

Reimagining epistemology: A historical analysis of shifting paradigms



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Abstract Over the past five decades, the field of epistemology has undergone a profound transformation that has challenged its traditional underpinnings. Previously, epistemologists ardently pursued the formulation of definitive rules for the attainment of absolute knowledge, basking in the quest for unwavering certainty. However, as time has passed, a collective realization has set in: the pursuit of undoubtable knowledge once the lodestar of epistemology has lost its luster and feasibility. This shifting intellectual landscape has brought the need for a fundamental reexamination of epistemology's role and purpose to the forefront. The conventional role of epistemology as a proponent of unassailable principles for knowledge acquisition has waned. The once-central premise of epistemology, which claims the attainability of unshakeable certainty, now faces skepticism. Epistemologists grapple with a formidable question: Can we genuinely secure unquestionable knowledge in a world characterized by uncertainty and complexity? The prevailing sentiment among contemporary thinkers leans toward growing skepticism regarding the possibility of achieving undoubtable knowledge, necessitating a thorough reevaluation of the essence of epistemology. This profound reevaluation has given rise to two influential paradigms, the 'psychologistic' and 'naturalistic' projects, which seek to redefine epistemology's scope and objectives, departing from traditional precepts. The field is currently undergoing a transformation within the crucible of these new paradigms, as this essay will delve into more deeply.

Keywords: epistemology, naturalism, psychological turn, mirroring, hermeneutics

1. Introduction

This essay embarks on a critical journey, one that scrutinizes the psychologistic and naturalistic projects that have emerged as the torchbearers of a reimagined epistemology. By subjecting these paradigms to rigorous scrutiny, we aim to unravel their complexities and evaluate their compatibility with the overarching objectives of epistemology. This critique seeks to elucidate whether psychologistic and naturalistic projects succeed in reinvigorating the field or whether they inadvertently lead to its diminishment.

At the heart of this critical exploration lies a foundational assertion, one that encapsulates the essence of our inquiry: that dependent epistemology, which relies exclusively on these newer paradigms, represents a form of 'mental suicide.' This bold claim serves as a rallying point for our examination, compelling us to dissect the paradigms that challenge the autonomy of epistemology and question the very essence of its being.

In the subsequent sections, we will embark on a comprehensive exploration of the psychologistic and naturalistic projects, dissecting their fundamental tenets, strengths, and limitations. We will scrutinize the psychologistic project, which endeavors to integrate epistemology into the realm of psychology and natural science. Furthermore, we delve into the naturalistic project, which advocates grounding epistemology in scientific knowledge while retaining a normative framework.

In this intellectual voyage, it is essential to maintain an acute awareness of the challenges and intricacies that underlie the psychologistic and naturalistic paradigms (Jacquette, 2001). While these paradigms provide innovative pathways for reinvigorating epistemology, they are not without their critiques and dilemmas. In this rigorous analysis, we endeavour to distill the essence of these paradigms and their potential to revitalize a discipline on the precipice of transformation.

As we traverse the intricate terrain of epistemological paradigms, the resounding question that echoes these pages is whether epistemology can navigate the turbulent waters of modern thought and retain its autonomy. In this quest for epistemology's redefined purpose and autonomy, we invite readers to join us on a voyage of critical exploration, intellectual inquiry, and rigorous reflection.

2. Methods

This article employs a multifaceted approach to explore the changing landscape of epistemology, primarily focusing on the paradigmatic shifts from mirroring to hermeneutics. The research methodology can be characterized by the following key elements:



2.1. Literature Review

The foundation of this article rests on a comprehensive literature review of primary sources in epistemology, philosophy, and relevant subfields. Extensive engagement with the works of key philosophers such as Richard Rorty, Larry Laudan, and Willard Van Orman Quine is central to our analysis. This review enables us to trace the historical evolution of epistemological paradigms and understand the nuances of each paradigm.

