it would be wrong to give up the morality-prudence distinction which Kant made and Aristotle did not.

Dewey could of course have accepted Goodman's distinction between nomological necessity and universal generalizations which are merely accidental, but that is because Goodman makes nomologicality not a feature of the universe but of the coherence of our descriptive vocabulary. (See, on this point, Davidson's comment on Goodman: "Emotions by Other Names"). Nomological necessity holds of things under descriptions, not, as for Kripke and Aristotle of things bare of sense.

Habermas, Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action, p. 118.

Habermas describes Blume as "the woman's moral philosopher" because his treatment of moral action in "Human Rights, Rationality and Subjectivity" (reprinted in his Truth and Progress) I discuss Blume's suggestion in connection with my claim (referred to in this paper) that we should try to create, rather than to presuppose, universality.

Another aspect of these two differing stances about maturation is the different attitudes they entrench to the quarrel between Socrates and the Sophists, and more generally to the distinction between argument and the modes of persuasion which I have described as 'educative' in the previous section. Apel (Deklaration, p. 355f.) says that one of the many things wrong with the way of view common to Gadamer, Rorty, and Derrida is these men's innucentness about the "Unterschied zwischen dem argumentativen Diskurs und den rationalen, dem Diskurs im Sinne von Verhandlungen, Propaganda, oder auch von partieller Fiktion reiche mehr zu erarbeiten bzw. zu erkennen vermögen." Apel goes on to say that that attitude marks "the end of philosophy." It seems to me that it marks a stage in the further maturation of philosophy—a step away from the power-worship involved in the idea that there is a power called 'reason' which will come to your aid if you follow Socrates' example and make your definitions and premises explicit. As a Deweans tells the story, the idea of philosophy as a science (Wissenschaft) as a search for knowledge, is itself a symptom of immaturity: the Sophists were not wholly in the wrong. The reciprocal assumption of immaturity to which Apel and I temper one another can easily seem cheap and empty, but they do express heartfelt convictions on both sides; convictions about what utopia looks like, and hence about what progress toward utopia requires.

Richard Rorty's Pragmatic Turn

JÜRGEN HABERMAS

In "Tonekky and the Wild Orchids" Richard Rorty casts a romantic eye back over his development as a philosopher. Using the form of a "narrative of maturation," he presents his intellectual development as a progressive distancing of himself from his adolescent dreams; this was the dream of fusing in a single image the extraordinary beauty of wild orchids and the liberation from profane suffering of an exploited society; the desire "to hold reality and justice in a single vision" (Yats). The existential background to Rorty's neo-pragmatism is his rebellion against the false promises of philosophy: a philosophy that pretends to be able to satisfy aesthetic and moral needs in satisfying theoretical ones. Once upon a time, metaphysics wanted to instruct its pupil in spiritual exercises involving a purifying contemplation of the good in the beautiful. But the youthful Rorty, who had allowed himself to be filled with enthusiasm by Plato, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas, painfully comes to realize that the prospect of contact with the reality of the extraordinary held out by theory—a contact at once deniable and reconcilable—although possibly attainable in the more definite forms of prayer, cannot be achieved along the path of philosophy. As a result, Rorty remembers Dewey—scorned by McKeon, Leo Strauss, and Mortimer Adler—who had not yet been completely forgotten in the Chicago of the 1940s. The realization that everyday reality conceals no higher reality, no realm of being-in-itself to be disclosed ecstatically, and that everyday practices leave no room for a redeemptory vision, cures the sobered Rorty of his Platonic sickness. To be sure, the memory of the erotic sight and the overpowering smell of the wild orchids in the mountains of his childhood in the northwest of New Jersey cannot be extinguished completely.

It is roughly thus in terms of his own life-histories that Rorty today explains to us the motives for his view of the dual dominance of Dewey and Heidegger developed in Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity. Strangely enough, this self-presentation contains no reference to the paramount role played by Wittgenstein, the third party in the alliance. Rorty's report on the experiences of his own philosophical development breaks off with his reading of Hegel as his student days in Yale drew to a close and his work as a professional philosopher is only about to begin. His training in analytic philosophy with his real teacher, Wilfrid Sellars, his basic conviction of the truth of physicalism, his successful career as a young analytic philosopher—those steps in his development are not mentioned at all. However, it is solely his ambivalence toward the tradition of analytic philosophy—the only tradition in whose language Rorty has learned to argue
and using which he continues to expand his earlier teachings brilliantly—thus explaining why he attributes a culturally critical significance to his anti-Platonic turn, a significance that is supposed to extend far beyond his own person and his private switch of philosophical allegiance.

I will deal briefly with this motivation for a kind of philosophizing that wants to bid farewell to itself as such before confining myself to discussion of the justification for the metaphysic conception itself. From the pragmatic radicalization of the linguistic turn Rorty obtains a new rational understanding of knowledge. In order to not whether he radicalizes the linguistic turn in the right way, I will then compare the contextualist approach with the epistemological double of the modern skeptics. In doing so I will recall a problem that was always connected with coherence concepts of truth: the problem of how truth is to be distinguished from rational acceptability. In responding to this question, there is a parting of philosophical ways. Whereas Rorty assimilates truth to justification at the expense of everyday realist intuitions, others attempt to take account of intuitions even within the linguistic paradigm, whether with the help of a definitional strategy or as regards the problem of truth or through an idealization of the process of justification itself. On the one hand, I will take issue with the definitional strategy that relies on a semantic conception of truth, emphasizing instead the advantages of a pragmatic approach. On the other hand, again from a pragmatic perspective, I will criticize a kind of epistemization of the idea of truth that I myself once proposed. In doing so I will develop an alternative to the liquidation of unconditional claims to truth. It is this liquidation that has ultimately compelled Rorty to effect a problematic naturalization of linguistically conditioned reason—or, at any rate, one that leads to further problems.

A Platonically Motivated Anti-Platonist

Richard Rorty is one of the most outstanding analytic philosophers, consistently arguing in an informed and acute way. But his program for a philosophy that is to do away with all philosophy seems to spring more from the melancholy of a disappointed metaphysician, driven by a nominalist spasm, than from the self-criticism of an enlightened analytic philosopher who wishes to complete the linguistic turn in a pragmatic way. In 1967, when analytic philosophy (to its own extent) had achieved widespread recognition comparable to that enjoyed by non-Kantianism in the period before the First World War, Rorty edited a reader with the demandingly lacunary title The Linguistic Turn. This reader, as we can see in retrospect, marks a break in the history of analytic philosophy. The texts collected in the reader are meant as an essay, not a survey. The Hegelian message that every manifestation of Spirit that achieves maturity is condemned to decline. At that time Rorty gave the starting signal to a discourse that has since given itself the name "postanalytic." In his introduction to the reader, he speculates on the "future" of analytic philosophy—a future that rejects it to the past tense. In the face of a still intact orthodoxy, Rorty points to three approaches that converge in their contradiction of the general basic assumption that "there are philosophical truths still waiting to be discovered that can be justified on the basis of arguments." Rorty links these anti-Platonic approaches with the names Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Wernemann (whose philosophical program Rorty even then described in terms similar to his later description of Dewey's pragmatism).

This discussion began on analytic philosophy in no way conceals the immense respect of the initiate who here steps outside of his own tradition: "Linguistic philosophy, over the last thirty years, has succeeded in putting the entire philosophical tradition, from Parmenides through Descartes and Hume to Bradley and Whitehead, on the defensive. It has done so by careful and thorough scrutiny of the ways in which traditional philosophers have used language in the formulation of their problems. This achievement is sufficient to place this period among the great ages of the history of philosophy." Only the irreversibility of analytic philosophy's arguments explains Rorty's real grief. This irreversibility leads him to bid farewell to the appealing promises of metaphysics so irrevocably that, even post analytic philosophy, there can be no alternative to postmetaphysical thinking. Nonetheless, Rorty, then as now, is in search of some mode of thinking that, as Adorno puts it at the end of Negative Dialectics, shares solidarity with metaphysics at the moment of its fall. There is melancholy in the strained irony propagated today by Rorty: "Rorty's post-philosophical intellectual is ironic because he realizes that truth is not all he would like it to be. Irony depends essentially on a kind of nostos de la verité." Even the romantic division of labor between irony and seriousness, Heidegger and Dewey, cannot ease the pain. Because metaphysics has commanded only over the language of knowledge, the aestheticization of its claim to truth amounts to an anachronism of the philosophical tradition as part of cultural heritage. The reality of the ideas with which Platonism seems to bring us into contact is not the same as the extraordinary appeal of aesthetic experience. What once seemed to be 'true' in an enigmatic sense cannot be preserved in the mode of the 'edifying.' In forfeiting the binding power of its judgments, metaphysics also loses its substance.

When one is faced with this dilemma it is possible to understand the move Rorty finally makes in order to give back to philosophy, even today, something of a 'doctrine,' something of that inimitable combination of wild orchids and Trojans: his imitation of the gesture, at least, of insight that is at once stimulating and rich in practical consequence. However, the metaphysical need to liberate philosophy from the sterility of a pseudo-enlightened postmetaphysical thinking can be satisfied only postmetaphysically. The farewell to analytic philosophy cannot lead back to a devalued metaphysics. For this reason, the only remaining option is to dramatize the farewell to philosophy in general. Only if the act of leave-taking itself were to release a shock and intervene into everyday life would philosophy "at the moment of its fall" be able to acquire a more than purely academic significance. But how is a separation from analytic philosophy carried out with analytic means supposed to achieve significance of a kind that would allow analytic thought to be illuminated one last time in the brilliance of its great tradition? As I understand it naturalistically reflected impulse toward great philosophy, Rorty wants to give an answer to this question.

Rorty begins by showing that analytic philosophy shares a fundamental premise with the tradition it has devalued. This is the conviction that "there are philosophical truths still waiting to be discovered." Thanks to a very German idea that he borrows from Heidegger, Rorty then attributes a dramatic weightiness to this postemphatic respect of Western metaphysics. According to this Heideggerian thesis, the profane destinies of the West are supposed to have been fulfilled only within the scope of an epochal understanding of being; moreover, one governed by metaphysics. Of course, unlike Heidegger, Rorty can no longer style postmetaphysical thinking post analytic phi-
Rorty's important book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) pursues a number of aims. By carrying through his conclusion the deconstruction of the philosophy of consciousness, he wants to complete a not-yet-completed linguistic turn in such a way that the Platonic self-understanding deeply rooted in our culture becomes obvious. My doubts relate to the second step. Does the pragmatic turn, which Rorty rightly demands in the face of semantically flawed approaches, require an anti-realist understanding of knowledge?

