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Translated by Thomas McCarthy
When this opposition sharpens into a demand for de-differentiation at whatever price, an important distinction is lost. Restricting the growth of monetary-administrative complexity is by no means synonymous with surrendering modern forms of life. In structurally differentiated lifeworlds a potential for reason is marked out that cannot be conceptualized as a heightening of system complexity.

To be sure, these remarks touch upon only the motivational background to this work and not its actual theme. 4 I have written this book for those who have a professional interest in the foundations of social theory.

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Introduction: Approaches to the Problem of Rationality

The rationality of beliefs and actions is a theme usually dealt with in philosophy. One could even say that philosophical thought originates in reflection on the reason embodied in cognition, speech, and action; and reason remains its basic theme. From the beginning philosophy has endeavored to explain the world as a whole, the unity in the multiplicity of appearances, with principles to be discovered in reason—and not in communication with a divinity beyond the world nor, strictly speaking, even in returning to the ground of a cosmos encompassing nature and society. Greek thought did not aim at a theology nor at an ethical cosmology, as the great world religions did, but at an ontology. If there is anything common to philosophical theories, it is the intention of thinking being or the unity of the world by way of explicating reason's experience of itself.

In speaking this way, I am drawing upon the language of modern philosophy. But the philosophical tradition, insofar as it suggests the possibility of a philosophical worldview, has become questionable. Philosophy can no longer refer to the whole of the world, of nature, of history, of society, in the sense of a totalizing knowledge. Theoretical surrogates for worldviews have been devalued, not only by the factual advance of empirical science but even more by the reflective consciousness accompanying it. With this consciousness philosophical thought has
withdrew self-critically behind itself; in the question of what it can accomplish with its reflective competence within the framework of scientific conventions, it has become metaphilosophy. Its theme has thereby changed, and yet it remains the same. In contemporary philosophy, wherever coherent argumentation has developed around constant thematic cores—logic and the theory of science, in the theory of language and meaning, in ethics and action theory, even in aesthetics—interest is directed to the formal conditions of rationality in knowing, in reaching understanding through language, and in acting, both in everyday contexts and at the level of methodically organized experience or systematically organized discourse. The theory of argumentation thereby takes on a special significance; to it falls the task of reconstructing the formal-pragmatic presuppositions and conditions of an explicitly rational behavior.

If this diagnosis points in the right direction, if it is true that philosophy in its postmetaphysical, post-Hegelian currents is converging toward the point of a theory of rationality, how can sociology claim any competence for the rationality problematic? We have to bear in mind that philosophical thought, which has surrendered the relation to totality, also loses its self-sufficiency. To the goal of formally analyzing the conditions of rationality, we can tie neither ontological hopes for substantive theories of nature, history, society, and so forth, nor transcendental-philosophical hopes for an aprioristic reconstruction of the equipment of a nonempirical species subject, of consciousness in general. All attempts at discovering ultimate foundations, in which the intentions of First Philosophy live on, have broken down. In this situation, the way is opening to a new constellation in the relationship of philosophy and the sciences. As can be seen in the case of the history and philosophy of science, formal explication of the conditions of rationality and empirical analysis of the embodiment and historical development of rationality structures mesh in a peculiar way. Theories of modern empirical science, whether along the lines of logical empiricism, critical rationalism, or constructivism, make a normative and at the same time universalistic claim that is no longer covered by fundamental assumptions of an ontological or transcendental-philosophical nature. This claim can be tested only against the evidence of counterexamples, and it can hold up in the end only if reconstructive theory proves itself capable of distilling internal aspects of the history of science and systematically explaining, in conjunction with empirical analyses, the actual, narratively documented history of science in the context of social development.

What is true of so complex a configuration of cognitive rationality as modern science holds also for other forms of objective spirit, that is, other embodiments of rationality, be they cognitive and instrumental or moral-practical, perhaps even aesthetic-practical.

