough and ideally scientific. However, I am afraid that a sort of pitfall may lie here, a pitfall that might risk leading towards a species of scientism, which Siegel obviously rejects.

As referred to, Siegel thinks of critical thinking as the educational cognate of rationality and regards fostering critical thinking as one fundamental aim of education. Given that many modern societies are already filled with a great deal of scientific, and correlatively technological, frameworks, it is inappropriate to devalue science. Yet, I would take issue with Siegel if he is inclined to confine the apex of rationality to science—i.e. the presently most dominant view—, which appears to be a covert aspiration shared by many analytical philosophers. What he seems to be mistaken about is his likely assumption that *evidence not yet available* will (presumably scientifically) be disclosed to us in a non-epistemic, namely, human-independent form. In brief, what Siegel fails to fully apprehend is that *evidence not yet available will partly be a result of the way humans live*—e.g. how we envisage a mode of enquiry. What I am saying is that it is collaboration between us and the earth in our world as a totality that constitutes the relevance of evidence. It is not *a priori* determined.[73] (This view stands at odds with Alvin Goldman's theory of truth to which Siegel subscribes and with which Chapter 6 is

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[73] Note that I am not claiming that how we live determines or changes the material structure of our world, needless to say. Rather, what I am trying to draw attention to here is that it is our ways of engaging with the earth that partly—even if not entirely—determine which aspects of reality can be possible objects of our knowledge in our world. One corollary to this point is that the content of science and the *method* of science are not irrelevant to each other. However, it should be borne in mind that this view does not entail the repudiation of presently accepted scientific evidence.

concerned. Goldman argues that: 'there might be truths concerning distant galaxies for which we possess no evidence, but they are truths nonetheless' (Goldman, 1999, p. 44). Of course, there are objects and phenomena we do not yet know. However, such an existence seems in need of something more to be called 'truths', unless we assume that there is Reality (the way the world really is).)

It is here that the significance of *education* is brought into clear focus. As noted, all that is given in *our* world has and involves a relation to human history. Due to concrete social and historical determinations and determinacies, opacities of the interpenetration between concept and being as well as between word and world are unavoidable. Insofar as truth is only revealed through human experience and practice, education has vitally important roles to play in order to improve the breadth and depth of our experience as human beings collectively (which might be called the social dimension of education) as well as to become full and free human beings individually (which might be called the personal dimension of education). Put another way, the two main broad roles of education I want to emphasise in this thesis are: (i) to initiate people into the world of meaning constituted by the complex interaction and deeper imbrication between concept and being as well as between word and world, and thereby (ii) to lead them to increase the sophistication of their interrelatedness in better ways because the unity can shift. This is precisely the major thrust of this thesis. As long as Mother Nature or the first nature does not offer us a recipe for our living,[74] let alone legitimate human development from outside *our* world, we human beings have the burden of making our ongoing world better and more sophisticated. At the heart of these processes lies education—education in a broad sense. For, since we cannot get outside *our* world, what we can do is just to tinker with what is already here, namely, with the legacy of human history which, as noted in Chapter 3, has been

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[74] Note, however, that Mother Nature or the first nature provides some background conditions and constraints under which alone humans and all other living things can live. For instance, no one, no animal and no plant can break natural laws like the law of gravity. See also footnote 76.

embodied and repositted in tradition and language. Viewed in this way, education in the inclusive sense described is the centrepiece of human development.[75]

Put another way, the advancement of evidence not yet available, whether it is scientific or not, goes hand in hand with *human rationality*—a basic conceptual web which has been historically (and biologically[76]) conditioned and the *de facto* reliance on which makes it possible for humans to live in our world. In a nutshell, what will be unpacked by evidence not yet available does exist independently of human epistemic capacities, but it will partly be concept-dependent, though not concept-exhaustive.[77] Thus, the main source of my quarrel with Siegel's account of the relation between rational justification and truth resides in the fact that he does not dismiss metaphysical realism—the view that 'the things we talk and think about are whatever way they are independently of our thoughts' (Cormier, 2006, p. 110)—by adhering to the idea that truth is 'radically non-epistemic'.[78]

With the aid of Heidegger's distinction between world and earth as well as Putnam's idea of the interpenetration of mind, body and world, I have striven to reveal that we can overcome an obsessing worry of philosophy, the worry about explanation of how the human mind can be in touch with the 'external' world. The fact is that they bleed non-reductively into as well as out of each other and thus that they figure as a complex totality. In this, there is no room for either the proposition that Reality as it is is totally independent of humanity on the one hand, or the notion that the mind one-sidedly constitutes the world on the other.

The vital point is that considerations so far tell us that we *can* retain a sort of 'representation'—accordingly, most of the Enlightenment notions listed earlier—even after we jettison the conventional correspondence theory of truth.

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[75] This issue shall be referred back to in the final chapter.

[76] Just as the earth is required for the world to figure (in Heidegger's distinction), so the first nature is required for a second nature to obtain.

[77] I take these terms, 'concept-dependent' and 'concept-exhaustive', from Roy Bhaskar.

[78] Siegel suggested to me that truth be seen as a semantic property. To be sure, some of the claims I have made about truth might be more plausible as claims about meaning. Either way, Siegel's formulation that truth is radically non-epistemic seems unsatisfying to the extent that it implies Reality or the way the world really is. However, this point surely needs further exploration.

Here, this representation, as Putnam puts it, is entailed by the activity 'in which we engage', not the idea of a representation as 'an *interface* between ourselves and what we think about' (Putnam, 1999, p. 59, italics in original). The following example Putnam adduces, which I already referred to in 2-3, serves to encapsulate this point: 'Wittgenstein says that "This chair is blue" (imagine he had a blue chair in front of him) corresponds to reality, but he can only say to what reality by using the sentence itself' (Putnam, 1999, p. 197). Put another way, the kind of representation advocated here is by nature *normative*, which is decisively distinct from non-normative 'representation' in the correspondence theory. True, Siegel also stresses the normative character of rationality and its importance for education, but, as far as this matter is concerned, his understanding of normativity seems not to reach the point where the notion of 'correspondence' or 'representation' is already normative in the sense that such notions already possess human conceptual content.[79]

4-3. Siegel's Aversion to Two Well-Received Views in the Philosophy of Education: Anti-Pragmatism and Anti-Wittgenstein

I have so far pursued at length Siegel's counter-arguments towards two challenges to traditional epistemology—which I dub 'standpoint epistemology' and 'post-analytical views' and, through a close critique of them, I have tried to elicit my own stance in terms of what could be called the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge. This section is devoted to making my endorsed view clearer by analysing Siegel's abhorrence with the two currently prevailing views in the philosophy of education circle: (i) (neo-) pragmatism which currently enjoys popularity (particularly in the U.S.) and (ii) the later Wittgenstein's view which is also highly acknowledged (especially in the U.K.). The attention of this chapter is confined to the issue of how far 'rational' enquiry goes in relation to a fundamental normative domain which appears to be immune to rational enquiry. I

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[79] See footnote 44.

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begin with pragmatist views.

Siegel's Abhorrence of Pragmatism

Siegel casts a critical eye on the orthodox pragmatist view and its variants. He asserts that pragmatist epistemology is 'deeply flawed', on the grounds that '[p]ragmatic utility will serve as a relevant criterion only on the assumption of a generally pragmatist epistemology' (Siegel, 1997, p. 126). In 'Justification by Balance', Siegel scrutinises Nelson Goodman's pragmatic account of justification and concludes that Goodman's (and Israel Sheffler's) version of justification is, though not the orthodox pragmatist view, unsatisfactory. Their view relies, Siegel claims, on the tenuous assumption that 'if we take some systematization to be justified—if we are committed to it, have confidence in it, find it highly credible—it is. The justification of the *initial* commitment, confidence, or rating of credibility cannot be gainsaid, for it is on that commitment that justification rests' (Siegel, 1992, p. 42, my italics). For him, this type of pragmatist account of justification is question-begging. He is reluctant to give privilege to the initial commitment by which subsequent justifications are made possible, on the basis of his understanding of fallibilism—the view that 'we can always be mistaken in our judgement that something is justified or credible; our confidence can be misplaced' (ibid., p. 43). In Siegel's eyes, fallibilism and pragmatism cannot stand in harmony. He asserts:

> This simple fallibilism with respect to judgements of justifiedness requires that
> *we honor the distinction between something's being justified and our taking it
> to be so*; it requires as well that we honor legitmate challenges to, and requests
> for justification of, both our judgements concerning the justifiedness of our
> beliefs and (inferential and other) practices, and *our confidence* in those beliefs
> and practices. It requires, in short, that we do not *uncritically* regard our
> estimates of *initial* credibility, our confidence in our beliefs and (inferential)
> practices,   as   either   *automatically*   warrant-enjoying   or   as

warrant-conferring—that is, as the basis of justification. (Siegel, 1992, p. 43, my italics)

In brief, doubt about our own existing measures or criteria is the very central thrust of Siegel's fallibilism. This stance of Siegel's is connected to his distrust of the later Wittgenstein's view—for example, some Wittgensteinians would be dissatisfied with Siegel's denial of a sort of scaffolding which makes having reasons and giving justifications possible and which is beyond our speculation about whether it is right or wrong—, which is the focal issue later.

Pragmatism, Siegel says, is misleading insofar as it sees an *initial* commitment, confidence or rating of credibility as immune to justification, namely, rational enquiry. I also do not subscribe to pragmatism if it is interpreted as follows: pragmatism identifies what is the case with what we take to be the case or what the majority of people agree on as the case (*à la* C. S. Peirce). However, as I have reiterated, *without some sort of initial human conceptual and social commitment to, or involvement in, the world, no one can even begin a non-foundational explanation of human knowledge*. As long as we are humans, put another way, there is no way out of epistemological presuppositions, as it were. And, as has been echoed, we are always in some sense on the way. For this reason, it is erroneous to find an air of bland uniformity or inertness in the statements I have made.

This initial commitment on the part of humans to the world is a desideratum for our being able to see this world in the way we actually do and this is precisely what I have attempted to articulate by the term, 'our world'. What is involved in this initial commitment constitutes what I would call *rationality*: namely, a basic conceptual web which cannot be specified but which functions as if it were certain, rational, objective, true, *a priori* and even foundational insofar as it cannot be intelligible to doubt it. Without the *de facto* reliance on this basic conceptual web, no one could see the world as they actually do. The present Putnam uses the term 'conceptual truth' to describe something similar to what I argue for. A conceptual

truth functions as *a priori* to the extent that 'it is impossible to make (relevant) sense of the *assertion* of its negation' (Putnam, 2004, p. 63, italics in original). *Impossibility of making sense of the assertion of its negation* well captures the salient feature of what I call a basic network for human conceptual understanding. As has been adumbrated, the basic conceptual web is fallible, revisable and changeable in accordance with one's intellectual development as well as with human flourishing as a whole, but nevertheless there cannot be a massive failure of the network at least in the short run.[80]

Noteworthy here might be to confirm that an initial commitment to the world is one thing and an initial commitment to a particular form of, say, politics or religion is another. Thus, an initial commitment to, for example, Christianity does *not* confer enough warrant to the justification of believing in Christianity. What is vitally important here is to properly recognise the distinction between worldviews and the basic conceptual network. In a nutshell, just because it is reasonable to think that the difference in the initial commitment to existing systems makes some difference to each individual's worldview, the difference by no means generates an utter incommunicability between different people. There *is* room for conversation, say, between a person whose initial commitment was to a strong Christian culture and another person whose initial commitment was to a far less religious culture. In short, initiation into different religious cultures, for instance, never seals off two people from each other, because of a basic conceptual network under consideration.

The reflections pursued above begin to indicate the impasse between the alternatives of 'individualism versus collectivism'. The predicament of Cartesian individualism does not necessitate the opposite idea that posits community-based collective knowledge and collective knowers as opposed to the individual subject at the start of the analysis of human knowledge. For, as rehearsed in 4-1 with

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[80] A total change in a basic web cannot be an immediate occurrence. In one place, Putnam says that 'it is not clear what becomes of the concept of rationality itself when there is an epistemological catastrophe'—a catastrophe that would be caused by '[doubting] *all* our past *counting*' (Putnam, 1983, p. 125, italics in original).

regard to the notion of 'standpoint', *no* clear-cut definition of 'society' or 'community' can be provided. For there is no specifying and aligning an infinite number of such possible 'societies' or 'communities'. One can easily be misled into setting up the alternative question of 'individualism or collectivism'. The lesson to be learnt from the discussion in this chapter is thus that neither individual nor society is reducible to the other but instead that it perfectly makes sense to suppose a properly socialised individual. To fully recognise both the existence of such a properly socialised individual and a social world which always lies behind her is the first and foremost step to grasp what it means for us to live in *our* world *qua* humans This line of reasoning leads us to another subject matter of this section, namely, Siegel's anti-Wittgenstein's view.

Siegel's Abhorrence of the Later Wittgenstein

In his review article (2008) of Christopher Winch's *Education, Autonomy and Critical Thinking*, Siegel develops his critique of Winch's reliance on the later Wittgenstein's view in some detail. So let us proceed with the article, after glancing at a brief overview of the early and later Wittgenstein's two distinct philosophical views.

In his early philosophy, Wittgenstein, along with the dominant framework of his day, assumes two different realms, one of which is the world (whose sub-classes are facts, states of affairs and objects), and the other of which is language (the corresponding classes are propositions, elementary propositions and names).[81] His attempt is to clarify the picturing relation between the two structures, and thereby to remove any philosophical confusion lingering among philosophers. This means that the aim in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is to demarcate the limits and formal structure of language, namely, (for Wittgenstein) that of thought. To put it the other way round, any enterprises considered to lie outside the world (outside the realm of facts, states of affairs and objects) cannot

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[81] The early Wittgenstein, with Russell, is a typical proponent of the correspondence theory between word and world, which I have criticised in this thesis.

rationally be talked about. Since they cannot be expressed in propositions falling within the realm of truth or falsity, to talk about them is simply nonsense. Among such enterprises, are ethics, religion and 'problems of life'—and presumably education is included.

In his later philosophy, Wittgenstein comes to negate the whole picture that he drew in his earlier period. That is, the two different realms consisting of the world and language are denied any separate existence and dissolved on the view that the world is dependent on a 'form of life' in which language plays a crucial part. This notion centres on language-games, which are of pivotal importance in Wittgenstein's later views. Because a language-game is closely related to a form of life, it acquires the status of a sort of 'given' in that form of life; therefore, *we cannot doubt the actual framework which itself makes it possible to doubt, have reasons, give justification, etc.* Here it no longer makes sense to argue over whether this language use constitutive of the actual framework is right or wrong. In this sense, in the later Wittgenstein's schematic picture, there is a point where reasonable search and justification come to an end; this point is a form of life that constitutes a language-game, from which no one can escape. It functions as the 'substratum', 'bedrock' or 'scaffolding' for human intellectual activity. In other words, Wittgenstein admits of the existence of 'foundation' for our language-game, although his use of the term 'foundation' is not identical to the meaning of the term that philosophers have traditionally ascribed to it.

It is not hard to imagine that this later view of Wittgenstein's lends strong warrant to those philosophers of education wanting to philosophically defend the normative aspects of education. Thus, for example, the following passage by Winch would probably be quite familiar to many Wittgensteinian philosophers of education:

> Since they [hinge propositions] do not themselves rest on reasons, they cannot be justified by reason. They are presuppositions of our reasoning, evidence giving and assessing activity and so part of the background of language.

Someone who finds that they cannot accept universal hinge propositions cannot take part in normal communication or in those activities that we would be inclined to call 'rational'. Yet we have no *reasons* for believing them. (Winch, 2006, p. 36, cited in Siegel, 2008a, p. 173, italics in Winch)

It is in this precise area that Siegel casts a dubious eye upon an influential interpretation of the later Wittgenstein, accusing proponents of this view of granting '*far too much normative credit*' to the underlying foundational 'hinge propositions', and of leading people to 'lose sight of the fact that '*rational' is itself a term of normative evaluation*' (Siegel, 2008a, p. 173, my italics). In brief, Siegel dismisses the view that 'some ('hinge') propositions or claims are in principle beyond the range of critical scrutiny' (ibid., p. 168), for it is against the fallibilism that he upholds. He asks: 'how is this Wittgensteinian line to be reconciled with the fallibilism of Peirce, Popper and the many contemporary epistemologists who endorse it?' (ibid., p. 169). But I think that these two lines of thought can be reconciled without much controversy.

I agree with Siegel that rationality is constitutive, and part, of the most basic element of humans *qua* humans. If rationality were removed, we could not imagine what we can see, think and do in a coherent way. As I have repeated thus far, I regard rationality as congenial to a basic conceptual network which cannot be specified but which functions as if it were certain, rational, objective, true, *a priori* and even foundational insofar as it is unintelligible to doubt it (because that is what any rational human being is equipped with). Furthermore, in accordance with how we conduct our lives, the basic conceptual web can also be shifting. As mentioned, the philosophy of education should be concerned with both of these dimensions: the first is to initiate people to the humanly rational world; and the second is to make the world better. In other words, the philosophy of education is required to be concerned with, for instance, the ways in which we lead meaningful lives and the human community as a whole will develop.

To be sure, there are differences in degree in terms of susceptibility to shift

and revision. In this respect, however, I take it that Siegel's discourse is worth attending to, because some Wittgensteinian philosophers (of education) tend to overemphasise 'internal' and 'foundational' constraints imposed on human intellectual activity, under the rubric of a community's agreement or cultural customs with a view to defending 'normativity' of a quite strong sort: the normativity of the kind that indoctrinates how one should behave and what one should learn in a given community. We should be cautious not to unnecessarily increase the sphere of such constraints—i.e. the domain of something 'foundational'—, under the names of 'forms of life', 'agreement', 'custom' and the like. Nevertheless, this view in no way takes issue with Wittgenstein's insight that such a constraint underlying our intellectual activity does exist. (What I call a basic conceptual network has a close linkage with his forms of life.) Conceived in this way, there is little reason, in my observation, to suppose that an unbridgeable chasm lies between living on the basis of such a basic conceptual network and reflecting rationally on it to the fullest extent that is possible.

Siegel is right in locating rationality 'between an overly *formalistic*[82] conception of rationality, and an overly *contextualist* conception' (Siegel, 1997, p. 102, my italics); that is, 'substantively' (ibid., p. 104). Nonetheless, his locution makes me somewhat uneasy about the way rationality is to be understood. For his mode of speaking might give the impression that rationality is, though normative and fallible, inert. Still, rationality essentially requires open variety—on the basis of rationality we now have. Human flourishing evolves, as does rationality—intertwined with a refinement of normativity and justification. In summary, his path still appears to run nearer the formalistic one. My approach may slightly be closer to the contextualist one, which results from my emphasis on what I call 'a basic conceptual network' or, more broadly, on what I dub the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge, whereby I aim to emphasise the organic and plastic character of rationality.

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[82] 'A purely formal conception of rationality could not do full justice to the normative, epistemic, evidential dimensions of the term.' (Siegel, 1997, p. 103)

To sum up, there is indeed nothing unintelligible in Siegel's criticism of the sceptical question of why we should be rational: namely, 'once one poses the question, that is, wonders whether or not (or why) one should be rational, one's wondering insures that one has reasons for being rational' (Siegel, 1997, p. 83)—in other words, 'the sceptic is presupposing rationalism in order to call it into question'; and thus 'in doing so [in asking the sceptical question], the sceptic is playing the rationalist's game' (ibid., p. 82). In brief, rationality is 'self-justifying' (ibid., p. 82). There is no trouble in this view. However, at the same time, it should also be realised that Siegel's argument is far from the last word on the nature of human knowledge. To put it in my own words, Siegel's discourse is nothing but a reiteration of the point that we are always already in our world filled with meanings where rationality and reasons obtain inasmuch as it would not make any relevant sense to have meanings without them. This is a crucial point. But this point needs to be appreciated, together with the other pivotal point that we are always in some sense on the way—i.e. our world is shifting. As noted, education is in a central position to have much bearing on the two points: Initiating people into *our* world of the space of reasons and making our world a *better* place. If more emphasis is placed on the second point in Siegel's account, that will calm the fear that his view on rationality and the force of reasons as well as on their implications for education is inert.

A Small Conclusion

I conclude this chapter by briefly summarising what has been argued and what is the next step to articulating my thread of thought. Just as Paul Hirst and Wilfred Carr do not fully apprehend the interpenetrating relation between theory and practice, Siegel does not seem to wholly acknowledge the corresponding relation between truth and rational justification. I have attempted to elicit this by an appeal to what I call the social and pragmatic dimensions in our understanding of what it is for humans to know. Raising awareness of the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge, I hope, serves to reveal the differences in terms of our

(Siegel's and my) understanding of rationality, justification and normativity.

My preferred line of thinking may help to bring into clear focus a richer and inescapable relation between philosophy and education. Siegel highlights the significance of modern epistemological enquiry both in education and the study of education on the grounds that rationality is indispensable for all people and that fostering rational ability is a crucial role of education. I have no intention to dispute this formulation of the relation between philosophy and education—with a proviso that we have to take care not to fall into the danger of the conflation of universal intelligibility with the legitimacy of its universal applicability. However, my hope is that what has been argued at length in this chapter will begin to indicate a more fertile relation between philosophy and education. This relation is not a variant of erstwhile enterprise of the philosophy of education, the attempt to exploit philosophical discussion in the context of education, which sometimes seems far-fetched.[83] Rather it is the relation which requires us to see it in the other way round. That is, philosophy, when considered from the perspective of the social and pragmatic dimensions I am recommending, will in substance be seen to be entwined with educational aspects. The view is well explained, for instance, by Richard Rorty in his introduction to Wilfrid Sellars's philosophy: '*knowledge is inseparable from a social practice—the practice of justifying one's assertions to one's fellow-humans. It is not presupposed by this practice, but comes into being along with it*' (Rorty, 1997a, p. 4, my italics).[84] Knowledge is never divorced from social practices of justification to fellow-humans; but it is by no means reduced to a determined set of social practices or conventions. This view pursued here, if taken seriously, encourages us to see the traditional outlook towards the relation between philosophy and education differently. Paul Standish convincingly

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[83] Andrew Davis in a place touches upon this issue: 'philosophers of education often draw on debates and findings in pure philosophy to develop positions about education' (Davis, 2009, p. 651).

[84] As shall be made explicit in 5-3, Rorty sometimes goes too far. However, we should not throw out the baby with bath water. His views are, on many occasions, insightful though he at times takes a further step, which is all too often both needless and bewildering. The quote I cite here is incisive unless it is interpreted as a form of linguistic idealism.

adverts to this point:

> [F]orms of enquiry central to philosophy (into ethics, epistemology and metaphysics) themselves necessarily incorporate questions about learning and teaching: they ask questions not only about the nature of the good (for the individual and for society), but also about *how we become* virtuous; and not only about the nature of knowledge, but also about *how it is acquired*. In other words, these essentially educational questions of teaching and learning are not external matters to which the philosophy is applied, but internal to philosophy itself. (Standish, 2007, p. 162, italics in original)

This line of thinking reminds me of Quine's favourite parable of Neurath's boat: the 'parable of the mariner who has to rebuild his boat while staying afloat in it' (Quine, 1988a, p. 24, my italics). Quine appeals to this parable to stress that philosophy is part of science in the sense of no first philosophy outside of science. In contrast, I make appeal to this parable to emphasise that we are always already in our world which 'socially' and 'pragmatically' co-varies with rationality, normativity and justification.

The overall aim of this thesis is to pursue this line of thinking and delineate a broadened horizon of the philosophy of education as an enquiry into it. For these purposes, this thesis needs to examine the existing 'social epistemologies'—particularly, what is called 'analytical social epistemology' promoted by philosophers working in the analytical tradition like Alvin Goldman and Philip Kitcher as well as Steve Fuller's 'sociological' social epistemology. The next chapter will be devoted to setting the scene for examining the two established social epistemologies. That is, it is high time to shift our attention away from the institutionalised framework of the existing philosophy of education to wider philosophical enquiry beyond it so as to see what is at stake after 'First Philosophy' (akin to what Carr calls 'foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy') is put into doubt. Put another way, analysing the ways in which what

I call the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge is addressed and developed constitutes the primary topic of the next chapter. We will there face two important philosophical strands that have also influenced the educational discourse: naturalistic epistemology and the so-called death-of-epistemology argument. These two will be approached mainly in the light of normativity, since the notion of normativity has been less focused on thus far than those of rationality and justification.

