

THE JOURNAL OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES RESEARCH (JAHDSR)

Volume 4, Issue No.1, pp 106-127; December, 2023

www.researchersjournal.org

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Received October, 2023, Accepted November, 2023, published: December, 2023

Richard Rorty's Anti Representational Theory of Knowledge and Its Epistemological Implications

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Abstract

The process of attaining knowledge has been misconceived by many scholars due to the disagreements that surrounds the subject matter, right from the ancient period to the contemporary period hence, the question of what is knowledge, how can one know, the origin and justification of knowledge became cardinal to the theory of knowledge. It is on the basis of this that Rorty disagreed with the representationists' accounts that the mind mirrors reality and interpret it independently. The problem revolves primarily on the position of knowledge that conceived the mind as the sole determinant of what qualifies as knowledge, the idea that knowledge is a linguistic affair, the refutation of foundational knowledge and the denial of objective knowledge. The search for knowledge and certainty should be devoid of the mindset of segmenting the subject and objects of knowledge. Adequate knowledge must necessarily incorporate the subject and the objects of knowledge which are the necessary pillars of knowledge. If certitude in knowledge would be attained the subject and the object must be seen as correlates. Foundational knowledge cannot be completely jettisoned as it creates a line of departure for particular significance. Therefore, the subject-object dichotomy in epistemology should be abolished to enable new and useful ideas if the quest for certainty in knowledge would be attained. The efficacy of any knowledge claim according to this paper is on the ability to correlate the subject and the object. Knowledge claims must accommodate the two basic pillars of knowledge (the knower and the known). One should not be robbed to pay the other because such attempt will only lead to futility in knowledge.

Key words: Representationalism, Anti Representationalism, Foundationalism, Correlatism.

Introduction

Over the years, the concept of mind, the nature of reality and the process of acquiring knowledge have been understood differently by many thinkers, thus, several views have been expressed regarding what they are and represents. The debate on how knowledge is acquired started from the ancient period of philosophy with the Ionian philosophers who investigated nature in an attempt to finding out the ultimate stuff of the universe. Thales and his contemporaries disagreed with each other regarding what knowledge is due to their individual perspective regarding nature. The skeptics equally argued that it is not possible to know anything; knowledge for them lies outside man. Plato in his distinction between sensible world and the world of forms contends that real knowledge is only found in the world of forms.

In the medieval period, knowledge received plethora of treatment from several scholars, notably among them are St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas. In his theory of knowledge, Augustine defended the possibility of attaining knowledge. We know logical truths such as the principle of excluded middle that either P or not P. We cannot refute someone who says I know this thing is white, the sound is delightful, the taste is sweet, and the smell is pleasant, such claims cannot be erroneous. In an attempt to explain the process of acquiring knowledge, Aquinas hold the view thus, knowledge is acquired through two stages of operations: sensitive and intellective (56). For him, proper object of the sensitive faculty is the individual, while the proper object of the intellect is the universal, the idea. But the intellect does not gain any idea unless the material for that idea is presented to it by the senses. The two cognitive faculties: sense and intellect are naturally capable of gaining knowledge of their proper objects since both are in potency- the sense toward the individual form and the intellect toward the universal (56) (Shaabani & Mansouri, 2020).

Prominent in modern period is argument between rationalists and empiricists. Both schools defended the possibility of attaining knowledge but disagreed on how knowledge is attained. In the contemporary period, Gettier was the first person to question claims to knowledge in his article titled "Is justified True-Belief Knowledge?" He proposed two counter examples to refute the

traditional conditions of knowledge. He maintained that justification is not always reliable as a criterion for knowledge. Unlike Gettier, Rorty's anti-representational theory of knowledge revolves around the process through which the mind mirrors nature and attains knowledge. The representationalists hold that there is a relationship - a link between the mind and the world that enables the mind to understand it accurately. A kind of a privilege mental power that enables the mind gain direct access to things-in-themselves. Knowledge for them is an act of mental mirroring of external world. Certainty and clarity in knowledge lie outside the mind not inside. It is on the basis of this that Rorty rejected scientism – the view that scientific methods help man achieve a privilege discernment into the structural processes of nature. For him, knowledge can be attained when humans free themselves from the assumed governing metaphor of the mind and the world. The claim that philosophy underwrites or debunks claims to knowledge is unwarranted and does not follow logically. Philosophy primarily, seeks to build knowledge, it can only debunk assertions or knowledge claims where such claims lack logical entailment (Agassi, 2008).