Empirically oriented sciences of this kind must, as regards their basic concepts, be laid out in such a way that they can link up with rational reconstructions of meaning constellations and problem solutions. Cognitive developmental psychology provides an example of that. In the tradition of Piaget, cognitive development in the narrow sense, as well as socio-cognitive and moral development, are conceptualized as internally reconstructible sequences of stages of competence. On the other hand, if the validity claims against which we measure problem solutions, rational-action orientations, learning levels, and the like are reinterpreted in an empiricist fashion and defined away—as they are in behaviorism—processes of embodying rationality structures cannot be interpreted as learning processes in the strict sense, but at best as an increase in adaptive capacities.

Among the social sciences sociology is most likely to link its basic concepts to the rationality problematic. There are historical and substantive reasons for this, as a comparison with other disciplines will show. Political science had to free itself from rational natural law; even modern natural law started from the old-European view that represented society as a politically constituted community integrated through legal norms. The new concepts of bourgeois formal law made it possible to proceed constructively and, from normative points of view, to project the legal-political order as a rational mechanism. An empirically oriented political science had to dissociate itself radically from that view. It concerned itself with politics as a societal subsystem and absolved itself of the task of conceiving society as a whole. In opposition to natural-law normativism, it excluded moral-practical questions of legitimacy from scientific consideration, or it treated them as empirical questions about descriptively ascertainable beliefs in legitimacy. It thereby broke off relations to the rationality problematic.

The situation is somewhat different in political economy. In the eighteenth century it entered into competition with rational natural law and brought out the independence of an action system held together through functions and not primarily through
To be sure, there has been no lack of attempts to make sociology a specialized science for social integration. But it is no accident—rather a symptom—that the great social theorists I shall discuss are fundamentally sociologists. Alone among the disciplines of social science, sociology has retained its relations to problems of society as a whole. Whatever else it has become, it has always remained a theory of society as well. As a result, sociology could not, as other disciplines could, shove aside questions of rationalization, redefine them, or cut them down to small size. As far as I can see, there are two reasons for that.

The first concerns cultural anthropology and sociology equally. The correlation of basic functions with social subsystems conceals the fact that social interactions in the domains important to cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization are not at all specialized in the same way as interactions in the economic and political domains of action. Both sociology and cultural anthropology are confronted with the whole spectrum of manifestations of social action and not with relatively clear-cut types of action that can be stylized to variants of purposive-rational action with regard to problems of maximizing profit or acquiring and using political power. Both disciplines are concerned with everyday practice in lifeworld contexts and must, therefore, take into account all forms of symbolic interaction. It is not so easy for them to push aside the basic problem of action theory and of interpretation. They encounter structures of a lifeworld that underlie the other subsystems, which are functionally specified in a different way. We shall take up below the question of how the paradigmatic conceptualizations “lifeworld” and “system” relate to one another. Here I would like only to stress that the investigation of societal community and culture cannot be as easily detached from the lifeworld paradigm as the investigation of the economic and political subsystems can. That explains the stubborn connection of sociology to the theory of society.

Why it is sociology and not cultural anthropology that has shown a particular willingness to take up the problem of rationality can be understood only if we take into consideration a circumstance mentioned above. Sociology arose as the theory of bourgeois society; to it fell the task of explaining the course of the capitalist modernization of traditional societies and its anomie side effects. This problem, a result of the objective historical situation, formed the reference point from which sociology worked out its foundational problems as well. On a metatheoretical
level it chose basic concepts that were tailored to the growth of rationality in the modern lifeworld. Almost without exception, the classical figures of sociological thought attempted to lay out their action theory in such a way that its basic categories would capture the most important aspects of the transition from "community" to "society." On a methodological level the problem of gaining access to the object domain of symbolic objects through "understanding" was dealt with correspondingly; understanding rational orientations of action became the reference point for understanding all action orientations.

