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## INTRODUCTION

The word "Hermeneutics" is derived from the Greek language i.e. 'Hermens'.<sup>1</sup> According to a Greek myth a deity Hermens was messenger of God whose task was to interpret the incomprehensible messages of God to the masses in their ordinary language. Generally God's messages are simple to understand but the problem arises when it becomes more complicated, ambiguous and incomprehensible. The difficulty is how a common men can understand these messages. The messenger of God, deity 'Hermens' was knowing the language of God. He was interpreting God's language into the language of common human beings.<sup>2</sup>

Plato, in his discussion of 'Cratylu' says that Hermens was not only comprehend the language of God but also interpret it for the ordinary man. Hence we can say that Hermens not only knows the language of God but also the language of man<sup>3</sup>. But Socrates was of the opinion that Hermens was not only an interpreter of God's messages into ordinary human language but he was a thief, mischief maker and lie teller also. Socrates talks about a Greek deity 'Pan' that his body is made out of different parts. His upper body is like deity's body and lower part is of like frog. In the Greeks, it is believe that the Pan is the creator of language. The language can be divided into two. One is truth and other is untruth. When language is related with God it become truth and when it is related with man it becomes false<sup>5</sup>. In this way, Socrates says that Pan has his different opinion about language. We find ambiguity in the message of god Pan because it is in oral form. When there is ambiguity in oral form it is very obvious that we find an ambiguity in written form also.<sup>5</sup> To relieve these type of ambiguity one needs 'Hermeneutics'.

Apart from all these, Greek philosophical tradition has an Aristotelian style book named 'Pan Hermeneutics' which talks about 'Logical Propositions'. It also defines how a person unite the specialties of a thing with its subject and predicates<sup>6</sup>.

One may ask that apart from Aristotle, do Greek philosophy have any other philosopher who thought on Hermeneutics? The answer comes that after Aristotle we find writings directly in saint Augustine's age. Hermeneutics during Aristotle's age and hermeneutics in European medieval period and changes in thoughts of hermeneutics is all together a new research topic, which is not the subject of this research work.

During European medieval period, hermeneutics was used for interpreting religious texts as well as other texts also. Specially, it was needed while making laws and implementations of laws. Because of Martine Luther's socio-religious movement, there was a need to reinterpretation of Bible and 'New Testament' came into existence.

In modern age we do not have hermeneutics like Greeks were having and therefore we find a profound need of this. Specially we need hermeneutics to interpret the meanings of terms, phrases with that explaining the meanings of mythological stories and clarification of them, to describe or to illustrate them, to explain meaning of it in few words or to interpret/express meanings of words and or sentences.

The prime hermeneutic philosophers like Hedger, Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur reject that a text has its own decisive meaning. There is differences of opinion in case of language between Gadamer and Habermas, whereas in Ricoeur and structuralists we find differences of opinion about methodology. This point will discussed more critically and in expanded while thinking on Gadamer and Ricoeur. Here the important point is to be noted that in the modern age, we cannot stick with the limited meaning of hermeneutics as which interpret the meanings of secret books but it is useful for interpreting every sciences or any theories.

We can say that the classical hermeneutics was initially developed as a method of interpretation then it was connected with religious secret books and after some due course of time it was used for

interpreting the meanings of legal terms and legislative books.

The rationale (the origin) of 'Hermeneutics' has given a totally new dimension to the modern tradition of hermeneutics. It is the hermeneutics is not only a tool of interpretation, method of study or method of deriving conclusions from a text but altogether it has its independent recognition as 'Hermeneutics'. In a real sense the philosophical problems were brought forward by Schleiermacher, Friedrich and thus he succeeded to give a philosophical position to 'Hermeneutic'.

Schleiermacher does not give or think of any particular meaning but he talks about what is understanding? Like Kant he talks about whether there is possibility to know or to understand the thoughts in the minds of others. As Kant did with the possibility of scientific knowledge and the probabilities of limitations of scientific knowledge, in the same way Schleiermacher also did with the possibilities of hermeneutics, limitations of the possibilities of hermeneutics. Thus, his hermeneutics has become a tradition in modern philosophy.

As Schleiermacher Dilthey was also influenced by Kant. Nineteenth century is known as 'modern hermeneutics age' because of many famous hermeneutics thinkers were there during this time.

Dilthey gave a new aspect to the Kantian thoughts. According to Dilthey, Kant's critical philosophy is with restriction flaw. Because with the help of that only knowledge of and about natural things was possible.

After Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer systematized hermeneutics on ontological base. On the bases of all this background Ricoeur tried to solve the hermeneutics problems. Thus, as a result of this we get Ricoeur's 'Hermeneutics Methodology'. This type of hermeneutics methodology is basically used for linguistically and action based philosophies.<sup>7</sup>

[With the help of this background we will see some modern hermeneutic philosophers:](#)

[F. E. D. Schleiermacher:](#)

Schleiermacher was basically a religious scholar. He was known as founder of modern hermeneutics because of his independent thinking. In the beginning his thoughts were totally ignored. First time in 1858, Kimrle Ugly, a student of Gadamer brought forward Schleiermacher. Kimrle has shown that Schleiermacher's hermeneutical methodology is not only the method for philosophical and epistemological but it is rather a method for interpreting complex religious texts.

The problem of talking about Schleiermacher is limited compiled information is available about him. F. Lucke published a book named 'Hermeneutics and Criticism' in 1838. He had collected all lectures on hermeneutics delivered by Schleiermacher in the University of Berlin in 1810 to 1834 and some notes prepared by in 1828. He was a student of Schleiermacher. After this publication Kimrle has published Schleiermacher's original notes.

Schleiermacher was influenced by German romantic hermeneutics philosophers like Chladenias, Friedrich Schegel.

In ancient times different criteria were used for interpreting religious texts and legal texts. Schleiermacher initially did research on the pre-assumption or pre-suppositions with which we can interpret legislature, religious texts or any art craft.

Early Kantian existentialists were believed that the philosophical cognition is possible only through experiences only whereas rationalist believed that the philosophical cognition is possible only through knowledge. But not existentialists could solve the problem of 'illusion' nor rationalist could solve the problem of 'inductive swoop'. To deal with these problems Kant suggested some pre-suppositions. Same type of method adopted by Schleiermacher for hermeneutics. Schleiermacher

discussed about which should be the pre-suppositions to interpretations of art craft, secret texts or any event. According to Schleiermacher, to know intention and purpose of writing the text one should consider author's social, psychological conditions. But at the same time he rejected that author has any purpose behind writing the text. According to him many a times the author does not know what he is doing. Not only this many a times after finishing the writing author does not know various aspects of the text. He says that the interpreter knows the accurate meaning of the text. Because the interpreter knows author more than author knows about himself. In other words we can say that the interpreter knows better than that of the author of the text. Further he states that any text does not present (display) the purpose of the text rather it present the life of writer.

Schleiermacher has changed the concept of 'Author's Intension' to the Kalendorius's concept of 'Author's whole life'. The question arises here is even if we know the author's whole life, can we say that the interpretation or the hermeneutics are complete and or ideal one. Further, it is again questionable that when an author cannot know himself how it is possible for a critic to know the author completely? In this way even if Schleiermacher rejects the concept of 'Author's Intension' but he accepts any text have a definite and complete meaning<sup>8</sup>.

It is presupposition for all hermeneutics that every text can be interpreted. The only problem lies in the method or how the interpretation is possible or the meaning should derive from the text. For instance, by understanding meaning of a sentence we can know the meaning of a paragraph and by understanding a paragraph we can understand full text and thus we can understand the author also. This is known as 'Circle of Understanding' in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics philosophy. Earlier to Schleiermacher this circle was known as 'Vicious Circle'. It was a vicious because it is like if you know one thing then only you will understand another otherwise one cannot understand anything. Now a days the same circle is known as 'Hermeneutical Circle'.

Schleiermacher was the first hermeneutical philosopher who brought hermeneutics movement from regional level to universal level. He found a universal rule which can be used as a tool for an interpretation of any text it may be legislative, art-craft or religious one. Earlier to Schleiermacher, the hermeneutics philosophers were using different rules for interpreting all these stated above i.e. legislative, art and or religious text. There was different constitution for interpreting art, legislature and religious. Whereas, Schleiermacher says that to interpret an art object, legislature or religious text one needs to think on its grammatical part and as well as psychological aspect also. Earlier to Schleiermacher, it was a tradition to interpret only through technical aspects. But Schleiermacher changed it with a strong argument that if interpretation is done only with technical aspect it will be incomplete and will lack the 'whole' understanding of the text. Therefore, Schleiermacher tried to remove the problem of interpretation from technical and he focused this problem to empirical encompassing. In short we can say that while interpreting any art craft Schleiermacher proposed that one should consider social and psychological aspects also. By stating this he seems to be suggesting that the hermeneutics is an art and by using this art we can interpret any text without much mistakes of hermeneutics and we can understand it fully.

How to understand an art craft is a prime problem in aestheticism. One need to know the background of the artist to understand the intention behind making the art and criteria for deciding the values given by an aesthetics. Paul Reicoeur while criticizing Schleiermacher says 'Even though Schleiermacher philosophical thoughts were deep it was ambiguous and if we want to remove the ambiguity of his thought we should know the difference between the text and 'Author's mind'.