(a) The basic conceptual framework of the philosophy of the subject has, from Peirce to Wittgenstein and Heidegger, been subjected to a relentless critique. Rorty draws on contemporary arguments (among others those of Sellars, Quine, and Davidson) in order to expose the basic assumptions of mentalist epistemology with a view to a critique of reason. The idea of 'self-consciousness' and 'subjectivity' imply that the knowing subject can discourse for itself a privileged sphere of immediately accessible and absolutely certain experiences (Erkenntnis) when it does not focus directly on objects but rather reflexively on its own representations (Vorstellungen) of objects. For classical epistemology, there is a constitutive separation between inner and outer—a dualism of mind and body—appells to the privileged access of the first person to her own experience. The epistemic authority of the first person is sustained by the presuppositions of three paradigm-shattering assumptions:

1. that we know our own mental states better than anything else;
2. that knowing takes place essentially in the mode of representing objects;
3. that the truth of judgments rests on evidence that vouches for their certainty.

Analysis of the linguistic form of our experiences and thoughts discovers in these assumptions three corresponding myths—the myth of the given, the myth of thought as representation, and the myth of truth as certainty. It is shown that we cannot circumvent the linguistic expressions as the medium for the representation and communication of knowledge. There are no uninterpreted experiences [Erfahrungen] that are accessible only privately and that public assessment and correction. Moreover, knowledge of objects is not an adequate model of the world. Truth is a property of recognizably constructed states of affairs that cannot be lost; it can be justified only on the basis of reasons—it cannot be authenticated on the basis of the genesis of representations.

Rorty, of course, connects this critique of foundationalism with the more far-reaching aim of radicalizing the linguistic turn. He wants to show what philosophy of language comes to when purified of attempts to imitate either Kant or Hume. To achieve this, he calls the representation (Vorstellung) of object the *Vorstellung* of objects is conceived as a two-place relation, the linguistic turn leaves the "mirror of nature"—as metaphor for knowledge of the world—intact.

Rorty wants to make full use of the conceptual scope that has been opened up by the philosophy of language. With Peirce he replaces the two-place relation between representing subject and represented object with a three-place relation: the symbolic expression, which accords validity to a state of affairs, for an interpretive community. The objective world is no longer something to be reflected but is simply the common reference point for a process of communication (Verständigung) between members of a communication community who come to an understanding with one another with regard to something. The communicative facts can no more be separated from the process of communication than the assumption of an objective world can be separated from the intersubjectively shared interpretive horizon within which the participants in communication always already operate. Knowledge no longer coincides with the correspondence of sentences and facts. For this reason, only a linguistic turn that is rigorously carried to its conclusion can, in overcoming mentalism, also overcome the epistemological model of the Mirror of Nature.

(b) I am interested in the question of whether Rorty performs this plausible pragmatic radicalization of the linguistic turn in the right way. If we no longer refer epistemological questions only to language as the grammatical form of representation (Verständigung), relating them instead to language as it is used communicatively, an additional dimension is opened up. This is the dimension of interactions that appeals to the privileged access of the first person to her own experience. The epistemic authority of the first person is sustained by the presuppositions of three paradigm-shattering assumptions:
of Nature can be discarded. The “communication model” of knowledge highlights the point that we have no unfiltered access to entities in the world independent of our practices of reaching understanding and the linguistically constituted context of our lifeworld: Elements of what we call ‘language’ or ‘mind’ penetrate so deeply into what we call ‘reality’ that the very project of representing ourselves as being ‘mappers’ of something ‘language-independent’ is finally compromised from the start.

This is a quotation from Hilary Putnam with which Rorty agrees. Nonetheless, Rorty has something other than Putnam’s “internal realism” in mind. Putnam’s “internal realism” stresses that the conditions for the objectivity of knowledge can be analyzed only in connection with the conditions for the intersubjectivity of a mutual understanding with regard to what is said. On Rorty’s view, “Being in touch with reality” has to be translated into the jargon of “being in touch with a human community” in such a way that the realist intuition, to which mentalism wanted to do justice with its Mirror of Nature, as its correspondence between representation and represented object, disappears completely. For Rorty, every kind of representation of something in the objective world is a dangerous illusion. Now, it is certainly the case that with the pragmatic turn the epistemic authority of the first-person singular, who inspects her inner self, is displaced by the first-person plural, by the “we” of a communication community in front of which every person justifies her views. However, it is only the empiricist interpretation of this new authority that lends Rorty to equate “knowledge” with what is accepted as “rational” according to the standards of our respective communities.

Just as Locke and Hume referred their mentalist reflections to the consciousness of empirical persons, Kant referred his to the consciousness of subjects in general. But Rorty, the nominalist, stands in the empiricist tradition and refers epistemic authority to the received social practices of our respective communities. He regards the urge “to see social practices of justification as more than just such practices” as normative. Rorty himself makes the connection between, on the one hand, the contextualist interpretation of the pragmatic turn and the anti-realist understanding of Nature and its correspondence between representation and represented object, disappears completely. For Rorty, every kind of representation of something in the objective world is a dangerous illusion.

This picture of ancient and medieval philosophy as concerned with things, the philosophy of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries with ideas, and the enlightened contemporary philosophical scene with words has considerable plausibility. But this sequence should not be thought of as offering three competing views about what is primary, or what is foundational. It is not that Aristotle thought that one could best explain ideas and words in terms of things, whereas Descartes and Russell envisaged the order of explanation. It would be more correct to say that Aristotle did not have — did not feel the need of — a theory of knowledge, and that Descartes and Locke did not have a theory of meaning. Aristotle’s remarks about knowing do not offer answers, good or bad, to Locke’s questions, any more than Locke’s remarks about language offer answers to Frege’s.

This disunity means that philosophical questions are not settled through finding the right answers, rather, they fall into disuse once they have lost their market value. This also holds for the question of the objectivity of knowledge. On the existential view, objectivity is ensured when the representing subject refers to his objects in the right way. He checks the subjectivity of his representations against an objective world. “Subjective” contrasts with “corresponding to what is out there,” and thus means something like “a product only of what is in here.” On the linguistic view, the subjectivity of beliefs is no longer checked directly through confrontation with the world but rather through public agreement achieved in the communication community: “A subjective” consideration is one which has been, or would be, or should be, set aside by rational discussion.

With this, the intersubjectivity of reaching understanding replaces the objectivity of experience. The language-world relation becomes dependent on communication between speakers and hearers. The vertical world-relation of representations of something, or of propositions about something, is bent back, as it were, into the horizontal line of the cooperation of participants in communication. The intersubjectivity of the lifeworld, which subjects inhabit in common, displaces the objectivity of a world that a solitary subject confounds. For Rorty, the desire for objectivity is not the desire to escape the limitations of one’s community, but simply the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible.

Rorty wants to say the paradigm shift transforms perspectives in such a way that epistemological questions as such are passé.
The contextualist understanding of the linguistic turn from which this anti-realist view emerges goes back to a conception of the rise and fall of paradigms that excludes the coexistence of paradigms as well as learning processes that extend across paradigms. In fact, the terms, in which we understand a comparison of paradigms, referring to our hermeneutic starting point and, thus, our own paradigm. That Rorty selects for his comparison the frame of reference of objectivity, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity results from the basic conceptual perspective from which we now describe the linguistic turn of mentalism. On the other hand the picture of a contingent succession of incomensurable paradigms does not fit in any way with this description. Rather, from the perspective of that frame of reference, a subsequent paradigm appears as an answer to a problem bequeathed to us by the devaluation of a preceding paradigm. Contrary to what Rorty supposes, paradigms do not form an arbitrary sequence but a dialectical relationship.

Nominalisation robbed things of their inner nature or essence and declared general concepts to be constructions of a finite mind. Since then, comprehending that which is (das Seine) in thought has lacked a foundation in the conceptual constitution of beings themselves. The correspondence of mind with nature could no longer be conceived as an ontological relation, the rules of logic no longer reflected the laws of reality. Face Rorty, mentalism responded to this challenge by reversing the order of explanation. If the knowing subject can no longer derive the standards for knowledge from a disqualified nature, it has to supply these standards from a reflexively disclosed subjectivity itself. Reason, once embodied objectively in the order of nature, retreats to subjective spine. With this, being-in-itself (das Sein) of the world is transformed into the objectivity of a world that is given for us, the subjects—a world of represented objects or phenomena. Whereas up to then, the constitution of the world of being-in-itself had enabled a correspondence of thought with reality—true judgments— the truth of judgments is now supposed to be measured against the certainty of evidence, subjective experiences (Evidence). Representational thought leads to objective knowledge insofar as it comprehends the phenomenal world.

The concept of subjectivity introduced a duality between inner and outer that seemed to confront the human mind with the precarious task of bridging a chasm. With this, the way was cleared for skepticism in its modern form. The private character of my particular subjective experiences, on which my absolute certainty is based, simultaneously provides the reason to doubt whether the world as it appears to us is not at least a fiction. This skepticism is anchored in the constitutive concepts of the mental paradigm. At the same time it conjures up memories of the comforting intuition that sustained the ontological paradigm: the idea that the truth of judgments is guaranteed by a correspondence with reality that is grounded in reality itself. This ‘residual’ intuition, as it were, which had lost none of its suggestive power with the advent of a paradigm shift, forces with the new skeptical question of whether—and if so, how—the agreement between representation and represented object is to be grounded on the basis of the evidence of our subjective experiences. It is this question that first provokes the epistemological quassel between Idealism and Empiricism. However, in light of this genealogy it becomes apparent—and this is my main point here—that contextualism is built into the basic concepts of the linguistic paradigm just as skepticism is built into mentalism. And once again, the intuitions regarding truth that carried over with us from the preceding paradigms lead to an exacerbation of these problems.