This connection between [a] the metatheoretical question of a framework for action theory conceived with a view to the rationalizable aspects of action, and [b] the methodological question of a theory of interpretive understanding [Sinnverstehen] that clarifies the internal relation between meaning and validity (between explicating the meaning of a symbolic expression and taking a position on its implicit validity claim), was connected with [c] the empirical question—whether and in what sense the modernization of a society can be described from the standpoint of cultural and societal rationalization. This connection emerged with particular clarity in the work of Max Weber. His hierarchy of concepts of action is designed with an eye to the type of purposive-rational action, so that all other actions can be classified as specific deviations from this type. Weber also analyzes the method of Sinnverstehen in such a way that complex cases can be related to the limit case of understanding purposive-rational action; understanding action that is subjectively oriented to success requires at the same time that it be objectively evaluated as to its correctness (according to standards of Richtigkeitsrationalität). Finally, the connection of these conceptual and methodological decisions with Weber's central theoretical question—how Occidental rationalism can be explained—is evident.

This connection could, of course, be contingent; it could indicate merely that Weber was personally preoccupied with these problems and that this—from a theoretical point of view—contingent interest affected his theory construction down to its foundations. One has only to detach modernization processes from the concept of rationalization and to view them in other perspectives, so it seems, in order to free the foundations of action theory from connotations of the rationality of action and to free the methodology of interpretive understanding from a problematic intertwining of questions of meaning with questions of validity. Against that, I would like to defend the thesis that there were compelling reasons for Weber to treat the historically contingent question of Occidental rationalism, as well as the question of the meaning of modernity and the question of the causes and side effects of the capitalist modernization of society, from the perspectives of rational action, rational conduct of life, and rationalized worldviews. I want to defend the thesis that there are systematic reasons for the interconnection of the precisely three rationality themes one finds in his work. To put it a different way, any sociology that claims to be a theory of society has to face the problem of rationality simultaneously on the metatheoretical, methodological, and empirical levels.

I shall begin [1] with a provisional discussion of the concept of rationality, and then [2] place this concept in the evolutionary perspective of the rise of a modern understanding of the world. After these preliminaries, I shall point out the internal connection between the theory of rationality and social theory: on the one hand, at the metatheoretical level [3] by demonstrating the rationality implications of sociological concepts of action current today; on the other hand, at the methodological level [4] by showing that similar implications follow from approaching the object domain by way of interpretive understanding. This argumentation sketch is meant to demonstrate the need for a theory of communicative action that arises when we want to take up once again, and, in a suitable way, the problematic of societal rationalization, which was largely ousted from professional sociological discussion after Weber.
1. "Rationality"—A Preliminary Specification

When we use the expression "rational" we suppose that there is a close relation between rationality and knowledge. Our knowledge has a propositional structure; beliefs can be represented in the form of statements. I shall presuppose this concept of knowledge without further clarification, for rationality has less to do with the possession of knowledge than with how speaking and acting subjects acquire and use knowledge. In linguistic utterances knowledge is expressed explicitly; in goal-directed actions an ability, an implicit knowledge is expressed; this knowledge can in principle also be transformed into a know-what. If we seek the grammatical subjects that go with the predicate expression "rational," two candidates come to the fore: persons who have knowledge, can be more or less rational, as can symbolic expressions—linguistic and nonlinguistic, communicative or noncommunicative actions—that embody knowledge. We can call men and women, children and adults, ministers and bus conductors "rational," but not animals or lilac bushes, mountains, streets, or chairs. We can call apologies, delays, surgical interventions "rational," but not a storm, an accident, a lottery win, or an illness.