2.2. Conceptual analysis

A critical aspect of this research involves in-depth conceptual analysis. We delve into the central tenets, arguments, and critiques associated with each paradigm – psychologistic, naturalistic, and hermeneutic. By thoroughly examining the core ideas of these paradigms, we unravel the complexities and implications of each, providing readers with a clear understanding of their theoretical underpinnings.

2.3. Historical Examination

This article places a strong emphasis on the historical dimension. Our research considers the historical context and intellectual currents that have shaped the paradigms in question. We examine pivotal historical episodes and the thinkers who have contributed to these shifts in epistemological thought. This historical examination not only grounds our analysis but also highlights the transformative moments in the discipline of epistemology.

2.4. Comparative analysis

To illuminate the differences and commonalities between the psychologistic, naturalistic, and hermeneutic paradigms, we conducted a rigorous comparative analysis. This approach allows us to highlight the unique contributions, challenges, and implications associated with each paradigm. By placing these paradigms in dialogue with each other, we facilitate a holistic view of their impact on epistemology's evolving landscape.

2.5. Critical Evaluation

This article critically evaluates the strengths and limitations of each paradigm, considering their normative implications and effects on the unity and autonomy of epistemology. We engage with the perspectives of scholars who have critiqued these paradigms, providing a balanced assessment of their validity and viability.

2.6. Interdisciplinary Engagement

This research engages with diverse disciplines, including philosophy, psychology, history of science, and hermeneutics. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach, we explore the intersections and cross-fertilization of ideas across these fields, demonstrating the dynamic nature of epistemological paradigms.

2.7. Use of Philosophical Discourse

The methods used in this article are rooted in the conventions of philosophical discourse. We present and engage with complex philosophical ideas and arguments, providing readers with a rigorous analysis of the paradigms under consideration.

By employing these methods, we aim to provide a comprehensive, historically informed, and philosophically grounded analysis of the shifting paradigms in epistemology, shedding light on their implications for the discipline's future directions.

3. Psychological turn in epistemology

The most radical perspective in the realm of justifying epistemology is exemplified by the work of Quine. In his renowned essay, "Epistemology Naturalized," Quine endeavors to institute an entirely novel framework where "epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science" (Quine, 1969). Quine posits that cognitive endeavours encompass two facets: the first pertains to the definition of concepts derived from lucid and distinct ideas, constituting the conceptual aspect. The second entails establishing theorems based on self-evident truths, representing the doctrinal dimension of cognition (Quine, 1969). Continuing his discourse, Quine delves into the historical backdrop of philosophy, attributing the initiation of these cognitive challenges to the illustrious philosopher David Hume. Hume's intellectual legacy proved influential in addressing both facets. On the conceptual front, Hume adeptly linked physical entities with sensory impressions, seamlessly intertwining the material world with the realm of sense perceptions. However, the doctrinal dimension presented a more formidable puzzle. Hume's doctrinal quest to establish airtight, self-evident foundations for knowledge appeared to be an unconquered citadel, posing profound challenges that have echoed through the annals of philosophy. "On the doctrinal side, I do not see that we are farther along today than where Hume left us. The Humean predicament is the human predicament" (Quine, 1969). Like Hume, Carnap embarked on a