Just as the dispute about universals at the end of the Middle Ages contributed to the development of the concept of objective reason, the critique of introspection and psychologism at the end of the sixteenth century contributed to the shaking up of subjectivity. Reason with the displacement of reason from the consciousness of the knowing subject to language as the medium by means of which acting subjects communicate with one another, is no longer derivable from the knowing subject, which supplies from within itself the standards for the objectivity of experience, to the justificatory practices of a linguistic community. Up to then the intersubjective validity of beliefs had resulted from the subsequent convergence of thoughts or representations. Interpersonal agreement had been explained by the ontological anchoring of true judgments or by the shared psychological or transcendentend dispositions of knowing subjects. Following the linguistic turn, however, all explanations take the primacy of a common language as their starting point. Description of states and events in the objective world, like the self-representation of experiences with which the subject has privileged access, is dependent on the interpreting use of a common language. For this reason, the term ‘intersubjective’ no longer refers to the result of an observed convergence of the thoughts or representations of various persons, but to the prior commonality of a linguistic pre-understanding or horizon of the lifeworld—which, from the perspective of the participants themselves, is presupposed—within which the members of a community find themselves before they reach understanding with one another about something in the world. Finally, the contextualist question, which should not be confused with the epistemological doubt of skepticism, results from this primacy of the intersubjectivity of shared beliefs over confrontation with reality (a reality that is always already interpreted).

The pragmatic turn leaves no room for doubt as to the existence of a word independent of our descriptions. Rather, from Peirce to Wittgenstein, the idle Cartesian doubt has been rejected as a performative contradiction—‘If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything’. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty. On the other hand, all knowledge is fallible and, when it is problematic, depends on the interpretational objectivity of knowledge passes from private certainty to public practices of justification, ‘truth’ becomes a three-place concept of validity. The validation of propositions that are fallible in principle is shown to be validity that is justified for a public. Moreover, because in the linguistic paradigm truths are accessible only in the form of rational acceptability, the question now arises of how in this case the truth of a proposition can still be isolated from the context in which it is justified. Untrue with regard to this problem brings older intuitions about truth onto the scene. It awakens memory of a correspondence between thought and reality or a contact with reality that is sensorily certain. These images, which are still suggestive despite having lost their bearings, are behind the question of how the fact that we cannot transcend the linguistic horizons of justified beliefs is compatible with the intuition that true propositions fit the facts. It is no accident that the contemporary rationality debates circle around the concepts of truth and reference. Just as skepticism does not simply annihilate being to appearance but rather gives expression to the uneasy feeling that we might be unable to separate the one from the other convincingly, neither does contextualism, properly understood, equate truth with justified asseribility. Contextualism is rather an expression of the embarrassment that would ensue if we did have to assimilate the one to the other. It makes us aware of a problem to which cultural relativism presents a solution that is false because it contains a performative self-contradiction.
Truth and justification

Even in the comprehension of elementary propositions about states or events in the world, language and reality interpenetrate in a manner that for us is indissoluble. There is no natural possibility of isolating the constraints of reality that make a statement true from the semantic rules that lay down these truth conditions. We can explain what a fact is only with the help of the truth of a statement of fact, and we can explain what is real only in terms of what is true. Being, as Tugendhat says, is veritistic being. Since the truth of beliefs or sentences can in turn be justified only with the help of other beliefs and sentences, we cannot break free from the magic circle of our language. This fact suggests an anti-foundationalist conception of knowledge and a holistic conception of justification. Because we cannot confine our sentences with anything that is not itself already saturated linguistically, no basic propositions can be distinguished that would be privileged in being able to legitimize themselves, thereby serving as the basis for a linear chain of justification. Rorty rightly emphasizes "that nothing counts as justification unless by reference to what we already accept," concluding from this "there is no way to get outside our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other than coherence." This does not mean, of course, that the coherence of our beliefs is sufficient to clarify the meaning of the concept of truth which has now become central. Certainly, within the linguistic paradigm, the truth of a proposition can no longer be conceived as correspondence with something in the world, for otherwise we would have to be able to "get outside of language" while using language. Obviously, we cannot compare linguistic expressions with a piece of uninterpreted or "naked" reality—that is, with a reference that eludes our linguistically bound inspection. Hence the less, the correspondence idea of truth was able to take account of a fundamental aspect of the meaning of the truth predicate. This aspect—the notion of unconditional validity—is swept under the carpet of the truth of a proposition. We recognize coherence with other propositions or as justified assemblability within an interconnected system of assertions. Whereas well-justified assertions can turn out to be false, we understand truth as a property of propositions "that cannot be lost." Coherence depends on practices of justification that let themselves be guided by standards that change from time to time. This accounts for the question: "Why does the fact that our beliefs hang together, supposing they do, give the least indication that they are true?"

The "cautious" use of the truth predicate shows that, with the truth of propositions, we connect an unconditional claim that points beyond all the evidence available to us; on the other hand, the evidence that we bring to bear in our contexts of justification has to be sufficient to entitle us to raise truth claims. Although truth cannot be reduced to coherence and justified assemblability, there is an internal relation between truth and justification. How, otherwise, would it be possible to explain that a justification of "p" successful according to our standards points in favor of the truth of "p," although truth is not an achievement and does not depend on how well a proposition can be justified. Michael Williams describes the problem as a dispute between two equally reasonable ideas: "First, that if we are to have knowledge of an objective world, the truth of what we believe about the world must be independent of our believing it; and second, that justification is inevitably a matter of supporting beliefs by other beliefs, hence in this minimal sense a matter of coherence." This leads to the contextualist question: "Given only knowledge of what we believe about the world, and how our beliefs fit together, how can we show that these beliefs are likely to be true?"

This question should not, however, be understood in a skeptical sense, for the conception according to which we, as socialized individuals, always already find ourselves within the linguistically defined horizon of our lifeworld implies an unquestioned background of intersubjectively shared convictions, proven true in practice, which makes nonsense of total doubt as to the accessibility of the world. Language, which we cannot "get outside of" should not be understood in analogy to the inaccessibility of a representing subject who is as if cut off from the external world of representable objects. The relationship between justifiability and truth, although in need of clarification, signals no gulf between inner and outer, no dualism that would have to be bridged and that could give rise to the skeptical doubts as to whether our world as a whole is an illusion. The pragmatic turn pulls the rug from under this skepticism. There is a simple reason for this. In everyday practices, we cannot use language without acting. Speech itself is effected in the mode of speech acts that for their part are embedded in contexts of interaction and entwined with instrumental actions. As actors, that is, as interacting and intervening subjects, we are always already in contact with things about which we can make statements. Language games and practices are intersubjective. "At some point...we have to leave the realm of sentences (and texts) and draw upon agreement in action and experience (for instance, in using a predicate)." From the point of view of the philosophy of language, Husserl's phenomenological conclusion that we "are always already in contact with things" is confirmed.

For this reason, the question as to the internal connection between justification and truth—a connection that explains why we may, in light of the evidence available to us, raise an unconditional truth claim that aims beyond what is justified—is not an epistemological question. It is not a matter of being or appearance. What is at stake is not the correct representation of reality but everyday practices that must not fall apart. The contextualist stance betrays a worry about the smooth functioning of language games and practices. Reaching understanding cannot function unless the participants refer to a single objective world, thereby stabilizing the intersubjectively shared public space with which everything that is merely subjective can be contrasted. This supposition of an objective world that is independent of our descriptions fulfills a functional requirement of our processes of cooperation and communication. Without this supposition, everyday practices, which rest on the (in a certain sense) Platonic distinction between believing and knowing unreservedly, would come apart at the seams. If it were to turn out that we cannot in any way make this distinction, the result would be more of a pathological self-misunderstanding than an illusionary understanding of the world. Whereas skepticism assigns an epistemological mistake, contextualism supposes a finer construction in the way we live.
than that in which it is good for "us" — the liberal members of Western culture or Western societies — to believe.

(Pragmatism) should see themselves as working at the interface between the common sense of their community, a common sense much influenced by Greek metaphysics and by "pneumatic" monotheism . . . They should see themselves as involved in a long-term attempt to change the rhetoric, the common sense, and self-image of their community.26

Before I deal with this proposal, I would like to examine whether the alternatives are as hopeless as Rorty assumes. Are there not plausible explanations for the fact that a justification successful in one jurisdictional context points in favor of the context-independent truth of the justified proposition? I am interested above all in two attempts at explanation: a deflationary one, which disputes that 'truth' has any nature at all that could be explained; and an apoplectic one, which inflates the idea of a justified assertion to such an extent that truth becomes the limit concept of the justification process. Of course, deflationism is permitted to de-contextualize the concept of truth only to the extent that this concept can continue to sustain realist intuitions, while the apoplectic conception is allowed to contextualize the justification conditions only to the extent that its idea of argumentation removed from everyday practice remains within the reach of 'our' practices.27

The Semantic Conception of Truth and the Pragmatic Perspective

Tarski's Convention T — "p" is true if and only if φ — relies on a discretional use of the truth-predicate that can be illustrated, for instance, by the example of confirming another person's statements: "Everything that the witness said yesterday is true." With this, the speaker makes his own "everything that was said," in such a way that he could repeat the corresponding assertions in the stance of the first person. This use of the truth-predicate is noteworthy in two respects. For one thing, it permits a generalizing reference to subject matter that is mentioned but not explicitly reproduced. Tarski uses this property in order to construct a theory of truth that generalizes about all instances of 'T'. For another, the truth-predicate when used in this way establishes a relation of equivalence between two linguistic expressions — the whole point of the Tarskian strategy of explanation depends on this. For, though explicating the discretional function, the inescapable "relation of correspondence" between language and world or sentence and fact can, it appears, be reflected onto the tangible semantic relation between the expressions of an object language and those of a metalanguage. No matter how one conceives of the representational function of statements, whether as 'satisfaction' of truth conditions or as 'fitting' the facts to the sentences, what is envisaged in every case are pictures of relations that extend beyond language. It now seems possible to clarify these pictures with the help of interrelations that are external to language. This initial idea allows us to understand why weak realist connotations are connected with the semantic conception of truth even if it is clear that this conception cannot sustain a strong epistemological realism in the manner of Popper.28

Now, it was already noticed at an early stage that the semantic conception of truth cannot vindicate its claim to be an explicat of the full meaning of the truth-predicate.29 The reason for this is that the discretional function is not sufficiently informative because it already presupposes the representational function. One understands the meaning of Convention T when one knows what is meant (prompt) with the right-hand side of the biconditional. The meaning of the truth-predicate in the sentence "Everything that the witness said yesterday is true" is parasitic on the assertoric mode of the witness's assertions. Before an assertion can be quoted it must be "put forward." This presupposed assertoric meaning can be analyzed in an exemplary way by looking at the 'yes' and 'no' positions of participants in argumentation who raise or refute objections; it can also be seen in the 'cautionary' use of the truth-predicate, which recalls the experience of participants in argumentation that even propositions that have been justified convincingly can turn out to be false.