Chapter 5

After First Philosophy: A Critique of Naturalism in Epistemology and the Death-of-Epistemology Argument

From Chapters 2 to 4, this thesis was concerned with three epistemologically minded philosophers of education: Paul Hirst, Wilfred Carr and Harvey Siegel. The broad picture I draw there is this: Hirst's later work has contributed to setting in motion an exploration of the social and practical character of human knowledge within philosophy of education discourse; Carr and Siegel have reacted to this line of thought contrastively to each other. Carr extends the line sketched by the later Hirst in an extreme way and goes so far as to declare 'a dignified end' of the philosophy of education; Siegel is at the other end of the spectrum in the sense that he takes 'Western, Modernist, Enlightenment epistemology' to be still useful and necessary and thus raises suspicion of new movements in epistemology (of education) including the lines of the later Hirst's and Carr's conceptions. As mentioned, neither of them is uncontentious. By critically examining the implications and burdens of the work of the above three thinkers, therefore, I have set out to bring to light a more plausible account of human knowledge and accordingly an extended conception of education. I stand in line with a growing attention towards the essentially social nature of human knowledge and pertinently of what I call the 'pragmatic'—rather than 'practical'—nature of it. What I mean by 'practical' is a resurrection of Aristotelian practical philosophy that Hirst and Carr have (differently) encouraged, where the 'practical' is counter-posed to the 'theoretical' which has putatively taken centre stage since the emergence of modern philosophy. In Chapters 2 and 3, I was concerned not so much to go into Aristotle's philosophy *per se* but to elicit how Hirst and Carr muddy the waters in terms of the theory-practice distinction. (I have no wish to dispute Aristotle's practical philosophy. Rather what I emphasise by the social and pragmatic dimensions of human knowledge, in my view, is of especial

significance when one tries to appreciate Aristotle's philosophy to the extent that it is concerned with the most basic conditions under which alone human beings can live as intellectual and moral beings.) In short, although their approaches to Aristotelian philosophy differ, both the later Hirst's and Carr's views are inadequate in fully construing the interacting and shifting relationship between theory and practice. In contrast, Siegel does not admit of the necessity to go back to pre-modern worldviews due in large part to his observation that modern traditional epistemology is still largely valid and so are its implications for education. However, as analysed at length in Chapter 4, Siegel also fails to fully incorporate the interpenetrating relation between theory and practice into his defence of traditional epistemology. To unpack their subtle and entangled relation, I have stressed the social and pragmatic[85] aspects of our engagement in the world by drawing mainly on recent developments in the theory of knowledge.

This thesis proceeds towards two paradigmatic academic enterprises prompted under the flag of 'social epistemology' which I think shed intriguing light on existing theories of knowledge in such ways that they have a more direct bearing on the thinking about social practices like education. As noted in Chapter 1, there are currently two established social epistemologies—the philosophical one and the sociological one.[86] I will address them in turn in the next two chapters (Chapters 6 and 7). This chapter is designed to prepare the ground for a detailed analysis of those two existing social epistemologies. For this purpose, this chapter turns beyond the institutionalised framework of the philosophy of education, towards wider philosophical enquiry in order to gain some sense of the central trajectory of recent epistemological debate. In the course of our exploration, we face two important philosophical strands that have also influenced

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[85] As noted at the beginning of Chapter 4, I prefer the term 'pragmatic' rather than 'practical' to stress the point that we cannot step outside the human world in which we live *qua* humans—which I dub *our* world—in order to seek or establish 'purer' laws, theories or principles.

[86] Attention here is confined to the academic programmes which name themselves 'social epistemology'. Needless to say, there are forms of philosophical thinking and sociological research which are concerned with social dimensions of knowledge.

the educational discourse: the so-called naturalistic epistemology and the death-of-epistemology argument. These are addressed in this chapter chiefly in the light of the notion of normativity.

It is the theme of *what comes after First Philosophy* that characterises the philosophical discussion in recent decades. The term, 'First Philosophy', was initially used by Aristotle, but in the contemporary philosophical scene, the Cartesian brand of modern philosophy is usually meant by this term.[87] (It is not far from the truth to see 'First Philosophy' as nearly equivalent to what I called 'foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy' in Chapter 3.) What is meant by 'First Philosophy' mostly corresponds to one or more of the following set of projects: (a) the quest for certainty, (b) the attempt to find absolute foundations, (c) the attempt to legitimate other disciplines and (d) the project of refuting scepticism (Greco, 1999, p. 2). As has been reiterated in the foregoing chapters, these projects all cause controversy.[88] It is precisely in this context that scientific naturalism and the end-of-epistemology debates come to the forefront in philosophical discussion, which is the main topic of 5-1. However, I hold that both of them leave plenty of room to be further reconsidered. Therefore, in the subsequent sections, I reveal what is wrong with (i) non-normative naturalistic epistemology, which tries to succeed the position of First Philosophy (in 5-2); and with (ii) the death-of-epistemology argument, which, like naturalism, recognises the end of First Philosophy and yet denies any subject as a successor to First Philosophy (in 5-3). As the representatives of these positions, I focus attention on W. V. O. Quine's and Richard Rorty's arguments respectively (albeit my criticisms are mainly directed at the two strands in question rather than at Quine and Rorty themselves). My conclusion will be that First Philosophy is untenable but that the deadlock of First Philosophy amounts neither to scientific naturalism nor to the

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[87] The proper title of Descartes's 'First Meditation' is as follows: *Meditations on the First Philosophy in Which the Existence of God and the Distinction between Mind and Body are Demonstrated.*

[88] It is an open question whether (d) the project of refuting scepticism, unlike the other three, has widely come under review. I want to withhold my judgement about this, but I think that the project of refuting scepticism is not necessarily the primary goal of philosophy.

death of epistemology.

5-1. The End of First Philosophy

First Philosophy now faces serious difficulties. We already looked at how it comes under criticism in Chapters 2 and 3. For First Philosophy almost accords with the form of traditional epistemology that Paul Hirst and Wilfred Carr call into question. In those chapters, I adduced as the features of First Philosophy 'rationalism', 'foundationalism', individualism and a 'transcendental argument'. As mentioned earlier, these are expressed by John Greco as (a) the quest for certainty, (b) the attempt to find absolute foundations, (c) the attempt to legitimate other disciplines and (d) the project of refuting scepticism.

In effect, the individualistic bent of traditional Cartesian epistemology has long been under scrutiny. For example, criticisms of it are already found in the discourse in Kant and subsequent transcendental idealists. However, in the tradition of analytical philosophy within which this thesis is broadly situated and from which the philosophy of education originally took shape (on one dominant account), it was the 20th-century that witnessed the increase in criticisms of Cartesian individualism. A. C. Grayling, for instance, points out that:

> ...Russell, like all his predecessors since Descartes and like some of his successors such as H. H. Price and A. J. Ayer, accepted a crucially significant assumption from Descartes. This is that the right starting-point for an enquiry into knowledge is individual experience.... One of the major shifts in twentieth-century philosophy has been the rejection of this Cartesian assumption.... Both thoughts [thoughts that, if the right starting-point is individual experience, then scepticism inevitably comes into play and that the solipsistic would-be knower is impossible] push us firmly towards the thought that *the proper place to begin epistemology is, somehow, in the public domain* (Grayling, 1996, p. 56, my italics).

If the autonomous rational subject is meant to be the 'omniscient' subject, I agree that the individualism assuming such an entity should be repudiated. For, as rehearsed in Chapter 4, behind an individual lies a *social* world that enables her to live *qua* a human rather than *qua* a simply biological organism. Although the existence of a social world denies the notion of the omniscient individual from whose internal consciousness alone a social, external world is built up, it in no way necessitates a repudiation of the autonomous and rational individual. Hence, as seen in 4-3, a properly *socialised individual* makes perfect sense. A properly socialised individual is precisely what traditional individualist epistemology was in the dark about.

As shown in the above quote, it can be conceivable that the works of Russell and Ayer—and, accordingly, those of the logical positivists whose aim was a 'unity' of science by a logical analysis—fall, broadly speaking, within the scheme of First Philosophy. The second quarter of the 20th-century already witnessed Heidegger's radical overcoming of traditional philosophy and the later Wittgenstein's therapeutic farewell to it. But it is W. V. O. Quine who decisively set the direction in which Anglo-American analytical philosophy in a narrow sense has since moved. What Quine draws attention to is precisely one of the two themes to be pursued in this chapter: naturalistic epistemology. By naturalising epistemology, he 'undermined the last vestiges of First Philosophy and strongly endorsed *the continuity between philosophy and science*' (De Caro and Macarthur, 2004, p. 8, my italics). This view, giving rise to its variants, has been so influential that today 'scientific naturalism is the current orthodoxy, at least within Anglo-American philosophy' (ibid., p. 1). The impact of this strand amounts to the situation where:

Often scientific naturalists give the impression of thinking that *philosophy began with Quine*, and that to read earlier texts is to leave philosophy behind for the study of the history of ideas. (De Caro and Macarthur, 2004, p. 17, my

italics)

However, the dominance of scientific naturalism is not the case with the philosophy of education community: 'Quine's work, although enormously influential in mainstream philosophy, has had little obvious impact on education or the philosophy of education' (Winch and Gingell, 2008, p. 162). This is an interesting and important point. This chasm between general philosophy and the philosophy of education in terms of scientific naturalism is likely to be based on the unspoken assumptions that education, however defined, is a most characteristically normative enterprise and that it is an antinomy to have one foot in the scientific and another foot in the normative at one and the same time. Yet, there is much confusion in the latter assumption that the scientific and the normative cannot occupy the same place at the same time. Both of the two threads of thought addressed in this chapter—scientific naturalism and the end-of-epistemology argument[89]—seem to be tricked into this confusion in one way or another. One of the central aims which run through this thesis is to disown the ill-defined boundary between the normative and the scientific by reconsidering the realm of the natural.

Before embarking on the analysis of scientific naturalism and the death-of-epistemology argument, it would be helpful to comment on what is at issue in the discussion of what can/should come after First Philosophy.

Two conspicuous exemplars that challenge the traditional philosophical presumptions are Quine's 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' (1951) where he casts doubt on the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements as well as the notion of apriority and Edmond Gettier's 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?'

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[89] In spite of the lack of a shared preoccupation with Quinian scientific naturalism among philosophers of education, part of Richard Rorty's philosophical attitude which has an affinity with Quine's to a certain point has attracted much attention in the philosophy of education community: 'it [the Rortian relativisation of knowledge] seems more widely accepted in education than it is within epistemology' (Winch and Gingell, 2008, p. 75); '[in contemporary philosophy of education] Rorty and Derrida are much more likely to be discussed than Goodman, Quine, or Davidson' (Davis, 2003, p. 254).

(1963) where he plausibly offers counter-examples where a person has justified true belief but seems not to have knowledge.[90] These challenges prepare the way for naturalistic—in particular, psychological—perspectives to cope with the difficulties that bother traditional epistemology. A number of philosophers thus have come to consider that psychological causal processes through which beliefs are formed and sustained are critical in the analysis of knowledge. The philosopher of science Philip Kitcher states, in his 'The Naturalists Return', that:

> Analyses of the concept of knowledge (and, later, that of justification) were no longer confined to specifying the logical relations among propositions believed by the subject but could take into account the processes, including inevitably the psychological sub-processes, that causally generate states of belief. By the mid 1970s a powerful argument for psychologistic epistemology had emerged. (Kitcher, 1992, p. 60)

Psychologistic epistemology threatens to deprive the philosopher of her task. For, if epistemology is to be naturalised, then there would remain little, if any, room for philosophy in our intellectual enquiry. Traditionally it has been considered that the normative domain is precisely what philosophy can, first and foremost, engage in and that it cannot be reduced to scientific and empirical studies. Therefore it is of vital importance for philosophy in general and the philosophy of education in particular whether the normative region can be fully captured by the descriptive and nomological approach regarded as characteristic of the sciences. Although, like many other issues, the contention between naturalism and anti-naturalism in philosophy could be traced back to Ancient Greeks (Ancient Atomism), the present dispute over them, as mentioned, finds its origin in twentieth-century epistemology, especially in Quine's work. Let us then move on to Quine's naturalised epistemology.

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[90] The classical tripartite account of knowledge in philosophy is, as noted in 1-1, justified true belief.

5-2. Non-Normative Scientific Naturalism: W. V. O. Quine

Quine's 'Epistemology Naturalized' (1969) is the *locus classicus* in the research programme of naturalistic epistemology. In the course of this paper, we encounter Quine's famous declaration that epistemology 'simply falls into place *as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science*' (Quine, 1988a, p. 24, my italics). Put another way, Quine urges that philosophers (in line with British empiricism) should stop dreaming of deducing science from observations. That is:

> If we are out simply to understand the link between observation and science, we are well advised to use any available information, including that provided by the very science whose link with observation we are seeking to understand. (Quine, 1988a, p. 19)

In other words, 'the drive to base science on something firmer and prior in the subject's experience' must be dropped (ibid., p. 27). Quine illustrates this point by an appeal to his favourite parable of Neurath's boat, which I touched upon at the end of Chapter 4:

> We are after an understanding of science as an institution or process in the world, and we do not intend that understanding to be any better than the science which is its object. This attitude is indeed one that Neurath was already urging in Vienna Circle days, with his parable of the mariner who has to rebuild his boat while staying afloat in it. (Quine, 1988a, p. 24)

For Quine, this is the inevitable consequence of the 'abandonment of the goal of a first philosophy prior to natural science' (Quine, 1981, p. 67). In brief, naturalised epistemology no longer seeks to concern itself with the foundations of science. In this respect, Quine's account of naturalised epistemology by an appeal to Neurath's boat can be seen as a non-foundational explanation of human

knowledge and understanding.

Naturalised epistemology requires a radical departure from the conventionally taken-for-granted presumption that philosophy is a normative discipline and science a descriptive one. For example, in the modern epistemological tradition, it has been expected to articulate and identify criteria determining the *appropriateness* of belief, prior to and independently of scientific enquiry. From the point of view of the traditional programme of epistemology, thus, the naturalised epistemology Quine is recommending is merely circular reasoning specifically because traditional epistemology, as Jaegwon Kim puts it, has been 'an attempt at a "validation" or "rational reconstruction" of science' (Kim, 2000, p. 305).

However, using scientific information for epistemological arguments is, Quine responds, neither viciously circular nor question-begging, once we discard the dream of First Philosophy—i.e. the attempt to deduce science from the subject's observations (namely, from the given sense data). For Quine, conversely, seeing epistemology as *a priori* concerned with the normative enquiry in the Cartesian and British Empiricist sense *is* question-begging insofar as causation is confused with justification in the account of how minds are in touch with the outside world. This view of Quine's might pose a threat to the philosophical study of education. For, as mentioned, the implications of Quine's conception may diminish the sense in which philosophy is a normative discipline; and, more fundamentally, they may obscure the sense of the very notion of normativity. In other words, Quine's naturalised epistemology raises a foundational problem for many philosophers of education's underlying assumption that education is self-evidently normative and thus that (at least part of) education is not apt for scientific or empirical study. (For example, David Carr says that 'the forms of human association characteristic of educational engagement are not really apt for scientific or empirical study at all' (Carr, 2003, pp. 54-5, cited in Phillips, 2008).) But, the threat posed by naturalistic epistemology is, in my view, spurious. This means that if science comes into the picture, that does not entail that normativity

is in turn excluded from it.

A large part of what underlies his naturalised epistemology can be found in his influential paper, 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism'. There he makes appeal to 'holism' and 'gradualism'. Put crudely, holism is the view that it is impossible to verify or falsify individual propositions and thus it is *whole* theories rather than single hypotheses that are to be examined; 'gradualism' is the view that it is impossible to demarcate analytic from synthetic statements and therefore it is only a difference in degree rather than in kind that exists among them and hence that what matters in considering the difference in degree is *pragmatic* considerations. Given the fact that Quine, as is often pointed out, confuses (identifies) analyticity with apriority in this paper,[91] his conclusion may be understandable. That is, once the boundary between the analytic and the synthetic disappears, the boundary between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori* will also disappear. What follows from this line of reasoning is, then, that it is only a difference in degree rather than that in kind that exists between 'formal' enquiry (philosophy, logic, mathematics, etc) and the empirical sciences (physics, chemistry, biology, etc). Hence we see a continuity between philosophy and science. Quine's point is encapsulated in the following quote:

> I see philosophy not as an *a priori* propaedeutic or groundwork for science, but as *continuous with science*. I see philosophy and science as in the same boat—a boat which, to revert to Neurath's figure as I so often do, we can rebuild only at sea while staying afloat in it. There is no external vantage point, *no first philosophy*. All scientific findings, all scientific conjectures that are at present plausible, are therefore in my view as welcome for use in philosophy as elsewhere. (Quine, 1988b, p. 39, my italics)

I am at peace with Quine with regard to the stalemate of First Philosophy. In other words, I stand in support of Quine's aspiration to set out a non-foundational

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[91] For example, see Putnam (1983, p. 87).

account of human knowledge and understanding by an appeal to the parable of Neurath's boat.

However, when he takes a second step, I do not see much reason to follow Quine. For it is probably fair to say that when mentioning the continuity of philosophy with science, Quine suggests that philosophical problems come under the realm of science. Put another way, it may be tempting to argue that Quine's naturalised epistemology is simply the project to reverse the positions between something foundational (explicans) and something to be explained (explanandum). That is: While the temptation of First Philosophy was to base science on epistemology-oriented philosophy, the aspiration of Quine's naturalised epistemology is to construe epistemological issues under the umbrella of scientific research. His preference for science over philosophy is embodied in the following remarks:

> Naturalism does not repudiate epistemology, but assimilates it to empirical psychology. Science itself tells us that our information about the world is limited to irritations of our surfaces, and then *the epistemological question is in turn a question within science: the question how we human animals can have managed to arrive at science from such limited information.* Our scientific epistemologist pursues this inquiry and comes out with an account that has a good deal to do with the learning of language and with the neurology of perception. (Quine, 1981, p. 72, my italics).

However, Quine's argument that scientific epistemology can take traditional epistemological issues in its stride does not seem to be true. For there is little sense that reductionism, whether one from science to philosophy or the other way round, suffices to settle the main epistemological questions. The fact is that philosophy and science, or, more specifically, normative deliberation and

empirical description are interacting, as are theory and practice.[92] This is to argue that it is impossible to deduce philosophy from science any more than the other way round, precisely because they do not exist in isolation. In a nutshell, I also think that philosophy and science are continuous in an important sense but not in Quine's sense. His claim that '[a]ll scientific findings, all scientific conjectures that are at present plausible, are…as welcome for use in philosophy as elsewhere' seems an indication of his apparent lack of serious attention to the fact that the actual scientific enquiry never operates without considerations that are essentially part of the philosophic enterprise—e.g. considerations relating to rationality, normativity and justification. To the extent that philosophical considerations are thoroughly enmeshed into empirical descriptions of the world, it is not unfair to say that the natural scientific enterprise is not as naturalistic as Quine seems to assume. In other words, the sciences are also embedded in something normative. To make this point more explicit, it would be appropriate to focus on the issue of normativity.

As noted earlier, Quine's condemnation of 'the hopelessness of the Cartesian "quest for certainty"'—namely, his denial of First Philosophy—was not new even at the time of his writing the above papers. What was new, rather, is his insistence that the negation of the Cartesian programme should be driven to 'discredit the very conception of *normative epistemology*' (Kim, 2000, p. 303, my italics). Instead of normativity, Quine stresses 'the *factual* and *descriptive* character' of his naturalised epistemology; that is, rather than the relation of justification, he foregrounds the causal-nomological relation, thereby setting aside 'the entire framework of justification-centred epistemology' (Kim, 2000, p. 305). In short, as Kim puts it, 'it is normativity that Quine is asking us to repudiate' and, in Quine's naturalised picture, '[e]pistemology is to go out of the business of justification' (ibid.). It is specifically this claim that makes Quine's naturalised epistemology both influential and contentious.

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[92] Recall that, taking a broad view, the present forms of science are a reflection of how we have conducted our lives in human history.

The relation between norms and descriptions has been one of philosophy's most difficult traditional problems. Hume's dictum that we cannot deduce an ought from an is still carries considerable weight. On this issue, the conventional aspiration of philosophers is to establish a philosophical discipline of epistemology by which to evaluate empirical claims against the available evidence. Therefore they have striven to establish *a priori* norms. For, it has been assumed, as Harold Brown explains, that '[*a*] *priori* norms would provide an anchor outside of the process of empirical investigation that would provide a noncircular foundation for empirical inquiry' (Brown, 1996, p. 23). Philosophy has engaged in the pursuit of the *a priori* sphere under the presumption that the *a priori* is the object of conceptual analysis that owes nothing to resources outside of one's internal reflection. As noted, Quine draws the conclusion, as a result of denying the notion of apriority, that 'the *normative* or *evaluative* issue of whether we have good reasons or justification for our beliefs would be simply replaced by the *empirical* issue of how those beliefs are causally generated' (BonJour, 2002, p. 239, italics in original). Harvey Siegel calls this sort of epistemology 'non-normative naturalism' (Siegel, 1996). Once the *a priori* sphere is removed from philosophical enquiry, Quine claims, there would practically remain no privileged terrain to which only philosophy has access. All subject matters will then inevitably be under scientific and empirical investigations.

The task of the remaining part of this section is to clarify why non-normative naturalism has its own set of problems. I develop my doubts about non-normative naturalism by an appeal to Hilary Putnam's counter-argument against the sharp 'fact-value-dichotomy' and to John McDowell's conception of 'second nature'. The argument made below will provide some sense of what it is to live in *our* world as intellectual and sentient beings as opposed to merely inhabiting a meaningless environment as purely biological organisms.

The kernel of Putnam's accusation of the sharp 'fact-value-dichotomy' is that value judgements are ineluctably an integral part of scientific enquiry. Putnam adduces the notions of, for instance, coherence, simplicity and plausibility (and

sometimes even beauty) as judgements that are indispensable for scientific investigations. The price of not fully acknowledging that scientific enquiry presupposes evaluative values in the sense that it draws, at the deepest level, on the notions of 'simplicity', 'coherence', 'plausibility' and the like would be to see scientific description of the world as purely mirroring 'the way the world really is'. The essential point Putnam makes is that it is wrong to draw a sharp line between fact and value. Fact and value go hand in hand in some important sense:

> [J]ust as the primary point of the judgement that someone is cruel is usually to evaluate rather than merely to describe..., so the primary point of the judgement that a theory or an explanation is simple or coherent is usually to evaluate rather than merely to describe...(Putnam, 2004, p. 69)

What is made explicit here is that it is misleading to suppose that scientific enquiry is the only description of the world as it is. The reason why the sciences are not purely descriptive in this sense is not because they have not become sophisticated enough to eliminate the evaluative or normative sphere from scientific enquiry, but because the evaluative or normative dimension is a *sine qua non* for our understanding of the world as long as we are humans as concept-employing and self-aware creatures.[93] 'Without the cognitive values of coherence, simplicity, and instrumental efficacy', as Putnam pithily puts the argument, '*we have no world and no facts...*' (Putnam, 1990, p. 139, my italics).

As long as the sciences cannot thoroughly explain what the nature of value is (because they presuppose some sort of value), it is reasonable to consider that 'our conceptions of value are historically conditioned' (Putnam, 1990, p. 117). Putnam claims that:

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[93] One corollary to this point is that the content of science never stands independently of the method of science (Putnam, 1981, p. 191). Another way of putting this point is to say that since the sciences are not purely descriptive in the relevant sense, human beings at least partly exercise our influence on which aspect of 'nature' is revealed (to us).

Our views on the nature of coherence and simplicity are *historically conditioned*, just as our views on the nature of justice or goodness are. There is no neutral conception of rationality to which one can appeal when the nature of rationality is itself what is at issue (Putnam, 1990, pp. 138-9, my italics).[94]

This line of thought might be greeted with the charge of a thoroughgoing historicism. It is true that Putnam's argument brings to the forefront the interpenetration between conceptual engagement and empirical description, but this is not meant to endorse a rampant historicism. Key to making sense of this complicated issue is the way we conceive of the 'natural'. McDowell's conception of 'second nature', which I introduced in 4-2, contains a vital clue as to how to conceive of the natural without lapsing into either a thoroughgoing historicism or non-normative naturalism. So I look in a little depth at the fundamental thrust of McDowell's argument on the second nature, which serves more than one purpose, for it also has to do with the issues raised by Rorty in the next section.

One central theme which runs through McDowell's argument is to exorcise (rather than answer) the philosophical questions about 'how minds can be in touch with the world' by reclaiming the 'world-directedness' of experience as 'a tribunal' which has been obscured by 'natural-scientific intelligibility' with the development of modern science.[95] The familiar contrast opened up by modernity is between a *sui generis* space of reasons—'a logical space that is organized by justificatory relations between its inhabitants' (McDowell, 2004, p. 91)—and 'the space of subsumption under, as we say, natural law' (ibid., p. 92) or, wrongly on

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[94] The effect of exaggerating the degree to which non-deductive elements filtrate scientific enquiry might make the Putnam view look as if natural properties were merely human conceptual products. However, as explicated in the previous chapters, the dispute between radical constructivism often associated with relativism and realist positivism often associated with scientism seems no longer really in dispute. The real point is far more subtle, which will be elaborated on in the text that follows.