For Rorty, the analytic philosophers were pursuing the age-old project of finding the universal foundation of knowledge that animated the Platonian, Cartesian, Lockean and Kantian traditions. Plato stressed that the objects of knowledge are not the real things we see but the reality in the world of forms, Descartes hold the view that the mind has the ability to know reality independently of the body, Locke argues that objects of knowledge impressed themselves on the mind and allow the mind to interpret them according to its disposition, and Kant contends that the categories of the mind are fundamental to knowledge. Rorty stressed that in analytic philosophy there is still a knowing mind, a reality out there and a theory of representation that describes how reality is represented by the knower, analytic philosophy failed to doff the assumption that the mind is like a mirror. Knowledge for Rorty is open-ended which implies that there is no stereotype, ritualistic way of arriving at knowledge. The mind should not be preconditioned to interpret reality. Ozumba corroborated this view that for Rorty, Knowledge is not to conform to an off handed, ritualistic, stereotype way which is guided by rigid set-down rules seeking to be

grounded in already accepted body of truths. Knowledge need not be based on privileged representations or apodictic truth (96). From the foregoing, it is evident that Rorty refuted established foundations regarding knowledge acquisition and maintained that neutrality is cardinal to studying nature because it gives room to skepticism which to some extent serves as catalyst to epistemology. Rorty expressed his dissatisfaction with the classical way of conceiving knowledge that also affected other periods of philosophy. According to him, the notion of a theory of knowledge based on an understanding of mental processes is accredited to the seventeenth century and especially to Locke, the notion of the mind as separate entity in which processes occur to Descartes. (*Philosophy and Mirror*, 4; Mansuri, 2016).

The idea of knowledge as a mirror of nature is pervasive and lacking philosophical undertone, this approach would lead to a state of mind he known as ironism in which people become aware of the contingency of their placement in history and of their philosophical vocabulary. That is, a situation that is funny and strange because things happens in a way that seems opposite of one's expectation. Without the representationalists account and metaphors between the mind and the world human society would be more developed in all fields. It is on this note that Rorty attacked the concept of knowledge as a glassy essence or mental mirroring. That is, knowledge through correspondence to the world. He believed the idea of mental representations leads to bad questions such as, what is out there (reality) and what is in here (mind) such that we can know what is really out there only through the link created by the mind. In what degree can one know that anything which is mental represent that which is not, whether what the eye of the mind sees is a mirror (even a distorted mirror- an enchanted glass) or a veil? Rorty's problem centers on the fact that whenever one have an incorrigible report on a state of ourselves, there must be a property with which are presented with (glassy essence) which induces one to make this report- a principle vital to the image of nature. It is the mindset which appearance is not mistaken belief but mistaken belief generated by particular mechanism (a deceptive thing getting before the eye of the mind). That is, knowledge acquired through the mind is considered true without

questioning even if it is false. This work therefore seeks to bring to the fore the vital roles of the subject and object, the knower and the known to knowledge.

Definition of Terms

Representationalism: The theory that holds that there is a relationship - a link, a likeness between the mind and the world that enables the mind to understand it accurately. A kind of a privileged mental power that enables the mind gain direct access to things-in-themselves. The doctrine that holds that the mind mirrors reality accurately the way it is and can interpret it accurately independent of the senses. Put differently, it contends that the mind is the sole determinant of knowledge. That is without the mind there is no knowledge.

Anti-representationalism: This is contradistinction to representationalism. It holds that the mind is neither a mirror – imagery substance nor a glassy essence that pictures reality. It denied the assertion that the mind is a perfect representation of reality. Anti-representationalism contends that the mind lacks the capacity to interpret nature accurately, independently of the senses. This theory maintained that nature is better understood and interpreted through the senses.

Richard Rorty's Anti-Representational Theory of Knowledge

Rorty's anti-representational theory of knowledge is a critical review of the representationalists account of knowledge that its search for truth is concealed behind the world. According to Rorty it is a theory that is aimed at liberating humanity from the old metaphor that is deeply established in superstition, mystification and a religious-inspired mindset. He believes that this can be possible through offering new ideas and reshaping vocabularies that will give room to new insights. Rorty argues that philosophy has unduly relied on a representational theory of perception and a correspondence theory of truth, hoping our experience or language might mirror the way reality actually is. He left the traditional subjective/objective dialogue in favour of a

communal version of truth. For him truth, is simply an honorific knower bestow on claims, asserting them as what we want to say about a particular matter.