The truth-predicate belongs — though not exclusively — to the language game of argumentation. For this reason its meaning can be elucidated (at least partly) according to its functions in this language game, that is, in the pragmatic dimension of a particular employment of the predicate. Whoever confines herself to the semantic dimension of sentences and of metalinguistic commentaries on sentences comprehends only the reflection of a prior linguistic practice that, as remains to be shown, extends even into everyday practices. However, the deflationary treatment of the concept of truth, through its semantic framing of the pragmatic meaning of truth, has the advantage of avoiding discussions about the 'nature' of truth without having to forfeit a minimal orientation toward the distinction between knowing and believing, between being-true and being-held-to-be-true. This strategy aims at decoupling these elementary distinctions from the dispute about substantial epistemological views. If it can be shown that the semantic conception of truth is sufficient to explain the usual methods of inquiry and theory selection — that is, sufficient also to explain what counts as 'success' or 'growth in knowledge' in the scientific enterprise — we can rescue the weak realist supposition of a world independent of our descriptions without boosting up the concept of truth in an epistemological-realist way.29

On the other hand, science is not the only sphere — and not even the primary one — in which the truth-predicate has a use. Even if a deflationary concept of truth were sufficient for elucidating the fact of science, for rendering the functioning of our practices of inquiry transparent, this would still not dissipate the contextualist doubt. For this doubt infers not only to the construction and selection of theories, indeed, not only to practices of argumentation in general: with respect to the pretheoretical orientation toward truth inherent in everyday practices, a semantic conception of truth simply does not help us at all.

What is at issue in the lifeworld is the pragmatic rule of a Janus-faced notion of truth that mediates between behavioral certainty and discursively justified asseribility. In the network of established practices, implicitly raised validity claims that have been verified against a broad background of intersubjectively shared convictions construe the rails along which behavioral certainties run. However, as soon as these certainties lose their hold in the context of self-evident beliefs, they are joined out of tranquility and transformed into a corresponding number of questionable topics that thereby become subject to debate. In moving from action to rational discourse,30 what is initially naïvely held-to-be-true is released from the mode of behavioral certainty and assumes the form of a hypothetical proposition whose validity is left open for the duration of the discourse. The argumentation takes the form of a competition for the better arguments in favor of, or against, controversial validity claims, and serves the cooperative search for truth.40

With this description of justificatory practices guided by the idea of truth, however,
the problem is posed anew of how the systemic mobilization of good reasons, which at best lead to justified beliefs, is supposed nonetheless to be adequate for the purpose of discriminating between justified and unjustified truth claims. To begin with, I simply want to keep hold of the picture of a circular process that presents itself to us from a perspective expanded by means of the theory of action: shaken-up behavioral certainties are transformed on the level of argumentation into controversial valid claims raised for hypothetical propositions; these claims are tested discursively — and, as the case may be, vindicated — with the result that the discursively accepted truth can return to the realm of action; with this, behavioral certainties (as the case may be, new ones), which rely on beliefs unproblematically held to be true, are produced once more. What still remains to be explained is the mysterious power of the discursively achieved agreement that authorizes the participants in argumentation, in the role of actors, to accept unreservedly justified assertions as truths. For it is clear from the description from the point of view of action that every argumentation can fulfill the role of problemhandler with regard to behavioral certainties that have become problematic only if it is guided by truth in a context-independent — that is, unconditional — sense.

Although when we adopt a relativistic attitude we know that all knowledge is fallible, in everyday life we cannot survive with hypotheses alone, that is, in a permanently fallible way. The organized falsification of scientific inquiry can deal hypothetically with controversial validity claims indefinitely because it serves to bring about agreements that are accepted from action. This could be a satisfactory situation for the lifeworld. Certainly, we have to make decisions in the lifeworld on the basis of incomplete information; moreover, existential risks such as the loss of those closest to us, sickness, old age, and death are the mark of human life. However, notwithstanding these uncertainties, everyday routines rest on an unqualified trust in the knowledge of lay people as much as experts. We would step on the bridge, use our car, undergo no operation, not even eat an unreasonably prepared meal if we did not consider the knowledge used to be safeguarded, if we did not hold the assumptions employed in the production and execution of our actions to be true. At any rate, the performative need for behavioral certainty rules out a reservation in principle with regard to truth, even though we know, as an act of the habitual performance of actions is interrupted, that truth claims can be vindicated only discursively — that is, only within the relevant context of justification. Truth may be assimilated neither to behavioral certainty nor to justified assertability. Evidently, only strong conceptions of knowledge and truth — open to the accusation of Platonism — can do justice to the unity of the hypothetical meaning of assertions, which take on different roles in the realms of action and discourse respectively. Wherein in everyday practices 'truths' prep up behavioral certainties, in discourses they provide the reference point for truth claims that are in principle fallible.

The Epistemic Conception of Truth in a Pragmatic Perspective

The stubborn problem of the relation between truth and justification makes understandable the attempt to distinguish 'truth' from 'rational acceptability'. This attempt proposes that a proposition justified according to "our standards is distinguished from a true proposition in the same way that a proposition justified in a given context is distinguished from a proposition that could be justified in any context. A proposition is 'true' if it could be justified under ideal epistemic conditions (Putnam)' or could win argumentatively reached agreement in an ideal speech situation (Habermas)" or in an ideal communication community (Apel). What is hard is what may be accepted as rational under ideal conditions. Convincing objections have been raised to this proposal, which dates back to Peirce. The objections are directed in part against conceptual difficulties with the ideal state adopted; in part they show that an idealization of justificatory conditions cannot achieve its goal because it either distances truth too far from justified assertability or not far enough.

The first kind of objection draws attention to the paradoxical nature of the notion of "complete" or "conclusive" knowledge fixed as a limit concept — that, when its incompleteness and fallibility is taken away from it, would no longer be (human) knowledge. Paradoxical, too, is the idea of a final consensus or definitive language that would bring to an end all further communication or all further interpretation. "The result that what is meant as a situation of ideal mutual understanding stands revealed as a situation beyond the necessity for (and the problems connected with) linguistic processes of reaching understandings." This objection is directed not just against an idealization that hypostatizes final states as attainable states in the world. Even if the ideal reference points are understood as aims that are not attainable in principle, or attainable only approximately, it remains "paradoxical that we would be obliged to strive for the realization of an ideal whose realization would be the end of human history." As a regulative idea, the critical point of the orientation toward truth becomes clear only when the formal or processual properties of argumentation, and not the aim, are idealized.

The second kind of objection leads to the same conclusion. These objections are directed not against the incoherent results of the idealization of the targeted states but against the operation of idealization itself. No matter how the value of the epistemic conditions is enhanced through idealizations, either they satisfy the unconditional character of truth claims by means of requirements that cut off all connection with the practices of justification familiar to us, or else they remain the connection to practices familiar to us by paying the price that rational acceptability does not exclude the possibility of error even under these ideal conditions, that is, does not simulate a truth that cannot be lost." It would be apparent either that those conditions allow the possibility of error or that they are in ideal so as to make no use of the intended connection with human abilities.

In his debates with Putnam, Apel, and me, Rorty makes use of these objections not in order to discredit the epistemology of truth but in order to radicalize it. With his opponents he shares the view that the standards for the rational acceptability of propositions, although they change historically, do not always do so arbitrarily. At least from the perspective of the participants, rationality standards are open to critique and can be "reformed," that is, improved on the basis of good reasons. Unlike Putnam, however, Rorty does not want to take account of the fact of learning processes by conceding that justificatory practices are guided by an idea of truth that transcends the justificatory context in question. He completely rejects idealizing limit concepts and interprets the difference between justification and truth in such a way that a proposition is prepared in principle to defend her views not only here and now but even in front of another audience. Whatever is oriented toward truth in this sense is willing "to justify his convictions in front of a competent audience" or "to increase the size or diversity of the conversational community." On Rorty's view, every idealization that goes beyond this will founder on the problem that in idealizing we must always take
something familiar as our point of departure, usually it is "us," that is, the communica-

tion community as we are familiar with it, "I cannot see what idealized rational acceptability" can mean except 'acceptability to an ideal community.' Nor can I see, given that no such community is going to have a God's eye view, that this ideal community can be anything more than we as we should like to be. Nor can I see what "us" can mean here except as educated, sophisticated, tolerant, wise liberals, the people who are always willing to hear the other side, to think out all their implications, etc.  

Of course, it can be objected to this that an idealization of the justificatory conditions does not in any way have to take the 'thick' characteristics of one's own culture as its point of departure, rather, it can start with the formal and procedural characteristics of justificatory practices in general that, after all, are to be found in all cultures — even if not by any means always in institutionalized form. The fact that the practice of argumentation compels the participants themselves to make pragmatic assumptions with a counterfactual content fits well with this. Whoever enters into discussion with the serious intention of becoming convinced of something through discussion with others, or with others, has to presume performatively that the participants allow their "yes" or "no" to be determined solely by the force of the better argument. However, with this they assume — normally in a counterfactual way — a speech situation that satisfies improbable conditions: openness to the public, inclusiveness, equal rights to participation, immu-
nization against external or inherent compulsion, as well as the participants' orientation toward reaching understanding (that is, the sincere expression of utterances).  

In these unavoidable presuppositions of argumentation, the intuition is expressed that true propositions are resistant to spatially, socially, and temporally unconstrained attempts to refute them. What we hold to be true has to be defensible on the basis of good reasons, not merely in a different context but in all possible contexts, that is, at any time and against anybody. This provides the inspiration for the discourse theory of truth: a proposition is true if it withstands all attempts to refute it under the demanding conditions of rational discourse.  