[95] I heavily rely on McDowell's *Mind and World* (1996) (especially his introduction to the paperback edition) and 'Naturalism in the Philosophy of Mind' (2004) as main sources for the description of his relevant argument.

McDowell's view, 'the logical space of nature' (McDowell, 1996, p, xiv). The general temptation to place knowing and thinking in 'the normative framework constituted by the space of reasons' (ibid.) on the one hand and to place 'empirical description' of the natural in the logical space of nature on the other raises the question as to how to 'reconnect the knowing subject with a natural world from which it seems to have withdrawn' (McDowell, 2004, p. 93). Obviously reconnecting the two logical spaces which are distinct in kind is an intractable problem. One option is the course Quine takes, which McDowell calls 'bald naturalism' or a 'restrictive naturalism': namely, 'the equation of nature with the realm of law' (ibid., p. 94).[96] This view places the concept of experience in the logical space of nature; to put it more clearly, bald naturalism aims to '[reconstruct] the structure of the logical space of reasons in terms that belong in the logical space of natural-scientific understanding' (McDowell, 1996, p. xxiii). In brief, 'the logical space of reasons…is just part of the logical space of nature' (ibid., p. xviii). McDowell rejects this view by arguing that:

> [W]hat the modern scientific revolution yielded was clarity about the realm of law, and that is not the same as clarity *about nature*. Sellars's contrast is between the space of reasons and the realm of law [rather than the realm of nature], and it need not imply that the space of reason is alien to the natural. (McDowell, 2004, p. 94, italics in original)

It is precisely the conception of second nature that gives force to McDowell's claim that the realm of the natural is not identical to that of law. McDowell, drawing on Aristotle's concept of 'practical reason', accounts for the character of the notion of a second nature: 'human beings are intelligibly initiated into this stretch of the space of reasons by ethical upbringing, which instills the appropriate shape into their lives. The resulting habits of thought and action are second nature'

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[96] Another option is to renounce empiricism, which Rorty with Davidson (and Sellars) endorses. This shall be analysed in 5-3.

(McDowell, 1996, p. 84). In this picture, knowing and thinking are placed in the *sui generis* space of reasons which is distinct from 'the logical space within which natural scientific description situates things' (ibid., p. xix). The benefit of thinking this way is that we do not need to deny either that 'the very idea of experience is the idea of something natural' or 'that empirical thinking is answerable to experience' (ibid.). Of primary importance is the insight that there is no need to equate the logical space of natural-scientific understanding with the logical space of nature (McDowell, 2004, p. 95). What McDowell dubs a 'liberal naturalism' expands what is regarded as the natural, thereby enabling us to realise that '[t]hinking and knowing are part of our way of being animals' (ibid.).

The whole line of thought of this Ph. D thesis, as echoed, turns on the presumption that the place in which we human beings as intellectual and sentient organisms live is 'our world' and this conception of our world takes a clue from McDowell's account of the natural (for human beings). If one is content with staying down at the natural-scientific level in our understanding of the world, there might seem to be only one kind of reality (which is largely how the world makes sense to proponents of bald naturalism or what is labelled in this thesis non-normative naturalism). I have no wish to dispute the achievements of natural-scientific enquiry at all. Yet, the conception of *our* world or the world of a second nature poses a crucial challenge to the view that the subject matter of natural science is identical to Reality as it is. There are two significant points to be made here.

First, the subject matter of natural science, which may be called 'a bare presence' (McDowell, 1996, p. 19) or 'things in themselves', is placed under some threat by the fact that we live in *our* world or the world of a second nature. It might be of use here to recall Kant's insight referred to in Chapter 2: the world has *no* language of its own. To put it in McDowell's terms: 'a bare presence cannot be a ground for anything' (ibid.); and 'if we let bare presences into the picture, they figure as the only objects of awareness in play' (ibid., p. 21). It should be borne in mind that natural sciences are in operation in splendid ways in this context.

The full realisation of the first point forces us into the second point. That is, the subject matter of natural-scientific investigations may be a core of reality we human beings have but it is never the whole of it. Now that we can think knowing and thinking are part of our nature (rather than the 'experiential intake' of 'an extra-conceptual Given' (McDowell, 1996, p. 9) that is supposed to be completely explained in physical or neuro-physiological terms), there is good reason to see that the kind of reality that is explained in the language of physics falls short of recognising multiple strata of reality in *our* world or the world of a second nature. In short, just as human beings are not just biological but also essentially social beings, so reality in our world of a second nature is composed of diverse layers of social reality. This is grounds for doubting the idea that explanations as to, for example, human psychological feelings of joy or sadness are to be reduced to a particular order of certain firing neurons in the brain and that there is nothing further to be said on this matter. I am not denying that there is some truth in physical or neuro-physiological accounts, but I am claiming that it is egregiously wrong to accept them as the only truth. One phenomenon in *our* world, for instance, my motivation to study philosophy, can be construed in physical, neurological, biological, psychological, sociological, socio-historical, poetic and other various ways. These expositions cast light on different levels of reality. It is a mistake to reduce levels of reality to one definite description of Reality.[97] In other words, fully realizing the achievements of physics is perfectly compatible with not acknowledging physics as the model of science. This is a trivial conclusion, given that there is no unambiguous definition of *the* science, or in other words, there is no transcendental science which arbitrates between the sciences. Put another way, what science is is far less clear than proponents of non-normative naturalism may hope. As De Caro and Macarthur put the point:

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[97] Stating that there are levels of reality does not mean to imply relativism. For different levels of reality is part of a totality. The point is that *it is misdirected to regard any one way of describing reality as the exhaustive description of the whole totality.*

[T]here is no single method or set of methods that is properly called *the* scientific method... [and] that there is no clear, uncontroversial, and useful definition of science to do the substantial work scientific naturalists require of it' (De Caro and Macarthur, 2004, p. 15, italics in original)

Viewed in this way, it is clear that there are enough uncertainties in the attempt of non-normative naturalism to replace traditional epistemology with empirical psychology. Part of philosophical enquiry does not fall into a chapter of science partly because there is no scientific method which explains why some epistemological questions can be settled by empirical psychology and partly because empirical psychology is in fact embedded in something normative.[98]

To sum up, the basic assumption of Quine's naturalised epistemology (non-normative naturalism) seems to be shaken by a suspicion that naturalised epistemology confines the realm of nature to the first nature, as it were. The first nature is necessary because and only insofar as it is the physical environmental condition on which we human beings, together with other living organisms, depend and without which we cannot even live. Still, as has been reiterated, the place human beings as concept-employing and self-conscious beings inhabit is, from the outset, *our* world or the world of a second nature filled with meanings *sui generis* to us rather than a meaningless environment. This recognition does not allow us to identify 'the way the world really is' with the particular way we describe it. To put this point in the terms I borrowed from McDowell, it could be remarked that the former belongs in the 'first nature' and the latter in the 'second nature'. The fear that the second nature distorts the very meaning of 'nature' is dispelled by the idea that '[e]xperiences already have conceptual content' (McDowell, 1996, p. 10): that is, 'Actualizations of conceptual capacities, which

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[98] As mentioned earlier, my main concern here is with articulating the reasons why non-normative naturalism cannot stand rather than with criticising Quine's own views. Quine obviously argues for non-normative naturalism (at least in 'Epistemology Naturalized'), but it is also true that he, in his later works, tries not to rule out the normative, as Putnam says (Putnam, 1983, p. 244).

as such belong in the logical space of reasons, can be natural in a different sense from the one that figures in the admittedly well-drawn contrast with the logical space of reasons' (McDowell, 2009, p. 248). Given this interpenetrating relation between conceptual norms and empirical descriptions, it turns out that philosophy and science go hand in hand but in a way different from Quine's sense.

As has been seen, Quine takes his naturalised epistemology to be a successor subject to traditional epistemology. This section, however, has revealed the sense in which it cannot become an heir to traditional epistemology. If the discussion thus far is plausible, then we are left with the situation where neither First Philosophy nor (non-normative) naturalised epistemology is defensible. Is there any room left for the traditional epistemological programme? It is Richard Rorty who gives the clear answer, 'no', to this question. Rorty stands in line with Quine in denying philosophy the status of the 'queen of the sciences'—i.e. First Philosophy. However, Rorty diverges from Quine when naturalised epistemology is offered as the successor subject to traditional epistemology, for Rorty believes that nothing should succeed traditional epistemology. Rorty's inclination is to urge that the whole enterprise of 'Cartesian and British-empiricist epistemology' (McDowell, 2000, p. 111) is futile and that no attempt to fill the void left by the demise of such traditional epistemology is promising. This is the 'death-of-epistemology' argument, which is the central issue of the next section.

5-3. The Death-of-Epistemology Argument: Richard Rorty

'Death notices' of philosophy were spread in the 1970s by such works as Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) and Michael Williams's *Groundless Belief* (1977) (Williams, 1992, p. 88). Williams argues that:

> Rorty is a critic of the very idea of a 'theory of knowledge' and hence of philosophy itself, conceived as a distinct, professionalized research activity with epistemological questions at its core. It is Rorty's work that has done

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most to fuel speculation about the death of epistemology. (Willams, 2005, p. 449)

Noteworthy here is that it is 'the death of epistemology', not 'the death of philosophy', that Rorty feels impelled to declare. Rorty himself makes this point in his philosophical self-portrait:

> [A]nti-representationalism was the principal thesis of *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* 1979, a book which went on to argue that *the end of representationalism meant the end of epistemologically-centred philosophy (though not of philosophy itself).*' (Rorty, 1997b, p. 489, my italics)

What he is keen to declare the end of is epistemologically centred philosophy ('philosophy-as-epistemology' in Williams's term), which is almost equivalent to what we have seen as First Philosophy and 'foundationalist epistemology-centred philosophy' which the later Paul Hirst and Wilfred Carr castigate. Put more clearly, Rorty's target is epistemology in the Cartesian and British-empiricist tradition. I stand in line with Rorty only insofar as he takes issue with First Philosophy as well as with Quinian naturalised epistemology and tries to reconstruct philosophical enquiry in a non-representationalist way.

Rorty has an affinity with Quine to the extent that he sees First Philosophy as implausible. Rorty's line of argument, which he sometimes calls 'new fuzziness', emanates from the holistic and pragmatic elements shared by Quine, Sellars and the later Wittgenstein:

> ... I interpret Sellars's attack on "givenness" and Quine's attack on "necessity" as the crucial steps in undermining the possibility of a "theory of knowledge." The holism and pragmatism common to both philosophers, and which they share with the later Wittgenstein, are the lines of thought within analytic philosophy which I wish to extend. (Rorty, 1980, p. 10)

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Rorty sees that modern epistemology-oriented philosophy has been haunted by the desire to resolve the structure of knowledge provided by the picture of representation in a foundationalist way. As a result of expelling this misguided ambition, we are, Rorty argues, led to the following picture, which is far beyond Quine's:

> [O]nce one puts aside foundationalism, representationalism, and the sterile quarrels between 'realists' and 'anti-realists', one comes to see *philosophy as continuous with science on one side and with literature on the other*. (Rorty, 1997b, p. 489, my italics)

Quine, as mentioned, urges us to see philosophy as continuous with science, but Rorty takes a further step of blurring the distinction between philosophy and literature[99]—namely, between philosophy and almost all other social practices.

As seen, the naturalised epistemology Quine proposes 'is to be a kind of epistemology after all, a "successor subject" to classical epistemology' (Kim, 2000, p. 304). This implies that while placing emphasis on (i) refined verificationism and (ii) holism without the notion of apriority to overcome the two 'dogmas' of empiricism, Quine still abides in the empiricist framework. As Donald Davidson on whose work Rorty heavily relies puts it, Quine's idea still starts with 'our sense organs and build[s] everything from there, and that is what Descartes and the empiricists have in common' (Davidson, 1994, p. 49). For Rorty, as for Davidson, our sensory stimulations are not the ultimate epistemological starting-point because the representationalist view that the internal mind or inner sense represents the external world or outer reality has lost its force. Rorty, with Davidson, urges thus that we should discard the empiricist epistemological

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[99] In Rorty's eyes, Europe, unlike the U.S., has the tradition in which philosophy is read as continuous with literature. Rorty refers to Valéry and Sartre as representatives of the tradition (Rorty, 1994, p. 113).

framework—i.e. Cartesian and British-empiricist epistemology—to which Quine adheres. Rorty argues, *contra* Quine, that 'I…criticize what I regard as reactionary attempts to treat empirical psychology or philosophy of language as "successor subjects" to epistemology' (Rorty, 1980, p. 11). However urgent it seems to fill the vacuum left by the demise of the old epistemology, we must, Rorty claims, not to try to fill it (ibid., p. 315). Rather than expect another academic discipline to succeed foundationalist epistemology, Rorty puts forward hermeneutics—later on he comes to prefer the term, 'pragmatism'. However, of course, for Rorty, hermeneutics is not a successor subject to classical epistemology.[100]

Rorty puts ceaseless *conversation* among human beings—i.e. 'the practice of justifying one's assertions to one's fellow-humans' (Rorty, 1997a, p. 4)—at the core of hermeneutics or pragmatism (which, as will be seen, has caused most controversy). Since the universal tribunal from which other academic disciplines are stratified is now repudiated, Rorty takes it to be a natural step to blur the distinction not just between philosophy and science but between philosophy and other human social practices like art and literature. No privilege is given to philosophy or science any longer. The only arbiter to decide what to choose and what to prioritise in each circumstance is left to 'conversation' among people involved.

However, it is not entirely clear how much sense Rorty's argument makes. In spite of his recurrent repudiation of relativism,[101] it does seem that his discourse does not completely dispel the fear that it leaves room for a species of relativistic views by dropping the significance of making ourselves 'answerable to the world' in favour of the significance of being 'answerable to our fellows'.[102]

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[100] It may be that Rorty chooses the term, hermeneutics, which is far less familiar in Anglophone philosophy to make clear that it has nothing to do with the role the traditional epistemology has been assigned. Rorty notes, especially in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Rorty, 1980, p. 357), that he himself is greatly influenced by Gadamer.

[101] Rorty denies relativism's assumption that one can stand within and outside one's language at one and the same time (Rorty, 1998, p. 51).

[102] I borrow the phrases put in scare quotes from McDowell (McDowell, 2000, p. 110), who defends 'a minimal empiricism' (McDowell, 1996, p. xv), which shall be elaborated later in the text.

This issue is worth serious consideration. For, as alluded to earlier, Rorty's argument seems more widely influential in education studies than Quine's physicalism. Part of the reason may be that Rorty's argument lends theoretical support to relativism or contexualism which diverts many educational researchers' attention from 'the logical, the universal, the timeless and the general' to 'the rhetorical, the particular, the local and the timely'. This tendency has encouraged suspicion of Enlightenment rationality and the prevalence of constructivism based on the idea of 'meaning-making' (Derry, 2008).[103] In what follows, therefore, I first take a quick look at some characteristics of his pragmatism and then elicit the predicament of his argument by making reference to his confused 'naturalism'—the kind of naturalism which misplaces the boundary between the normative and the natural by its failure to recognise the full implications of the fact that we live in *our* world or the world of a second nature.

Rorty's version of pragmatism has the following three salient features: First, pragmatism is 'simply anti-essentialism applied to notions like "truth," "knowledge," "language," "morality," and similar objects of philosophical theorizing'[104]; second, 'there is no epistemological difference between truth about what ought to be and truth about what is, nor any metaphysical difference between facts and values, nor any methodological difference between morality and science'; and third, '[pragmatism] is the doctrine that there are no constraints on inquiry save conversational ones' (Rorty, 1982, pp. 162-165). Put another way, these features can be formulated as follows: the first point is Rorty's anti-essentialism—i.e. his warning against playing the game of conventional epistemology; the second is, more specifically, his negation of the notion of an universal aspect of humanity, which is, as shall be analysed, underpinned by his

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[103] Rorty's aim is to reconstruct philosophy as a generator and mediator of the social practice of conversation, still in support of 'Enlightenment liberalism' but not of 'Enlightenment rationalism'.

[104] Indeed, it is precisely when speaking in *negative* terms that Rorty's argument is most expressive and eloquent. He says that 'we [pragmatists] define ourselves in negative terms. We call ourselves "anti-Platonists" or "antimetaphysicians" or "antifoundationalists"' (Rorty, 1999, p. xvi).

'naturalism'; and the third is his recommendation to replace truth-oriented epistemology yearning for 'unconditionality' with philosophy craving for a better future through the social practice of conversation.[105] In a nutshell, Rorty prefers, for example, justification to truth, hope to knowledge and democracy to philosophy. (This is the line of thought Rorty tries to pursue under the name of 'edifying philosophy'. He claims: 'Since "education" sounds a bit too flat, and *Bildung* a bit too foreign, I shall use "edification" to stand for this project of finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking' (Rorty, 1980, p. 360).)

However, one would be tempted to ask: 'What makes conversations possible?' or 'On what grounds can we converse with one another?' For Rorty, these questions do not make sense. This is because it is precisely such a philosophical urge against which Rorty warns.[106] Rorty induces us *not* to engage in a philosophical enterprise to uncover something firmer or deeper behind the surface of conversations. Rather, the sheer fact that conversations are being performed here and now is the correct starting-point. Rorty sees no point in trying to furnish philosophical foundations to conversations specifically and to human social practices generally—such as politics and education. He, for example, asserts that 'I am dubious about the relevance of philosophy to education, for the same reason that I am dubious about the relevance of philosophy to politics' (Rorty, 1990, p. 41). Philosophers of education who are preoccupied with 'philosophical' discussions,[107] Rorty warns, may unnecessarily risk separating themselves 'from the people whom they are trying to help' (ibid., p. 44). What is required of the philosopher of education is, like the philosopher in general, to

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[105] Rorty suggests that more emphasis should be placed on 'the conditional character of justification' rather than on 'the unconditional character of truth' (Rorty, 2000, p. 5).

[106] Rorty, it could be argued, stands in line with the later Wittgenstein and Davidson insofar as they consider it pointless to ask philosophical questions like: 'What is meaning?' and 'What does understanding consist in?' Their attitude may be called anti-Socratic in the sense that, whereas Socrates believes that we know less than we think we know, they believe that we know more than we think we know.

[107] What Rorty has in mind here is 'contemporary reformers who borrow their rhetoric from Nietzsche, Foucault, and Lyotard' (Rorty, 1990, p. 44).

become a facilitator of conversations, by creating and offering new, various vocabularies. Philosophers of education should, Rorty claims, aim to lead the learner to 'hope'.[108] Rorty thinks of 'hope, rather than truth, as what education is supposed to get across' (ibid., p. 44). By 'hope' he means 'the ability to believe that the future will be unspecifiably different from, and unspecifiably freer than, the past' and it is 'the condition of growth' (Rorty, 1999, p. 120).

There is, on Rorty's view, no point in worrying that we might merely be making judgements on a case-by-case basis irrespective of how things really are. For, the notion of truth finds no important place in Rorty's picture. On the basis of his reading of Davidson's work, Rorty argues that 'nobody should even try to specify the nature of truth' (Rorty, 1998, p. 3). Rorty thinks that truth, if anything, is neither stable nor convergent, but rather context-based and even *ad hoc*. This view is elevated to his remark that 'the only criterion we have for applying the word "true" is justification, and justification is always *relative* to an audience' (ibid., p. 4, my italics).[109] As long as there is nothing that is true once and for all, 'truth is not a goal of inquiry' (ibid., p. 3).

I do not deny that there is some truth and an intuitive appeal in Rorty's conversationalist view. However, it is tempting to say that, whatever benefit it may offer, Rorty's argument brings some new nagging problems. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to analysing how far his views are confusing and confused by focusing on a little-discussed issue, namely, his 'naturalism'.

Rorty's Naturalism

Rorty takes issue with Quine's naturalised epistemology. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which Rorty is also committed to a type of naturalistic view. In effect, as

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[108] It merits mention that Rorty's 'hope' is quite approximate to what John Dewey calls 'growth'.

[109] 'Justification' in Rorty's conception takes a different shape from that in philosophy-as-epistemology. Rorty asserts that 'justification is not a matter of a special relation between ideas (or words) and objects, but of conversation, of social practice' (Rorty, 1980, p. 170). Put the other way round, once we 'give up the idea of context-free justification', Rorty argues, we can 'give up the idea of 'knowledge' as a suitable object of study—an idea which Descartes and Kant inherited from Plato's *Theaetetus*' (Rorty, 1999, p. 34)

Brandom sees it, 'Rorty's pragmatism is... a form of naturalism' (Brandom, 2000b, p. xiv). The most crucial consequence of this is, in my view, Rorty's great ambivalence about the importance of human beings as language users, thereby obscuring the sense that we human beings live in *our* world or the world of a second nature. His endorsing of the ill-defined boundary between the natural and the normative diminishes the basic thrust of his argument, as is the case with Quine's. Drawing on a 'Darwinian point of view' (Rorty, 2000, p. 14) which pervades Rorty's discourse, he thinks that 'the ability to use language is, like the prehensile thumb, just one more gimmick which organisms have developed to increase their chances of survival' (ibid.).[110] Rorty gives no more special status to the human ability to use language—i.e. concept and thought—than to the ability to walk long distances and to digest vegetables. Thus, as Brandom says, '[o]ur relations to our environment are for Rorty purely *causal* ones' (Brandom, 2000b, p. xiv, my italics); to put it another way, as Williams says, 'Rorty thinks that the idea of "answering to the world" confuses causation with justification' (Williams, 1992, p. 431). This view, as seen in 5-2, is in tension with McDowell's account of how we human beings live in the world of a second nature on the basis of the first nature which I think highlights the way we live as reflective and self-aware beings.

The focal point of their dispute is on the notion of answerability to the world. While McDowell defends 'a minimal empiricism' to secure our answerability to the world without lapsing into the Myth of the Given—roughly the idea that an independent outer reality is mediated to sense experience as foundations for empirical knowledge—, Rorty asserts that 'I see nothing worth saving in empiricism' (Rorty, 1998, p. 150) and that all that matters is the practice of justifying one's assertions to one's fellow-humans rather than to the world. The brilliance of Rorty's end-of-epistemology argument is that it finds it pointless to bridge the seeming gulf between a *sui generis* space of reasons in which the

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[110] 'Darwinian processes are not driven by the need, not to ascertain truth, but to survive and reproduce' (Malik, 2005, p. 64).

knowing subject belongs and the logical space of nature in which a natural world belongs. Yet, the way he presents this idea diminishes the brilliance. That is, Rorty contrasts the space of reasons and the space of causes, whereas McDowell sets the space of reasons against 'the space of subsumption under, as we say, natural law' whereby there is room for 'the possibility that reasons might *be* causes' (McDowell, 2004, p. 92, italics in original). In McDowell's picture, 'powers to acquire knowledge are part of our natural endowment' (ibid.). McDowell rebuts Rorty's setting up of the contrast by saying that:

> Rorty has causation, just as such, on the opposite side of the Sellarsian divide from the considerations about justification or warrant that are the proper environment for classifying states or episodes as cases of knowledge. That means that Rorty lacks a resource that would surely be needed if we tried to put detail into the thought that capacities to acquire knowledge are natural powers. (McDowell, 2004, p. 292)

Rorty's quarrel with this charge is that McDowell's worry about 'the world-directedness of empirical thinking' (McDowell, 1996, p. xvii) is pressing only through the lens of empiricism:

> Brandom, Sellars, and Davidson can all agree that the space of reasons as we find is also, by and large, the shape of the world. Because most of our beliefs must be true, we can make no sense of the idea that a great gulf might separate the way the world is and the way we describe it. Unlike McDowell, however, they think that the world shapes the space of reasons not by "vouchsafing facts" to us but by exercising brute causal pressure on us. *Just as the brute pressure of the environment led to successive stages of biological evolution, so it led to the successive stages of cultural evolution.* (Rorty, 1998, pp. 147-8, my italics)

Rorty's conviction that most of our beliefs must be true turns largely on Davidson's idea of 'triangulation'—namely, 'three-way relation among two speakers and a common world' (Davidson, 2001, p. xv). Rorty claims that all we need is intersubjective agreement through conversation[111] and that takes the place of the traditional notion of objectivity. However, it is still an open question whether this view which completely renounces empiricism calms the fear that the way we describe the world might have nothing to do with the way the world is. The idea that capacities to acquire knowledge are *natural* powers carried forward by McDowell appears to provide a more rational approach to understanding what it is for human beings to live in the world of a second nature on the basis of the first nature.