venture to render all scientific statements in the language of sense data and empirical observations. However, much like Hume, this endeavour culminated in disappointment. During this period, a prevailing consensus among philosophers began to take root, acknowledging the futility of pursuing the hallowed ideal of Cartesian certainty. This widespread realization casts a shadow upon any aspirations for an a priori reconstruction, which was deemed a mythical edifice lacking empirical foundations, as emphasized by Quine (1963). In light of this sobering recognition, Quine's incisive query emerged: "Why not just see how this construction truly proceeds? Why not settle for psychology?" (Quine, 1969). Quine's proposition underscored a pragmatic shift away from unattainable a priori certainties and encouraged a more grounded exploration of how knowledge is actually formulated. This conceptual transition marked a departure from the abstract and philosophical musings and urged a pragmatic engagement with the empirical realities of human cognition, aligning epistemological inquiries more closely with the field of psychology. The resonance of this transformation has reverberated through contemporary philosophical thought, altering the trajectory of epistemology. The idea that psychology can, or perhaps should, play a role in the realm of cognition is not a groundbreaking notion; however, it is within this backdrop that Quine decisively and empirically challenges the very underpinnings of traditional epistemology. As articulated in an authoritative encyclopaedia, he "suggests that epistemology has no autonomy at all" (Luper, 1998). Even though Quine knows very well that this thesis yields circularity, he holds that it is better than "dreaming of deducing science from observation" (Quine, 1969). In sum, Quine acknowledges that while this path may not provide absolute certainty, it remains a less-than-fully reliable avenue. The rationale underlying this perspective stems from the recognition that, on the one hand, the discipline of philosophy finds itself limited in its capacity for self-evolution, whereas, on the other hand, the scientific domain boasts an extensive array of achievements and advancements. Consequently, Quine advocates for a redirection of effort, emphasizing the importance of unraveling the authentic processes by which "better to discover how science is in fact developed and learned than to fabricate a fictitious structure to a similar effect" (Quine, 1969). This declaration has metamorphosed into a rallying cry for adherents of Quinean philosophy, serving as a guiding ethos that underpins their commitment to supplanting traditional epistemological paradigms with innovative alternatives. It encapsulates their resolute dedication to charting a novel course for the discipline. Moreover, "one effect of seeing epistemology in a psychological setting is that it resolves a stubborn old enigma of epistemological priority" (Quine, 1969). By virtue of Quine's scholarly contributions, one frequently encounters statements akin to the following: "Recently, epistemology has taken a psychological turn. It is now widely believed that questions about the justification of belief cannot be answered independently of questions about a belief's causal ancestry" (Kornblith, 1982). Theories devoid of a psychological dimension are characterized as antiquated or outdated approaches to the issue.

The psychologistic project, while provocative, has not escaped the scrutiny of its critics. This raises a multitude of questions that demand thorough consideration before wholesale acceptance can be justified. Disregarding the circular argument, which Quine has previously explored, one salient issue pertains to the interface between norms and facts within this paradigm. Quine, a prominent proponent of the psychologistic project, advocates the utilization of a predominantly descriptive language within epistemology. He asserts that the primary task of epistemology is twofold: not only to elucidate the methods employed by scientists but also to proscribe or recommend the methods they ought to employ (Giere, 1985). This perspective, while seemingly pragmatic, introduces a pivotal challenge. If epistemology confines itself to the realm of descriptive language, it confronts a formidable limitation – the inability to discriminate between sound and unsound scientific theories. The crux of the issue lies in the absence of normative language within such a framework. In this context, norms serve as the evaluative criteria that enable epistemologists to distinguish between the merits of scientific theories. Normative language imparts a prescriptive and evaluative dimension to epistemology, thereby allowing for the differentiation of empirically robust theories from their less credible counterparts. Without the guiding compass of normative language, epistemology becomes stranded in the realm of mere description, rendering it incapable of adjudicating the epistemic worth of scientific endeavors. The conundrum is further underscored by the pivotal role that normativity plays within the epistemic domain. Epistemology, as a normative discipline, primarily concerns itself with delineating the standards for rational belief formation, evidence assessment, and knowledge justification. It dictates how one should proceed in the realm of cognition and inquiry. In the absence of normative guidance, the epistemological project becomes ineffectual, as it cannot fulfill its fundamental mandate of discerning and articulating the principles by which sound scientific theories are formulated and appraised. Consequently, the proponents of a psychologistic approach find themselves at crossroads. While the descriptive focus aligns with empirical inquiry, it unwittingly jettisons the normative dimension that is intrinsic to epistemology. Epistemology, as the arbiter of intellectual standards and the elucidator of the principles governing rational inquiry, cannot fulfill its central role if it relinquishes its normative discourse. The psychologistic project, advocated by prominent figures such as Quine, undoubtedly offers fresh perspectives on the intersection of psychology and epistemology. However, its proponents must grapple with the critical issue of normativity. The absence of normative language within this framework impedes epistemology's capacity to fulfill its core mission – distinguishing between well-grounded and unsound scientific theories (Field, 2009). Hence, the challenge remains to reconcile the insights of psychology with the indispensable normative framework that underpins the epistemic project. Hilary Putnam's assertion, encapsulated in his statement, "the elimination of the normative is attempted mental suicide" (Putnam, 1982), resonates with profound insight. The absence of