However, this does not mean that it is also true for this reason. A truth claim raised for 'y' says that the truth conditions for 'y' are satisfied. We have no other way of ascertaining whether or not this is the case except by way of argumentation, for direct access to uninterpreted truth conditions is denied to us. But the fact that the truth conditions are satisfied does not itself become an epistemic fact just because we can only establish whether these conditions are satisfied by way of discursive vindication of truth claims — whereby we already had to interpret the truth conditions in light of the relevant sorts of reasons for the claim in question.  

A cautiously epistemic reading of the discourse-theoretical explanation of truth already founders on the problem that not all of the procedural properties mentioned retain a "connection with human abilities." Nonetheless, with regard to the argumen-
tative presuppositions of general inclusiveness, equal rights to participation, freedom from repression, and orientation toward reaching understanding, we can imagine in the present what an approximately ideal situation would look like. This does not hold for anticipation of the future, of future corroboration (Beweisung).  

To be sure, the orientation toward the future, too, essentially has the critical point of reminding us of the ethnocentric limitation and the illusoriness of every actually achieved agreement, no matter how rationally motivated; that is, it serves as a reminder to us of the possible further decentering of the perspective of our justification community. Time, however, is a constraint of an ontological kind. Because all real discourses, conducted in actual time, are limited with regard to the future, we cannot know whether propositions that are rationally acceptable today will, even under approximately ideal conditions, assert themselves against attempts to refute them in the future as well. On the other hand, this very limitation condemns our finite minds to be confronted with rational acceptability as insufficient proof of truth: "Whenever we raise truth claims on the basis of good arguments and convincing evidence we possess... that no new arguments or evidence will crop up in the future that would call our truth claim into question."  

It is not so difficult to understand why participants in argumentation, as subjects capable of speech and action, have to behave in this way if we look at a pragmatic description of their discourses, which are embedded in the lifeworld. In everyday practices, as we have seen, socialized individuals are dependent on behavioral certainties, which remain certainties only so long as they are summed by a knowledge that is accepted unreservedly. Corresponding to this is the grammatical fact that, when we put forward the assertion 'y' in a performative attitude, we have to believe that 'y' is true unconditionally even though, when we adopt a reflexive attitude, we cannot rule out that tomorrow, or somewhere else, reasons and evidence could emerge that would invalidate 'y'. However, this does not yet explain why we are permitted to regard a truth claim explicitly raised for 'y' as vindicated just as soon as the proposition is rationally accepted under conditions of rational discourse. What does it mean to say that truth claims can be 'vindicated' discursively?  

The Pragmatic Conception of Truth

It is still unclear what it is that authorizes us to regard as true a proposition that is presumed to be justified ideally — within the limits of finite minds. Wittgenstein speaks in this regard of a 'surprise' residing in the 'anticipation of future corroboration.' Perhaps it would be better to say that participants in argumentation who convince themselves of the justificatory identity of a controversial validity claim have reached a point where they have been brought by the unconstrained force of the better argument to a certain shift in perspective. When, in the course of a process of argumentation, participants attain the conviction that, having taken on board all relevant information and having weighed up all the relevant reasons, they have exhausted the reservoir of potential possible objections to 'y', then all motives for continuing argumentation have been, as it were, used up. At any rate there is no longer any rational motivation for retaining a hypercritical attitude toward the truth claim raised for 'y' but temporarily left open. From the perspective of actors who have temporarily adopted a reflexive attitude in order to restore a partially disturbed background understanding, the de-problematic-

ation of the disputed truth claim means that a license is issued for return to the attitude of actors who are involved in dealing with the world more naively. As soon as the differences in opinion are resolved between 'us' and 'others' with regard to what is the case, our world can merge once more with this 'world.'
that Rorty always connects with a realist intuition. Because acting subjects have to cope with "the" world, they cannot avoid being realists in the context of their lifeworld. Moreover, they are allowed to be realists because their language games and practices, so long as they function in a way that is proof against disappointment, "prove their truth" (nach Kuhn) in being carried on.

This pragmatic authority responsible for certainty — interpreted in a realist way with the help of the supposition of an objective world — is suspended on the reflective level of discourses, which are relieved of the burdens of action and where only arguments count. Here, our gaze turns away from the objective world, and the disappointments we experience in our direct dealings with it, to focus exclusively on our conflicting interpretations of the world. In this intersubjective dimension of contested interpretations, an assertion "proves its truth" solely on the basis of reasons, that is, with reference to the authority responsible for possible refutation, not for practically experienced disappointment. Here, however, the fallibilist consciousness that we can err even in the case of well-founded beliefs depends on an orientation toward truth whose roots extend into the realm of everyday practices — a realism no longer in force within discourse. The orientation toward unconditional truth, which compels participants in argumentation to presuppose ideal justificatory conditions and requires them in an ever-increasing decentralization of the justification community, is a reflex of that other difference — required in the lifeworld — between believing and knowing, this distinction relies on the supposition, anchored in the communicative use of language, of a single objective world.30 In this way, the lifeworld with its strong, action-related conceptions of truth and knowledge projects into discourse and provides the reference point — transcending justification — that keeps alive among participants in argumentation a consciousness of the fallibility of their interpretations. Conversely, this fallibilist consciousness also reacts back upon everyday practices without thereby destroying the dogmatism of the lifeworld. For actors, who as participants in argumentation have learned that no conviction is proof against criticism, develop in the lifeworld, too, rather less dogmatism and more toward their problematic convictions.

This stereoscopic perception of processes of cooperation and communication, layered according to action-contexts and discourses, allows us recognize the emboldenedness of discourses in the lifeworld. Convictions play a different role in action than in discourse and "prove their truth" in a different way in the former than in the latter. In everyday practices, a prescriptive "coping with the world" decides whether convictions "function" or are drawn into the maelstrom of problematization, whereas in argumentation it depends solely on reasons whether controversial validity claims deserve rational motivated recognition. It is true that the question of the internal relation between justification and truth poses itself only on the reflective level; however, only the interaction between actions and discourses provides an answer to this question. The contextualist doubt cannot be dissipated so long as we persist in remaining on the level of argumentation and neglect the transformation — secured by personal union, as it were — of the knowledge of those who act into the knowledge of those who argue, while equally neglecting the transfer of knowledge in the opposite direction. Only the encircling of the two different pragmatic roles played by the James-based concept of truth in action-contexts and in rational discourses respectively can explain why a justification successful in a local context points in favor of the context-independent truth of the justified belief. Just as, on the one hand, the concept of truth allows translation of shaken-up behavioral certainties into problematized propositions, so too, on the other hand, does the firmly retained orientation toward truth permit the
simply refuse to talk in a certain way. The Platonist way . . . Our efforts at persuasion must take the form of gradual incitement of new ways of speaking, rather than of straightforward argumentation with old ways of speaking.23

The Naturalization of Linguistified Reason

Rorty’s program of reeducation has provoked questions and objections.24 In the first instance, Rorty himself must shoulder the burden of proof for his unwillingness to leave the language of common sense as it is. As a rule, pragmatists make substantial allowances for themselves on the basis that their views are at one with common sense. Strangely enough, neopragmatists boast of their role as “chieftains of an overwhelmingly religious culture.” Their theory is supposed to reach through the pathological language games of philosophers to the distortions for which Platonism is responsible in daily life itself. In order to make plausible Platonism’s idealist violence, Rorty has to let himself in for a diagnosis of the history of Western metaphysics as a history of decline. However, what Houlagier or Derrida, for example, have to say in their own fairly metaphysical ways about the critique of metaphysics is, on Rorty’s estimation, mere part of the “edifying” literature that is supposed to be reserved (or private perfection of the self and cannot, at any rate, serve the public critique of alienated living conditions.25 Of course, more important than the motivation for this enterprise is the question of its viability. I would like to conclude with just two questions in this regard:

(a) Is the envisaged revision of our self-understanding compatible with the fact of an ability to learn that is not already constructed a priori?

(b) What is to happen to the normative character of reason, and how counterintuitive is the proposed neo-Darwinist self-description of rational beings?

Rorty’s program of a rational revision of deeply rooted Platonist prejudices presumes we are capable of a learning process that not only can take place within a given vocabulary and according to the standards prevailing in a given context but that makes hold of the vocabulary and standards themselves. This reason alone requires Rorty to provide a suitable equivalent for an orientation toward truth that is beyond the prevailing context of justification. If, however, the distinction between ‘true’ and ‘justified’ shrinks to the fact that the proponent is prepared to defend ‘p’ even in front of a different audience, the reference point for such an anticipation (of truth) is missing. Rorty counters this objection by conceding a cautious idealization of justificatory conditions. He allows that what traditionally was called the “pursuit of truth” might just as well be described as the “pursuit of intersubjective, unforced agreement among larger and larger groups of interlocutors”: “We hope to justify our belief to as many and as large audiences as possible.”26 Rorty, it is true, does not want this to be understood as an orientation toward an “ever-encreasing goal,” that is, as a regulative idea. Even the larger audience and the overarching context are supposed to be no more than a different audience and a different context. Nonetheless, Rorty adds to this description the qualifications mentioned: ever-expanding size and ever-increasing diversity—that is, conditions that hamper the possible success of argumentation in certain, not completely arbitrary, ways.

(b) In losing the regulative idea of truth, the practice of justification loses that point of orientation by means of which standards of justification are distinguished from ‘customary’ norms. The sociologizing of the practice of justification means a naturalization of reason. As a rule, social norms can be described not merely from the point of view of a sociological observer but also from the perspective of the participants in light of the standards they hold to be true. Without a reference to truth or reason, however, the standards themselves would no longer have any possibility of self-correction and would thus for their part forfeit the status of norms capable of being justified. In this respect, they would no longer be customary norms. They would be nothing more than social facts, although they would continue to claim validity “for us,” the relevant justificatory community. If, despite this, the practice of justification is not to collapse, and if the predicate “rational” is not to lose its normative character—that is, if both are to continue to be able to function—the rationality standards valid for us have to be, if not justified, then at least explained.