According to Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Rorty's anti-representational theory of knowledge is a theory that aimed at avoiding ancient fallacies that are replete in Plato's theory of forms, Cartesian cogito, Berkeley's esse est percipi, Lockean theory of knowledge and so forth trying to project contemporary justified beliefs into the future. Rorty in his anti-representational theory of knowledge maintained that since Plato used cognition to analogize the relation of the psyche to the forms, philosophers have mistakenly tried to make a word-world connection in order to ground reality in thought (77); Mansuri, 2016).

Rorty believes that this representational scheme is wrong and cannot lead one to certainty in knowledge, is left to humans to consciously fashion their own metaphors that will cope with the world such that is free from the tyranny of locating and adopting a non-human vocabulary where human ingenuity and creativity will craft undreamt possibility as Galileo reinvented our understanding of the heavens by jettisoning of the outmoded Aristotelian crystalline celestial metaphor or as Thomas Kuhn reinvented our understanding of paradigms. Knowledge is an open-ended interdisciplinary conversation. All consensus for Rorty are contingent, spatial and on-going solidarities directed towards specific practical outcome. Knowledge for Rorty should not be based on clairvoyance, surmise, chance and circumstance, but on observable processes that are practical.

Over the years, philosophers have been concerned with understanding the concept of truth, thus many scholars have come up with several ideas as to what truth means in relation to gaining certainty in knowledge. The Ionian philosophers conceived truth from the point of view of the underlying material substratum that underlies all things. For Parmenides, truth is found in the one reality of being that is unchangeable, immutable and eternal. For the Sophists, truth is relative. They reduced truth to individual conception. For Plato, truth is an entity existing outside the mind, an entity existing in the intelligible world or the world of forms. For Aristotle, truth is the conformity of mind with reality. For Aquinas, truth is the conformity of the intellect with reality.

Kant avers that truth lies in judgment which the mind makes when it applies the categories to phenomena. For Descartes, truth is clear and distinct perception of innate ideas.

It is evident that truth has received Plethora of treatment from different thinkers. Rorty's quest for certainty in knowledge stood against the representationalists account of knowledge in his theory of apodictic truth. Rorty avers,

The story I want to tell... is merely how the notion of two sort of representations- intuitions and concepts fell into disrepute... is equivalent to saying that if we do not have the distinction between what is given and what is added by the mind or that between the contingent (because influenced by what is given) and the necessary (because entirely within the mind and under its control) then we will not know what would count as knowledge (Philosophy and Mirror, 169).

Rorty believes that the mind is not infallible as long as knowledge acquisition is concern; it is capable of making mistakes. Therefore there should be a distinction between what is given by the senses (objects of knowledge) and what is added by the mind. His arguments points to the fact that if the mind is not regulated regarding what is given and what is added by the mind, truth will be difficult to fathom. The issue of necessary and absolute truth is not for the mind to determine. Truth for him lies outside the mind. Truth is embedded in the reality we perceived. There are basically two alternatives to truth according to Rorty.

First alternative leads to a pragmatic view of truth and a therapeutic approach to ontology, second alternative leads to ontological explanations of the relations between minds and meanings, mind and immediate data of awareness, universals and particulars, thought and language, consciousness and brains, and so on. The goal of all such explanations is to make truth something more than what Dewey called *warranted assertibility*: more than what our peers will, *certeterisparibus*, let us get away with believing such explanations. To select between these approaches is to choose between truth as what it is good for us to believe and truth as contact with reality (Philosophy and Mirror, 176; Pietro. 2020).

Scholars have over the years indulged in heated debates concerning what truth is. While some scholars contend that truth is objective and can be known irrespective of one's interest, belief, will and so forth. Others held that truth is relative and dependent on individual's assertibility. These arguments led scholars to propound several theories concerning the concept of truth.

i. Correspondence Theory of Truth: This theory holds that truth is the cognate of mind with reality. What is in the mind must be akin to what is in reality. Reality must confirm what is said or held as true for the belief to be justified.

Russell proposed the correspondence theory to enable him distinguish between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. Correspondence theory of truth holds that whatever conforms to reality is true. Pojman posits that it has been observed that the truth or falsehood of a belief always depends upon something which lies outside the belief itself (170).

The correspondence theory of truth enables judgments and also guarantees certainty. It is important to note that it is difficult to ascertain when the intellect or mind corresponds to reality because of the dichotomy between the mind (knower) and the object (known). For certainty in knowledge to be attained, this dichotomy must be evacuated.

ii. Coherence Theory of Truth: This theory holds that a claim to knowledge is true when it is incorporated in an orderly and logical manner into a larger and complex system of beliefs (Armstrong 45). According to this theory, for a claim to qualify as true, the coherentist insists that such claim must fit into already existing and accepted – justified beliefs logically and structurally.