normative considerations within the epistemological discourse is met with criticism by other luminaries of the field. Jaegwon Kim, for instance, emphatically maintains that the concept of 'descriptive epistemology' is fundamentally untenable. Within the domain of epistemology, the term itself inherently conveys the essence of 'normative epistemology.' Kim expounds upon this perspective, affirming that epistemology functions as a normative discipline, paralleling the normative terrain of ethics (Kim, 1988). Putnam's assertion poignantly underscores the indispensable role that normativity plays within the field of epistemology. Normative considerations are not mere embellishments or optional addenda; they constitute the lifeblood of epistemological inquiry. In the absence of normative parameters, the very essence of epistemology is imperiled. It is the normative facet that enables epistemology to fulfill its intrinsic mandate – the formulation of criteria for rational belief, the assessment of evidence, and the justification of knowledge claims. The divorce epistemology from its normative dimension is akin to self-inflicted intellectual truncation, as it undermines the discipline's fundamental purpose and efficacy. Kim's assertion aligns with the core tenets of epistemological inquiry. The term 'epistemology' itself implicitly encompasses the normative aspect. Epistemology is, by its very definition, inseparable from the normative realm. Kim draws a salient parallel between epistemology and ethics, underscoring their shared status as normative disciplines. Just as ethics prescribes moral guidelines and standards, epistemology prescribes the standards governing rational belief and knowledge. Both are quintessentially normative in nature, and to perceive epistemology devoid of normativity is to misconstrue its essential character. In essence, the perspectives of Putnam and Kim converge in emphasizing the irreplaceable role of the norm within epistemology. The presence of normative considerations is not an embellishment but rather a foundational imperative, guiding the discipline's mission and shaping its contours. To embark upon a trajectory of epistemological inquiry that jettisons normativity is tantamount to a forfeiture of epistemology's very identity and purpose. It is the normative dimension that breathes life into the discipline, enabling it to navigate the intricate terrain of rational inquiry and evidence assessment. As such, the normative is an indispensable cornerstone upon which the edifice of epistemology firmly rests. However, paradoxically, despite Quine's aversion to the normative aspect, his assertion regarding repudiation embodies a normative dimension. In this peculiar twist, his claim assumes a normative character, implicitly prescribing the abandonment of traditional epistemological paradigms. Moreover, Kim accentuates the perplexing nature of the program aimed at replacing traditional epistemology. He identifies this endeavor as beset with confusion, highlighting the intricate challenges involved in steering the discipline toward an alternative course. The proposed transformation, which seeks to replace well-established epistemological frameworks, remains shrouded in ambiguity and complexity. "It is difficult to see how an "epistemology" that has been purged of normativity, one that lacks an appropriate normative concept of justification or evidence, can have anything to do with the concerns of traditional epistemology. In addition, unless naturalized epistemology and classical epistemology share some of their central concerns, it's difficult to see how one could *replace* the other, or be a way (a better way) of doing the other" (Kim, 1988).