For this Rorty falls back on a naturalist description of human beings as organisms that develop tools in order to adapt themselves optimally to their environment with the aid of satisfying their needs. Language, too, is such a tool—and not, for instance, a medium for representing reality. “No matter whether the tool is a hammer or a gun or a belief or a statement, tool-using is part of the interaction of the organism with its environment.”27 What appears to us as the normative dimension of the linguistically constituted human mind merely gives expression to the fact that intelligent operations are functional for the preservation of a species that, through acting, must cope with reality. This neo-Darwinist self-description demands an ironic price: For Rorty, in replacing the “correct description of facts” with “successful adaptation to the environment,” merely exchanges one kind of objectivism for another: the objectivism of represented.
reality for the objectivism of instrumentally 'mastered' reality. Although admis-
ibly, with this, the direction of fit between human beings and
world is changed, what remains the same is the reference point of an objective
world as the reality of everything that we can, in the one case, 'represent,' in the
other, 'deal with.'

The pragmatic turn was supposed to replace the representational model of
knowledge with a communication model that sees successful intersubjective mutual
understanding (Verständigung) in the place of a chimerical objectivity of experience.
It is, however, precisely this intersubjective dimension that is in turn closed off in an
objectivizing description of processes of cooperation and communication that can be
grasped at such only from the perspective of participants. Rorty uses a jargon that no
longer permits any differentiation between the perspectives of the participant and the
observer. Interpersonal relationships, which are owed to the intersubjective possession
of a shared language, are assimilated to the pattern of adaptive behavior (or instrumen-
tial action). A corresponding de-differentiation between the strategic and the normative
use of language, between action oriented toward success and action oriented toward
ruthless understanding, robs Rorty of the conceptual means for doing justice to the
intuitive distinctions between convincing and persuading, between motivation through
reasons and causal exertion of influence, between learning and indoctrination.

The counterproductive mingling of the one with the other has the unpleasant consequence
that we lose the critical standards operating in everyday life. Rorty's naturalistic strategy
leads to a categorical leveling of distinctions of such a kind that our descriptions lose
their sensitivity for differences that do make a difference in everyday practices.

Notes
5 Cf. The exchange between T. McCarthy and R. Rorty in Critical Inquiry 16 (1990): 351–70,
63–41.
6 R. Rorty, Linguistic Turn, p. 39.
8 [Editor's note] Habermas notes that in English the word 'representation' is used to refer to
both Verstehung and Verstehende.
12 Ibid., p. 179. "The contextualist view" threatens the non-Kantian image of philosophy's
relation to science and to culture. The urge to say that assertions and actions must not only
caccole with other assertions and actions but 'interpenetrate' to something apart from what
people are saying and doing has some claim to be called the philosophical urge."

References
33 Ibid., p. 171.
35 [Editor's note] Habermas remarks that the subtitle to the German translation of Philosophy
and the Mirror of Nature in A Critique of Philosophy (Eine Kritik der Philosophie).
36 R. Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, p. 263.
37 Ibid., p. 339.
38 Ibid., p. 338.
40 Only the empiricists were prepared to call 'objective' the experience (Erfahrung) that
"corresponds to what is there outside" (Rorty). The transcendent idealists, by contrast,
reduce even the objectivity of experience to necessary subjective conditions of possible
experience.
§118, p. 121.
43 With respect to a critique of Rorty's approach, I will confine myself in the following to the
problem of truth. However, I would like to indicate, at least, that we would not be able to
explain the possibility of learning processes without reference to the capacity for recognizing
the same entities under different descriptions.
44 F. Tappanist, Traditional and Analytical Philosophy, trans. P. A. Gurney (Cambridge, 1982),
46 Cf. Williams, Unnatural Doubts, p. 212. "We need only ask whether or not the "direct"
grasping of facts on which such comparison depends is supposed to be a cognitive act with
propositional content. If it isn't, it can have no impact on verification. But if it is, what
we have been given is another kind of belief."
49 Williams, Unnatural Doubts, p. 266.
50 Ibid., p. 249.
51 F. Kamlarow, "Universalis richtig verstehen," Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie 44
52 It is no accident that I introduced the formal-pragmatic concept of the grammatical
supposition of an objective world in the context of the theory of action. Cf. J. Habermas
vol. 2 (Boston, 1987), pp. 1190.
53 Cf. Williams, Unnatural Doubts, p. 258. "All that is involved in the idea of an objective
world is what it is anyway" is that an objective proposition's being true is one thing and
our believing it to be true, or being justified in believing it to be true, something else again.
54 R. Rorty, "Is Truth a Goal of Inquiry? Davidson vs. Wright," Philosophical Quarterly 45
55 D. Davidson pursues a third strategy that could be called 'theoretical' or, as he himself
understood in a nonfoundational way, as the undefined basic concept for an empirical theory
of language. Both the concept of truth, which is used as a theoretical term in his theory
of language, and the theory itself, which is supposed to explain the comprehensiveness of
linguistic expressions, can prove their truth (i.e., hearability) at one and the same time. For this
reason, Davidson's 'implicit' theory of truth can be discussed only in connection with his theory
as a whole. In general, I see the following difficulty: on the one hand, Davidson disputes that

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the concept of truth has a constant capability of being explicated, to this extent aligning himself with the definition-centric critic against attempts to explain the meaning of truth, on the other hand, he has to secure for the truth-predicating, over and above its dispositional function, a certain content as far as the theory of rationality is concerned in order to explain the ontological nature of being. The result is one of many with Patman and Dummett, who insist that Tarski's Convention T says nothing about the actual meaning of truth. Standing between these two positions, Davidson, instead of merely using the concept, lets himself compelled to write learned treatises on a concept he declares to be indefinable - treatises in which he does, at least, in a metacritical way, isolate the realistic intuitions bound up with truth. Cf. D. Davidson, "The Structure and Content of Truth," Journal of Philosophy 97 (1990): 279-288. Davidson holds onto the idea that we can know something of an objective world "which is not of our own making." This view separates him from Rorty who attempts to view in to pull Davidov over to his own side of an absolutori understanding of truth. Cf. D. Davidson, "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge," in A. MAKAYAKOWIAK, ed., Reading Rorty (Oxford, 1990), pp. 120-39; cf. also Rorty, "Pragmatism, Davidson, and Truth." For a comparison of Davidson's and my own approach to the theory of language, see R. FÜRTNER, Radical Interpretation or Communicative Action (PhD dissertation, Northwestern University, 1965).


42 J. Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorie," in Habermas, Verstehen und Erklären in Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns.


52 [Editor's note: The German term 'sich beweisen' and its cognates have generally been rendered here as 'prove to be true' (in the sense of 'out to be true'), so as to preserve in translation its connection with 'nur'; true. Schicht beweisen is proving to be true in the sense of proving the test, withstanding critical scrutiny. However, because it is the term that Alfried Scttler used to render 'verwirberzimt' in his influential discussion of Popper, where the reference is closely to Wittgenstein's idea of anticipating future 'Bewahrung,' it is better to use the German term here]
RESPONSE TO JÜRGEN HABERMAS

The initial sections of Jürgen Habermas' paper provide a very sympathetic account of the motives which led me to hold my present philosophical views. I understood the course of my own thinking much better after reading this account. Those sections also illustrate the extent to which Habermas and I see the history of philosophy, and the current situation of philosophy, in similar terms. His 'The philosophical discourse of modernity' made an enormous impression on me. Ever since I read it I have thought of the 'linguistic turn' as salubrious within the larger movement from subject-centered rationality to communicative rationality. But the motives Habermas has for commending this movement are the same as those which make me want to take what he calls 'the pragmatic turn' - that is, to act solidarity over objectivity, to doubt that there is such a thing as 'desire for truth' distinct from desire for justification, and to hold that, in Habermas' words, 'being in touch with reality' has to be translated into 'being in touch with a human community' in such a way that the realistic intuition, to which mensanism wanted to do justice with its mirror of nature and its correspondence between representation and represented object, disappears completely.

The remaining disagreements between us begin to emerge at the beginning of the section of Habermas' paper called "Truth and Justification." There he says that 'the correspondence idea of truth was able to take account of a fundamental aspect of the meaning of the truth predicate' - the notion of unconditional validity. This is a notion for which I can find no use, in an article called "Universality and Truth," to a version of which Habermas refers. I argued that the switch to "communicative rationality" should lead us to drop the idea that when I make an assertion I am implicitly claiming to be able to justify it to all audiences, actual and possible. The claim would, I urged, be like the village champion, swollen with victory, predicting that he can defeat any challenger, anywhere, anytime. Maybe he can, but he has no good reason to think so, and it would be pointless for him to make such a claim. Analogously, I argued, when we have finished justifying our belief to the audience we think relevant (perhaps our own intellectual conscience, or our fellow-citizens, or the relevant experts) we need not, and typically do not, make any further claims, much less universal ones. After rehearsing our justification, we may say either "That is why I think my assertion is true" or "That is why my assertion is true, or both. Going from the former assertion to the latter is a philosophically legitimate transition from particularity to universality, or from context-dependence to context-independence. It is merely a stylistic difference.

So when Habermas says that there is an "internal connection between justification and truth," one which "explains why we may, in light of the evidence available to us, reach an unconditional truth claim that aims beyond what is justified," I protest that the explicandum is just not there. We do not aim beyond what is justified. No unconditional claim has been made. It is not the case, as Habermas says, that "What we hold to be true has to be defensible on the basis of good reasons, in all possible contexts." If it were, I would, whenever I acquired a belief, be tacitly making an utterly unjustified empirical prediction about what would happen in a potentially infinite number of justificatory contexts before a potentially infinitely diverse set of audiences. I find this as implausible as the suggestion naively made by the logical positivists: that every empirical assertion is an empirical prediction about a potentially infinite number of future sense-data. Again, when Habermas makes a distinction between "two pragmatic roles" - played by the Janus-faced concept of truth in action-contexts and in rational discourses respectively - and when he goes on to say that "the concept of truth allows translation of shaken-up behavioral certainties into problematized propositions," I would rejoin that he is ignoring Peirce's point that beliefs are just habits of action. A rational discourse is just one more action-context in which a behavioral certainty evades itself. There is no Janus-like role to be played, and no translation to be performed.

Rational discourses are the species of action-context in which you are trying to acquire better habits of action by comparing and contrasting your own habits with those of others. In such contexts, your behavioral certainty makes itself evident in your attempt to justify your belief. You may well change your belief as a result of participation in rational discourses, just as you may change it as a result of its lack of success in dealing with the non-human environment. But when you turn from encounters with the non-human, non-linguistic part of your environment to encounters with the human, language-using, arguing part, there is no transition that needs explanation or mediation. The passage from the one action-context to the other raises no philosophical problems which could be solved by a better understanding of the concept of truth.