According to Rescher,

The coherentist programme of epistemology takes as its index of acceptability the overall acceptable thesis with the rest of what is presumptively acceptable. On its approach, the standard of the acceptability of thesis is not their deductive derivability from some sacrosanct basis, but their systematic connectability with one another (125).

This theory of truth appears difficult to accept any knowledge claim that does not coheres with the already established body of knowledge. Knowledge, according to Rorty should not be regulated by ritualistic and rule governed procedures. This theory does not accept or assess a claim based on how beautiful and logical it appears but on how supportive it is to the already held beliefs. For this theory, truth is accessible on the basis of best-fit consideration.

Rorty contends that if a set of belief must fit into already existing beliefs, there is bound to be problem of justification, because only one coherent body of belief is possible to justify itself. Put differently, a theory that is false will continue to produce false knowledge claim as long as the truth or falsehood of emerging knowledge claim is dependent on it (Brandom, 2013).

iii. Pragmatic Theory of Truth: The main advocates of this theory are Charles S. Pierce, John Dewey and William James. For them the hallmark of truth is utility. Lawhead argues that for them, truth is

What works, what gives satisfaction, or practical consequences of our beliefs. Workability is the pragmatic definition of what it means for a belief to be true. Just as a hammer is useful if it enables us to relate to the world in a certain way (drilling nails) so a belief is useful (true) if it let us relate to our experience satisfactorily (407).

From the above premise, it is germane to note that whatever does not work in practice is false as far as pragmatic theory of truth is concern. Truth, for this theory should not be based on what the mind conceives as true but what works, what can be verified through the senses. This theory reduces truth to what can be seen or verified through the human senses. It is important to note that this is the group that Rorty belongs. He is a thorough going pragmatist.

Characteristics of Truth

i. Truth is Unchangeable: The unchangeable nature of truth makes truth a fixed and constant reality. Truth is not liable to change. This nature of truth disagreed with the relative conception of truth that argues that truth is wholly dependent on individual's views.

Apepende, held that:

Truth does not vary, it is an unalterable reality. It follows therefore, that truth is the same for all. Thus, one could be repelled by the expression that “what is true for you is not true for me” this is the cankerworm that seems to have eaten deep into the fabric of the postmodernist epistemic community (119).

Consequently, the implication of situating truth on individual reduces truth to mere opinion and expression of individual’s conception rather than what is the case. The notion of truth as unchanging may not be applicable in all situations. Prior to Copernicus, the earth was known as the center of the universe, the geocentric notion, but he refuted it and propounded the heliocentric notion that holds that the sun is the center of the universe; every other planet revolves round its orbits. What is known to be true today can become false tomorrow vice versa due to the dynamic nature of man and things around him.

iii. Truth is Timeless: Truth is not governed by time. It is a reality that lies outside time. It may be discovered in a given time but it is not in time. Truth is a reality that does not run out of time. It is eternal and ever useful, irrespective of when it was discovered. The certainty that truth possesses remains always the same every time, except proven otherwise.

iii. Truth is Independent: Truth is independent and cannot be altered. Nobody can change truth. Truth exists independent of anybody. People can temper with truth and replace it with falsehood but cannot be buried completely. Put differently, falsehood can be presented as truth where people are ignorant or bereaved of truth but that does not undo the independent nature of truth, truth may lie for several years before being discovered. Truth cannot be buried forever.

Rorty’s notion of apodictic truth (necessary truth or absolute certainty) and privilege representations, questioned the traditional conception of truth where the mind is the chief determinant of it. According to Rorty, how can the mind represent accurately what reality is? It is germane to note here that Rorty’s argument regarding accurate representation is to some extent true. If the mind is to represent or mirror correctly what a given reality is then children and

imbeciles should be able to interpret. Secondly a mind that is not train in a particular field cannot interpret reality in such field. Knowledge as stated earlier is the subject plus the object. Both must coexist to enable certainty.

Rorty and the Idea of Foundationalism

The collieries of foundationalism are traceable to Parmenides (the apostle of permanence). He believed that reality is stable. That is, one, immutable and unchanging. Pythagoras followed suit in the search for unchanging foundations of knowledge. He finally settled in number, arguing that number is the foundation of things. The search continues in the days of Socrates down to Plato who employed the reality of the transcendental forms by arguing that it is the permanent, immutable and the foundation of all things, it is the original basement of things.