The price of losing a resource to explain how we human beings live in *our* world or the world of a second nature as both evolved, biological organisms and as intellectual, sentient beings would be to have difficulties in dispelling the anxiety associated with a Darwinian point of view, one that there is 'no room left in the universe for genuine meaning' (Dennett, 1996, p. 189). The philosophical machinery Rorty forges to reduce the anxiety often seems little more than a species of linguistic idealism in which 'there is no Way the World is' (Rorty, 1998, p. 25), despite his emphasis on the brute causal pressure of the environment on us. There seems to be some confusion here. Rorty argues that:

> [I]f one does not take knowledge to be accurate representation of reality, or truth as correspondence to reality, then it is harder to be a convergentist, and harder to think of the space of reasons as finite and structured. (Rorty, 2000, p. 12)

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[111] Intersubjective unforced agreement is achieved, based on what Rorty calls 'cheerful ethnocentrism' (Rorty, 2000, p. 20). Its fundamental thrust is the view that it is always possible to 'enlarge the scope of "us" by regarding other people, or cultures, as members of the same community of enquiry as ourselves—by treating them as part of the group among whom unforced agreement is to be sought' (Rorty, 1991, p. 38)

The representatives of what Rorty calls a 'convergentist' are Habermas, Apel and Putnam. They think, Rorty says, that 'one way to help create a cosmopolitan community is to study the nature of something called "rationality" which all human beings share, something already present within them but insufficiently acknowledged' (Rorty, 2000, p. 14). Rorty, is quite vocal in his doubts about such a view. He claims that the practice of justifying one's assertions to one's fellow-humans 'may gradually create universality', and yet he 'cannot see any sense in which it [Rorty's conversationalist view] recognises a previously existent universality' (Rorty, 2000, p. 17). However, his assertion that 'truth' or 'reality' turns on human conversations alone seems to divert Rorty into linguistic idealism. In other words, one crucial source of Rorty's confused naturalism, I argue, is that while tending to slight the normative notion of reason by seeing the human capacity to use language as merely a gimmick appearing at an evolutionary stage of *Homo Sapiens*, he credits linguistic conversations with the most crucial place in our life. Another way of putting this is to say that Rorty seems to be confused about the degree to which the logical space of reasons is *sui generis* to us human beings. For instance, Rorty asserts:

> I would argue that it [the logical space of reasons] is no more or less sui generis than the logical space of political argument or biological explanation or soccer or carpentry. (Rorty, 1998, p. 145)

It does seem that Rorty undermines the most basic sense in which we human beings live in *our* world or the world of a second nature as concept-employing and self-conscious agents. What is lacking in Rorty's scheme is the following insight of Putnam's:

> [T]he 'standards' accepted by a culture or a subculture, either explicitly or implicitly, cannot *define* what reason is, even in context, because they *presuppose* reason (reasonableness) for their interpretation.... Reason is, in

this sense, both immanent (not to be found outside of concrete language games and institutions) and transcendent (a regulative idea that we use to criticize the conduct of *all* activities and institutions). (Putnam, 1983, p. 234, italics in original)

The essential point to appreciate is that *our* world is unintelligible apart from human conceptual capacities that constitute the space of reasons. Put simply, human beings cannot be understood only in natural-scientific terms. Human beings are surely evolved, biological organisms but it is out of the question to try to understand us only in physical, physico-chemical, neuro-physiological and biological terms. For, as the geneticist Steve Jones pithily says, '*Homo Sapiens* is the species, which, in a sense, has stepped outside evolution (Jones, 2005, p. 21). We and *our* world do not operate solely at the mechanistic and biological level. This is where the natural sciences stumble; this is where the notion of second nature comes in; and, accordingly, a broad sense of education comes in. This line of thinking makes the latter half of the following statement of Rorty's less sufficient and less plausible: 'Just as the brute pressure of the environment led to successive stages of biological evolution, so it led to the successive stages of cultural evolution'. For, 'cultural evolution' has not been led by the first nature, namely, by the brute causal pressure of the environment on us. The fact is, as the scientific thinker Kenan Malik puts it, that:

Humans are biological beings under the purview of biological and physical laws. But we are also conscious, self-reflexive agents, with the capacity to bend the effects of biological and physical laws. (Malik, 2005, p. 52)[112]

Understood in this way, it turns out that some 'interference' in (the effects of) the

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[112] Human history tells us that 'we've been interfering with nature to our (overall) benefit throughout our history' (Holland, 2003, p. 4); 'the whole process of human development has been about transforming the environment for our benefit' (Malik, 2005, p. 60). Thus, '[a]ll animals have an evolutionary past. Only humans make history' (ibid., p. 56).

first nature in the 'natural' world enables *our* world or the world of a second nature which we human beings inhabit as intellectual and sentient beings. So far as human intellect and sentience are concerned, there is no doubt that education has a significant part to play in our world of a second nature.

This chapter has pursued the two lines of argument that have moved to centre stage since the decline of First Philosophy: scientific naturalism and the death-of-epistemology argument. I have tried to articulate that neither of them is sufficient to settle the main epistemological issues in particular and to make sense of what it is for us to live in *our* world or the world of a second nature not just as evolved, biological creatures but also as intellectual, sentient beings in general. In a word, these two positions are misguided in that they do not fully recognise the normative aspect of the natural. However, this is not the end point in terms of scientific naturalism. For a much more prominent form of naturalism in contemporary philosophy is the one which evokes sensitivity to the concept of normativity: 'normative naturalism'. Normative naturalism is to try to incorporate scientific evidence into the epistemological argument while retaining the normative. This line of argument has, as alluded to in Chapter 1, paved the way for a social epistemology. This is the social epistemology achieved through naturalised epistemology in the sphere of analytical philosophy, which has been fuelled by, for example, Alvin Goldman and Philip Kitcher. Another motivation to turn to this version of social epistemology is that it puts education at a centre of the subject matter of its programme. Thus, the next chapter focuses on this sort of social epistemology.

Chapter 6

Social Epistemology I: Analytical Social Epistemology

While Chapters 2 to 4 revealed that what I call the social and pragmatic nature of human knowledge is not fully incorporated into recent discussions within the philosophy of education, Chapter 5 turned its attention to the wider philosophical arguments in order to see how the social and pragmatic character is debated. More specifically, Chapter 5 was concerned with two of the influential positions in contemporary philosophy: scientific naturalism and the 'death-of-epistemology' argument. Both of these threads flow from the widespread conviction that First Philosophy is no longer tenable—the conviction shared also within philosophy of education discourse. However, neither of them is satisfying, when examined in the light of the social and pragmatic dimensions of the human intellectual ability—in relation to rationality, normativity and justification.

Neither naturalised epistemology nor the 'end-of-epistemology' argument—as represented, respectively, by the work of W. V. O. Quine and Richard Rorty—, seems to adequately appreciate the extent to which the normative infiltrates our engagement with the world. That is, to use the term I introduced, it is difficult to see those arguments as the best account of what it is for humans to live in *our* world which is from the outset filled with meanings, rather than in a meaningless environment. What is dubbed 'non-normative naturalism' is wrong in considering the scientific language game as the only language game through which we can grasp reality. It thus misses two important points. One is that scientific descriptions are not purely descriptive insofar as they are always already embedded in something normative. That is, scientific 'evidence' is entailed partly by human engagement with the world, although, of course, phenomena explained by such evidence occur independently of human conceptual capacities. The key is the interpenetrating and shifting dynamics between the conceptual powers of the mind and the 'external' world. The second

point which non-normative naturalism neglects is that there is no unambiguous definition of *the* science. The *sciences* shed their own light on one phenomenon—e.g. biologically, psychologically or socio-historically. Herein lies one important lesson: that one science cannot be reduced to another. This accrues from the fact that there is no transcendental science which arbitrates between the sciences. The price to try to explain a particular phenomenon only in terms concerned with its most fundamental constituents such as the language of physics is to lose sight of multiple levels of reality in the world we live in.

On the other hand, Rorty is right to say that there are many language games. That is, there is no one correct description of reality but there are many descriptions of it. However, his further insistence that 'there is no Way the World is' slightly unsettles us. For a suspicion might be raised here as to whether intersubjective agreement takes the place of the notion of objectivity. Indeed, there are many descriptions of reality—e.g. scientifically, philosophically and literally; but, this is far from giving us a reason for supposing that the discourse of objectivity exclusively turns on conversations among fellow-humans. A complex mix of linguistic idealism and (Darwinian) naturalism, underlying Rorty's conversationalist view, seems to mislead him into some confusion about the degree to which what Wilfrid Sellars calls 'the logical space of reasons' is *sui generis* to us human beings. As a result, Rorty, it seems, falls short of recognising the sense in which we human beings live in *our* world or 'the world of a second nature' (in John McDowell's term) as not just evolved, biological organisms but also as intellectual and sentient beings.

Even if my criticisms of Quine's and Rorty's arguments have plausibility, however, it is too early for us to feel relieved. For, it is not the Quinian kind of non-normative naturalism that makes 'scientific naturalism' the current orthodoxy within Anglophone philosophy. A much more prominent form of naturalism can be called normative naturalism. This sort of normative naturalism stands in line with traditional epistemology to the extent that it pursues the normative dimensions of knowledge. Jaegwon Kim says that:

> If...we locate the split between Quine and traditional epistemology at the descriptive vs. normative divide, then currently influential naturalism in epistemology is not likely to fall on Quine's side. (Kim, 2000, p. 310)

Whilst Quinian naturalised epistemology is dubbed 'the replacement thesis' (Kornblith, 1988, p. 3), or 'replacement naturalism' (Feldman, 2001) on the grounds that it is concerned to *replace* traditional epistemology, normative naturalistic epistemology is variously labelled as 'cooperative naturalism' (Feldman, 2001), 'the transformational thesis' (Almeder, 1998) or 'moderate naturalism' (Goldman, 2002, p. 26).

The latter type of normative naturalism is therefore thematically discussed in this chapter. This is of more than philosophical interest. An educationally important point is that a form of normative naturalism can alert us to the *social* aspects of what it is to have knowledge and thereby recognises *education* as a main subject matter to be addressed within its framework. This line of philosophical enquiry into education seems woefully under-examined and thus a close analysis of this line of research constitutes the primary topic of this chapter. In 6-1, the fundamental thrust of normative naturalism is accounted for. Broadly speaking, the most distinct characteristic of normative naturalism is its positioning between traditional epistemology and non-normative naturalism. More specifically, normative naturalism seeks to retain the normative justification that lies at the core of traditional epistemology while subscribing to the externalist, naturalistic account provided by non-normative naturalism. Normative naturalism has its variants. One strand on which I focus is an influential one that broadens its scope towards a 'social epistemology'.

Thus, 6-2 is concerned with this sort of social epistemology which figures via normative naturalised epistemology. As espousers of this line of a 'socialisation' of epistemology, I mainly take up the works of Alvin Goldman and Philip Kitcher. Since this kind of social epistemology has developed in the

analytical tradition of philosophy, it is sometimes called analytical social epistemology (ASE). In this section, the salient traits of analytical social epistemology are brought to the surface by comparison to other more radical social epistemologies based often upon the work of, say, anthropology, the sociology of knowledge, and the history and sociology of science. (Among other things, a 'sociological' social epistemology, prompted chiefly by the sociologist Steve Fuller, will be investigated in Chapter 7.) Noteworthy here is that these two social epistemologies to which this thesis devotes much attention—analytical social epistemology and Fuller's social epistemology—stand in a contrastive relation to each other concerning the two components of 'social epistemology'—namely, 'social' and 'epistemology'. 'Social' in analytical social epistemology is meant in the broadest sense; i.e. it is a *social* epistemology in the sense that it concerns *more than one person* in the philosophical enquiry into how the subject knows something. In other words, analytical social epistemology, it can be seen, has developed from an awareness that epistemic subjects obtain knowledge through the *testimony* of others. By contrast, in Fuller's social epistemology, based upon a number of sociological perspectives, 'social' directly designates *society*; i.e. it grapples with how knowledge is formed, distributed and consumed in a wider community. This difference *vis-à-vis* 'social' in social epistemology has to do with the ways these two social epistemologies in question approach 'epistemology'. As Fuller puts it, while analytical social epistemology's concern is with investigating *the verb 'to know'* and thus employs what Fuller calls the '*inside-out* strategy' (i.e. how individuals *know* something), Fuller's social epistemology is concerned with *the noun 'knowledge'* and thereby handles the '*outside-in*' strategy (i.e. how *knowledge* is created, transmitted and utilised in a society). These social epistemologies both seem to (intentionally) underestimate the mutually dependent parts of a single complex totality of human knowledge. To appreciate the mutually dependent parts and thereby offer a better account of the social (and pragmatic) nature of knowledge as well as its bearing on educational discourse precisely becomes the focus of the concluding chapter of this thesis. To

achieve this purpose, however, several technical details need to be cleared up. In the course of exploring analytical social epistemology and Fuller's social epistemology, Chapters 6 and 7 will deal with those technical details and thereby clarify both the benefits and burdens of socialising epistemology.

Goldman has taken the crucial steps towards bringing education within the scope of epistemology. Thus, 6-3 is concerned to examine analytical social epistemology's implications for educational discourse. Rich as the potential of analytical social epistemology is, the detailed analysis of its contribution to educational discourse so far raises a worry as to whether it has not realised its full potential. The main problem, in my view, lies in the fact that analytical social epistemology still seems stuck with some institutionalised pathologies that have haunted analytical philosophy—such as the internalism/externalism distinction and its deference to the Cartesian individual as the ideal model of the knowing subject, contrary to what proponents of this approach actually say. Overcoming these deep-rooted difficulties besetting analytical social epistemology is required to bear fruits as it promises—i.e. social epistemology in the form of interdisciplinary work that enables a detailed analysis of the institutional structures relevant to the formation and transmission of human knowledge.

6-1. Normative Naturalism

As rehearsed in Chapter 5, First Philosophy—or, philosophy-as-epistemology—is moribund in contemporary philosophy, insofar as it is chiefly concerned with one or more of the following four issues: that is, (a) the quest for certainty, (b) the attempt to find absolute foundations, (c) the attempt to legitimate other disciplines and/or (d) the project of refuting scepticism (Greco, 1999, p. 2). Quine alleges that epistemology's aspiration to bear on the foundations of science is a lost cause and thus that the world is unintelligible apart from scientific findings and conjectures. In a word, epistemology, Quine is telling us, should be assimilated into natural

science—in particular, into empirical psychology.[113] This is the broad picture of Quinian replacement naturalism. I clarified why this thesis is untenable in 5-2. As summarised at the beginning of this chapter, Quinian non-normative naturalism obscures the fact that normative evaluation is always already immanent in scientific investigations. This reminds us that even the natural sciences are not purely naturalistic in the sense that the proponent of non-normative naturalism assumes. In other words, the fact that phenomena explained by scientific evidence occur independently of human conceptual deliverances in no way denies that human history has placed the present natural sciences where they are. The seductive appeal of the notion of the absolute reality or a real object is unwarranted without regard to such a historical process or legacy. Therefore, as the discussion in Chapter 5 attests, non-normative naturalism, if it really aims for normativity-free naturalistic epistemology, is not so much to be repudiated but to be recognised as simply impossible. Given that it is misguided to infer from this that there is no space of natural laws, the question to be posed should, then, be like this: In what ways do advocates of normative naturalism deal with the subtle relation between the normative and the natural?

It can be seen, as adumbrated, that the most fundamental aspiration of normative naturalism is to supplement traditional epistemology by making use of scientific methods and insights without going so far as to replace it. In the remainder of this section, I confine attention to the way in which this sort of normative naturalism has been developed.

Given that the basic temptation of normative naturalism is both to admit the significance of normative evaluation and to employ scientific results, it makes sense for it to locate itself between traditional epistemology and non-normative naturalism. It would be then appropriate to begin by looking at the way that normative naturalism has diverged from traditional epistemology. For this purpose, we cannot ignore the so-called internalism/externalism debate, which has gained

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[113] On this view, as Hilary Kornblith puts it, 'psychology replaces epistemology in much the same way that chemistry has replaced alchemy' (Kornblith, 1988, p. 6).

focus in epistemology over the last decades.

Laurence BonJour[114] provides a lucid explanation of internalism and externalism in epistemic justification:

> [A] theory of justification is *internalist* if and only if it requires that all of the factors needed for a belief to be epistemically justified for a given person be *cognitively accessible* to that person, *internal* to his cognitive perspective; and *externalist*, if it allows that at least some of the justifying factors need not be thus accessible, so that they can be *external* to the believer's cognitive perspective, beyond his ken. (BonJour, 1992, p. 132, italics in original)

As typically found in the Cartesian approach to epistemology, until recently internalism took centre stage in epistemology. BonJour says that:

> [I]t seems plausible to say that until very recently an internalist approach was assumed without question by virtually all philosophers who paid any serious attention to epistemological issues. (BonJour, 2002, p. 221)

Presumably, the general image of the philosopher is formed from this tradition—namely, the image that the philosopher is absorbed in serious questions *in her armchair*, without doing any experiments in a laboratory or collecting data outside her library.[115] Traditional armchair philosophy turns, in a nutshell, on the underlying assumption that philosophical questions can be addressed by reflection alone. As has been echoed, however, it is elicited that First Philosophy, namely, philosophy-as-epistemology on the Cartesian and British-empiricist model faces great difficulties in its original form. This predicament of the traditional internal

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[114] BonJour himself is an advocate of (a sophisticated version of) internalism.

[115] Roderick Chisholm says that: 'The epistemic principles that he [the internalist] formulates are principles that one may come upon and apply merely by sitting *in one's armchair*, so to speak, and without calling for any outside assistance' (Chisholm, 1989, p. 76, my italics). Note that Chisholm is also one who quite strenuously vindicates internalism.

approach has invited the appearance of externalism.[116]

Noteworthy here is that externalism is a *weaker* thesis than internalism. In the scheme of internalism, 'epistemic status…is entirely a function of factors that are part of one's mental life, and to which one therefore has privileged access' (Greco, 1999, p. 258). However, once we accept the internalist framework, we are highly likely to be bothered by the perennial question of how to account for the 'external' world and other minds from a first-person's point of view. Externalism arguably has less trouble in this regard. This is not least because of the externalist's claim that 'the epistemic justification or reasonableness of a basic empirical belief derives from the obtaining of an appropriate relation, generally construed as *causal* or *nomological* in character, between the believer and the world' (BonJour, 1985, p. 34, my italics).[117] As mentioned in 5-2, in the traditional internalist's eyes, the externalist puts the cart before the horse, for external factors that are supposed to be explained from a first-person's cognitive state are unduly *presupposed* from the outset in externalism. (Remember that one of the vital themes pursued in the internalist epistemological programme is to construe how human minds can be in touch with reality which exists independently of one's cognitive faculties.) Therefore, presupposing the relationship to the external reality is question-begging for the internalist. Viewed from the standpoint of the externalist, on the other hand, externalism can avoid the seemingly silly scepticism that internalism easily invites. Such scepticism always lurks in the internalist scheme, inasmuch as we cannot expel the possibility that a belief fully justified in one's mental state nonetheless has *nothing* to do with truth. Chisholm encapsulates this point:

According to this traditional conception of "internal" epistemic justification,

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[116] For example, the externalist approach is expected to be a potential resolution to philosophical perplexities such as the epistemic regress problem and the Gettier problem, both of which do not seem to be satisfactorily tackled by the internalist approach.

[117] This thread of reasoning is *prima facie* more successful than internalism in accounting for how young children and higher animals, for example, are justified in holding their knowledge.

there is no *logical* connection between epistemic justification and truth. A belief may be internally justified and yet be *false*. This consequence is not acceptable to the externalist. He feels that an adequate account of epistemic justification should exhibit *some* logical connection between epistemic justification and *truth*. (Chisholm, 1989, pp. 76-77, italics in original).

The externalist mode of thinking, in brief, refutes the sceptically potential irrelevance of human justification of beliefs to truth, by presuming the notions of truth and reality *ab initio*. However, whether or not externalism counts as the most plausible account of human knowledge depends on how well it captures the conceptions of truth and reality. This is where naturalistic epistemology enters the picture. It has a great affinity with externalism.[118]

Naturalism in epistemology, John Greco says, is 'a methodological position that is quite naturally suggested by externalism' (Greco, 1999, p. 12). Since the externalist thinks that epistemological questions cannot be resolved only by speculative reflection in one's armchair, she calls for the aid of empirical means to answer those questions. Given the prevalence of science in many contemporary societies, it is understandable that scientific means are regarded as the most reliable empirical method.[119] In this way, the externalist approaches naturalistic epistemology as a result of abandoning 'armchair philosophy'.[120]

Reliabilism

Of the many externalist views concerning the issue of epistemic justification, I take up the version called reliabilism. There are two reasons for this. For one thing, reliabilism 'has been perhaps the most widely discussed and advocated' (BonJour,

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[118] Although, in most cases, externalism and naturalised epistemology are advocated by the same philosophers, they are not identical views (BonJour, 2002, p. 253). However, our point is that, as a consequence of discarding internalism, externalism has a clear tendency to draw on scientific means to construe the 'external' world.

[119] The way the high standing of science has come to be enjoyed was presented in 2-2.

[120] This is not saying, of course, that the externalist rises from her armchair and then begins to do the empirical research. In the literal sense, the externalist philosopher can still do her work in her armchair.

2002, p. 226) among the externalist variants. For another, this view is espoused by Goldman and Kitcher on whom this chapter focuses and, guided mainly by them, it is extended towards a 'socialisation' of epistemology. I thus outline Goldman's normative naturalism which is conjoined with what he calls 'process reliabilism'.

The central thrust of reliabilism, as the name indicates, is that 'what makes a belief justified is the cognitive *reliability* of the causal process via which it was produced, that is, ...that the process in question leads to a high proportion of true beliefs, with the *degree* of justification depending on the degree of reliability' (BonJour, 2002, pp. 226-7, italics in original). This stands in contrast to internalism to the extent that reliabilism does *not* require that the believer in question has any sort of cognitive awareness of the reliability of the belief-producing process in order for her to be justified (BonJour, 2002, p. 227).

Goldman, like other proponents of externalism, negates the thesis that philosophical methodology should be wholly *a priori*. He instead insists that only when justified beliefs are considered in the light of *reliability* of belief-forming processes, can they be a subject matter under epistemology. As noted earlier, what distinguishes his version of naturalised epistemology from Quine's is Goldman's sensibility towards the *normative* dimensions that inform traditional epistemology. Goldman stands in conflict with the internalist thesis that the matter of normativity can be approached only through one's own internal reflection, but rather puts forward the idea that the germ of the normative elements is present in the belief-generating processes. To put this more clearly, the normative status of belief-forming processes consists, on Goldman's view, in *true* beliefs produced by those processes. Hence his moderate naturalism is formulated as 'process reliabilism', which devotes attention to how reliable given belief-forming processes are in the light of truth. To borrow his own words, 'justified beliefs are ones produced by belief-forming processes with high truth-ratios' (Goldman, 1998, p. 445). Obviously, one conspicuous hallmark of this line of thought is its peculiar aspiration for truth. For the notion of reliability presupposes that of truth; put the other way round, the notion of reliability does not make any coherent sense

without the notion of truth. Thus, in Goldman's scheme, the ground of the normative derives from the truths shown by scientific investigations such as cognitive science. In this way, he mediates the natural and the normative, which non-normative naturalism is liable to disregard.

Two basic principles Goldman adduces in his formulation of moderate naturalism clarify the way in which the natural and the normative are mediated in his picture:

(A) All epistemic warrant or justification is a function of the psychological (perhaps computational) processes that produce or preserve belief.

(B) The epistemological enterprise needs appropriate help from science, especially the science of the mind. (Goldman, 2002, p. 26)

In the sentence that follows this formulation, he argues that the thesis '(A) fits with the rather minimal metaphysical point that *epistemic agents are natural phenomena, namely, physical organisms*' (Goldman, 2002, p. 26, my italics).

This section ends by confirming two intertwining points with regard to Goldman's normative naturalism. One is its deference to the *naturalistic* aspects of the human cognition that arguably tend to have been overlooked in traditional epistemology; the other is its *truth*-oriented character, which, in the conception of normative naturalism, saves room for the normative in play. Goldman prefers to call this sort of truth-oriented reliabilism 'veritism' and refers to its basic thrust as the principle that 'a certain value is placed on having true beliefs rather than false beliefs or no opinion (uncertainty)' (Goldman, 2006). To repeat, this is, on Goldman's view, what the normative consists in. It may be of value to note here that since normative naturalism gains a foothold within classical epistemology in terms of its truth-oriented character, it is clearly in stark contrast with Rorty's view that truth is not a goal of enquiry. As discussed in 5-3, Rorty's distaste for the concern with the notion of truth can result in a form of linguistic idealism, as a consequence of his overemphasis on pragmatic conversation without special

regard to the tangled relation between our conceptual capacities and our perception of what is. Goldman's normative naturalism stands in tension with the Rortian view in that it seeks to comprehend how things are independently of human experience by empirical means. As will be discussed in 6-3, this kind of normative naturalism also has its own set of problems. Nevertheless, indeed, it engenders a new vista for epistemology. For, as adumbrated before, Goldman enlarges the scope of his normative naturalism in a way that makes epistemology 'socialised'. In brief, Goldman and others have developed a socialised epistemology through naturalised epistemology of the sort outlined in this section. The next section is concerned with this species of social epistemology.

