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**9. CHALLENGING THE ALIGNMENT OF TEXT AND PERFORMANCE IN IBSEN'S
PEER GYNT**

Author (s) by: - Abhimanyu Vinayakumar

10. RATIONALISM: A BRIEF STUDY OF THE ORIGIN OF KNOWLEDGE

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RATIONALISM: A BRIEF STUDY OF THE ORIGIN OF KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract:

Knowledge is one of the most popular terms among the people which are used as the term cognition, awareness, experience etc. Different philosophers have given different opinion regarding the origin of knowledge i.e. Rationalism, Empiricism, Criticism, Intuitionism. Rationalism is a theory of the origin of knowledge which believes that true knowledge comes from reason or intellect. Sense-experience fails to give us true knowledge of the world. Because knowledge which comes from sense-experience is transient as like as the physical world. Socrates, Plato, Descartes, Leibnitz, Spinoza, Wolf etc. are the supporters of rationalism. They believed that rationalism is a proper method of philosophy as the sources of origin of knowledge. Adventitious ideas, factitious ideas and innate ideas are the three types of ideas owing to Descartes. According to him, adventitious ideas, factitious ideas cannot give us clear and distinct knowledge. But knowledge which comes from innate ideas is clear and distinct. He through his dictum: Cogito—ergo-sum tries to prove that knowledge which comes from soul or mind is clear and distinct.

The empiricist philosopher criticizes rationalism and innate ideas and says that only sense-experience can give us true knowledge of the physical world. They say that if knowledge come from innate ideas than it must be equal to all men. But children, idiot, uncivilized people do not know innate ideas and their thinking also different. Even the ideas of God, morality are also different from different people in different situation and places.

Key Notes: Introduction of Knowledge, Brief Conception of Rationalism, Socrates' views on rationalism, Plato's views on rationalism, Descartes' views on rationalism, Spinoza's views on rationalism, Leibnitz's views on rationalism, Characteristics of rationalism, Cogito-ergo-sum
Criticism against Rationalism

Introduction:

'Knowledge' is one of those widely used terms the meaning of which we all seem to understand but which cannot, strictly speaking, be defined at all. In making an attempt to define 'knowledge' we are compelled to use such term as 'consciousness', 'cognition', 'awareness', 'experience' etc. which have more or less the same sense as the former and we are also confronted by the same situation if we attempt to define any of these terms themselves. Moreover, the ultimate or metaphysical nature of knowledge is itself a question which has been answered differently by different philosophers, and since any definition of 'knowledge' that we may fix upon must have metaphysical implications it is impossible to frame such a definition without first determining the metaphysical nature of knowledge.