Hence, it becomes evident that the psychologistic project confronts a fundamental deficiency – the absence of normative knowledge, a vital component essential for the robust development of epistemic cognition. The dearth of normativity within this framework poses a substantive obstacle to the pursuit of epistemological inquiry. Normative knowledge, with its capacity to articulate the criteria for rational belief formation, evidence appraisal, and the justification of knowledge claims, is intrinsic to the very fabric of epistemology. Within the realm of epistemological discourse, the normative dimension acts as the guiding beacon, illuminating the path toward intellectual rigor and coherence. It serves as the compass that enables epistemologists to distinguish between well-founded and poorly substantiated beliefs. Normativity is the normative compass that empowers the field of epistemology to fulfill its primary mission – the establishment of the normative standards that govern the landscape of knowledge acquisition and justification. While offering a novel perspective that integrates psychology and epistemology, the psychologistic project inadvertently serves this vital connection to normative knowledge. By relegating normativity to the periphery, it effectively handicaps the discipline's capacity to scrutinize, evaluate, and validate the robustness of scientific theories and knowledge claims. The absence of normative language within this paradigm undermines the discipline's ability to fulfill its fundamental role, which is to determine the normative criteria by which the soundness of scientific theories is assessed. In conclusion, the psychologistic project's inability to incorporate normative knowledge serves as a significant impediment to the advancement of epistemological cognition. Normativity is the lifeblood of epistemology, and its exclusion within this framework curtails the discipline's ability to adjudicate the worthiness of empirical theories. This finding underscores the critical need for the coalescence of normative considerations with empirical insights, which is essential for the revitalization and efficacy of the field of epistemology.

4. Naturalistic project and its perspectives

These criticisms have engendered a crucial reevaluation among epistemologists concerning their stance on normativity. In response to this intellectual fermentation, certain scholars have proposed an alternative framework known as 'normative naturalism.' Foremost among the proponents of this paradigm is Larry Laudan. Central to Laudan's exposition is the elucidation of a critical observation; for an extended period, epistemology has rested upon two enduring dogmas. According to the first, there is dependence "between cognitive progress or growth, on the one hand, and the cumulative retention of explanatory success, on the other" (Laudan, 1976).

Conversely, Laudan introduces a nuanced perspective by challenging the prevailing notion of cognition as a cumulative and unbroken procession. He directs our attention to a fundamental question: In what capacity must a successor theory surpass its precursor? Do all scientific theories share a uniform objective? Laudan's response is a resounding negation. He underscores that the historical annals of science are replete with instances where a succeeding theory, despite unearthing a plethora of novel facts, struggled to cohesively reframe the problems that its predecessor had adeptly resolved (Laudan, 1976). Laudan's examination extends further to the realm of epistemological underpinnings. He boldly disavows the existence of certain epistemic principles capable of steering knowledge toward direct and inexorable growth. This departure from the conventional notion of epistemology as resting on synthetic a priori propositions (Laudan, 1990) underscores a significant shift in perspective. In the vein of naturalistic philosophy, Laudan posits that epistemology should find its anchor in the solid bedrock of scientific knowledge. This reframing challenges the traditional paradigms of epistemology and endorses a recalibration of the discipline's coordinates, aligning it more intimately with the empirical and scientific discoveries that underpin the quest for knowledge. In essence, Laudan's perspective emerges as a thought-provoking departure from convention, forging a fresh epistemological pathway where the normative framework is significantly redefined, and epistemological principles are intricately intertwined with empirical insights. The merit of this viewpoint lies in its alignment with the contemporary ethos of empiricism and naturalism, offering a novel avenue for the rejuvenation of epistemology. In this regard, Laudan expounds: "My own belief is that, until and unless we have learned how science actually works, epistemological posturing will necessarily remain both ill-informed and inconclusive" (Laudan 1978). In contrast to psychologists, Laudan diverges by placing a pronounced emphasis on the significance of normative rules. He contends that these rules are most aptly construed as hypothetical imperatives, serving as the linchpin that connects the means to the desired ends (Laudan, 1990).