According to Ozumba, using Socrates and Theaetetus as his mouth piece Plato contends that knowledge is not perception of physical things we see but incontrovertible warrant of justification (82). According to John Kekes, foundationalism is the epistemological idea that there exist non-inferentially basic proposition whose truth and certainty can be obtained through direct and unmediated means (19). Rorty refuted foundational philosophies for example Descartes clear and distinct ideas, Kantian a priori truth and Berkeley's esse est percipi on the ground that they promote representational knowledge. The author contends that there is no natural contest-independent truths upon which judgment are made. Contest-independent truth and knowledge is to him misguided effort to hypostatize truth and knowledge by repackaging it in epistemological terms of the Platonic attempt to hypostatize good. Insisting on context-independence would be to endow reason with causal powers that enable a particular descriptive vocabulary to resist refutation regardless of time and place (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 90).

Rorty maintained that, if, however, one think of rational certainty as a matter of victory in argument rather than of relation to an object known, we shall look toward our interlocutors rather than to our faculties for the explanation of the phenomenon. If we think of certainty about theorem as our confidence, based on experience with arguments that nobody will find an objection to the

premises from which we infer it, then we shall not seek to explain it by relation of reason. Our certainty will be a matter of conversation between persons rather than a matter of interaction with non-human reality. So we shall not see difference between necessary and contingent truths. We shall see differences in degree of ease in objecting to our beliefs, we shall be where the sophists were before Plato brought his principle to bear, we shall be looking for an airtight case rather than an unshakable foundation. (157).

Rorty's point against foundationalism is that certainty in knowledge should not be based on cause -the foundation which brought them forth rather it should be based on the arguments given for them. According to Lackey and Sosa, putting aside radical skepticism, it seems almost a truism that a lot of what we believe is based on the testimony of others. Beliefs about the distant past are based on the writings of historians, beliefs about the micro-world are based on the word of physicists and beliefs about names, ages, habits, likes and dislikes of friends are largely based on the information those friends provide (77). According to Ozumba, Rorty sees foundational epistemology as the traditional inquiry which stresses the importance of knowledge having foundations. It emphasized the need for a core subbasement of facts. There are no fixed structures for knowledge; there is no distinction between analytic statements and synthetic statements. There are no common grounds and hope for agreement in what is to be perceived. There are no standards that hold sway in any discourse except relativistic standard adopted by participants in a discourse or inquiry. Knowledge need not be based on privileged representations or apodictic truth, but the agreement of belief with other set of beliefs already accepted as true - a kind of coherence theory of truth. (*Epistemology*, 96).

Sellar contends in his theory of *Rejection of the Myth of the Given*, that nothing is given in a fixed static way; our perception is nothing but a continuum of perceptions varying in degrees and only determinable from the individuals' peculiar perceptive ability (90). From Sellar's individuals' perceptive ability, it is obvious that knowledge is not a conglomerate of individuals' agreement. It is not the case that two people who are looking at the same reality will interpret it the way it is. It is possible that two people may be looking at the same thing and seeing it differently because of their

peculiarity. Ozumba further stressed that, non-foundationalism, no doubt has a lot of consequences for epistemology. It is an attempt to chart a less problematic course for epistemological inquiry. If adopted will bring to an end the concept of justification in its absolute and certain conception. It also reduced epistemology to just an aspect of natural science proceeding on the investigative canons of science that is based on the principle of induction and its limitations (89). Rorty further clarified his position in his theory of contingency: contingency of language, contingency of selfhood and contingency of community.

The Contingency of Language:

According to Stumpf, if there is any theme that capture Rorty's philosophical point of view, it is his conviction that there are no eternal essences. Rorty contends that, there is no human nature, true nature of the self – universal moral law discoverable by human reason. Instead of a timeless and stable structure in reality what we find is that everywhere we are confronted with contingency by the ever presence of chance (*Consequences*, 456). Stumpf contends that if everything is contingent how can there be meaning to life? If there is no timeless truth and knowledge, how can we know whether our lives fall short of their intended purpose or value?

Rorty further stressed that, we normally think of language as a means by which our vocabulary represents reality to our minds. How can a vocabulary represent or be a medium of something out there? One way is to use the metaphor of a jigsaw puzzle. It is assumed that we can describe various pieces of the puzzle so that as the vocabulary changes and evolves our language will come closer to what exists out there. It is assume that out there are to be found fixed and stable realities capable of being described (*Pragmatism*, 455). Rorty expressed his displeasure over the use of language by thinking that language represents reality accurately. He contends that Galileo created a new vocabulary when he described the behavior of the earth and the sun. For him, Galileo's new description does not represent deeper insight into the intrinsic nature of the natural world. For him one must resist the temptation to think that the re-descriptions of reality offered by contemporary physical sciences are somehow closer to the things themselves.