What does it mean to say that persons behave "rationally" in a certain situation or that their expressions can count as "rational"? Knowledge can be criticized as unreliable. The close relation between knowledge and rationality suggests that the rationality of an expression depends on the reliability of the knowledge embodied in it. Consider two paradigmatic cases: an assertion with which A in a communicative attitude expresses a belief and a goal-directed intervention in the world with which B pursues a specific end. Both embody fallible knowledge; both are attempts that can go wrong. Both expressions, the speech act and the teleological action, can be criticized. A hearer can contest the truth of the assertion made by A; an observer can dispute the anticipated success of the action taken by B. In both cases the critic refers to claims that the subjects necessarily attach to their expressions insofar as the latter are intended as assertions or as goal-directed actions. This necessity is of a conceptual nature. For A does not make an assertion unless he makes a truth claim for the asserted proposition p and therewith indicates his conviction that his statement can, if necessary, be defended. And B does not perform a goal-directed action, that is, he does not want to accomplish an end by it unless he regards the action planned as promising and therewith indicates his conviction that, in the given circumstances, his choice of means can if necessary be explained. As A claims truth for his statement, B claims prospects of success for his plan of action or effectiveness for the rule of action according to which he carries out this plan. To assert this effectiveness is to claim that the means chosen are suited to attain the set goal in the given circumstances. The expected effectiveness of an action stands in internal relation to the truth of the conditional prognoses implied by the plan or rule of action. As truth is related to the existence of states of affairs in the world, effectiveness is related to interventions in the world with whose help states of affairs can be brought into existence. With his assertion, A makes reference to something that in fact occurs in the objective world; with his purposive activity, B makes reference to something that should occur in the objective world. In doing so both raise claims with their symbolic expressions, claims that can be criticized and argued for, that is, grounded. The rationality of their expressions is assessed in light of the internal relations between the semantic content of these expressions, their conditions of validity, and the reasons (which could be provided, if necessary) for the truth of statements or for the effectiveness of actions.

These reflections point in the direction of basing the rationality of an expression on its being susceptible of criticism and grounding: An expression satisfies the precondition for rationality if and insofar as it embodies fallible knowledge and therewith has a relation to the objective world (that is, a relation to the facts) and is open to objective judgment. A judgment can be objective if it is undertaken on the basis of a transsubjective validity claim that has the same meaning for observers and nonparticipants as it has for the acting subject himself. Truth and efficiency are claims of this kind. Thus assertions and goal-directed actions are the more rational the better the claim (to propositional truth or to efficiency) that is connected with them can be defended against criticism. Correspondingly, we use the expression "rational" as a disposition predicate for persons...
from whom such expressions can be expected, especially in difficult situations.

This proposal to base the rationality of an expression on its criticizability has two obvious weaknesses. On the one hand, the characterization is too abstract, for it does not capture important differentiations. On the other hand, it is too narrow, because we do not use the term "rational" solely in connection with expressions that can be true or false, effective or ineffective. The rationality inherent in communicative practice extends over a broad spectrum. It refers to various forms of argumentation as possibilities of continuing communicative action with reflective means. In what follows I shall take up these points seriatim. Then, because the idea of discursively redeeming validity claims occupies so central a position in the theory of communicative action, I shall insert a lengthy excursus on the theory of argumentation.

A.—To begin with I shall keep to the cognitivist version of rationality defined exclusively with reference to the employment of descriptive knowledge. This concept can be developed in two different directions. If we start from the noncommunicative employment of knowledge in teleological action, we make a prior decision for the concept of cognitive-instrumental rationality that has, through empiricism, deeply marked the self-understanding of the modern era. It carries with it connotations of successful self-maintenance made possible by informed disposition over, and intelligent adaptation to, conditions of a contingent environment. On the other hand, if we start from the communicative employment of propositional knowledge in assertions, we make a prior decision for a wider concept of rationality connected with ancient conceptions of logos. This concept of communicative rationality carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld.

Let the belief $p$, as suited in a given situation to achieve a desired effect. $A$ and $B$ use the same knowledge in different ways. In one case the relation of the utterance to the facts (and its amenability to grounding) make possible an understanding among participants in communication about something that takes place in the world. It is constitutive of the rationality of the utterance that the speaker raises a criticizable validity claim for the proposition $p$, a claim that the hearer can accept or reject for good reason [begriindet]. In the other case the relation of the rule of action to the facts (and its ability to be grounded) make possible a successful intervention in the world. It is constitutive of the action’s rationality that the actor bases it on a plan that implies the truth of $p$, a plan according to which the projected end can be realized under given conditions. An assertion can be called rational only if the speaker satisfies the conditions necessary to achieve the illocutionary goal of reaching an understanding about something in the world with at least one other participant in communication. A goal-directed action can be rational only if the actor satisfies the conditions necessary for realizing his intention to intervene successfully in the world. Both attempts can fail; the consensus sought can fail to come to pass, the desired effect can fail to take place. But even the nature of these failures shows the rationality of the expressions—failures can be explained.