6-2. From Naturalised Epistemology to Socialised Epistemology

This section is designed to clarify the salient traits of the version of social epistemology which is based on a normative naturalistic epistemology. As noted near the start of this chapter, the strand of social epistemology with which this chapter is concerned is sometimes called analytical social epistemology (ASE), precisely because it has developed within the analytical tradition of philosophy.

The reason why this kind of epistemology is, under the name of social epistemology, pursued intensively in the Anglophone analytical tradition is not because this tradition takes precedence over other philosophical traditions in the recognition of the social nature of human knowledge but for exactly the reverse reason. Steve Fuller points out that:

> [A]ccounts of knowledge in the other traditions already presuppose a social dimension, which would make social epistemology superfluous. For example, from the nineteenth century onward, epistemologies descended from French positivism and German idealism have consistently stressed the systematic and collective character of knowledge. In contrast, analytic philosophy has remained wedded to the Cartesian individual—now occasionally presented as

Darwinian—as the paradigm case of the knower. In that respect, "social epistemology" is designed to redress the individualist bias of analytic philosophical accounts of knowledge. (Fuller, 2007, p.1)

As epitomised in this quote, the Anglophone epistemological tradition of philosophy has been marked by its individualist bent. The focal point is therefore the way in which and the extent to which analytical social epistemology based upon a naturalised epistemology can move beyond the individualist inclination of the tradition in which it originates. Earlier, I wrote that analytical social epistemology is a 'social' epistemology in that it focuses on the testimony of others in the subject's acquisition of knowledge. Once some light is thrown on the testimony of others, it is clear that more than one person becomes the subject of research. Given that '[t]he most inclusive sense of the social is simply any relationship among two or more individuals' (Goldman, 2006), the social epistemology under consideration is worthy of the name of social epistemology. The central preoccupation of analytical social epistemology is with investigating the ways in which belief-forming processes among more than one person are operating by way of, say, cognitive science and empirical psychology. As mentioned, I take issue with Goldman's formulation of social epistemology in some important respects, but, to do full justice to this line of reasoning, some further clarification of this sort of social epistemology is needed.

According to Goldman, belief-forming processes entail two types: cognitive and social processes. Cognitive processes are concerned with how *a person* reaches a belief; on the other hand, social processes are unavoidably concerned with *more than one subject*. This classification between cognitive and social processes, Goldman argues, need *two* modes of epistemology in the exploration of the respective spheres: individual epistemology and social epistemology (the latter of which he sometimes calls 'epistemics').[121] Both branches, he goes on to claim,

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[121] The representative work of individual epistemology is his *Epistemology and Cognition* (1986); and that of social epistemology is his *Knowledge in a Social World* (1999).

'seek to identify and assess processes, methods or practices in terms of their contributions—positive or negative—to the production of *true* belief' (Goldman, 2006, my italics). In short, both of these epistemologies are species of 'truth-oriented' epistemology. Goldman assigns them the following roles:

> Individual epistemology would identify and evaluate psychological processes that occur *within* the epistemic subject. Social epistemology would identify and evaluate social processes by which epistemic subjects interact with other agents who exert causal influence on their beliefs. The communicational acts of other agents and the institutional structures that guide or frame such communal acts would be prime examples of social-epistemic practices that would be studied within social epistemology. (Goldman, 2006, my italics)

What is evident here is that, for analytical philosophers endorsing this sort of social epistemology, 'social' in 'social epistemology' designates nothing more than the testimonial processes among more than one subject in the acquisition, transmission and dissemination of knowledge.[122] For example, Philip Kitcher, sharing with Goldman the general orientation of analytical social epistemology, expounds why analytical social epistemology is social: '[T]he exact point at which epistemology becomes social is in the appreciation of the possibility that whether or not a subject is justified (or whether or not a belief-forming process counts as reliable in the pertinent sense) turns on the properties of other people or of the group to which the subject belongs' (Kitcher, 1994, p. 113). By focusing attention on the reliability of the testimonial processes against the standard of truth—by means of scientific methods such as psychology and/or theories of probability such as the Bayesian approach—, analytical social epistemology alleges to accommodate two features which cannot be encompassed either by

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[122] To put it the other way round, it does seem that it never crosses Goldman's mind that 'psychological processes that occur within the epistemic subject' are, in some sense, already social.

traditional epistemology or non-normative naturalism: namely, the normative aspect (the preservation of the notion of justification) and the appeal to scientific means.

Established in this way, analytical social epistemology enlarges the scope of research under the flag of epistemology. Frederick Schmitt, in his introduction to a pioneering anthology in this field, divides the range of analytical social epistemology into three branches: (i) 'the role of social factors in individual knowledge'; (ii) 'the organization of the cognitive labor of individuals and groups of individuals'; and (iii) 'the nature of collective knowledge' (Schmitt, 1994, p. 4). Of these three, overwhelming attention has been given in analytical social epistemology to the first branch: the role of social factors in individual knowledge.[123] Indeed, this may be no surprise, given that the methodological individualism to which the analytical tradition of philosophy has remained wedded seems to still work effectively in addressing the issue of the first branch. However, it is not wise in the analysis of the social nature of human knowledge to focus on each branch by cutting one off from the others rather than the other way round. In analytical social epistemology, there appears to be an irredeemable tendency towards methodological individualism. Conversely, in many of the more radical versions of social epistemology, touched upon later in this section, there seems to be an inclination towards a radical break with methodological individualism, resulting in a partially dominant attention to the third branch above: 'the nature of collective knowledge'. Still, the beginning of wisdom in this area, in my view, is the full realisation of the importance of the second branch. That is, individual cognitive pursuits and social organisations surrounding them shape, and are shaped by, each other. With regard to this point, Fuller's social epistemology, as will be seen in Chapter 7, shows an acuter awareness of their interplay.

Considering that adherence to methodological individualism determines the

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[123] In fact, Schmitt himself devotes almost all of his introduction to elucidating the first branch (Schmitt, 1994).

scope and limits of the research agenda of analytical social epistemology, it is no coincidence that a complaint is raised, namely that analytical social epistemology is not social enough. As implied above, this complaint is made by a lot of would-be more 'social' social epistemologists who find their inspiration in the work of, say, anthropology, the sociology of knowledge or the history of science. To grasp the way in which analytical social epistemology differs from other more radical social epistemologies, it would help to have a look at Kitcher's 'Contrasting Conceptions of Social Epistemology' (1994), which also includes a somewhat caricatured and pejorative tone towards the rival conceptions of social epistemology.[124]

The most regrettable connotation the term 'social epistemology' may take on is the relativistic one: e.g. social epistemology is easily associated with the crude idea that the standards of knowledge vary from society to society. It is precisely this sort of relativistic image from which analytical social epistemology differentiates itself and which it imputes to other more 'radical' variants of social epistemology. Thus, Kitcher enumerates the following three conditions as 'the elements of a *minimal social epistemology*'—i.e. analytical social epistemology underpinned by reliabilism:

(1) Individuals are the primary subjects of knowledge. To ascribe knowledge to a community is to make an assertion about the epistemic states of members of the community.

(2) X knows that p if and only if (a) X believes that p and (b) p and (c) X's belief that p was formed by a reliable process.

(3) The reliability of the process that produces X's belief that p depends on the

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[124] Kitcher is a philosopher of science, who is another leading protagonist of analytical social epistemology. Although Kitcher and Goldman share central thrusts constituting a reliabilist version of social epistemology, Kitcher pays more attention to 'the collective epistemic goal' (Kitcher, 2002, pp. 198-199) and *the study of the organization of cognitive labor* (Kitcher, 1994, p. 114, italics in original) than Goldman does. In this sense, it can be seen, as Fuller says, that Kitcher 'occupies the middle ground between Goldman and Fuller' (Fuller, 1996b, p. 34).

properties and actions of agents other than X. (Kitcher, 1994, p. 113)

Some conspicuous traits that inform analytical social epistemology can be detected in this formulation. First, (1) shows that analytical social epistemology still runs on an individualist track to the extent that 'the primary subjects of knowledge are individual human beings' (ibid.), as opposed to 'collective knowledge'. However, this individualist disposition of analytical social epistemology is not, Kitcher claims, tantamount to individualism in the classical Cartesian model. The watershed that divides them is whether to accept 'some presuppositionless [i.e. Archimedean] point from which we can begin inquiry' (Kitcher, 1994, p. 112). Kitcher thus asserts that: 'Social epistemology begins at the point of rejecting the individualistic reduction' (ibid.). Put another way, on Kitcher's conception, analytical social epistemology fully recognises the existence of the engaged intellect. Second, (2b) reflects analytical social epistemology's strong aspiration for an epistemically independent reality—i.e. the world as it really is.[125] Third, (2c) and (3) display a reliabilist account of the formation of beliefs, which is pertinent to analytical social epistemology's embracing of a naturalistic and externalist account of human knowledge. As may be expected, I have objections to these points. However, before embarking on my own criticisms of them, I want to cast an eye on the way in which proponents of other (more radical) social epistemologies dispute the formulation of analytical social epistemology, which serves to gain a broad picture of the province of social epistemology.

Espousers of other more radical social epistemologies criticise analytical social epistemology on the grounds that the formulation above exemplifies a continuation of traditional epistemology. Kitcher himself is aware of this line of criticism:

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[125] Even if (2b) is to be understood simply to imply that p is true, that does not seem to resolve the difficulty that will be described in 6-3.

I suspect that the project I have sketched seems almost indistinguishable from classical epistemology ("positivism") to those like Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway, Andrew Pickering, Sharon Traweek, and the many others in sociology, anthropology, and history of science who want to develop a more radical critique. (Kitcher, 1994, p. 131)

The main criticisms made by more radical social epistemologists of the manifested conditions of analytical social epistemology above are directed against (1)—i.e. methodological individualism—and (2b)—i.e. the idea of an epistemically independent reality. As Kitcher admits, more radical social epistemologies are fundamentally antithetical to the individualist and realist character of analytical social epistemology:

> [Analytical social epistemology] slights the social by making the most individualistic parts of social science—psychology, microeconomics—central to the development of social epistemology. If we [more radical social epistemologists with whom Kitcher does not have affinity] were to start, instead, with sociology, political theory, or cultural anthropology as our paradigms of social science, we might develop a far more *social* social epistemology. (Kitcher, 1994, p. 116, italics in original)

The basic aim of more radical versions of social epistemology is to develop collectivity-based accounts of human knowledge as opposed to the traditional individualist approach. That is, advocates of such collectivity-based accounts, as Kitcher puts the argument (in a somewhat simplified way), assert that 'we should regard the community-wide knowledge as primary, identifying individual knowledge with belief that accords...with the knowledge current in the community' (Kitcher, 1994, p. 117).

Yet, for Kitcher, the above charge made by proponents of more radical social epistemologies does not provide any reason for calling analytical social

epistemology into question. To borrow a phrase from him, 'the sociologizing program based on the rejection of (1) seems headed either for relativism or for vagueness' (Kitcher, 1994, p. 119). The academic resources on which more 'social' social epistemologists draw range from philosophical discussion such as the later Wittgenstein's[126] to empirical studies such as Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. Among them, Kitcher adduces three exemplars that are frequently used to give theoretical endorsement to more radical social epistemologies: (i) 'the Strong Programme in the sociology of knowledge (most notably, the Symmetry Principle)'; (ii) 'the venerable anti-realist attack on the correspondence theory of truth' (whose most influential advocate is presumably Rorty); and (iii) 'a thesis about the underdetermination of our claims about reality by our encounters with reality' (which is often associated with the so-called Duhem-Quine thesis, which, put crudely, argues against the sphere of the deterministic *a priori* in favour of a sort of holistic view) (Kitcher, 1994, p. 120).

As has been made explicit, the focal point is whether 'the phenomena that inspire the "multiple embodiments" approach to knowledge really demand a break with the traditional conception of knowledge as something that is located in (or possessed by) an individual subject' (Kitcher, 1994, p. 118). Those answering in the affirmative to this are categorised as subscribing to a more 'social' social epistemology; and those responding in the negative are classified as signing up for analytical social epistemology. The temptation to dismiss the conventional view that the primary epistemic subject is the individual, Kitcher claims, seduces us to abandon the traditional presumption of truth as 'epistemically independent'—i.e. to use his formulation above, the rejection of (1) is driven towards that of (2b). It is this familiar unnerving issue that differentiates Kitcher's favoured 'more limited conception of social epistemology' (Kitcher, 1994, p. 115) from versions of 'more

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[126] For example, the later Wittgenstein's notion of 'forms of life' is there interpreted as follows: 'the types of entities that can count as items of knowledge are as diverse as the "forms of life" in which they are embedded' and thus 'the standards of knowledge are simply those of social acceptance'. This view, Kitcher insists, is nothing more than 'a full-blooded relativism' (Kitcher, 1994, p. 117).

social social epistemology':

> Traditionalists suppose that the notion of truth is epistemically independent, that we are not to reduce the notion of truth in terms of what people know, or believe, or what the members of a society accept. Precisely this epistemic independence of the concept of truth inspires the radical versions of social epistemology to break with tradition.[127] (Kitcher, 1994, pp. 119-120)

Without special regard to the entangled relation between rational justification and truth, which was the specific subject of focus in 4-2, Kitcher asserts that advocates of more radical social epistemologies attempt to overturn the traditional picture which has taken for granted the metaphysical, realist notion of truth. By shedding new light on the human epistemic role, more 'social' social epistemologies, Kitcher goes on to claim, bring truth onto the *human* side. Kitcher's observation that the notion of truth, in the conception of more radical social epistemologies, is little more than extreme subjectivism or relativism seems valid, if and only insofar as the false dichotomy with which Kitcher develops his account works—the one between the idea that Reality as it is is totally independent of humanity and the idea that the human mind constitutes realities. There seems little doubt that, for analytical social epistemologists who endorse 'truth-oriented' epistemology, the central contention between radical social epistemologists and individualist epistemologists consists in this epistemic/non-epistemic dichotomy concerning the concept of truth. There is, I hope, nothing further to be said about the serious flaw of this dichotomy any longer.

It would be constructive, instead, to raise the question of whether analytical social epistemology, developed in the way sketched thus far, can achieve what it promises to do. An illustrative example might be the possibility of analytical

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[127] As analysed in 5-2, the seeming contrast between the knowing subject who belongs in 'the normative framework constituted by the space of reasons' (McDowell, 1996, p. xiv) and a natural world under the logical space of nature has long unnerved philosophers.

social epistemology to advance towards an interdisciplinary undertaking. In his elucidation of social epistemology, Goldman delineates epistemology as 'a multidisciplinary enterprise' (Goldman, 1999, p. ix) by recasting traditional epistemology. In his project, individual epistemology and social epistemology are to become arenas that assemble non-philosophical disciplines to address epistemological issues:

> Individual epistemology should be linked to the cognitive sciences, and social epistemology should be linked to those social science and policy disciplines that study knowledge in its social and institutional contexts. (Goldman, 1999, p. ix)

In this blueprint, social epistemology as well as individual epistemology, equipped with its social, normative and interdisciplinary (multidisciplinary) character, is of new relevance to a broad range of social practices—such as science, law, democracy and education (in Goldman's examples). Does analytical social epistemology, as it promises, bear on those social practices? As expected, my answer is a negative one. The next section discusses how analytical social epistemology faces difficulties and why it has lost much of its appeal in the treatment of social practices like education.

6-3. Some Reflections and Comments on Analytical Social Epistemology

Analytical social epistemology, an extended naturalised epistemology, furnished with a reliabilist approach and truth-oriented character, has carved out a path to deal with a number of social practices which have no place as a subject matter in the traditional programme of epistemology. The emphasis analytical social epistemology places on education deserves special mention and provides enough incentive for this section to take up this issue. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, however, even while fully respecting the point that it is a step

forward to bring education into the scope of epistemology, I suspect that analytical social epistemology has not yet had a great impact on the discourse in the philosophy of education nor has it made much contribution to the philosophical analysis of educational practices. In this section, therefore, I first draw attention to how education is addressed within the framework of analytical social epistemology by reference to Goldman's discussion of education. For he devotes ample attention to education as an important subject falling into the province of social epistemology—in parallel with science, law and democracy (Goldman, 1999). I then critically analyse the scope and limits of this approach to education in particular as well as the overall orientation of analytical social epistemology in general.

So far, Goldman has provided two pieces of writing specifically on education from the point of view of his social epistemology: 'Education' (Chapter Eleven of his *Knowledge in a Social World*) and 'Education and Social Epistemology' (in *Philosophers on Education: New Historical Perspectives* edited by Amelié Rorty). The views offered in these writings, however, appear little more than 'a traditional picture of what education is all about, one aligned with an "Enlightenment" conception of epistemology' (Goldman, 1999, p. 349). Goldman claims, for example, that:

> [T]he fundamental aim of education, that is, of schooling systems at all levels, is to provide students with knowledge and to develop intellectual skills that improve their knowledge-acquiring abilities. This, at any rate, is the traditional image, and I know of no good reason to abandon it. (Goldman, 1998, p. 439)

This passage implies to us that Goldman's views on education are aligned with Harvey Siegel's in fundamental respects. In fact, Siegel, in his paper on Goldman's approach to education, 'Truth, Thinking, Testimony and Trust: Alvin Goldman on Epistemology and Education', describes their debate as 'an in-house

dispute' (Siegel, 2005, p. 347).[128] As recounted in Chapter 4, I have no intention to dispute Siegel's basic ideas on education at the formal level—the idea that fostering the ability to appreciate knowledge, rationality and justification (in relation to critical thinking) plays an educationally important part. Yet, I (over-) emphasised that some appreciation of the bearing of matter on form (i.e. the interpenetration between form and matter) alerts us to the danger of seeing the presently dominant view of the world as the only description of it. Moreover, I stressed (perhaps, exaggerated) that potential danger as the predicament of analytical philosophy and of a narrow sense of analytical philosophy of education. The main objective of this thesis is to shed some light on what might be called the social (and pragmatic) nature of human knowledge without renouncing the claim that knowledge, rationality and justification are of vital importance in education. At first sight, analytical social epistemology appears to be along the lines of reasoning I have been urging. Still, a close look at it reveals that the core of analytical social epistemology still stays anchored in a narrow sense of analytical philosophy, and thereby that its implications for education are not as fruitful as it asserts.

Indeed, Goldman takes care to prevent a likely misunderstanding that analytical social epistemology's argument concerning education is no more than, say, that of Robert Hutchins's 'essentialism' with regard to a core curriculum—the view that '[e]ducation implies teaching. Teaching implies knowledge. Knowledge is truth. The truth is everywhere the same. Hence education should be everywhere the same' (Goldman, 1998, p. 442). In short, analytical social epistemology or veritistic social epistemology, Goldman is telling us, in no way precludes multiculturalism. On Goldman's picture, furthermore, it can even bear on several domains that are *prima facie* inharmonious with veritistic value such as education

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[128] For instance, one of their central contentions resides in whether young children should have rational justification in obtaining true beliefs. I do not find this dispute fruitful. For their positions are not incompatible alternatives but complementary items. As argued in Chapter 4, we, human beings, cannot even begin a human life without any initial engagement with the meaningful world and thus coming to hold as many reasons as possible in the world filled with meanings is imperative in order to live *qua* humans.

in art, literature and history, by raising awareness of 'secondary judgements' comprised of the expertise of experts in those domains. For example, analytical social epistemology, placing weight on the roles of testimony and trust in the transmission of knowledge, motivates raising the questions such as the following: 'What kinds of education...could substantially improve the ability of novices to appraise expertise, and what kinds of communicational intermediaries might help make the novice-expert relationship more one of justified credence than blind test?' (Goldman, 2002, p. 160).

There is surely an insight in analytical social epistemology's approach to education, which is worth further deepening. However, it is tempting to pose the following question: Is analytical social epistemology fully developed in the ways it promised, when it comes to the analysis of education? As touched upon, Goldman envisages social epistemology as 'linked to those social science and policy disciplines that study knowledge in its social and institutional contexts'. The way Goldman grapples with educational issues by recourse to analytical social epistemology, nevertheless, seems far from satisfactory to the extent that it has not delved deeper into the analysis of the institutional structures or the organised forms of knowledge that guide or mould the ways in which knowledge is formed and transmitted. Nor has it attempted a more fine-grained exploration of an interdisciplinary development in the investigation into educational issues. The primary obstacle that stands in the way of a more fruitful development of analytical social epistemology in these respects resides, I claim, in the perennial individualist tendency that has bound analytical philosophy—the self-imposed adherence to the enquiry into how the subject knows something with little reference to the conditions which make it possible for her to have a particular kind of knowledge. Put another way, what is lacking in the line of research prompted by analytical social epistemology is sufficient heed to what I call *our* world which makes a subject the engaged intellect, not a merely biological species. (Goldman's view is to be remembered here, that 'epistemic agents are natural phenomena, namely, physical organisms' (Goldman, 2002, p. 26).)

In the remainder of this chapter, I highlight the sense in which the basic stance of analytical social epistemology is still anchored in the narrow sense of analytical philosophy and thereby takes 'social epistemology' back a step contrary to its attempt to 'socialise' epistemology. To do this, I reveal the limits of the three features that inform analytical social epistemology: normative naturalism, the internalism/externalism distinction and reliabilism. As seen in 6-1, traditional epistemology is transformed into a social epistemology via the process of these three. Yet, the process is not, in my observation, as straightforward as proponents of analytical social epistemology may assume. Each stage of the process seems to involve its own set of problems. I will develop my own doubts about them in turn.

In Criticism of Normative Naturalism

First of all, what is meant by 'normative' in normative naturalism remains quite ambiguous. It does seem that analytical social epistemologists employ the term normativity as concerned with justification or judgement in the face of competing ideas as well as in the development of interdisciplinary work and an analysis of institutional structures relevant to the transmission of knowledge. Nonetheless, this understanding of the normative misses its deeper sense. Robert Almeder's illustration of salient aspects of normative naturalism makes clear the way in which it leaves out the deeper sense[129]:

> Alvin Goldman has argued for this second form [the transformational thesis, namely, normative naturalism] which allows for traditionally normative elements but is "naturalized" for the reason that the practitioners of natural science, especially biology and psychology, will have the last word on whether anybody knows what they claim to know. ...Unlike the first form of naturalized epistemology [non-normative naturalism], this form allows traditional epistemology to sit in judgment on the deliverances of natural

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[129] It should be noted that Almeder himself does not agree with what he calls 'the transformational thesis'.

science, but....*the judgment must be made by the practitioners of natural science using the methods of natural science*. (Almeder, 1998, p. 5, my italics)

If the central thrust of normative naturalism is along the lines of argument canvassed here, then that shows that the normative naturalist misses the point in much the same way as the non-normative naturalist fails to acknowledge that scientific results are already embedded in something normative and that the normative is always immanent in some sense in doing the natural sciences. That is, advocates of normative naturalism, in all likelihood, consider that empirical, scientific results are one thing, namely, normativity-independent and their application to normative questions is another. Because this sort of understanding of the normative is correlated with analytical social epistemology's idiosyncratic aspiration for truth based on reliabilism, I shall return to this issue later.

In Criticism of the Internalism/Externalism Dichotomy

Second of all, the internalism/externalism distinction might be little more than a reflection of analytical philosophy's abiding adherence to the Cartesian individual as the paradigm case of the knower. Even if the externalist (and the reliabilist) has striven to repudiate the model of the isolated thinker by foregrounding interpersonal testimony, the overall drift from the internalist to externalist approaches in the analytical community since the 1970s, it seems, has yet to affect its deep-rooted attachment to individualism very much. Therefore, as Fuller sees it, the thriving debate on the distinction between internalism and externalism does not appear to be productive. Fuller points out that:

Regarded from outside the Anglophone world, it must be striking that internalism and externalism are seen as irreducible alternatives and not complementary components of a comprehensive theory of knowledge. (Fuller, 2007, p. 2)

The basic presupposition shared by many analytical philosophers that internalism and externalism stand in an incompatible relation is, in all probabilities, illusory. The fact is that they are complementary and, put more precisely, that they are so interlocking from the very beginning that it is almost pointless to think of internalism and externalism separately, let alone regard them as adverse to each other.

Given the remaining tendency of analytical social epistemology towards the individualist approach, it is no accident that the following parallel dichotomy is also working in the discussion of social epistemology. That is:

> Analytic social epistemology also tends to see the individual and the collective as alternative sources of epistemic authority. (Fuller, 2007, p. 2)

I cannot resist the temptation to say that the dichotomies between individualism and collectivism as well as internalism and externalism cast a heavy shadow on the further development of analytical social epistemology. My inclination is to turn away from these dichotomies to the view that as the ideas of internalism and externalism in epistemic justification are interpenetrating *ab initio*, so are those of individualism and collectivism in the debate of social epistemology. This thread of thought is in parallel with the view deployed in Chapter 5 that reason is both immanent and transcendent in some important sense. As stressed there, what is essential is to fully appreciate the concept of 'the properly socialised individual'. To recognise the full implications of the idea that we are, and are becoming, properly socialised human beings is, I think, precisely the moral to be drawn from the fact that we human beings as concept-employing, self-conscious beings inhabit *our* world, not in a meaningless environment. Put another way, considering that as internalism and externalism constitute a wheel of the carriage of human beings as social individuals, so do individualism and collectivism, one can see that analytical social epistemology based on these dichotomies diminishes the significance of the concept of the properly socialised individual.