The Contingency of Selfhood:

Rorty maintained that, Plato presented to us the metaphor of two worlds: the world of time, appearance and change and the world of enduring, changeless truth. Our lives involve an attempt to escape from the abstractions of the flesh and the dominant opinions of a particular time; our priority is to enter the real world of reason. With this vocabulary, Plato created a language designed to describe the essence of human nature implying that there is only one true description of our human situation. This assertion according to Rorty is the true picture of the way the idea of metaphor brought misconception of nature. As we encounter true the contingent events of our lives, we are to control our affections by the use of power and reason and thereby achieve moral and intellectual virtue. Rorty believes that Plato imposed labels and description of the self as those that are absolutely true. Those descriptions according to him are mere alternative ways of defining the self.

The Contingency of Community:

Rorty contends that, Plato drew a tight connection between the essential human nature and the social and political arrangement of the community. He thought that the three classes of society were necessary extensions of the three parts of the human self. For Plato, the artisans embody the physical element of the person, the guardians express the spirited and passions and the rulers are the incarnation of the mind (*Consequence*, 46). For Rorty this whole argument is orchestrated and dictated by the structure of the human nature. He disagrees with Plato that our public life must be governed by antecedent's facts of human nature. For him, the major value upon which a community should be built, are values of equality and freedom. Equality and freedom for him are the basic and ideals of democracy. What we call good is that which is the result of free discussion. If we control political freedom, goodness and truth would be handled.

Epistemological implications of Rorty's anti representational theory of knowledge

Kant proposed synthetic a priori knowledge in his attempt to reconcile the rationalists and the empiricists point of divergence. For him, ideas without contents are empty, perceptions without conceptions are blind and understanding can perceive nothing while the sense can think nothing.

Richard Rorty's Anti Representational Theory of Knowledge and its

Knowledge can only arise from the united action of reason and experience (25). The thrust of Kant's argument is that synthetic - a priori knowledge seems to be distinct. They are somehow related to experience but are not derived from experience, and cannot be falsified by experience. Rorty's refutation of knowledge as representation, metaphor, glassy essence and mirror of nature is replete in his anti-representational theory of knowledge where he maintained that knowledge cannot be gotten through mere correspondence. For him knowledge is only acquired when the senses come into direct contact with object of knowledge. Rorty was induced by the representationalists account of knowledge where whatever the mind affirms qualifies as knowledge. The mind under this background is seen as sole determinant of knowledge. In this perspective the mind must mirror reality through its glass before such reality is accepted as knowledge. Rorty, argued against this position. For him, the mind is not the sole determinant of knowledge. He believes that knowledge is attained through a critical study of nature.

Suffice it here to say that can nature be studied in a vacuum? Is the person to study nature without mind? Rorty consistently maintained that knowledge is acquired when the senses come in contact with objects of knowledge. This is Rorty's stronghold regarding the process of acquiring knowledge. Do the sense organs exist outside being? Is it possible for the sense organs to exist on their own, that is, can they exist independent of body? They cannot exist outside being. Their existence is dependent on a body. They cohere in a body therefore cannot interpret nature independently of the mind. Plato maintained that the objects of knowledge are not the material things we see in the world but the reality in the world of forms which to him is the real world. The soul (mind) existed in the world of forms prior to its coming into this world. But when it was sent into this world to unite with the body, it forgot all that it knew in the world of forms. So for him, the mind recollects what it already knows. It is glaring that for Plato, there is no new discovery, knowledge has already been established and since the senses cannot lead us to certitude in knowledge, the mind only need to recollect all its prior knowledge through the mirror of reality.

For Locke understanding seems to me not to have the least glimmering of any ideas which it does not receive... external objects furnish the mind with the ideas of sensible qualities which are all those different perceptions they produce in us; and the mind furnishes this understanding with ideas of its own operations (E. 2. 1. S). According to him, the mind receives ideas through imaginations, perceptions, doubting, emotions and so forth and use them to send signal to our understanding with ideas of its own operations. Implies that for him objects of our senses imposed themselves on the mind and allow the mind to interpret them the way they are. Berkeley holds the view that, things are annihilated and created anew. These objects of senses exist only when they are perceived: the trees therefore are in the garden, or the chairs in the parlour no longer than while there is somebody by to perceive them. Upon shutting my eyes all the furniture in the room is reduced to nothing and barely upon opening them. It is again created (85, 48, 45). This shows that he held a monistic view regarding knowledge. He maintained that there is no reality outside the mind. For this work knowledge is a collaborative affair between the knower and the known. Descartes assumption that, suppose that all the things which I see are false (fictitious), I believe that none of those objects which my fallacious memory represents ever existed, I suppose that I possess no senses, I believe that body, figure, extension, motion and place are merely fictions of my mind. What is it then that can be esteemed true? Perhaps, this only, that there is absolutely nothing certain (118).