Along both these lines the analysis of rationality can begin with the concepts of propositional knowledge and the objective world; but the cases differ in the way in which the knowledge is used. From one perspective the telos inherent in rationality appears to be instrumental mastery, from the other communicative understanding. Depending on which aspect is the focus of attention, our analysis can lead in different directions. The two positions may be briefly elucidated as follows. The first, which for the sake of simplicity I shall call the "realistic," starts from the ontological presupposition of the world as the sum total of what is the case and clarifies the conditions of rational behavior on this basis. The other, which we can call the "phenomenological," gives a transcendental twist to the question and reflects on the fact that those who behave rationally must themselves presuppose an objective world.

(a) The realist can confine himself to analyzing the conditions that an acting subject must satisfy in order to set and realize ends. On this model rational actions basically have the character of goal-directed, feedback-controlled interventions in
the world of existing states of affairs. Max Black lists a series of conditions that an action must satisfy if it is to be able to count as more or less rational ("reasonable") and to admit of critical review ("dianoetic appraisal").

1. Only actions under actual or potential control by the agent are suitable for dianoetic appraisal.
2. Only actions directed toward some end-in-view can be reasonable or unreasonable.
3. Dianoetic appraisal is relative to the agent and to his choice of end-in-view.
4. Judgments of reasonableness are appropriate only where there is partial knowledge about the availability and efficacy of the means.
5. Dianoetic appraisal can always be supported by reasons.

If one develops the concept of rationality along the lines of goal-directed action, that is, problem-solving action, a derivative use of "rational" also becomes comprehensible. We often speak of the "rationality" of a stimulated response, or the "rationality" of a system's change in state. Such reactions can be interpreted as solutions to problems, without imputing to the interpolated purposiveness of the observed reaction any purposeful activity and without ascribing this activity to a subject capable of making decisions and using propositional knowledge, as his action. Behavioral reactions of an externally or internally stimulated organism, and environmentally induced changes of state in a self-regulated system can indeed be understood as quasi-actions, that is, as if they were expressions of a subject's capacity for action. But this is to speak of rationality only in a figurative sense, for the susceptibility to criticism and grounding that we require of rational expressions means that the subject to whom they are attributed should, under suitable conditions, himself be able to provide reasons or grounds.

(b) The phenomenologist does not rely upon the guiding thread of goal-directed or problem-solving action. He does not, that is, simply begin with the ontological presupposition of an objective world; he makes this a problem by inquiring into the conditions under which the unity of an objective world is constituted for the members of a community. The world gains objectivity only through counting as one and the same world for a community of speaking and acting subjects. The abstract concept of the world is a necessary condition if communicatively acting subjects are to reach understanding among themselves about what takes place in the world or is to be effected in it. Through this communicative practice they assure themselves at the same time of their common life-relations, of an intersubjectively shared lifeworld. This lifeworld is bounded by the totality of interpretations presupposed by the members as background knowledge. To elucidate the concept of rationality the phenomenologist must then examine the conditions for communicatively achieved consensus; he must analyze what Melvin Pollner calls, with reference to Alfred Schutz, "mundane reasoning.

That a community orients itself to the world as essentially constant, as one which is known and knowable in common with others, provides that community with the warrantable grounds for asking questions of a particular sort of which the prototypical representative is: "How come, he sees it and you do not?"

On this model, rational expressions have the character of meaningful actions, intelligible in their context, through which the actor relates to something in the objective world. The conditions of validity of symbolic expressions refer to a background knowledge intersubjectively shared by the communication community. Every disagreement presents a challenge of a peculiar sort to this lifeworld background.