These dualist presuppositions have diverted analytical social epistemology into a partial development of the philosophical study of the social aspects of human knowledge. For instance, as noted in 6-2, Goldman divides epistemology into individual and social epistemologies, where the former is linked to the cognitive sciences and the latter to social science and political disciplines. The basic assumption underlying this classification is that 'the social' other than the interpersonal is opposed to 'the cognitive'. However, given that various attempts have been made, for example, in the cognitive sciences and psychology to deal with a social conception of mind, the divide between individual and social epistemologies is virtually redundant. The proper recognition that all epistemology is social epistemology in the sense I am urging in no way means that the notion of subjectivity loses its force. In the similar way, it is to be noticed that the way Kitcher contrasts his own favoured 'more limited conception of social epistemology' with versions of 'more *social* social epistemology' is also underpinned by the sterile dichotomy between individualism and collectivism with regard to the primary epistemic subject. Only on the misleading assumption that social epistemologies antithetical to the individualist tack would inevitably be along the lines of relativism does analytical social epistemology acquire currency. (Proponents of analytical social epistemology appear to be fighting a losing battle insofar as the dispute between radical constructivism and realist positivism that are no longer really in dispute occupies much of their attention.) In my view, overcoming the barren dichotomy between individualism and collectivism by focusing attention on the socio-genetic dimensions of human knowledge is necessary for analytical social epistemology to experience a breakthrough and thus to have a direct bearing on the discourse on social practices like education.

In Criticism of Reliabilism

Last but not least, there seems to be something suspect about the reliabilism on which analytical social epistemology heavily draws as a sophisticated philosophy of testimony. This has to do with the issues of truth and normativity. (Recall that

the ground of the normative, on the conception of analytical social epistemology, derives from truth.) For the notion of reliability does not make sense without the notion of truth: i.e. the notion of reliability presupposes the notion of truth. As Goldman puts it, reliabilism emphasises 'the truth-conduciveness of a belief-forming process' (Goldman, 2006).

Robert Brandom is quite vocal in his doubts about reliabilism. In the chapter of *Articulating Reasons*, entitled 'Insights and Blindspots of Reliabilism', he re-describes the gist of reliabilism as follows: '[A]ssessments of reliability (and hence of knowledge) can turn on considerations external to the *reasons* possessed by the candidate knower himself' (Brandom, 2000a, p. 120, my italics).[130] Brandom's re-description of the thrust of reliabilism motivates raising one vital question about it: What is the background against which reliability counts? The anticipated answer is, of course, 'objective probabilities'. But how can we reach knowledge about objective likelihood? The reliabilist's answer must be: 'By scientific means' (because reliabilism is a naturalistic epistemology). In reality, as Brandom says, reliabilism needs 'a naturalistic story about objective likelihood' (ibid., p. 111). Still, this is an *aporia*. For 'objective probabilities are a staple of explanations in the natural sciences, indeed, even in fundamental physics' (ibid., p. 112). In a nutshell, Brandom claims that:

> [T]he reliability of the belief-forming mechanism (and hence the status of its true products as states of knowledge) varies depending on how we describe the mechanism and the believer. (Brandom, 2000a, p. 116).

In a word, '[a]n objective probability can be specified only relative to a reference class' (ibid., p. 112).[131] To be sure, there are cases where we can arrive at

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[130] As has been mentioned, reliabilism is an externalist approach. This means that, as seen in 6-1, in the justification of our beliefs the subject does *not* need to know her belief-forming processes as long as the processes are reliable with high truth-ratios.
[131] To use a longer passage from Brandom: 'Relative to a choice of reference class, we can make sense of the idea of objective probabilities, and so of objective facts about the reliability of various cognitive mechanisms or processes—facts specifiable in a naturalistic vocabulary.

knowledge, which can be explicable not through reasons but through reliability—i.e. the believer does not hold reasons for thinking she has reliable knowledge (which Brandom is willing to accept). Yet, this does not entail that we are free from all games of (what Brandom calls) 'giving and asking for reasons'; that is, we are, as long as we live *qua* humans, involved in a game of applying concepts rather than simply drawing on concept-independent reliability. The fact that something serves in local cases does not mean that it suffices in global cases. To borrow a phrase from Brandom:

> Besides serving as a kind of reason, reliability can take a subordinate place alongside reasons in certifying beliefs as knowledge. But it cannot displace giving and asking for reasons from its central place in the understanding of cognitive practice. (Brandom, 2000a, p. 110)

In brief, what is missing in the reliabilist theory is the insight that the notion of *reasonableness* is presupposed in reliabilism. Reliabilism's attention is exclusively focused on truth alone without sufficient awareness of its relation to reasons and reasonableness. It is against this background that my story about the social and pragmatic nature of human knowledge makes its start. Brandom is not the only philosopher who calls into question the usefulness of the notion of reliability. For example, Putnam claims that:

> [J]udgments of reasonableness simply do not fall into classes to which we are able to assign probabilities. (Moreover, any scientific judgment can be regarded as having been arrived at by a virtually infinity of different "methods." "Reliabilism" only *pretends* not to presuppose the notion of reasonableness. (Putnam, 2004, p. 143, italics in original)

But the proper choice of reference class is not itself objectively determined by facts specifiable in a naturalistic vocabulary' (Brandom, 2000a, p. 113).

As noted in 6-2, analytical social epistemology, on Kitcher's view, fully recognises the existence of the engaged intellect. Nonetheless, it does seem that the three criticisms of the central components of analytical social epistemology above demand a reconsideration of their fundamental presuppositions concerning truth and reality in relation to the engaged intellect. As touched upon, most proponents of analytical social epistemology vindicate the idea of 'correspondence', while repudiating the traditional correspondence theory of truth. I here want to take up Kitcher's preferred view, 'real realism', which is presented as opposed to what he pejoratively dubs 'IRA'—Inaccessibility of Reality Argument. This choice of name ('IRA') appears to be an indication of a general attitude shared tacitly by many analytical philosophers, an attitude that has been shaped by the fact that analytical philosophy has chiefly been enjoyed in (politically) strong and dominant countries, particularly in the U.S.

Kitcher's 'real realism' is surely a sophisticated version of the correspondence theory of truth insofar as it aims to bring 'the observers' into the picture. It runs as follows:

> [T]here are referential relations between elements of representations and entities that are typically independent of the subject who has/uses the representation. These referential relations, together with the state of reality, jointly determine the truth values of statements and the accuracy values of other forms of representations (such as maps, diagrams). (Kitcher, 1994, p. 123)

This description of reality and truth itself is not necessarily contrary to the view I have been suggesting. Still, I am motivated to raise a concern as to whether real realism goes in the wrong direction when facing the questions Kitcher interrogates: Why should the relations between the subject, the subject's representations, and the independent objects depend on the presence of another to note them? Why should the presence of an observer affect the connection between

accurate representation and success? Why should the case of any of us—or of all of us—be any different?' (Kitcher, 1994, p. 123). Real realism is right to see that the ontological aspect of reality is not social fabrications. However, it is still a long way from a satisfying view. For Kitcher sometimes seems to confuse multiple levels of social reality (and truth) in one world with the existence of Reality (and Truth).

Maps, one of Kitcher's own examples, would serve as a case in point. As an uncompromising realist, I am willing to agree that we humans live in one and the same world. But that by no means undermines the sense in which the fact that the world maps we use *vary* in accordance with the areas we live in might affect the way the world is *for us*. World maps in Europe puts Europe at their centre (in them, Japan is in the Far East). In the Japanese version of world map, however, Japan and its neighbouring areas are put at its centre. More striking would be the world maps employed in the southern hemisphere countries such as Australia. Their world maps are *upside down*. Upside down? It is possible to say so only when watched from the point of view of northern hemisphere countries' world maps. Needless to say, this is not to imply that different world maps change the material structure of the world. Yet, there is a sense in which *no* world maps existing in this world are the purely accurate representation of the world. Saying that there are many descriptions of the world, as implied, should carefully be distinguished from the Rortian statement that there is no way the world is. At the same time, it is to be remembered also that there exists no description of the world that can be free from the reference to (human) experience. The point here is, as Brandom says, that 'nothing in the way the world is privileges one of those reference classes' (Brandom, 2000a, p. 116). Viewed in this way, it is warranted to think that different descriptions of the 'same' world may alter our dealings with the world. This is the kernel of the thesis provided in Chapters 4 and 5 that the notion of representation or correspondence is *intrinsically normative*. It goes without saying that different descriptions are subject to comparison, negotiation and criticism and, as a result of them, it may turn out that some are better than

others. Yet, the fact that no world map changes the physical structure of the world never assures us that the American version of world map is unconditionally to be used as the definitive version of the world.[132] Even though different world maps do not alter the physical side of the world, they might affect our perceptions of it somehow or other precisely because any representation is normative. To employ a somewhat provocative expression, in this sense, analytical social epistemology misses the constitutive (and historical) character of reality and truth. Analytical social epistemology's lack of attention to this respect, at the same time, reflects its insensibility to the relevance of the institutional structures in the formation, transmission and dissemination of knowledge (which cannot be ruled out in a fine-grained analysis of knowledge in education).

As has been intimated, Steve Fuller's social epistemology is much more sensitive to the inseparability of cognitive pursuits and their social organisation. Shifting attention away from analytical social epistemology to Fuller's 'sociological' social epistemology in the next chapter will prepare the way for a renewed philosophical understanding of education in the light of human knowledge.

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[132] This point bears on the matter of the dominance of the English language. However, this is too substantial an issue to address here.

Chapter 7

Social Epistemology II: Steve Fuller's Social Epistemology

The preceding chapter analysed philosophical social epistemology as giving a new twist to the enquiry into the social aspects of knowledge. Despite some insight into the interpersonal testimonial processes through which subjects acquire knowledge, the philosophical enterprise known as analytical social epistemology does not suffice to achieve its objective of having relevance to the analysis of the institutional structures germane to knowledge-production and knowledge-transmission as well as to a concrete involvement in an interdisciplinary work related to epistemological issues. Accordingly, analytical social epistemology has not made a great contribution to educational discourse although, as the previous chapter saw, it aims to cast light on education as a main subject matter to be addressed within the framework of epistemology. In my criticism of analytical social epistemology, I pointed out that the three theses on which part of analytical philosophy has carved out a path to a 'social epistemology' are untsatisfying—i.e. (i) normative naturalism, (ii) the dichotomies between internalism and externalism in epistemic justification as well as between individualism and collectivism with regard to the primary epistemic subject and (iii) reliabilism. As for (i), analytical social epistemology fails to gauge the extent to which the normative infiltrates our engagement with the world; in respect of (ii), it simplifies the issue by regarding as dichotomies the mutually dependent parts of a single complex totality; and as regards (iii), it misses the point that the notion of reliability presupposes not only the notion of truth but also that of reasonableness. To sum up, analytical social epistemology, due in large part to its idiosyncratic individualist bent, tends to enquire into how the subject knows something *without* focusing much attention on the conditions which make that possible. This chapter therefore turns to Steve Fuller's 'sociological' social epistemology which is more aware of the interaction between internal and external factors that have placed the

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present human knowledge where it is.

As has been noted, there are currently two lines of argument worthy of the name of social epistemology: One is philosophical and the other is sociological. 'Sociological' social epistemology has its variants. But many of them seem unworthy of serious consideration, for, as Chapter 6 implied, they still have not risen above the dichotomy between individualism and collectivism, albeit their vector is in the opposite direction to that of analytical social epistemology. Steve Fuller's version of social epistemology deserves mention for the following four reasons. First, Fuller is the very person who has heralded this field under the flag of 'social epistemology'.[133] Second, he contrasts his version with analytical social epistemology in many respects, which provides a clearer picture of the present social epistemologies, and he skirts the philosophical pathology that has bothered analytical social epistemology by taking a sociological viewpoint from the outset. Conversely, it is probably true that Fuller falls short of recognising the importance of some significant philosophical insights in his design of social epistemology. Nonetheless, a focus on his sociological work will help to gain further insight into how to reconceive the philosophy of education by clarifying the nature of the social (and pragmatic) dimensions of human knowledge. Third, he puts *normative* questions at the core of his social epistemology by means of his *naturalistic* approach, which means that he addresses normative and naturalistic issues from an angle different from a philosophical one. What makes Fuller's social epistemology worthy of careful examination is precisely its suggestion that the banal characterisation of philosophy as normative and sociology as descriptive is to be reconfigured. Fuller's renewed attention to another sense of normativity which has long been marginalised by philosophers as mere policy-making and technical applications stimulates further consideration of the normative. Finally, his social epistemology opens up a comprehensive, though not impeccable, way to make possible an intensive and scholarly study of knowledge and education

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[133] Fuller founded the journal, *Social Epistemology: A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy*, in 1987 and published the book of the same title, *Social Epistemology*, in 1988.

policies as well as of the institutional relevance of the investigation of knowledge in society. The pertinence of Fuller's social epistemology to educational issues is found, for example, in Fuller's proposals as to how the university should be reconsidered as a site for the ideal embodiment of his preferred 'knowledge management', which is provided in a philosophically well-grounded but chiefly *social scientific* way. Devoting attention to a sociological perspective is more than a side issue. Rather, debating the pros and cons of both analytical social epistemology and Fuller's approach will serve to articulate what the philosophy of education can achieve as an academic discipline concerned with a meta-critique of knowledge-relevant issues in society, which is precisely the central issue towards which this whole thesis has been leading.

In this chapter, after briefly sketching the background to the intellectual context which has prepared the emergence of 'sociological' social epistemology, I specify the distinct features of Fuller's brand of social epistemology, again particularly by contrasting it with analytical social epistemology (7-1). Their contrast, as touched upon near the beginning of Chapter 6, is clearly marked as follows: While analytical social epistemology's concern is with investigating the verb 'to know' and thus employs what Fuller calls the '*inside-out*' strategy (i.e. how individuals know something), Fuller's social epistemology is concerned with the noun 'knowledge' and thereby handles the '*outside-in*' strategy (i.e. how knowledge is created, distributed and consumed in society). In addition, Fuller's doubt on the 'always-already' thesis in philosophy draws our attention to a potential danger of this thesis, but at the same time, it intimates Fuller's failure to acknowledge its deeper significance. At any rate, there is little doubt that Fuller's 'sociological' social epistemology throws light on some issues that analytical social epistemology has not adequately tackled. As one such example concerning education, I next touch on Fuller's suggestions towards a re-construction of the contemporary university by focusing attention on his notion of 'knowledge management' (7-2). While bracketing the validity of his views on the expected role of the university itself, this section offers an example embodying a 'control'

and 'management' of human knowledge that may well unsettle many academics, especially philosophers. The last section therefore turns to critical reflections on Fuller's social epistemology as a meta-discourse of knowledge-relevant issues in society (7-3). Although his social epistemology is sensitive to the inseparability of cognitive pursuits and their social organisation, it appears less sensitive to the inseparability and interaction between empirical research and philosophical deliberations. The point Fuller appears to miss is that philosophy not only sets the scene for the sciences as an underlabourer but also goes on to contribute to offering visions of what lines of research can and should be organised for the human community as a whole, along with the feasibility and implementability of the present sciences and technology. In other words, sociology is not adequate for the task to address the issue of the shifting unity of cognitive pursuits and their social organisation, which intimates a call for interdisciplinary work.

7-1. Steve Fuller's 'Sociological' Social Epistemology

Indeed, the expression 'social epistemology' is a neologism that has appeared very recently.[134] However, it would be absurd to infer that the history of enquiry had never witnessed those who are concerned with the social dimensions of knowledge until the term 'social epistemology' was coined. I have no ambition to do a thorough historical survey of the social aspects of knowledge at all. However, it should be noted that the seeds of 'sociological' social epistemology have been sowed differently from the way the soil for analytical social epistemology has been cultivated. While a motivating force to break with the egocentric orientation in the analytical tradition of philosophy paves the way for analytical social

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[134] The first use of the phrase 'social epistemology' is, according to Goldman, found in 'the writings of a library scientist, Jesse Shera, who in turn credits his associate Margaret Egan.' Shera describes 'social epistemology' as follows: '[S]ocial epistemology is the study of knowledge in society. .... The focus of this discipline should be upon the production, flow, integration, and consumption of all forms of communicated thought throughout the entire social fabric' (Goldman 2006). However, Shera did not make 'a conception of social epistemology with very definite philosophical or social-scientific contours' (Goldman, 2006). For this reason, I ignore Shera's line of 'social epistemology' in this thesis.

epistemology, a proliferation of work in sociology has prepared the context from which Fuller's social epistemology emerges.

In the theatre of social and political theory, it is not difficult to find some elements which could now be called a type of 'social epistemology' in the works of, say, Karl Marx, thinkers in the Frankfurt School—especially, Jürgen Habermas[135]—and Michel Foucault[136] (Goldman 2006). However, the line of thought which has more directly invited the appearance of sociological social epistemology is a series of developments of the sociology of knowledge (e.g. Karl Manheim's work), the sociology of science (e.g. Robert Merton's work) and the history and philosophy of science (e.g. Thomas Kuhn's work). Broadly, these lines of work place more weight on the *evaluating* and *interest-bound* elements in knowledge than on the 'intrinsic' nature of knowledge with which traditional epistemology in philosophy is concerned as well as on value-neutral truth at which orthodox sociologists such as Max Weber aim. For example, Mannheim, in his seminal book *Ideology and Utopia* (1936), claims that:

[S]ince we do not as yet live in a period free from mundane troubles and beyond history, our problem is not how to deal with a kind of knowledge which shall be "truth in itself", but rather how man deals with his problems of knowing, bound as he is in his knowledge by his position in time and society (Mannheim, 1966, p. 168).

This train of thought has spawned an enormous number of interesting and important sociological work that has arguably helped to remove 'a "non-evaluative", "supra-social", "supra-historical" realm of "objectively" valid truth' (Mannheim,1966, p. 166) from forms of knowledge including mathematics

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[135] In the chapter entitled 'What is Social Epistemology? A Smorgasbord of Projects' in his *Pathways to Knowledge*, Goldman nominates Kitcher, Fuller and Habermas as 'democracy-based normative theorists of social epistemology' (Goldman, 2002, p. 201).
[136] Foucault can be conceived as the continental parallel to Thomas Kuhn mainly in terms of the strength of fatal influence on the conventional views concerning knowledge (Foucault in the sphere of political knowledge; Kuhn principally in the domain of scientific knowledge).

and the natural sciences. Examples of this line of research are research on, for instance, the peer-review system, tenure and promotion processes, citation patterns and various other 'non-academic', 'external' factors in the publication of academic work in scientific communities and organisations. Among other things, the work of some advocates of what was then called 'the new philosophy of science[137] such as Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend has contributed to blurring—or, at least, has been interpreted as blurring—the boundary between knowledge in the natural sciences and the rest of knowledge, thereby making widespread the idea that it is only a difference in degree rather than in kind that there is between them.

The contribution this line of analysis has made to throwing light on the view that natural scientific knowledge may not be purely naturalistic in the sense assumed in modern times deserves appreciation. However, this social and interpretive approach is too easily misunderstood as explaining more than it does because there is much room for interpretation regarding it. The worst interpretation is probably to see this line of approach as a species of outright relativism.[138] Yet, the insight this thesis tells us is simply that there is a distinction to be drawn between the subject matter of the natural sciences which are extra-psychological and the natural sciences themselves which are part of a social system socially and historically conditioned.

Broadly speaking, these lines of sociological work are the major impetus to the development of Fuller's social epistemology. Fuller himself confidently asserts that his brand of social epistemology is the legitimate heir to the sociology

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[137] The representative works in this strand are, for example, N. R. Hanson's *Patterns of Discovery: An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science* (1958), Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) and Feyerabend's *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (1975).

[138] Given his 'anything-goes' argument, it may not be far from the truth to see Feyerabend as an ardent proponent of relativism. But it is mistaken to take Kuhn, the most-cited representative of the new philosophy of science, to be a relativist. He was pro-science throughout his whole life (like Popper) and hesitated to give a nod to a relativistic direction suggested by thinkers who draw inspiration from his work such as the Edinburgh School's Strong Programme. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that Kuhn's argument—in particular, his remarks on the incommensurability of competing paradigms—is often interpreted as in line with relativism.

of knowledge, saying that 'what used to be called sociology of knowledge', which revolves around 'the intersection between philosophy and sociology is 'nowadays increasingly called social epistemology' (Fuller, 2007, p. vii). What is notable here is that one can see that Fuller's social epistemology is part of the recently thriving field, science and technology studies (STS). (This is unsurprising, given the widely recognised high standing and reputation of scientific forms of knowledge in many contemporary societies.) Fuller's aim is to establish social epistemology as a *normative* incarnation of the traditional sociology of knowledge since Mannheim in science and technology studies. He claims that '[i]n STS, social epistemology appears as a normative approach to science and technology policy' (Fuller, 2007, p. 152). It is high time to turn to the heart of Fuller's social epistemology.

The basic definition Fuller gives to social epistemology is 'a *naturalistic* approach to the *normative* questions surrounding the *organization* of knowledge processes and products' (Fuller, 2007, p. 177, my italics). Its focus of attention 'corresponds to what the pragmatists used to call "the conduct of inquiry" and what may appear to today's readers as an abstract form of science policy' (Fuller, 1996a, p. 34). The three dimensions I italicised above—i.e. naturalistic, normative and organisational dimensions of knowledge—co-constitute the features of Fuller's version of social epistemology, which requires a close look at each of them below. With respect to the 'naturalistic' and 'normative' aspects, a certain sensibility is needed to realise what exactly is meant by these terms especially in comparison with their usage in philosophy; as regards the 'organisational' sphere, we encounter a new vista because analytical social epistemology has not gone into the details of this side of things.

In Chapter 6, especially in 6-2, the contour of 'sociological' social epistemologies was depicted as contrastive to analytical social epistemology (from the standpoint of the analytical social epistemologist). In this section, in turn, the outline of a sociological social epistemology—i.e. Fuller's version—is portrayed from his own viewpoint, which also weighs the comparison with its

rival theory, analytical social epistemology. This section starts with their decisive contrast in terms of the entry point of enquiry and then pays heed to the three characters that mark Fuller's social epistemology in order: namely, naturalistic, normative and organisational dimensions.

Fuller's social epistemology's threshold of enquiry is diametrically opposed to that of analytical social epistemology. This may well reflect a disciplinary difference between sociology and philosophy. That is, Fuller regards knowledge as 'intrinsically *social*" (Fuller, 2007, p. vii, italics in original). While analytical philosophers, as seen in Chapter 6, have long been struggling to incorporate a social perspective into their epistemological discussion due to its traditionally embedded individualist style, Fuller and many other sociologists, from the outset, grant that knowledge is intrinsically social. Therefore, those sociologists, for example, see as trivial the Wittgensteinian insight that language (and concomitantly human knowledge) is intrinsically social[139] which analytical philosophers tend to fetishise. (It may be objected that philosophers and sociologists are talking about different levels of the 'social' dimensions of knowledge. I have no wish to dispute this objection. Nonetheless, it is of help, in my view, to draw attention to the social character of human knowledge through the lens of sociology. For, as has been adumbrated, cognitive pursuits and their social organisation are deeply entangled and co-constitute a wheel of human knowledge. Appreciating this mutually dependent relationship will reveal that human knowledge is of an essentially educational nature, which shall be sharpened in the last chapter. The philosophical insight that any rational human being is already a properly socialised individual—namely that if one is to count as a member of the world of meaning, that means that she lives in the space of reasons—is indeed crucial, but this is not the entire picture. Another part of this story, which attracts far less attention from philosophers, is how one comes to

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[139] For example, the later Wittgenstein's so-called 'private-language argument' is, according to a social reading of his work, to elicit the (implicit) existence of a social world. For an utterance in principle needs public standards and criteria of correctness to be meaningful.

inhabit the space of reasons or *our* world in my own terms. Another way of making the same point is to say that philosophers—e.g. McDowell—are prone to highlight the sense in which there are a huge number of meanings that a fully rational adult in our world of a second nature takes for granted; but, on the other hand, the issue of how a person is initiated and educated into such a world of meaning tends to be taken off the agenda in philosophy. A regrettable consequence is a prevailing assumption that philosophy does not have a bearing on the issue of what will become such a taken-for-granted category in our future world. My sense is that the philosophy of education can serve to encourage a growth of this avenue of research as an academic discipline concerned with a 'natural' development of our world of a second nature.[140])

The marked difference between the analytical philosopher and the sociologist (of knowledge) is roughly encapsulated in their respective strategies by which to wrestle with their own 'problems of knowledge':

Strategy A

1. The thing I know best is the thing with which I have had the most direct acquaintance, namely, my own mind. After all, without it, I could not have made this very observation. But my mind is possibly not all that exists.