There is nothing to be understood about the concept of X except the various uses of the term 'X'. This goes for the concept of truth as well. 'True' is a term we can, if we like, apply to all the assertions we feel justified in making, or feel others are justified in making. We thereby endorse those assertions. But we can also add, after any assertion we or others make, "But of course somebody someday (maybe we ourselves, today) may come up with something (new evidence, a better explanatory hypothesis, etc.) showing that that assumption was not true." This is an example of 'true's' cautionary use. I do not see why the fact that the term 'true' has both an endorsing and a cautionary use should lead us to think that there is an 'internal connection' between justification and truth, or between assertion and unconditionality, or to think that a deflationary account of truth is, as Habermas claims, acceptable only if it "can continue to sustain realistic intuitions."

There is, to be sure, something unconditional about truth. This unconditionality is expressed by the fact that once true, always true: we regard people who use the word in such expressions as 'true then, but not now' as using it incorrectly. Since "once justified, always justified" is obviously false, one can indeed express the contrast between truth and justification as a contrast between the unconditional and the conditional. But the unconditionality in question does not provide a reason for the fact that the cautionary use of 'true' is always apropos. To say that truth is eternal and unchangeable is just a picturesque way of restating this fact about our linguistic practices. The whole pragmatic force of the claim that truth is not conditional is to express willingness to change one's mind if circumstances alter, not to explain or justify this willingness. We are not constantly fallible because we are in awe of the unconditionality of truth. Rather, to speak of truth as being unconditional is just one more way of expressing our sense of ontic fallibility (or, more robustly put, our sense of the desirability of comparing one's habits of actions with those of others in order to see whether one might develop some more effective habits). The unconditionality of truth
has no positive content over and above the cautionary function of such expressions as "justified, but maybe not true."

If we see it, philosophers who think that we have a duty to truth, or that we should value truth, or that we should have faith in truth, are engaging in needless, and philosophically mystificatory, hyporization. So are philosophers who worry about whether our practices of justification are "truth-indicative" - about whether epistemologists will ever be able to demonstrate that justification will eventually, somehow, God willing, lead to truth. So, it seems to me, is Habermas when he says that it is a "fact" that "justification is successful in our justificatory context points in favor of the context-independent truth of the justified proposition."

"Our justificatory context." What justificatory context? Surely not any and every such context has this desirable feature? Have not past justificatory contexts (those of primitive science, racist politics, and the like) pointed us away from truth? In order to deal with such rhetorical questions, Habermas brings in the distinction between rationally convincing people and strategically manipulating them into agreeing with you. He wants to say that only in the former case do we have genuine, and therefore truth-indicative, justification. Some of the so-called "justifications" - the ones which strike us as more like brainwashing than like putting forward arguments - must be ruled out in order to save the claim that "success in our justificatory context points in favor of context-independent truth."

Überzeugen, in short, points in favor of such truth, but überreden does not. Thus we find Habermas criticizing me for sweeping this distinction under the rug.

A ... refusal to differentiate between the strategic and non-strategic uses of language; between success-oriented and understanding-oriented action deepens Rory of the conceptual soil to do justice to the intuitive distinction between rationally convincing and persuading, between motivational reasons and causal exertion of influence, between learning and indoctrination. ... (zweifeln Übersetzung und Überreden, zwischen der Motivierung durch Gründe und bewusster Einflussnahme, zwischen Lernen und Indoktrination ...)

Habermas and I can agree that certain desirable social practices and institutions could not survive unless the participants could deploy these latter, communioasional, distinctions. But I see these distinctions as themselves just as context-dependent as the distinction between sufficient and insufficient justification. So I cannot see how they could serve as conceptual instruments for telling us when we are being steered in the direction of context-independent truth. The whole idea of context-independence, in my view, is part of an unfortunate effort to hypothesize the adjective 'true.' Only such hypoization creates the impression that there is a goal of inquiry other than justification to relevant contemporary audiences.

This hypoization is exemplified by Habermas' claim that "true propositions are resistant to spatially, socially, and temporally unconstrained attempts to refute them."

But propositions are just hypothesized assertions. Endowing them with causal powers, such as the ability to resist, is just another move that Plato made when he hypothesized the adjective 'good' and gave causal power to the resulting Idea. Plato thought that only by giving the Good power he explained the appeal of moral virtue. Habermas thinks that only by giving true propositions power can he explain the appeal of such intellectual virtues as eagerness to hear the other side. But "Truth resists attempts to refute it" or "Truth cannot lose in a free and open encounter" is as pragmatically empty as "Healthy people do not get sick." If they get sick, they aren't healthy. What

is refuted was never true. An intrinsic property called 'truth' no more explains resistance to refutation than can called 'health explains resistance to disease.'

Habermas says, correctly, that I am trying to substitute a neo-Darwinian description of human beings for one which distinguishes sharply between what animals do (causal manipulation) and what we do (offering rationally convincing arguments). To effect this substitution, I need to claim, first, that all argumentation is, under one useful description, causal manipulation (kausal und Einflussnahme). Second, I need to assert that some sorts of causal manipulation by means of language are highly desirable. The difference between strategic and non-strategic uses of language is the difference between the kind of causal manipulation we are glad to have practiced on us and the kind we resent having practiced on us. In this respect it is like the difference between having our body manipulated by a knowledgeable doctor, one who has our interests at heart, and having it manipulated by a quack chiropractor trying to make a quick buck.

As I see it, the philosophical distinction between non-strategic and strategic uses of language adds nothing to the commonsense distinction between dishonesty and sincerity. You are being what Habermas calls "non-strategic" if the arguments you offer others - mere rhetorical devices though they may seem to your critics - are ones you yourself find entirely persuasive. You are being what he calls "strategic" if you say to yourself something like "My interlocutor either would not understand or refuse to accept the arguments that convinced me, so I shall use premises he will grant, and terms he understands, even though I should disdain to use either when talking to myself." In the latter case, your interest in your interlocutor is like the quack chiropractor's interest in his patient. But a sincere, ignorant, chiropractor is no more being "strategic" than is a sincere, ignorant Nazi orator. Both are being honest and non-strategic, though neither is likely to do you any good.

The distinction between honesty and sincerity is not itself context-dependent (or at least no more so than the distinction between the straight and the crooked). The distinction between logic and "mere rhetoric," on the other hand, is just as context-dependent as that between the presence and absence of adequate justification. For a sincere Nazi can successfully use really pitiful arguments to justify infamies - arguments that nobody outside his remarkably provincial, illiterate, and stupid audience would take seriously. They are arguments which are rightly described as 'more causal manipulation or 'more' rhetoric, even though to the Nazi and his stupid audience they seem paradigm cases of rational persuasion, überzeugende Argumentation.

From a pragmatist perspective, to describe someone as succumbing to the appeal of "the better argument" is to describe her as being convinced by the sort of reasons that have convinced us, or would convince us, of the same conclusion. Our criteria for betterness of argument are relative to the range of arguments at our disposal, just as our criterion for bitterness of tool are relative to the technology at our disposal. To describe someone as having come to a certain conclusion for bad reasons is simply to say that the reasons which convinced her would not convince us.

Habermas, however, says that when we enter into a serious discussion we "presume performatively that the participants allow their 'yes' or 'no' to be determined by the force of the better argument." But this is to hypothesize arguments as elsewhere hypothesized propositions. Arguments no more have a context-independent property of betterness than propositions have a context-independent resistance to refutation. When we enter into a serious discussion we of course hope that our interlocutors will find the same sorts of considerations convincing that we do; indeed, we are not sure whether or not the discussion will count as serious until we have discovered that
hope will be gratified. But that hope is not a presumption about our interlocutors’ relation to a natural order of reasons, an order in which the bottomless of arguments is apparent without any need to consider the “spatial, temporal, and social restraints” on any actual discursive engagements.

To say that there is no such thing as a proposition being justified post hoc, or an argument better post hoc, amounts to saying that all reasons are reasons for particular people, restrained (as people always are) by spatial, temporal, and social conditions. To think otherwise is to presuppose the existence of a natural order of reasons to which our arguments will, with luck, better and better approximate. The idea of such an order is more relief of the idea that truth consists in correspondence to the intrinsic nature of things, a nature which somehow precedes and underlies all descriptive vocabularies. The natural order of reasons is for arguments what the intrinsic nature of reality is for sentences. But if beliefs are habits of action the one regulative ideal is as unnecessary as the other. Yet Habermas can only go beyond the commonsense distinctions between dishonest and honest use of language on the one hand, and arguments acceptable and not acceptable to us on the other, if he appeals to this implausible idea. For that would be the only way to make plausible the claim that there is a non-context-dependent distinction between real and apparent justification, or that the überzweckfrei-überreden distinction is not just in the ear of the audience.

From my neo-Darwinist perspective, of course, the Cartesian idea of a natural order of reasons is as bad as the suggestion, mentioned by Wittgenstein, that the great advantage of the French language is that words occur in the order in which one naturally thinks them. Familiar French words do indeed occur in the order in which the French typically think them, just as arguments which strike us as afterwards rather than merely überreden have premises we accept arranged in the order in which we ourselves would arrange them. But what counts as rational argumentation is historically determined, and as context-dependent, in what counts as good French. Habermas gives, in this paper, excellent reasons for abandoning as useless Peirce’s notion of “the end of inquiry.” It also seems to me that these are also reasons for abandoning all similar idealizations. They all sound inspiring, but they all degenerate on closer inspection, in the same way that Peirce’s attempts to see just what those idealizations amount to you have to resort to the idea of an audience whose standards of justification cannot be improved on. But such an audience seems to me as hard to envisage as the largest number, the largest set, or the last dialectical synthesis — the one which cannot become the thesis of a new dialectical triad. Our finitude consists in the fact that there can never be an ideal audience, only more spatially, temporally, and socially restrained audiences. So the idea of “universal validity claims” seems to me one more attempt at the set of evasions of finitude Hegel’s rightly criticized.