This alternative project, known as 'normative naturalism,' emerges as a more robust and compelling counterpart to the psychologistic approach. Nevertheless, it is not without its inherent complexities. Laudan navigates this intricate terrain adeptly, and his endeavors illuminate the nuanced intricacies of this novel paradigm. One key facet of his argument is his critique of certain historical approaches, asserting that a reliance on historical evidence is indispensable in each case. He maintains that the edifice of normative naturalism must be firmly grounded in the eddying currents of historical context and empirical evidence. However, Laudan embarks on a notable departure from established historical narratives. He undertakes the task of reconstructing history through the lens of his unique perspective, essentially formulating an alternative historical narrative that aligns with the tenets of normative naturalism. This approach, while innovative, introduces a layer of complexity. This prompts a reconsideration of historical accounts through the refracted lens of normative naturalism, potentially reshaping the historical trajectory of scientific and epistemological thought. However, this ambitious project also carries a significant risk. The risk lies in the potential loss of the unity that traditionally characterizes epistemology. By tethering the domain of epistemology primarily to the investigation of concrete historical episodes, there is a looming danger of fragmenting the discipline. The unity of epistemology, as a holistic and interconnected field of inquiry, may become diluted or fragmented by the exclusive focus on particular historical instances. The challenge, therefore, is to strike a balance between harnessing the insights of historical evidence while preserving the broader coherence and unity of epistemological thought. In essence, Laudan's normative naturalism presents an intriguing alternative that is replete with its unique strengths and complexities (Capaldi, Proctor 2000). Its reliance on historical evidence and the reconfiguration of historical narratives in alignment with normative principles introduce a dynamic dimension to the field. However, careful calibration is necessary to ensure that the unity of epistemology is not sacrificed in the pursuit of a more historically grounded and normative framework (Kitcher, 1992).

5. Utilizing discursive epistemology as a fundamental tool for effective problem solving

The notion that epistemology occupies a paramount and central position within the realm of philosophy finds its roots in the seminal philosophy of Immanuel Kant. This perspective gained prominence, particularly in the wake of the abortive a priori project, which had sought to ground knowledge on a priori and irrefutable principles. The subsequent shift in intellectual currents led to the proposition of empirical approaches to epistemology. However, these empirical models, as previously discussed, gave rise to their own set of intricate challenges and conundrums. In the contemporary landscape of philosophical thought, epistemology has undergone a profound transformation. This evolution stems from a candid acknowledgment – the impossibility of unreservedly pronouncing upon the external world. The pursuit of absolute and indubitable knowledge has proven elusive and, to a considerable extent, unattainable. In this context, the conventional notion of objectivity, which had been a cornerstone in the annals of philosophical discourse, underwent substantial redefinition. It transitioned from a stance of purportedly pristine, unbiased, and unmediated apprehension of the external world to a more nuanced conception – that of "communication with others" (Davidson, 2004). This reframing underscores the idea that objectivity is not an isolated and solitary endeavour but rather a collaborative process rooted in the dialogues and interactions among individuals. Within this shifting paradigm, the notion of methodological solipsism, which had previously been explored as a potential approach to epistemology, was cast aside as a path leading to intellectual cul-de-sacs. It became evident that an intellectual soliloquy, divorced from the rich tapestry of intersubjective discourse and shared

human experience, was a trajectory that ultimately led nowhere. The recognition of the intrinsic link between knowledge and communication with others highlighted the need for a more dynamic and interconnected approach to epistemology. The evolution of epistemological thought, from its Kantian origins to the contemporary landscape, is marked by a profound reorientation. The ideals of absolute and indubitable knowledge have given way to a recognition of the inherent challenges in such aspirations. Epistemology now grapples with the dynamic interplay between individuals in the pursuit of knowledge, moving away from the solipsistic visions of the past. This evolving perspective underscores the intrinsic connection between epistemology and human interaction, shaping the direction of contemporary philosophical inquiry. Davidson issues a cautionary note, emphasizing that if, for instance, you “have a thought that you are seeing a snake, then you must believe many true things about snakes: you must know what a snake is like. However, such truths are *general*, and general truths like these do not imply that any snakes exist, but only that if there were snake, it would be without legs or arms, etc.” (Davidson, 2004).