The assumption of a commonly shared world (lifeworld) does not function for mundane reasoners as a descriptive assertion. It is not falsifiable. Rather, it functions as an incorrigible specification of the relations which exist in principle among a community of perceivers' experiences of what is purported to be the same world (objective world).... In very gross terms, the anticipated unanimity of experience (or, at least of accounts of those experiences) presupposes a community of others who are deemed to be observing the same world, who are physically constituted so as to be capable of veridical experience, who are motivated so as to speak "truthfully" of their experience, and who speak according to recognizable, shared schemes of expression. On the occasion of a disjunction, mundane reasoners are prepared to call these and other features into question. For a mundane reasoner, a disjunction is compelling grounds
for believing that one or another of the conditions otherwise thought to obtain in the anticipation of unanimity did not. For example, a mundane solution may be generated by reviewing whether or not the other had a capacity for veridical experience. Thus "hallucination," "paranoia," "bias," "blindness," "deafness," "false consciousness," etc., insofar as they are understood as indicating a faulted or inadequate method of observing the world serve as candidate explanations of disjuncture. The significant feature of these solutions—the feature that renders them intelligible to other mundane reasoners as possible correct solutions—is that they bring into question not the world's intersubjectivity but the adequacy of the methods through which the world is experienced and reported upon.

The concept of cognitive-instrumental rationality that emerges from the realist approach can be fit into this more comprehensive concept of communicative rationality developed from the phenomenological approach. That is to say, there are internal relations between the capacity for decentered perception and manipulation of things and events on the one hand, and the capacity for reaching intersubjective understanding about things and events on the other. For this reason, Piaget chooses the model of social cooperation, in which several subjects coordinate their interventions in the objective world through communicative action. The contrasts stand out only when one tries, as is usual in empiricist research traditions, to separate the cognitive-instrumental rationality based on the monological employment of descriptive knowledge from communicative rationality. This shows up, for example, in concepts like "responsibility" and "autonomy." Only responsible persons can behave rationally. If their rationality is measured by the success of goal-directed interventions, it suffices to require that they be able to choose among alternatives and to control (some) conditions in their environment. But if their rationality is measured by whether processes of reaching understanding are successful, recourse to such capacities does not suffice. In the context of communicative action, only those persons count as responsible who, as members of a communication-community, can orient their actions to intersubjectively recognized validity claims. Different concepts of autonomy can be coordinated with these different concepts of responsibility. A greater degree of cognitive-instrumental rationality produces

a greater independence from limitations imposed by the contingent environment on the self-assertion of subjects acting in a goal-directed manner. A greater degree of communicative rationality expands—within a communication-community—the scope for unconstrained coordination of actions and consensual resolution of conflicts (at least to the extent that the latter are based on cognitive dissonance). This last qualification is necessary so long as we are oriented to constative utterances in developing the concept of communicative rationality. Poli et al. also limits "mundane reasoning" to cases in which there is disagreement about something in the objective world. But the rationality of persons is obviously not exhibited solely by the ability to utter well-grounded factual beliefs and to act efficiently.

B.—Well-grounded assertions and efficient actions are certainly a sign of rationality; we do characterize as rational speaking and acting subjects who, as far as it lies within their power, avoid errors in regard to facts and means-ends relations. But there are obviously other types of expressions for which we can have good reasons, even though they are not tied to truth or success claims. In contexts of communicative action, we call someone rational not only if he is able to put forward an assertion and, when criticized, to provide grounds for it by pointing to appropriate evidence, but also if he is following an established norm and is able, when criticized, to justify his action by explicating the given situation in the light of legitimate expectations. We even call someone rational if he makes known a desire or an intention, expresses a feeling or a mood, shares a secret, confesses a deed, etc., and is then able to reassure critics in regard to the revealed experience by drawing practical consequences from it and behaving consistently thereafter.

Normatively regulated actions and expressive self-presentations have, like assertions or constative speech acts, the character of meaningful expressions, understandable in their context, which are connected with criticizable validity claims. Their reference is to norms and subjective experiences rather than to facts. The agent makes the claim that his behavior is right in relation to a normative context recognized as legitimate, or that the first-person utterance of an experience to which he has privileged access is truthful or sincere. Like constative speech acts, these expressions can also go wrong. The possibility of intersubjective recognition of criticizable validity claims is constitutive for their
rationality too. However, the knowledge embodied in normatively regulated actions or in expressive manifestations does not refer to the existence of states of affairs but to the validity of norms or to the manifestation of subjective experiences. With these expressions the speaker can refer not to something in the objective world but only to something in a common social world or in his own subjective world. For now I shall have to leave the matter with this provisional suggestion that there are communicative actions characterized by other relations to the world and connected with validity claims different from truth and effectiveness.