Is evident, that he was concerned about establishing foundation of knowledge that will be use to ascertain the existence of other things. According to him, the methodic doubt was used to affirm the existence of material things, God and himself. It is pertinent to note that his quest was to establish a sure foundation where edifice of knowledge would be built but fail to sustain his claims as he was accused of indulging in solipsism. He failed to incorporate the other parameter of knowledge (object). Descartes' position would appear cogent and reasonable if his methods and principles that led to his arguments were logically considered and formulated by incorporating the knower and the known. According to him, I was made to believe all I was thought. That is, all the knowledge he acquired prior to his methodic doubt were refuted. He denied all the knowledge that

the senses provide and resorted to holding a position that the mind can lead us to certitude in knowledge. This is where this work faults Descartes for using a single route to establishing a foundation of knowledge. Husserl's theory of knowledge tried to harmonize the dichotomy between the knower and the known as necessary prerequisite for acquiring knowledge when he contends that the mind be bracketed, our previous knowledge, our beliefs, our claims, objects of knowledge and so forth to enable us gain certitude in knowledge. According to him, there are three types of reduction, to wit, phenomenological reduction, eidetic reduction and transcendental reduction. The author espoused, the phenomenological reduction contains the description of mental acts free of theories and presuppositions. Eidetic reduction is a reduction where the individual existence of object in question is bracketed since phenomenology is interested only in the essences. The essences are evaluated at this stage. In transcendental reduction, we bracket the ego and its intention and cease to affirm the existence of the ego as a psychological reality (6).

The author held that reality (objects) should be approached without a preconceived, premeditated knowledge of them. Not doing such for Husserl, will amount to futility in knowledge. He believes also that the mind be clear of all prejudices to enhance certainty in knowledge. Verala argued that Husserl thus took the first step of the reflective scientist for holding that; we cannot take the world naively but must see it instead as having the mark of our own structure (16). Asouzu in his book *Complementary Reflection and some Basic Philosophical Problems in Africa Today*, contends that, the mind must be made to see reality in a way that is devoid of prejudices in order to gain adequate and authentic knowledge. In his words, in the very process of noetic propaedeutic, an actor seeks to approach the world with a type of self-consciousness that reactivates the innate transcendental categories (74).

Suffice it to say that Asouzu's position implies that there are innate transcendental categories that must be activated to enhance certitude in knowledge. Hegel's position that the mind is ultimately the source and container of knowledge, proves that he polarized the edifice of knowledge that should have been built upon the two basic two pillars of knowledge, (the subject

and the object). Kant maintained that the categories of the mind are fundamental to knowledge. For him, without the categories, knowledge is not possible to attain. In his words, this distinctive activity of the mind is to synthesize and to unify our experiences. It achieve this synthesis first by imposing on various experiences in the sensible manifold certain forms of intuition... there are certain categories of thought that deal more specifically with the way the mind unifies or synthesizes our experience. The mind achieves this unifying act by making various kinds of judgment as we engage in the act of interpreting the world of sense (279). Kant, in his theory of synthesizing and unifying, contends that the mind is cardinal and superior to reality. The mind without fear of contradiction is not cardinal to knowledge acquisition it only works in unity with the objects of knowledge to make knowledge possible.

Rorty contends that it is erroneous to assume that human beings through their minds are equipped with a structural frame work (a mirror – imagery) that dictates how our enquiries must proceed. For Rorty knowledge should be represented by what is linguistics and not by what is mental (452). Rorty contends that the traditional epistemologist views the mind as a mirror that reflects the external world. The mirror, for Rorty is hazy, hidden, darkened and clouded hence cannot lead to genuine knowledge. His contention is that “how can a hidden, darkened and cloudy implement lead to knowledge that is certain and authentic. Rorty rejected objective truth. His anti-representational theory can be seen as a theory that conceives reality in a radical realist perspective. Rorty’s goal was to eradicate metaphysical inclinations to knowledge. Lawhead maintained that, the radical nature of Rorty’s philosophy is captured by his call to abandon the project of epistemology which by summary is based on the notion that ideas and statements can lead to certainty in knowledge. That is, give us the true picture of reality (564).