The pioneering philosopher who charted a novel course for the reconstruction of epistemology in this manner was Richard Rorty. In his seminal work, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Rorty boldly propounded a radical reevaluation of conventional epistemological paradigms. At the core of Rorty’s proposition is the assertion that the concept of mirroring, which has traditionally been considered a fundamental facet of our cognitive processes, is, in fact, a fallacy devoid of any intrinsic grounding in the human mind. Rorty’s provocative and resonant slogan, ‘from epistemology to hermeneutics,’ encapsulates his transformative vision for the discipline. He contends that epistemologists must navigate a course that transcends the conventional boundaries of their inquiries and aligns more intimately with the field of hermeneutics. This paradigm shift underscores the imperative for epistemologists to engage in a profound reorientation of their perspectives, acknowledging the limitations of the mirroring paradigm and embracing the complexities of interpretation and understanding as essential components of the epistemological endeavor. Rorty’s ground-breaking work challenges the very bedrock of epistemological thought, compelling a shift from the mirroring model, which posits an objective and unmediated reflection of reality, toward a more dynamic and interactive hermeneutic approach. This reframing invites epistemologists to grapple with the intricate processes of interpretation and the interplay of language and culture in shaping our understanding of the world. Rorty’s call to transition ‘from epistemology to hermeneutics’ ushers in a new epoch in the discipline, one that is characterized by a willingness to engage with the complexities of human interpretation and its pivotal role in the acquisition and construction of knowledge: “Epistemology views the participants as ... a group united by mutual interests in achieving a common end. Hermeneutics views them as united ... persons whose paths through life have fallen together, united by civility rather than by a common goal, much less by a common ground” (Rorty, 1979).

6. Final Considerations

In accordance with the traditional and contemporary paradigms of epistemology, the philosopher is often seen as an encyclopedic figure who aspires to possess comprehensive knowledge, striving to decipher the intricacies of all human activities and the true nature of reality. This conventional view places the philosopher at the epicenter of intellectual pursuits, burdened by the weighty task of comprehending every facet of human existence. Conversely, the philosopher of hermeneutics occupies a distinct role within this evolving landscape. They embrace the position of an informed dilettante, an intermediary weaving through the rich tapestry of diverse discourses and perspectives. Rather than aiming for exhaustive knowledge, they assume the role of a mediator and interpreter, facilitating dialogues among varying worldviews. To preserve unity and autonomy in the face of these shifting dynamics, epistemology is challenged to become increasingly discursive and argumentative. The discipline must pivot toward a more dialogic and interactive mode of inquiry, acknowledging the multiplicity of voices and viewpoints that contribute to the tapestry of human understanding. A critical component of this transformation lies in the contemplation of common ‘meta-goals,’ a concept coined by Laudan. These meta-goals offer a shared framework for epistemologists, guiding their inquiries and uniting their diverse endeavors. A pivotal shift involves transcending the historical preoccupation with the reconstruction of scientific narratives. Instead, the discipline is urged to direct its gaze toward the meta-goals of cognition, a realm where science relinquishes its exclusive dominion. This transformation signifies a departure from the once-revered notion of mirroring, where reality was believed to be objectively reflected, and illuminates the contemporary imperative – the consideration of what we should do as thinkers, communicators, and interpreters, rather than mere reflection on what is. In conclusion, the changing tides of epistemology call for a reimagining of its essence and purpose. The evolving roles of philosophers demand a discursive and argumentative engagement with diverse perspectives, transcending the boundaries of traditional epistemological inquiries. The adoption of metagoalistics offers a cohesive framework, guiding the field into uncharted territories of understanding. The departure from mirroring underscores the contemporary mandate to focus on the pragmatic and dialogic aspects of cognition, ushering in a new era of epistemological exploration.

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