Expressions that are linked with claims to normative rightness or subjective truthfulness in a way similar to that in which other acts are linked with claims to propositional truth and to efficiency satisfy the central presupposition of rationality: they can be defended against criticism. This holds true even for a type of expression that is not invested with a clear-cut validity claim, namely evaluative expressions, which are not simply expressive—that is, manifesting a merely private feeling or need—nor do they lay claim to be normatively binding—that is, to be in agreement with normative expectations. And yet there can be good reasons for such evaluations. The agent can, with the help of value judgments, explain to a critic his desire for a vacation, his preference for autumn landscapes, his rejection of the military, his jealousy of colleagues. Standards of value or appreciation neither have the generality of norms of action nor are they merely private. We distinguish between a reasonable and an unreasonable employment of those standards with which the members of a culture and language community interpret their needs. Richard Norman makes this clear with the following example.

To want simply a saucer of mud is irrational, because some further reason is needed for wanting it. To want a saucer of mud because one wants to enjoy its rich river-smell is rational. No further reason is needed for wanting to enjoy the rich river-smell, for to characterize what is wanted as "to enjoy the rich river-smell" is itself to give an acceptable reason for wanting it, and therefore this want is rational.

Actors are behaving rationally so long as they use predicates such as "spicy," "attractive," "strange," "terrible," "disgusting," and so forth, in such a way that other members of their life-worlds can recognize in these descriptions their own reactions to similar situations. If, on the other hand, they use evaluative standards in such a peculiar way that they can no longer count on a culturally established understanding, they are behaving idiosyncratically. Among such private evaluations there may be some which have an innovative character. These are distinguished by their authentic expression (for example, by the conspicuous aesthetic form of a work of art). As a rule, however, idiosyncratic expressions follow rigid patterns; their semantic content is not set free by the power of poetic speech or creative construction and thus has a merely privatistic character. The spectrum ranges from harmless whims, such as a special liking for the smell of rotten apples, to clinically noteworthy symptoms, such as a horrified reaction to open spaces. Someone who explains his libidinous reaction to rotten apples by referring to the "infatuating," "unfathomable," "vertiginous" smell, or who explains his panicked reaction to open spaces by their "crippling," "leaden," "sucking" emptiness, will scarcely meet with understanding in the everyday contexts of most cultures. The justificatory force of the cultural values appealed to is not sufficient for these reactions, which are experienced as deviant. These extreme cases only confirm that the partialities and sensibilities of the desires and feelings that can be expressed in value judgments also stand in internal relations to reasons and arguments. Anyone who is so privatistic in his attitudes and evaluations that they cannot be explained and rendered plausible by appeal to standards of evaluation is not behaving rationally.

To sum up, we can say that actions regulated by norms, expressive self-presentations, and also evaluative expressions, supplement constative speech acts in constituting a communicative practice which, against the background of a lifeworld, is oriented to achieving, sustaining, and renewing consensus—and indeed a consensus that rests on the intersubjective recognition of criticizable validity claims. The rationality inherent in this practice is seen in the fact that a communicatively achieved agreement must be based on reasons. And the rationality of those who participate in this communicative practice is determined by whether, if necessary, they could, under suitable circumstances, provide reasons for their expressions. Thus the rationality proper to the communicative practice of everyday life points to the practice of argumentation as a court of appeal that makes it possible to continue communicative action with other
means when disagreements can no longer be repaired with everyday routines and yet are not to be settled by the direct or strategic use of force. For this reason I believe that the concept of communicative rationality, which refers to an unclarified systematic interconnection of universal validity claims, can be adequately explicated only in terms of a theory of argumentation. We use the term argumentation for that type of speech in which participants thematize contested validity claims and attempt to vindicate or criticize them through arguments. An argument contains reasons or grounds that are connected in a systematic way with the validity claim of a problematic expression. The "strength" of an argument is measured in a given context by the soundness of the reasons; that can be seen in, among other things, whether or not an argument is able to convince the participants in a discourse, that is, to motivate them to accept the validity claim in question. Against this background, we can also judge the rationality of a speaking and acting subject by how he behaves as a participant in argumentation, should the situation arise.