Rorty maintained that Beliefs ideas and statements are always components of large-scale systems of practices that are chosen for practical reasons. For him the representationalists do not think that when we say something we must necessarily be expressing a view about a subject. We might just be saying something- participating in a conversation rather than contributing to an

inquiry. Perhaps, saying things is not always saying how things are (*Philosophy and Mirror*, 371). Rorty stressed that, the purpose of epistemology is not to say how things are but to finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking and to keep the conversation going rather than to find objective truth (*Philosophy and Mirror*, 360). Rorty believes that human beings are not fixed like objects but are always continually remarking themselves. So there is no need for engaging in a discourse that is busy looking for objective truth. According to him, keeping a conversation is a sufficient aim of philosophy. To see wisdom as consisting in the ability to sustain a conversation is to see human beings as generators of new description rather than those to describe accurately (*Philosophy and Mirror*, 378). Suffice it to say that it is safer to approach reality with a broader mind than the mind that is restricted by a single principle and strictly governed by rigid rules. It is on this note that this work attempts to harmonize the knower and the known relationship in a mutual way. For this work, the knower and the known are fundamentally two sides of a coin.

For the realists' particular things exist independently of our perceiving them. Matter has its own existence independently of the mind. The objects of our senses exist independently of their being known or perceived. It is obvious that, it is not our knowledge of objects that brought them into existence, nor not knowing them make them not to exist. Likewise, the mind, it is not because the objects are perceived by the mind that made the mind superior both exist independently of one another. As argued earlier that objects of our senses and the mind are two sides of the same coin (knowledge) they can be complementarily made to correlate to enhance certitude in knowledge. Certitude in knowledge cannot be gotten through polarization, bifurcation, disjointing, segmenting, decoupling, dissevering, dissociating, and divorcing the role of the subject and object of knowledge. The mind and reality must work in harmony and complementary way to enhance certitude in knowledge. Objects are presented to us through the senses and known through the help of the mind, who synthesizes and unifies them. The subject and the object are two entities that are regarded as major contributors to knowledge acquisition. To this work both entities are two sides

of the same coin (knowledge). Knowledge will be incapacitated without both; it would be difficult if not impossible to talk about knowledge acquisition or by extension certitude in knowledge. Objects of our senses are deposited through mental process into the mind. Suffice it to say that Knowledge is a cooperative affair between the subject (mind) and the object (nature). That is, it is when a collaborative romance took place between the knower and the known that knowledge and by extension certitude in knowledge is guaranteed. Reality will be entirely bifurcated if either the subject or object is given utmost priority. Finally, this work also disagrees with Rorty on his point that knowledge should be represented by what is linguistics and not by what is mental". Linguistics is a verbal expression of inner deposits. That is, knowledge must be gotten before it is communicated. Without the mind there cannot be an expression. It is obvious that it is out of what one has inwardly that he brings out.

Conclusion

The process of attaining certitude in knowledge as proposed by Rorty lacks the ability to unify all the basic pillars of knowledge. This conclusion stem from the fact that if knowledge resides only within the object, then there will be no knowledge at all. The knower and the known according to this work are correlatives and must be treated as such for the purpose of gaining certitude in knowledge. The efficacy of any knowledge claim according to this paper is on the ability to correlate the subject and the object. Knowledge claims must accommodate the two basic pillars of knowledge (the knower and the known). One should not be robbed to pay the other because such attempt will only lead to futility in knowledge.

If the mind is a set of cognitive faculties including consciousness, imaginations, perceptions, thinking and judging that means there must necessarily exist something for it to perceive, thinks and judge which according to this work are the objects of knowledge. Ideas does not float or fly, there coheres in the mind. Therefore, the mind plays some role in the process of attaining knowledge but it is not entirely the sole determinant of knowledge. The knower and the known must integrate to enhance certitude in knowledge. Therefore, the subject-object dichotomy in epistemology should be abolished to enable new and useful ideas if the quest for certainty in

knowledge would be attained. Rorty, in his anti-representational theory emphasized conversation as the goal of epistemology. In as much as conversation is good and necessary it should not replace knowledge. A fruitful conversation is supported by adequate knowledge. Foundational knowledge cannot be completely jettisoned as it creates a line of departure for particular significance. This work encourages neutrality in examining nature but also contends that the idea of foundational in knowledge is basic and crucial to knowledge acquisition.

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