### August Boeckh :

August Boeckh was a student of Schleiermacher. According to him the main task of philosophy is to study historical language. As per this attitude he believes that hermeneutics is a principal method and only through hermeneutics one can know the meaning of the word and sentences. With the help of this we can reach to 'Absolute meaning'. Whatever opinions Boeckh has about 'Absolute meaning' is basically derived from Schleiermacher's philosophy.

Boeckh's hermeneutical method is of nineteenth century, from that date onwards hermeneutics got a new added linguistic prospective. Boeckh generated interest in F. A. Wolf and F. Ast with reference to hermeneutical problems occurs in old language, literature and culture. While doing this he rejected ideas, principles and pre-suppositions of his teacher Schleiermacher<sup>9</sup>.

Boeckh has its own theory of hermeneutics in his encyclopedia. He believes that for hermeneutics there is a need of foundation of language. Therefore to understand Boeckh we should first understand his ideas about language. Boeckh's definition of language is 'achieving knowledge of what is known'. Because of this he had to face many questions and critics.

Boeckh states that to know cultural art and language one should not stop only after knowledge of what the meaning linguistics suggests as an original meaning according to the author and situation of that time but he should considered beyond about the meaning and decide the right interpretation of the text.

Boeckh had strong belief that man has an important tool to grasp is language. Philology is a science which studies oral and written words. Therefore philology is the base of all anthropology. And therefore, it is very necessary to be studied history of science and philology. But one cannot study philology in history but philology do have historical background. Thus, even though philology and history are two different subject we actually cannot differentiate into it. For instance, if one decide to study grammar of particular language it will not only the study of philology but also a study of history itself, which is inclusive of both the ideas of philological concepts and history. <sup>10</sup>

Boeckh has established some important points for better comprehension in modern hermeneutics. While establishing these comprehensions he made difference in two type of comprehensions. These are as follows -

- 1) While comprehending one concentrate only on one thing is a type of comprehension.
- 2) In another type of comprehending while thinking on one thing one thinks on the relation of another thing.

According to Boeckh, historical philology is depends upon above stated two types of comprehension. Therefore, we can say that Boeckh made a great contribution to the problems of Modern Structuralism's some major points. On this point we can say that Boeckh was influenced by Schleiermacher.

The problems arises while interpreting literally works, one needs to think upon some elements which are suggested by Boeckh.

### William Dilthey :

Nineteenth century has made history in hermeneutics. All hermeneutists Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Ranke and Droyseth were created history in this century. In this period we can find that there was various theories, histories and problems related to the study of hermeneutics were on its peak point. Some are as follows :

1. Continues comprehension into present and past time. With the help of present situation is anyone can comprehend two different span of time.
2. Is it possible to study past with present situation because it happened in the past?
3. How it is possible to make observations impersonal and different from that of man-made to natural world.
4. Can we interpret fully and without any mistake literature, art, history and religion in present which are created in past.

### Dilthey tried to relate history with hermeneutics.

William Dilthey was a student of Schleiermacher. Therefore we find influence of Schleiermacher on Dilthey. Dilthey after studying on the thoughts of Schleiermacher published a book on Schleiermacher's life is 'Life of Schleiermacher'. In this we can see not only his efficiency in manmade sciences but also the faith he had on anthropology and social sciences. We do find this faith in various writings of Dilthey. He wrote on culture, anthropology, education, history of law, history of literature, history of science, Germany and contemporary psychological criticism, history of intellectualism, music, philosophy, history and on manmade scientific methodology etc. But his writings on hermeneutics is great work among all these stated above.<sup>11</sup>

In 1883 Dilthey has wrote a book named "Introduction to Human Science". In this book Dilthey clearly states that I have wrote this book to make foundation of study of Society and the history of the society.

1883 onwards Dilthey has made change in these two terms 'explanation' and 'coherent' are different. According to Dilthey, natural events or Nature needs to be explained and history should be coherent. Hence, it seems that natural events does not needs any explanations or rather it is not meaningful in case of natural events. Subjects like history, psychology etc needs that. According to Dilthey coherence and psychology has close relation. While explaining this Dilthey says that we can coherent anything when we put ourselves in place of others. And while doing this type of coherent we presuppose the presuppositions of metaphysics and thus we somewhere relate ourselves with the history of metaphysics.

We need to think on metaphysics here because some or the other way we know the metaphysics by historical studies. In ancient Greek philosophy, philosophy, history, psychology, art etc were in same faculty they had no separate independent subjects (all were mixed), but in due course of time they were separated from the basic subject as philosophy and became independent subjects. Further on Dilthey's thoughts on hermeneutics turns to epistemological shape.

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