2. How, then, do I determine whether other possible things exist, and, if they exist, how can I know them, given that they seem quite different from my own mind?

Strategy B

1. We ordinarily experience everyone (and everything) as living in the same world. Yet, as people articulate their experience, it becomes clear that there are significant differences in the aspects of the world to which we have direct access.

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[140] I am willing to admit that the germ of such a line of research has already been in present in the contemporary philosophy of education.

2. What, then, accounts for these differences in access to our common reality, and what enables us to ignore them in everyday life, as we suppose that our own access is the one shared by all (right-minded) people? (Fuller, 1996a, p. 37)

Fuller goes on to argue that: 'Whereas Strategy A captures the tradition of inquiry that unites Descartes and Quine, Strategy B captures that of the sociology of knowledge' (Fuller, 1996a, p. 37). Pithily, he describes the problem of knowledge raised by Strategy A as *inside-out* and that by Strategy B as *outside-in*. Furthermore, Fuller elsewhere depicts analytical social epistemology as concerned mainly with 'the verb "to know"'—i.e. 'to engage in act of knowing' and, on the other hand, his own social epistemology with 'the noun "knowledge"'—i.e. 'to gain access to knowledge' (Fuller, 2007, p. 177). Viewed from this perspective, it becomes clear that even the externalist, of which the analytical social epistemologist is a member, still works *within* the inside-out framework. Fuller illuminates this point:

> All contemporary epistemologies—be they called "internalist" or "externalist"—operate within the *inside-out* strategy, in that knowledge is posed as a problem for each individual to solve on his or her own terms, namely, by approximating a standard to which the cognitive agent may or may not have conscious access. (Fuller, 1996a, p. 37, my italics)

One inevitable accompaniment of this disposition of analytical philosophers is, as mentioned in some previous chapters, their obsessive worry about *relativism*. Notable here is that the relativism by which they are bothered is 'a *self-centred* relativism' (ibid., my italics). Within the egocentric inside-out strategy, the self-centred relativism always figures as an obstacle. Their perennial abhorrence of relativism and their strong aspiration for a particular form of *realism* are the two sides of the same coin. On the other hand, for Strategy B, namely, the

outside-in framework, 'the initial liability' is 'a totalizing realism' (Fuller, 1996a, p. 37). 'The relevant corrective' of this liability, Fuller claims, is 'a dose of *methodological relativism*' (ibid., p. 37). Recall that analytical social epistemology holds on to methodological individualism in a fundamental respect. The difference between the inside-out and outside-in strategies is also reflected in their attitudes towards realism. Whereas philosophers in line with the inside-out strategy long for universalistic realism, sociologists in sympathy with the outside-in strategy dream about realism without a universalistic bent (ibid., p. 38).

The Naturalistic Aspects of Fuller's Social Epistemology

In this way, the reverse starting-point in the establishment of Fuller's social epistemology makes itself radically different from analytical social epistemology. I then shift focus to the first phase that differentiates Fuller's version: the *naturalistic* aspects of his social epistemology. As shown earlier, Fuller defines his version of social epistemology as 'normative-yet-naturalistic epistemology' (Fuller, 1991, p. 19), which, on his view, is a descendant from what Auguste Comte, the founder of sociology, envisioned. The reader may be reminded here that analytical social epistemology is also a species of naturalistic epistemology. However, Fuller's social epistemology, on his own account, is *more radically naturalistic* than analytical social epistemology (Fuller, 1996a, p. 36). The naturalistic dimension of Fuller's social epistemology is twofold. First, Fuller's social epistemology is on a par with naturalistic epistemology of the sort to which the analytical social epistemologist assents insofar as it denies that 'knowledge has any conceptually necessary (or a priori) component' (ibid.). Second, however, it goes beyond philosophical naturalistic epistemology inasmuch as Fuller goes further to deny that 'philosophy benefits science' once science is dominant (ibid, p. 38). This extreme view on Fuller's part derives from his formulation of the relation between philosophy and sociology as *form* and *matter* (Fuller, 2007, p. 120). According to Fuller, his thesis that 'if philosophy articulates the idea of the good society, sociology establishes the conditions under which it can be realized'

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(ibid., pp. 120-1) is very much in resonance with the works of Marx, Hegel and Comte. Encouraged by this thread of thinking, Fuller argues that: 'Philosophy first guides but is then *superseded* by sociology' (Fuller, 2007, p. 121, my italics).

I disagree with this view. Even if the form-and-matter analogy drawn to the relation between philosophy and sociology is considerably reasonable, it is questionable whether Fuller (and Siegel as was seen in Chapter 4) has an inclusive grasp of their relationship. In brief, one is completely useless without the other: that is, form needs matter and matter needs form. In fact, however, the idea of comparing philosophy to form may not be as useful as might have been hoped. Given the interpenetrating relation between conceptual norms and empirical descriptions, which was a subject of focus in Chapter 5, it does seem that the form-matter analogy with regard to the relation of philosophy and sociology simplifies the issue. The fact is that they go hand in hand with each other. It may be a little surprising that Fuller claims that philosophy and sociology serve sequentially rather than synchronically in view of how sensitive he is to the inseparable relation between cognitive pursuits and their social organisation. Nonetheless, the 'more naturalistic' aspect of Fuller's social epistemology—i.e. his emphasis on social scientific methods—deserves further reflection inasmuch as it contains an insight that analytical social epistemology does not reach.

Fuller adduces the names of Alvin Goldman and Philip Kitcher as analytical social epistemologists who take it that philosophers can serve 'as "underlabourers" who clear the conceptual obstacles to a properly scientific understanding of the world' and who 'accord the natural sciences this level of epistemic privilege' (Fuller, 2007, p. 106). In contrast, as noted above, Fuller tries to purge any philosophical residue from his social epistemology concerned with knowledge policy. The chasm between Fuller and analytical social epistemologists with respect to the role of philosophy in social epistemology resides in whether to accept the truth-oriented direction—i.e. what Goldman dubs 'veritism'—in their respective social epistemologies.

Fuller parts company with truth-oriented social epistemology for two

reasons. The first reason is that veritistic analytical social epistemology relies on the assumption that 'the end justifies the means, when the end is truth' (Fuller, 2007, p. 197). As seen in Chapter 6, the normative elements in reliabilist social epistemology figure in proportion to the degree to which truth is achieved by reliable methods. However, as the second reason Fuller mentions shows, the truth-directed social epistemology 'pre-empts the articulation of *significant disagreements over the ends of enquiry* and *the standards used to evaluate progress towards them*' (Fuller, 2007, p. 197, my italics). In other words, while analytical social epistemology sees truth as the ground of normativity to the extent that the closer a theory comes to truth, the *better* it is, Fuller takes issue with regarding truth as the primary and fixed goal.

Fuller, I think, has a finer-grained view concerning the notion of truth than the analytical social epistemologist. For Fuller is mindful of the point to which the philosopher is liable to be insensitive, the point that what becomes the content of true assertions at least partly depends on how we organise our enquiry into it. For example, Fuller says that '[Fuller's] social epistemology's naturalism amounts to the idea that knowledge cannot be *about* the world unless it is clearly situated *in* the world' (Fuller, 2007, p. 108, italics in original). The moral Fuller draws from this insight is to highlight *empirical* investigations into the conditions on which our life stands rather than *philosophical* considerations about ideal conditions. He points out that 'there are major discrepancies between philosophical idealization of knowledge production and the actual cases' (Fuller, 1991, p. 27) and thus argues that the end of knowledge production is 'a matter of *empirical* determination' (ibid., italics in original). In other words, what Fuller (and many sociologists of knowledge) are keen to do is to '[demystify] the philosopher's ultimate cognitive utopia: *the free pursuit of knowledge* (ibid., p. 270, italics in original). Fuller avers that philosophers, from Plato's Republic to the more recent 'open society' of Popper as well as Habermas's 'ideal speech situation', have shared the following utopian assumption:

There has been a remarkable amount of agreement among Western philosophers over both the *desirability* and the *feasibility* of an institution protected from all other *social concerns* which would be devoted entirely to the pursuit of knowledge. (Fuller, 1991, p. 270, my italics)

This is precisely where Fuller's (sociological) 'naturalism' comes in. The 'philosopher's cognitive utopia', Fuller claims, should be reconceptualised through sociological considerations. He calls the work based on such sociological considerations 'a kind of "field ontology" of the cognitive enterprise' (ibid., p. 271). What is striking is, as shall be expounded later, that such sociological work, on Fuller's conception, has a *normative* force despite its emphasis on empirical investigations. Furthermore, he bluntly asserts that 'objectivity and the other virtues of knowledge production can be *exhaustively* explained by sociological principles' (ibid., italics in original). To put the argument simply, Fuller, as a 'naturalist', places emphasis on 'pragmatic constraints' (ibid, p. 290) in the pursuit of knowledge. In other words, whilst philosophers tend to focus on the 'inherent' or 'internal' value of knowledge, sociologists are disposed to attend to 'external' factors essential for the existence of a particular type of (existing) knowledge. Thus, Fuller stresses the 'implementability' and 'feasibility' that are equivalent to 'pragmatic constraints' in the quest for knowledge. Yet analytical social epistemologists are in sharp disagreement with Fuller, for, in their eyes, Fuller seems to simply commit a sort of naturalistic fallacy. Goldman, for example, asks: 'if we don't know the end, how can we try to direct science toward it? And how can one determine science's end empirically?' (Goldman, 2006). In spite of a limit to Fuller's sociological reductionism, I have more, though not entire, sympathy for Fullers' position than for the truth-driven analytical social epistemology over this issue. For, while philosophers are prone to see 'cognitive pursuits' and 'their social organization' as separate and irrelevant at least in principle, sociologists like Fuller regard them as essentially inseparable and thus take it to be fruitless to study one without analysing the other (Fuller, 1991, p. 9). Fuller's view appears to

be more in resonance with the view I am putting forward concerning the fact that we human beings as intellectual and sentient beings live in the human world filled with meanings that have socially and historically been forged and that the meaningful world is shifting in accordance with its material (environmental) conditions and humanly-perceived states of affairs that are not shared with other living beings that are basically purely evolved and biological organisms.

The Normative Aspects of Fuller's Social Epistemology

If the 'naturalistic' aspect of Fuller's social epistemology is to override philosophical considerations by replacing them with sociological counterparts, then where is the 'normative' located in his social epistemology? This is a pressing question. For the term 'social epistemology' may sound like an oxymoron to those who are accustomed to the conventionally standard view that epistemology/philosophy is concerned with 'universal rationality' and sociology with 'the study of the particular in our cognitive pursuits' (Fuller, 1991, p. 4). Trying to put an end to this stereotypical view is precisely one important motive that spurs Fuller to promote his brand of social epistemology. More specifically, his enterprise is to regain 'normativity' into the sociology of knowledge[141]—the kind of normativity *different* from that philosophers have cherished in history. The historically accepted disciplinary boundary between philosophy and sociology in general as well as epistemology and the sociology of knowledge in particular, Fuller asserts, has devastated a lively appreciation of the sociology of knowledge as a normative discipline.

According to the widely received distinction, epistemologists 'take care of what *ought* to pass as knowledge in *general*' while sociologists (of knowledge) are concerned with what *actually* passes as knowledge in *particular* cases' (Fuller, 1991, p. 263, my italics). It is this conventional agreement to which Fuller raises

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[141] Fuller says that: 'Indeed, the sociology of knowledge was conceived as an irreducibly *normative* discipline, integrally tied to social policy-making (Mannheim 1940)' (Fuller, 1991, p. 12).

objections. For, in Fuller's observation, this distinction is merely a side consequence of the tendency to talk about the issue of normativity *only in terms set by epistemologists* (Fuller, 1991, p. 263). The heart of his charge is that epistemologists have exclusively enjoyed the privilege of discussing the issue of normativity by narrowly defining the conception of the normative. To borrow his own words:

> [A] key reason why the sociology of knowledge has not been usually regarded as a normative enterprise is that epistemologists have presumed an excessively restricted understanding of "normative" which manages to include the decisions that individual scientists ought to make for regulating their own research practices in idealized settings, yet exclude the decisions that *policymakers* ought to make for regulating the research practices of the scientific community as a whole in more realistic settings. (Fuller, 1991, p. 275, my italics)

His dissatisfaction with the epistemologist's confined understanding of normativity urges Fuller to bring *another* sense of it to light, which also has its roots in philosophy. That sense of normativity is the one 'suggested by Plato's *Republic* and Bacon's *New Atlantis*, namely, the ideal regulation of real knowledge systems, to which the sociologist's expertise would likely prove relevant' (Fuller, 1991, p. 263). The crucial point is that this sense of the normative has been detracted in the Western philosophical tradition and 'consigned to the realm of "mere" policy-making and technical applications' (ibid.). This is, Fuller argues, because Western moral theory has paid much attention only to the *first person's perspective* as in Kant's work or to the *third person's perspective* as in Hume's work. What is missing in the Western tradition of enquiry into the normative is the *second person's perspective* exemplified by 'Plato's philosopher-king' (ibil., p. 253). (This second person's perspective Fuller wishes to bring into shaper focus is wedded to his endorsed idea that 'knowledge

cannot be *about* the world unless it is clearly situated *in* the world' and it takes issue with analytical social epistemology's inclination to enquire into how the subject knows something without focusing much attention on the conditions which make her an engaged intellect.) The goal of Fuller's social epistemology is therefore 'not to make myself as I ought to be (contra Kant), nor to judge whether others are as they are ought to be (contra Hume), but to judge whether I am as I ought to be, on the basis of whether I have made others as they ought to be' (Fuller, 1991, p. 263).

The Organisational Aspects of Fuller's Social Epistemology

Fuller's sensibility to the second person's perspective motivates turning his social epistemology towards the wider knowledge system in the existing societies in which everyone is situated. This is where it parts from analytical social epistemology as well as from postmodernism. That is:

> Fuller's version of social epistemology adopts the normative perspective of the *interested non-participant* in the knowledge system. This is diametrically opposed to the *disinterested participant* of analytic social epistemology, which aims to acquire knowledge first-hand above all else. It also contrasts with postmodernism, which tends to adopt the standpoint of the *interested participant* (a.k.a. situated reasoner). (Fuller, 2007, p. 110, italics in original)

Analytical social epistemology keeps the existence of the interested non-participant out of its picture simply because its primary aim is to '[construct] a conceptually satisfying model of how inquiry ought to proceed (e.g., definitions of knowledge that enjoin the inquirer to seek only "justified true beliefs")' (ibid., p. 113). On the other hand, Fuller's social epistemology brings the interaction between cognitive pursuits and their social organisation into the picture, whereby an intensive and scholarly study of knowledge-bearing institutions is enabled. (Notable here may be Fuller's sympathy for John Dewey. For one thing, Fuller's

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social epistemology is compared to 'the conduct of inquiry' aimed at by pragmatism. For another, Fuller sees Dewey as an exception (within Anglophone philosophy) insofar as Dewey is duly mindful of the interrelation between cognitive pursuits and their social organisation and thereby engages in constructing practically ideal *educational* settings. Fuller generally accuses philosophers of not committing themselves to the issues of education. He says: 'The most immediate sign of this failure [philosophers' failure to concede the inseparability of cognitive pursuits and their social organisation] has been the lack of interest that epistemologists have generally had in issues of education (Dewey being the obvious exception)' (Fuller, 1991, p. 25).)

Fuller's warning is directed towards the philosopher's presumption that 'the norms of enquiry could be straightforwardly instantiated in a particular scientist or that a scientific community is typified by any one of its members (a "normal scientist")' (Fuller, 2007, p. 113). For such a presumption commits 'what logicians call the fallacy of division or what sociologists dub the "oversocialized" individual' (ibid., p. 103). He thus claims that:

> On the contrary, that [constructing, like philosophers, a conceptually satisfying model of how inquiry ought to proceed] is the easy part. The hard part is to determine the units of analysis to which the norms could be reasonably thought to apply and then the means by which those norms may be instantiated in that unit. (Fuller, 1996a, p. 35)

On Fuller's view, 'the reliabilist's [i.e. the analytical social epistemologist's] own failure to develop—or even suggest—the appropriate institutions for assessing the reliability of knowledge claims' (Fuller, 2007, p. 201) reflects their failure to fully recognise the relevance of community or organisation where the norms are both constitutive and instantiated.

Fuller's Criticisms of the 'Always-Already Thesis' in Philosophy

Whether or not we subscribe to Fuller's social epistemology, there is, I think, an issue worth mentioning. For the issue alerts us to a potential danger inherent in an 'always already' line of thinking, although Fuller, as shall be made explicit in 7-3, misses something deeper. Up until this point in this thesis, I have appreciated the 'always already' dimensions in the theory of knowledge—e.g. the views that rationality 'always already' lies behind what we do and that normativity is 'always already' implicit in our linguistic representation of the world—because these dimensions are not far removed from what I mean by the social and pragmatic aspects of human knowledge. I have no intention to undermine the significance of such 'always already' dimensions; but it is of value, I think, to advert here to a latent pitfall entailed by the 'always already' line of consideration. The lurking pitfall is that there could be a possibility that the 'always already' philosophy lends tacit theoretical support to a kind of Whiggish or laissez-faire view not only in the discussion of political economy but also in every discourse, which I touched upon in Chapters 4 and 6. (It might not be egregiously wrong to find such a flavour conveyed in Siegel's and the analytical social epistemologist's arguments.) With regard to this issue, Fuller contrasts analytical social epistemology with his version of social epistemology.[142]

> Whereas the geometrical model [analytical social epistemology] treats the empirical as *already normatively infused*, the dialectical model [Fuller's social epistemology] treats the empirical as *a challenge for the normative to overcome*. In short, the geometrical model will tend to characterize the world in ways it can accept, whereas the dialectical model will tend to characterize the world in ways it would correct. (Fuller, 2007, p. 180, my italics).

As opposed to the 'always already' line of thinking (especially concerning rationality and normativity), Fuller's version of social epistemology holds 'that

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[142] It is questionable whether many analytical social epistemologists endorse the 'always already' thread of thought in the sense I attribute to it, though.

rationality is normally *alienated* from our epistemic practices' and therefore that '[rationality] exists as an *external* standard to which we hold ourselves and others accountable' (Fuller, 2007, p. 132, my italics). Fuller castigates philosophers in line with the 'always already' track by saying that:

> Philosophers tend to make life easy for themselves by claiming that we are "always already" rational. In practice, this might amount to an endorsement of the scientific establishment or a retreat to Kantian transcendentalism. (Fuller, 2007, p. 132)

As implied earlier, philosophers' subscription to the 'always-already' dimensions of human knowledge could lead towards 'a laissez-faire attitude' (Fuller, 1991, p. 269) in the enquiry into knowledge. When facing a laissez-faire attitude (i.e. on Fuller's view, the philosopher's ultimate cognitive utopia—the free pursuit of knowledge without any constraints) or its recent incarnation, neo-liberalism, which has penetrated into a wide range of spheres of many present societies, one might think that there is little point in making appeal to the 'always-already' philosophy (even though it alleges to be concerned with the 'normative' dimensions of human knowledge). The normative character in what Fuller calls 'the dialectical model' has been addressed by neither analytical social epistemologists nor recent sociologists of knowledge (ibid., pp. 269-70). This provides Fuller with incentives to offer the idea of 'knowledge management' to 'centrally coordinate' knowledge processes and products. It is the normative aspects in this sense of policy-making and policy implementation as well as the institutional and organisational deliberations that take centre stage in Fuller's notion of knowledge management. The term 'knowledge management' probably sounds like a business model that unsettles most academics. However, the basic motive of Fuller's social epistemology is, as mentioned earlier, to reclaim the sense of normativity to which philosophers have historically paid scant attention. Thus:

[Fuller's social epistemology] seeks to provide guidance on how and what we should know on the basis of how and what we actually know. The subject matter corresponds to what the pragmatists used to call "the conduct of enquiry" and what may appear to today's readers as an abstract form of science policy. (Fuller, 2007, p. 177)

In a nutshell, Fuller does not confine the spectrum of the normative to the 'always already' level, whereby he broadens the range of research towards institutional aspects of knowledge processes and products. Hence 'knowledge policy' including education policy becomes the focus of his social epistemology. To put this more concretely, 'the design of knowledge-bearing institutions, especially universities' (Fuller, 2009, p. 3) comes into sharp focus. Although the space does not allow for a full exploration of how knowledge-bearing institutions can and should be contemplated (which provides me with an incentive for further work after this thesis), the next section touches upon how educational institutions (universities) are addressed by the interdisciplinary meta-discourse, namely, by Fuller's social epistemology, which I think contains a vital clue to our reconsideration of the potential nature of the *philosophy of education* as a meta-critique of knowledge-relevant issues.

7-2. The Idea of Knowledge Management

The strongest point of Fuller's social epistemology lies, in my view, in its engagement with making *concrete* suggestions about how knowledge should be dealt with in society. As has been looked at, the discrepancy between philosophy (especially, analytical philosophy) and sociology (especially, the sociology of knowledge) *vis-à-vis* human knowledge has encouraged Fuller's social epistemology. Fuller is neither satisfied with the status quo of analytical philosophy nor that of the sociology of knowledge. Fuller's diagnosis of these two

disciplines runs as follows:

> [P]hilosophical theories of knowledge tend to stress normative approaches without considering their empirical realizability or political consequences. Sociological theories suffer the reverse problem of capturing the empirical and ideological character of knowledge, but typically without offering guidance on how knowledge policy should be conducted. (Fuller, 2007, p. 177)

Filling this gap and redressing these deficiencies motivates Fuller to address, under the rubric of social epistemology, the normative questions surrounding the organisation of knowledge processes and products through a naturalistic approach (Fuller, 2007, p. 177). While analytical philosophers are cautious about making concrete suggestions as to how knowledge should be treated in society at a policy level, Fuller does not hesitate to do so from a philosophically-grounded social scientific perspective. It is clearly not irrelevant, I think, to focus attention on the tension and affinity between analytical philosophy and the sociology of knowledge in order to find clues for concrete suggestions for knowledge-bearing policy. As intimated earlier, the perspective I want to urge in this thesis is a *social scientifically-grounded philosophical* perspective in the investigation of the visions of human society and institutions. Fuller's approach serves to set the scene for this.

It is the university to which Fuller draws our attention as a site where his preferred 'knowledge management' in contemporary society should be instantiated. However, as mentioned, as there is not enough space here to look closely at Fuller's suggestions towards a reconstruction of the contemporary university, the focus of this section is placed on the idea of knowledge management that constitutes a key part of his social epistemology. The idea of knowledge management is clearly in stark contrast with the free pursuit of knowledge, but it may be too quick to dismiss it out of hand. For, given that *our* world is the world of a second nature, the sense of 'the free pursuit of knowledge'

in our world may not be as self-evident as it might first appear.

The term 'knowledge management' will bewilder most academics by its managerial connotation. Yet what Fuller means by the term is not to give additional force to the ever-expanding business model with respect to universities. It does not simply follow, however, that his notion of knowledge management is an expression of nostalgia towards 'curiosity-driven' research with 'amateur ethics' (Fuller, 2007, p. 74), which makes Fuller's idea worth mentioning. The business model regards contemporary university as a species of firms. Once analysed in cost-benefit terms, universities are to be judged as 'dumb organisations' precisely because they have 'too much "human capital" but not enough "structural capital"' (Fuller, 2003, p. 119). If assessed by the *same* performance standards, the university is far less effective than most firms. The following is an emblematic remark concerning the ineffective structure of contemporary universities: 'If a McDonald's is much more than the sum of its parts, a university appears to be much less.' (Fuller, 2003, p. 119)[143] It is against this background that Fuller's idea of knowledge management comes into the picture as his prescription for the contemporary university from the angle of his social epistemology. Its primary aim is to reconfigure the university in a *republican* way so that 'the wholes of universities will be much greater than the sum of their parts' (Fuller, 2003, p. 122). The republican approach is not, as noted, in agreement with the nostalgic or illusory view that the university should be an ivory tower isolated from the secular world, let alone with the currently prevailing view that universities should be aligned with business and the market-place.

However, his attempt to reconfigure the university might cause uneasiness in the minds of many academics, for he asserts that his idea of knowledge management is fundamentally antithetical to the way that the whole history of Western thought has proceeded:

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[143] Note that Fuller's own view is that such a cost-benefit perspective has encroached on the nature of the university.