My conclusion is that what is needed is not an attempt to get closer to an ideal, but rather an attempt to get farther away from the purview of our past that we most regret. We should give up on the Kant-Peirce-Apel strategy of finding regulative ideas to serve as surrogates for the authority of some non-human power, thereby replacing metaphysics with transcendental philosophy. Instead, we should answer the questions “What keeps us critical rather than dogmatic?” with “The memory of how parochial our ancestors have been, and the fear that our descendents will find us equally so.” In short, we should be retrospective rather than prescriptive: inquiry should be driven by concrete fears of regression rather than by abstract hopes of universality.

This substitution of fear for hope is my strategy for answering another criticism made by Habermas. He says “As soon as the concept of truth is eliminated in favor of a context-dependent, epistemic validity-for-us, we lack the normative reference-point (normative Bezugsrahmen) that would explain why a proponent should struggle to secure acceptance for ‘p’ beyond the bounds of his own group.” ( ... über die Grenze der aequiparierbaren, beseitigten, etc.)

Here I need to distinguish between wanting to go beyond those borders and being under an obligation to do so between kainen beseitigen will and kainen beseitigen soll. I regard it as a forunate historical accident that we find ourselves in a culture — the high culture of the West in the twentieth century — which is highly sensitized to the need to go beyond such borders. This sensitization is a result of our awareness of the blind cruelty which has resulted from not doing so in the past, and our fear of falling back into barbarism.

I do not think that we are under an obligation to go beyond these borders, but that is simply because I am deeply suspicious of the notion of obligation. I tend to agree with Elizabeth Anscombe when she doubts, in her famous essay “Modern Moral Philosophy,” that those who do not believe in the existence of God are entitled to use the term “moral obligation.” On this point, theists like Anscombe and atheists like myself can make common cause against Kantians who think that you can preserve, and must preserve, a non-prudential “ought.” We can line up with Mill and Dewey in being as suspicious of the morality-prudence distinction, when it is given a transcendental twist, as we are of the truth-justification distinction, when it is given the same twist. However, I would concede, as Anscombe might not, that one can give the notion of “moral obligation” a respectable, secular, non-transcendental sense by relativizing it to a historically contingent sense of moral identity. As someone whose sense of moral identity is tied up with the need to go beyond the boundaries of my own group, I can temper the notion of kainen beseitigen soll, though perhaps not in a way that Habermas would find adequate. For I can say that I could not live with myself if I did not do my best to go beyond the borders in question. In that sense, I am morally obliged to do so, but only in the same sense that a Nazi who could not live with himself if he spared a certain Jew is under a moral obligation to kill that Jew. But my moral identity is not an expression, or an account, of myself as a language-user. It cannot be incorporated into any language-using being. It is merely a remark about whom I happen to be, not about what I must, to avoid performative self-contradiction, conceive myself to be. Perhaps I also could not live with myself if I consumed a rich meal in the presence of a starving child, with whom I refused to share my food. But this too is a fact about the way I happened to be brought up, not a fact about what it is to be a human being.

In short the only normative Bezugsrahmen that I find myself in need of is something which fits easily into a naturalistic, Darwinian picture of myself. I am an organism whose beliefs and desires are largely a product of a certain acclimatization. Specifically, I am the product of a culture which worries about the fact that American black slavery and European pogroms seemed sensible and right to previous generations of white Christians. As such a product, I spend time worrying about whether I may not now be taking similar, current atrocities for granted. I have acquired a moral identity, and a set
of obligations, from this culture. I think I am lucky to be have been raised within this culture. But I am well aware that my barbarous ancestors thought themselves lucky to have been raised within their culture, that my cousins in Germany thought themselves lucky to be able to enroll in the Hitler Youth, and that my descendants in a hypothetically fascist culture would have a similarly warm sense of gratitude for their own upbringing.

Philosophers who fear relativism are corronted to the idea that we need a criterion for telling real justifications and obligations from apparent ones, and real Justification from apparent Justification. Since the reality—appearance distinction seems to me a relic of our authoritarian past, a secularizing attempt to move the Intrinsic Nature of Reality into the role previously played by the Person Who Must Be Obeded. Is not the man about the relativism. Fear of relativism is also the fear that there is nothing in the universe to hang on to except each other. As I see it, we do not treat each with respect because we are rational. Rather, rationality is, in our culture, one of our names for our habit of listening to the other side— treating most of our interlocutors with proper respect. There is no reason why a person who listens to the other side (tells the slave-owner to listen to the slave, or the Nazi to listen to the Jew) Rather, there are social virtues called ‘tolerance,’ ‘decency,’ ‘respect for others,’ ‘toleration,’ and the like. In our culture, we restrict the term ‘rational’ to people who exhibit those virtues. That is why Richard Hare’s designated monster, the ‘rational Nazi,’ is a genuine possibility. It is possible to hear the other side and still do the wrong thing, for it is possible to listen to arguments which we know to be erroneous, yet not to be.

Once one accepts the shift Habermas proposes from ‘subject-centred’ to ‘communicative’ reason, it seems to me, one should be happy with the idea that one’s only obligations are to other human beings and to oneself. Habermas, however, believes that Kant was right in thinking that we cannot altogether do without the notion of unconditionality. He sees unconditional, universal validity not only as a useful, but as an indispensable, notion. I not only cannot see why it is indispensable, I cannot even see that it is useful. It seems what Wörgner calls “a wheel that turns even though nothing else turns with it, and is therefore no part of the mechanism.” The only function it might have is to intimidate us by making us feel that no matter what we do, it is probably not good enough — the function once performed by the doctrine of Original Sin. But once we start thinking of inquiry as a relation between organisms and their environment, rather than as a relation between human beings and something awesome — something like Truth or Reality — we no longer need to be scared.

I see the opposition between Hume and Kant — or, in contemporary moral philosophy, between contemporary Humean moral philosophers like Annette Baier and contemporary Kantians like Christine Korsgaard — as centering around their respective accounts of moral motivation. For writers in the Kantian tradition, the intertwined notions of rationality and universality are indispensable. Baier interprets Hume, “the woman’s moral philosopher,” as treating the very idea of universal rationality as a relic of patriarchal authoritarianism. That seems to me right, and that is why I see pragmatism, and the neo-Darwinian redemption of inquiry it offers, as part of a more general anti-authoritarian movement — the movement which assumes that if we take care of constitutional democracy, academic and press freedom, universal literacy, careers open to talents, and similar democratic institutions, then truth will take care of itself.

From this Humean point of view, moral progress is what Hume called “a progress of sentiments” — an ability to overlook what one had previously thought to be moral obstructions: for example, women speaking in churches, or inter racial marriage, or Jews having the same civil status as Christians, or same-sex marriage. From my pragmatist point of view, intellectual progress is a subdivision of moral progress — it is progress in finding beliefs which are better and better tools for accomplishing our communal projects. One of these projects is to replace resentment with good will and authority with democracy.

What Peirce called “blocking the road of inquiry” occurs whenever a given view — Copernicus’ theory of planetary motion, or Darwin’s theory of the descent of man, or James’ pragmatism, or Hitler’s racism — is resisted by being a moral abomination. Sometimes, as in the case of Hitler’s racism, blocking the road of inquiry is an excellent thing to do. Sometimes, as in the case of Darwin’s theory, it is a bad thing to do. Sometimes, as in the case of James’ pragmatism, we may be genuinely perplexed about whether we are dealing with a moral abomination, a well-meant but misguided suggestion, or a helpful proposal about how to free ourselves from obsolete ways of thinking.

A lot of powerful philosophical considerations can be brought to bear on such perplexity, and this exchange between Habermas and myself has released a number of them. But if the pragmatists are right, philosophical reflection will not adjudicate the issue, for such reflections can do little more than rearrange previously extant intuitions, rather than creating new ones or erasing old ones. But even if in what pragmatists are asking for. Only experiment — trying out our psychological and moral life as it would be lived without the familiar Platonistic/Kantian intuitions — will decide the matter.

In a world which had no more urgent tasks than to stage social experiments in order to adjudicate philosophical disagreements, the decision between Habermas’ quasi-Kantian way of looking at rationality and morality and my quasi-Humean way would be made after seeing the results of experiments in training a large sample of the rising generation to think in exclusively Humean terms. My prediction is that these experimental subjects would be just as decent people as the control group — the ones who were brought up to understand the term “universal validity.”
3

Truth Rehabilitated

DONALD DAVIDSON

There is a long tradition according to which the concept of truth is one of the most
important subjects for philosophical discussion, but in this century the tradition has
come to be seriously questioned by a large number of philosophers, not to mention
historians, literary critics, anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists, and others. I
think this is because of various tempting errors and confusions. Here I examine a few
of the reasons truth has become tarnished, or at least diminished, in the minds of
many, and then go on to say why the concept of truth should be restored to its key
erole in our understanding of the world and of the minds of agents.

Before it could come to seem worthwhile to debunk truth, it was necessary to
represent truth as something grander than it is, or to endow it with powers it does not
have. When there was no clear line between philosophy and science, it was natural for
philosophers to claim to be purveyors of the closest thing to truth in our society.
Concen-
tration on epistemology, especially when epistemology seemed called on to provide
ultimate grounds for justifications of knowledge, encouraged the confused idea that
philosophy was the place to look for the final and most basic truths on which all other
truths, whether of science, morality, or common sense, must rest. Plato’s confusion of
abstract universals with entities of supreme value reinforced the confusion of truth
with the most eminent truths; the confusion is apparent in the view (which Plato
ultimately came to question) that the only perfect exemplar of a universal or form is
the form itself. Thus only circularity (the universal or concept) is perfectly circular,
only the concept of a hand is a perfect hand, only truth itself is completely true.

Here we have a deep confusion, a category mistake, which was apparently doomed
to flourish. Truth isn’t an object, and so it can’t be true; truth is a concept, and is
inherently attributed to things like sentences, universals, beliefs and propositions,
entities which have a propositional content! It is an error to think that if someone seeks
to understand the concept of truth, that person is necessarily trying to discover important
general truths about justice or the foundations of physics. The mistake pervades down
to the idea that a theory of truth must somehow tell us what, in general, is true, or at
least how to discover truths.

No wonder there has been a reaction! Philosophy was promising far more than it, or
any other discipline, could deliver. Nietzsche famously reacted; so, in a different way,
did the American pragmatists. Dewey, for example, quite properly rejected the idea
that philosophers were privy to some special or foundational species of truth without