The very idea that knowledge needs to be managed suggests that its growth should not be left in a wild state: at best it remains unused and at worst it wastes resources. Yet, this managerial mindset goes against the grain of the past 2500 years of Western thought, which has valorized the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, regardless of its costs and benefits. (Fuller, 2007, p. 74)

Notable here is that the notion of 'the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake' resonates, in my view, with two influential ideas: (i) a laissez-faire view (in economics) whose roots lie in Adam Smith's classic 'invisible hand' in the capitalist market-place and (ii) evolutionary theory (in biology) which originates in Charles Darwin's 'natural selection' in the history of life—perhaps a little ambiguous phrase of Herbert Spencer's, 'survival of the fittest', conveys more explicitly the basic idea found in this line of thought. For example, economists are, as Fuller says, pessimistic about 'the prospects for controlling the growth of knowledge' and instead are 'generally optimistic that such uncontrolled growth will ultimately result in overall good' (Fuller, 2007, p. 75). In addition, as mentioned in the previous section, an 'always-already' mindset embraced by many philosophers tends to sign up for this laissez-faire attitude in the pursuit of knowledge. It may be possible to provoke the issue by saying that, inside academia, the laissez-faire attitude towards knowledge has been worshiped under the guises of, say, 'the pure pursuit of knowledge' or 'academic freedom'. Obviously, this thread of consideration is opposed to the idea of managing knowledge. Fuller's objective, it could be argued, is to accelerate the speed of 'progress' and make the 'progress' more efficient by intervening with the natural evolution of knowledge. This social engineering flavour certainly risks raising suspicions about the general orientation of Fuller's social epistemology, but nevertheless it is, I think, worthy of serious attention as long as we see the existence of the 'non-fittest' in this world and cannot afford to wait for four billion years.

In other words, Fuller regards the 'uncontrolled growth of knowledge' as problematic and counter-productive. His alternative to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is to reconceptualise the university as a site for '[manufacturing] knowledge as a public good through the "creative destruction" of social capital' (Fuller, 2005, p. 27). By appealing to several terms used mainly in the social sciences and a certain amount of knowledge about the history of the university (it is beyond the remit of this thesis to clear up such a number of technical details), Fuller presents the basic disposition of his knowledge management based on social epistemology as follows:

> [U]niversities are unique in producing new knowledge (through research) that is then consolidated and distributed (through teaching). In the former phase, academia generates new forms of social advantage and privilege, while in the latter phase, it eliminates them. This creative destruction of social capital entitles universities to be called the original entrepreneurial organisations. However, universities have been neither produced nor maintained in a social vacuum. With the slow but steady decline of the welfare state, it is time to recover the university as one of the original corporations, whose style of 'privatisation' is superior to the 'trade fair' model that has dominated modern economic thought and today threatens the institution's integrity. (Fuller, 2003, p. 122)

It may not be difficult to raise questions about Fuller's views on the (re-) design of the university themselves by pointing out, for example, that they seem to constitute little more than his own political preferences and interests rather than an instantiation of his programme of social epistemology. Nonetheless, pride of place should be given to Fuller's social epistemology to the extent that it offers a helpful example of its educational implications. In particular, it is a step forward to prepare the ground for discussions of the knowledge-bearing organisations in society such as universities in academic terms rather than cost-benefit terms. The

next section, therefore, is devoted to debating the pros and cons of Fuller's social epistemology as an interdisciplinary meta-discourse of knowledge-relevant issues, which is preparatory to articulating an extended conception of the philosophy of education in the last chapter.

7-3. Some Reflections and Comments on Fuller's Social Epistemology

By having closely looked at the two paradigmatic research programmes of social epistemology in the last two chapters—analytical social epistemology and Fuller's social epistemology—, two dimensions of knowledge have come to the surface. As has been mentioned, analytical social epistemology places emphasis on how individuals know something; on the other hand, Fuller's sociological version lays more weight on how knowledge is formed, distributed and consumed in a social vacuum. Clearly, education involves both these aspects of knowledge. This fact involves a demand that any constructive work in education studies should take both of these aspects of knowledge into consideration. Still, it is misleading to suppose that these two aspects exist in isolation, but rather they are combined. This is the way human knowledge is in *our* world.

As examined in Chapter 6, analytical social epistemology has a tendency to confine its attention to what individuals know and how they know what they know. On the other hand, Fuller's 'sociological' social epistemology is more aware that knowledge acquisition at an individual level has something to do with how knowledge-bearing institutions are organised in society. In this regard, I find richer potential in Fuller's social epistemology as an academic study of education. Nonetheless, this in no way means that I enrol myself as an uncompromising proponent of Fuller's social epistemology. For, as alluded to at the beginning of Chapter 6, Fuller's social epistemology, like analytical social epistemology, is liable to underestimate the mutually dependent parts of a single complex totality of human knowledge. The single complex totality is precisely what I have striven to elicit by what might be called the social and pragmatic nature of knowledge.

Given his sensibility towards the interaction between cognitive pursuits and their social organisation, Fuller's assertion that sociological explanations, once science penetrates into almost every sphere of our life, can supersede philosophical enquiry leaves us with a puzzle. To be sure, there is an insight in his warning against a potential danger inherent in the 'always-already' philosophy—i.e. the danger that it tends to give a nod to the status quo of social reality. Nevertheless, at the same time, there is a temptation to say that he fails to acknowledge a deeper sense of such an 'always-already' thread of thinking. The deeper sense tells us that the realisability and implementability of methods that Fuller stresses as opposed to the cognitive utopia that philosophers are prone to cherish are 'always-already' reflections of how human beings (in a particular society) have engaged with the world. It is this sense of the 'always-already' line of reasoning that resonates with the view I have been urging, namely, that we are, from the outset, thrown into the world filled with meanings, normativity, rationality, etc. Yet, this thesis by no means entails the untenable idea that all we can do is just to follow the existing rules of the present world. Rather, we can change meanings, normativity and rationality from within the world inundated with them (not from outside such a world). For meaning, normativity and rationality are constitutive, and constituted by, the interpenetrating but ceaselessly shifting interaction between humans and world. Indeed, it should be highly regarded that Fuller raises awareness of the interdependence of humans' knowing and the institutional settings through which knowledge is transmitted; but, a further step he takes seems quite unwarranted, namely, to manage and control human knowledge at a policy level, only on the basis of his sociological and social scientific accounts of the empirical conditions of the existing and realisable knowledge. Although Fuller's renewed attention to another sense of normativity which has long been marginalised by philosophers stimulates further work on the normative, his notion of knowledge management based on his brand of social epistemology is possibly *too normative*. One of the obvious drawbacks of knowledge management is that it misses the importance of *by-products* of human

knowledge. An analogy to the evolution of the human brain might be helpful. 'Natural selection didn't build our brains to write or to read', Stephen Jay Gould explains, 'because we didn't do those things for so long' (Gould, 1996, p. 55). Fuller's fundamental motive can be interpreted as increasing the speed at which the human brain evolves on the basis of the sociological accounts of the current and realisable conditions of the brain. However, even though our abilities to write and read are merely by-products of the evolution of the human brain, it is undoubted that those capacities, once acquired, have considerably determined how we have lived and will at least partly determine how we can live. This shows that sociological and social scientific perspectives are not sufficient (though necessary) in considering the interdependence between the description of how the actual world is and the prescription for where the actual world may head. In this, philosophical deliberations, *contra* Fuller, cannot be dropped out of our enquiry.

Another point about which we need to be clearer is that, while it may be true that academics have been largely in denial about an intentional control or management of the growth of knowledge, it is mistaken, or at least exaggerated, to suppose that 'the past 2500 years of Western thought' have witnessed 'the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, regardless of its costs and benefits'. One of the recent examples on how knowledge is actually pursued is found in the cancellation of the construction of Superconducting Super Collider, which is a particle accelrator complex expected to make a great contribution to fundamental physics—namely, on a view, to the unpacking of how the world really is. After the investment of two billion dollars for the construction, the U.S. House of Representatives in the time of Bill Clinton decided to call off the project in 1993. A more trivial example is that, if it is true that Western philosophy consists of a series of footnotes to Plato, then it simply follows that the themes to be pursued do not derive so much from the free pursuit of knowledge but from Plato, which means that such a pursuit of knowledge could be otherwise. If it is fully recognised that there are a myriad of conditions and constraints that human history has placed on our conduct of enquiry—what to pursue and how to pursue

it—, then it turns out misleading to see the grain of the past 2,500 years of Western thought as the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, regardless of its costs and benefits. This requires us *not* to identify 'the free pursuit of knowledge' with a 'natural' growth of knowledge in our world of a second nature. (The former is an illusion; the latter is precisely the most fundamental subject matter for us human beings.)

It is precisely at this point that the *philosophy of education* comes into the picture. It should, in my view, take up but also take issue with the important ideas that Fuller has developed. As has been echoed, two pillars of education are (i) to initiate human animals into *our* world, which is to be understood in terms of meanings and sentience that are *sui generis* to human beings and (ii) to draw people's attention to the fact that our world is always in some measure in process and thus we have responsibility to make it better. As long as we cannot get outside the realm of our world, what we can do is just to tinker with what is already here, as it were. However, what is already here is, as has been reiterated, an amalgamation between cognitive pursuits[144] and their social and historical organisation. Provided that this view is right, it is required to have broad visions of what kinds of life we can and should conduct in future, even if there is not much point in managing and controlling human knowledge in a strong sense. There is not the slightest reason, I think, to suppose that the philosophy of education needs to distance itself from this sort of enquiry. It is true that, at present, science and technology studies, bioethics and others enjoy the reputation as the academic disciplines which engage themselves with the enquiry into the relation between what (how) knowledge is produced and what (how) knowledge should be produced. This is due in large part to the fact that science, technology and medicine are regarded as crucial knowledge in many present societies. However, we have certified the view that philosophical reflections cannot be dropped out of scientific knowledge and have highlighted the sense in which the analysis of human knowledge requires a consideration of its *educational* aspects

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[144] It is of course legitimate here to add intellectual, moral and other pursuits.

in the sense described above. Considering these contexts, it is far from far-fetched to assume that the philosophy of education should not only put its finger on the issue of visions of human society and institutions in terms of human knowledge specifically and human development more generally but also can make substantial contributions to it. To clarify the sense of this broadened conception of the philosophy of education is left to the final chapter.

Chapter 8

Broadening the Horizons of the Philosophy of Education

This thesis concludes by spelling out the broadened horizons of the philosophy of education as an enquiry concerned with developing and advancing human knowledge, on the basis of what has been discussed in the foregoing seven chapters. The rationale for this thesis is predicated on the view that when we become aware that we know something we are *always already* in the world filled with 'contentful' meanings which are unique to human beings. Put another way, those meanings have *public* standards and criteria of 'correctness' (for human beings) that have been shaped in the course of human history. The basic thrust of this view is that when humans live *qua* humans, the world people inhabit is, from the very beginning, not a meaningless, physical world, but what I call *our* world, which is, in a crucial sense, distinct from the environment where non-human other living beings live.

The perspective I have urged entails that human knowledge in particular and human nature in general are essentially of a *social* and *educational* nature. For, humans as part of the biological species (e.g. as newborn babies) enter into the meaningful world that is constituted by what Wilfrid Sellars terms 'the logical space of reasons'. Through the acquisition of what John McDowell dubs a 'second nature'—i.e. roughly, through the acquisition of a sufficient range of meanings and a sufficient degree of sentience which always already figure in *our* world—, we are to equip ourselves with human modes of engagement with the world which are beyond the physiological needs for survival. A large part of what makes the human species special is this capacity to be responsive to reasons *sui generis* to human beings and accordingly to humanly-perceived states of affairs that make no sense to any other living beings.[145] Herein lies the most basic sense of 'social'

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[145] The capacity of responsiveness to reasons is akin to what I called in some earlier chapters a basic network which may not be able to be specified but which functions as if it were certain,

(for human beings), which is prior to relative differences in the standards of knowledge among societies. Living *qua* a human requires us to be more than a genetic, biological creature, namely to be a social being in the relevant sense and this is achieved through initiation into what Robert Brandom calls 'social practices of giving and asking for reasons' (Brandom, 1994, p. xiv).

The source of complication in making sense of what it is for a human being to know something resides in this: that we human beings live as both evolved, biological organisms and intellectual, sentient beings at one and the same time, which means that it is misguided, though perhaps tempting, to try to cut first nature off from second nature.[146] It could be seen therefore that the focus of a substantial part of this thesis has been placed on unravelling this tangled issue in one way or another.

In Chapters 2 and 3, this issue was addressed in the guise of the theory-practice debate. Much of what the later Paul Hirst and Wilfred Carr say about the social and practical aspects of knowledge that they (in different ways) have brought to focus within the recent philosophy of education by recourse to the Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy has plausibility only if it is appreciated in the context of *our* world or the world of a second nature. What they fall short of recognising in common is the insight that theory and practice are *ab initio* intertwined in ways that enable human beings to live as though we stood both within and outside our particular social practices at one and the same time. Put another way, although it is true, as D. C. Phillips says, that '[i]t is becoming more fashionable to hold that the "theory v. practice" dichotomy is a false one' (Phillips, 2008), it is by no means sufficient to simply sing the praise of, say, *phronesis* or *arete* without giving much thought to *our* world or the world of a second nature.

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rational, objective, true, *a priori* and even foundational insofar as it cannot make any relevant sense to doubt it.

[146] A marked corollary is that our world or the world of a second nature figures, from the very beginning, as our world or the world of a second nature. As noted in 3-2, our world is a *bona fide* world behind which there is no such a thing as 'the world as it really is'.

In Chapter 4, the nature of human knowledge was explored by bringing into sharp focus the relationship between rational justification and truth. Harvey Siegel recurrently emphasises the significance of rationality and the force of reasons and their implications for education. Yet, the sharp distinction Siegel draws between rational justification and truth slightly diminishes this significance. For his strong aspiration for a particular form of realism seems to give credence to the dispute which is no longer really in dispute—one between radical constructivism and realist positivism. Faced with his ambivalent claim that rational justification is clearly distinct from truth but they are nonetheless not irrelevant to each other, it may be tempting to doubt that Siegel fully acknowledges the crucial point—i.e. that it is not what he wants to see as 'the world as it really is' but *our* world or the world of a second nature that makes reason both immanent and transcendent.

The interpenetrating relation between conceptual norms and empirical descriptions was the main focus of Chapter 5. The sharp separation between the normative and the descriptive seduces proponents of non-normative naturalism or bald naturalism such as W. V. O. Quine to equate nature with the realm of natural law—or, to put this in McDowell's terms, to reconstruct 'the structure of the logical space of reasons in terms that belong in the logical space of natural-scientific understanding' (McDowell, 1996, p. xxiii). There is some truth in this view, but it is far from satisfying given that human beings in *our* world do not live solely at the mechanistic and biological level. The espousers of non-normative naturalism are prone to find it possible to investigate a first nature without special regard to a second nature and to identify the first nature with only one kind of reality, namely, the world as it really is. Yet, reality in our world of a second nature is essentially composed of multiple strata of social reality. In this important sense, it can be said that human beings have stepped outside the mechanism of natural selection.

The analysis in Chapters 6 and 7 draws our attention to the need to cast light on the substantial interrelation between the enquiry into the verb 'to know' based on what Steve Fuller calls the 'inside-out strategy' (i.e. how individuals

know something) and the enquiry into the noun 'knowledge' based on the 'outside-in' strategy (i.e. how knowledge is created, transmitted and utilised in a society). Because of their temptation to confine their attention to one of them without much regard to the other, both analytical social epistemology and Fuller's social epistemology are liable to underestimate the mutually dependent parts of a single complex totality of human knowledge. However, the enquiry into the verb 'to know' and that into the noun 'knowledge' are both necessary and complimentary rather than contradictory. For one of the major insights gained in the investigation of these social epistemologies is that cognitive pursuits and their social organisation go hand in hand.

The broad theme running through these chapters in different forms is what it is for us human beings to live in our world of a second nature as reflective, self-conscious beings. More specifically, the main thrust of my discussions is that a crucial part of what makes the human species distinct from non-human other living beings is human knowledge, by which we are always bound and with which we always go into situations that involve more than imperative biological needs for survival. The point to appreciate is that such human knowledge is of an essentially educational nature.

First, as rehearsed, our fundamental conditions as human beings intrinsically involve a broad sense of education or *Bildung*, in the form of an initiation or upbringing of human animals into *our* world or the world of a second nature that requires a human mode of orientation and relationship to the world. Second, since there is no final word in our world or the world of a second nature which is predestined or can be legitimated from outside,[147] our life is always in some way in process and fluid. What matters here is to properly dispel the two seductive but flawed aspirations: (i) to predict the direction the human community as a whole will take and fully control it (an unnerving sort of social planning) and

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[147] That is, the shifting character of human knowledge can always alter, in different degrees, our mode of orientation and relationship to the world. This is to indicate that there is no sense in the idea that a perfect science will, at the end of the day, be able to explain everything about the world.

(ii) to disenchant the world which is, from the outset, (at least partially) enchanted so as to establish 'purely' foundational principles to make a better world (a rampant Platonism[148]). What we can do rather is to ceaselessly keep carving out a better world *from within* our world or to tinker with what is already here, so to speak.[149] This is precisely the lesson to be drawn from the kernel of what I term the social and pragmatic nature of human knowledge.

The proper appreciation of the shifting character of our world of a second nature opens our eyes to the second point above as a theme relevant to education. This exploratory dimension of our world elicits the nature of human knowledge, namely the complex interaction and deeper interpenetration between concept and being as well as between word and world. This indicates that the reigning assumption in teaching and learning that words represent objects is not enough. Jan Derry, taking a clue from Brandom's work, illustrates this point:

> Even if it is the case that the meaning of the word is tightly connected with its referent, how this connection *arises*—that it is developmental and ongoing—is a matter of pedagogical importance. (Derry, 2007, p. 10, italics in original)

There does not seem to be any good reason to suppose that this view matters only in the context of learning and teaching in the narrow sense of (formal) education. My inclination is to see that the spectrum in which the opaque, complex interaction and deeper interpenetration between concept and being as well as between word and world figures is coextensive with *our* world as a whole.[150] My

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[148] For the phrase 'rampant Platonism', see p. 90. This is McDowell's coined term, which roughly means that human knowledge is legitimated from outside the structure of the space of reasons. It is to be realized that McDowell does not see any connection between this position and Plato. See *Mind and World*, especially pp. 77-8 and pp. 91-5.

[149] Thus, *tradition* and *language* have crucial and fundamental parts to play in our world. For our world of a second nature, which is distinct from the environment that non-human living beings may perceive by their imperative biological forces, is constituted by shared languages that are themselves embodiments of human traditions. It is impossible to wipe away the legacy of history that enables us to live the way we do as intellectual and sentient beings.

[150] I am not loath to admit that the line of research I am suggesting here was already present in the history of enquiry—e.g. in German idealism.

suggestion to expand the boundaries of the philosophy of education grounds itself on this view. This thesis ends by sharpening the sense of this broadened conception of education and accordingly of the philosophy of education.

Just because our world as a community of thinking and minded beings is always in some measure on the way, that does not mean that it is automatically or voluntarily marching towards something greater. There *can* be a regress in our world (morally, politically, economically, culturally, etc). I would venture here to suggest that the *philosophy of education* as an academic discipline concerned with knowledge-relevant issues in society should and can engage itself in the enquiry into how human knowledge has evolved and will develop—on the basis of what we have known and how we have lived. The suggestion that the philosophy of education should be concerned with the 'directionality' of our world will be easily greeted with the complaint that it interferes in a 'natural' development of the world and such social engineering has endangered hell rather than paradise in human history. As mentioned earlier, I am not claiming that the philosophy of education appears out of the blue and serves as a *deus ex machine* by showing the direction the human community as a whole should take. Yet, it is to be noted that a natural development of our world never exists 'naturally' as something like a natural kind in the natural world or the world of a first nature. The first nature prescribes next to nothing about how we human beings should conduct our lives either individually or collectively, even though it provides some background conditions and constraints under which alone humans and all other living things can live. This is an inevitable consequence of the fact that our world is being handled by human capacities which are not just beyond those of mere animals but beyond our own evolved adaptations.[151] Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully spell out the ways in which and the extent to which a 'natural'

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[151] We are in a position to surmount our physical limitations—e.g. humans biologically cannot fly as birds can, but we can contrive aeroplanes which enable us to 'fly' faster and longer than birds do. In a nutshell, the way the first nature strikes us and the way we deal with it owe much to the degree of our intellectual and sentient sophistication, which makes our life radically different from other living beings' perception of the first nature.

development of our world in tandem with a 'natural' growth of human knowledge becomes a subject of enquiry, I want to conclude this paper by highlighting the sense in which the philosophy of education forms an important part of interdisciplinary enquiry into education, knowledge and human development.

It is, first and foremost, to be borne in mind that, as McDowell reminds us, nature in a community of thinking and minded beings, is second nature. This intimates to us that 'the world as it really is' without the conception of second nature does not give us directions about what we ought to do in our world as intellectual and sentient beings. As has been adumbrated, the primary goal of this thesis is to make more explicit the unnoticed fact that the onus is on us living in the world of second nature to develop our world, since the issue is not pre-planned. It is true that little has been said about a concrete indication of such development in this thesis. However, this is not least because I recognise that the issue of how we develop our world *with* the conception of second nature is of central importance and will be a feature of my research in the future. It may be complained that my following insistence is too trivial and modest. But I believe its implications are more than trivial and modest. That is, the exploration of how we live, what it is to be a human being, what society we envisage and so on necessitates an interdisciplinary shape in such a way as to investigate multilayered, complex reality. For our world co-evolves with what we hope to know and how we want to live on the basis of what we have known and how we have lived. As the preceding chapters have clarified, the dichotomous relationships between theory and practice, truth and rational justification, conceptual norm and empirical description, and cognitive pursuits and their social organisation all impede the full realisation and advancement of the enquiry into what I call the educational nature of human knowledge specifically and human development more generally. Put the other way round, it is misguided to break off dialogue between conceptual enquiry and empirical research. Philosophers can make salient contributions to facilitate fine-grained interdisciplinary work in part because scientists themselves are not experts on the meta-discourse of what scientific knowledge is in a social vacuum

or where it takes us and in part because empirical researchers often fail to acknowledge the philosophical deliberation that is thoroughly enmeshed in their work.[152] Philosophical enquiry and empirical research should not be insulated from one another.

Such a promising avenue of research can be witnessed in, for example, (part of) bioethics and science and technology studies.[153] I do think that a growing public concern about the issues raised in these areas and an increasing focus on the importance of philosophically informed work are great steps forward. My claim is that there is no good reason for the *philosophy of education* to hesitate to engage itself in such an essentially interdisciplinary enquiry into human knowledge and development as a key discipline. For, what has been discussed throughout this thesis, I hope, raises awareness of an inclusive sense of education, the sense that becomes explicit by the observation that at the heart of our world of a second nature lie ongoing *processes* and that at the core of those processes lies education. If this view has plausibility, the issues in question—e.g. how we lead meaningful lives, what it is to be a human being, how we can envisage future society and institutions, what path the human community as a whole can go in, what lines of organised research will be pursued and so on—should not be left only to a narrow sense of moral philosophers, religious thinkers and researchers in science and technology studies. For the inclusive sense of education at the core of human knowledge is broader than the confined sense of scientific, religious and medical knowledge, even though the sense is so inclusive that it is hardly recognised properly.[154]

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[152] As examined in Chapters 5 and 6, many of non-normative naturalists (such as Quine) and normative naturalists (such as Goldman) alike fail to concede the immanence of philosophical deliberations in empirical research, which makes their 'interdisciplinary' programme look little more than a (reductive) 'mishmash' of academic disciplines.

[153] Given the pressing and startling issues such as in vitro fertilisation (IVF), abortion, euthanasia, animal experimentation and organ transplantation, it may be understandable that bioethics has gripped public consciousness. In addition, given that these issues are raised by revolutionary developments in the biomedical sciences and related technology in particular and a wide range of science and technology disciplines in general, it may be understandable that science and technology studies has acquired general currency.

[154] Of course it would be absurd to suggest that the line of research I am recommending has

The full appreciation of the essentially educational dimensions of human knowledge specifically and the human condition generally will extend a narrow conception of the philosophy of education. This is not to suggest that the discipline finds a new niche in the academic world but rather to suggest that it form the centrepiece of the philosophical enquiry into human knowledge. A close look at the educational aspects, broadly understood, constitutes the core, if not the whole, of philosophical enquiry into human knowledge. Furthermore, the implications of the perspective I have been suggesting may go beyond the narrow purview of academic philosophy because, as mentioned, philosophical enquiry into the educational dimensions of human knowledge and the human condition will flourish best when taking an interdisciplinary shape. I do not pretend that this thesis has offered concrete suggestions towards knowledge and education policies as well as knowledge-bearing institutions. But I have offered my best effort in preparing the ground for further, more concrete work on the direct implications and realisations of the educational nature of human knowledge and development, which is to be in dialogue with, for instance, ongoing cognitive-scientific findings and sociological research. This line of enquiry is far-reaching. That is, the philosophy of education is more generative than it now may look.

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not been undertaken in the present philosophy of education at all. I have no intention to over-generalise the whole course of the philosophy of education simply by seeing Hirst, Carr and Siegel as fair representations of the field. However, it may be fair to say that we have not yet witnessed a flowering of this line of research in the contemporary philosophy of education.

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