Anyone participating in argument shows his rationality or lack of it by the manner in which he handles and responds to the offering of reasons for or against claims. If he is "open to argument," he will either acknowledge the force of those reasons or seek to reply to them, and either way he will deal with them in a "rational" manner. If he is "deaf to argument," by contrast, he may either ignore contrary reasons or reply to them with dogmatic assertions, and either way he fails to deal with the issues "rationally." 13

Corresponding to the openness of rational expressions to being explained, there is, on the side of persons who behave rationally, a willingness to expose themselves to criticism and, if necessary, to participate properly in argumentation. In virtue of their criticizability, rational expressions also admit of improvement; we can correct failed attempts if we can successfully identify our mistakes. The concept of grounding is interwoven with that of learning. Argumentation plays an important role in learning processes as well. Thus we call a person rational who, in the cognitive-instrumental sphere, expresses reasonable opinions and acts efficiently; but this rationality remains accidental if it is not coupled with the ability to learn from mistakes, from the refutation of hypotheses and from the failure of interventions.

The medium in which these negative experiences can be productively assimilated is theoretical discourse, that is, the form of argumentation in which controversial truth claims are thematized. The situation is similar in the moral-practical sphere. We call persons rational who can justify their actions with reference to existing normative contexts. This is particularly true of those who, in cases of normative conflict, act judiciously, that is, neither give in to their affects nor pursue their immediate interests but are concerned to judge the dispute from a moral point of view and to settle it in a consensual manner. The medium in which we can hypothetically test whether a norm of action, be it actually recognized or not, can be impartially justified is practical discourse; this is the form of argumentation in which claims to normative rightness are made thematic.

In philosophical ethics, it is by no means agreed that the validity claims connected with norms of action, upon which commands or "ought" sentences are based, can, analogously to truth claims, be redeemed discursively. In everyday life, however, no one would enter into moral argumentation if he did not start from the strong presupposition that a grounded consensus could in principle be achieved among those involved. In my view, this follows with conceptual necessity from the meaning of normative validity claims. Norms of action appear in their domains of validity with the claim to express, in relation to some matter requiring regulation, an interest common to all those affected and thus to deserve general recognition. For this reason valid norms must be capable in principle of meeting with the rationally motivated approval of everyone affected under conditions that neutralize all motives except that of cooperatively seeking the truth. 14 We rely on this intuitive knowledge whenever we engage in moral argument; the "moral point of view" is rooted in these presuppositions. 15 This need not mean that these lay intuitions could also be reconstructively justified; in regard to these basic questions of ethics I am myself inclined, however, to a cognitivist position, according to which practical questions can in principle be settled by way of argumentation. 16 To be sure, if we are to have any prospect of defending this position successfully, we shall have to avoid rashly assimilating practical discourse, which is characterized by an internal relation to the interpreted needs and wants of those affected in a given instance, to theoretical discourse, with its relation to the interpreted experiences of observers.
There is a reflective medium not only for the cognitive-instrumental and moral-practical domains, but for evaluative and expressive manifestations as well. We call a person rational who interprets the nature of his desires and feelings \([\text{Bedürfniss natur]}\) in the light of culturally established standards of value, but especially if he can adopt a reflective attitude to the very value standards through which desires and feelings are interpreted. Cultural values do not appear with a claim to universality, as do norms of action. At most, values are candidates for interpretations under which a circle of those affected can, if occasion arises, describe and normatively regulate a common interest. The circle of intersubjective recognition that forms around cultural values does not yet in any way imply a claim that they would meet with general assent within a culture, not to mention universal assent. For this reason arguments that serve to justify standards of value do not satisfy the conditions of discourse. In the prototypical case they have the form of aesthetic criticism.

This is a variation of a form of argumentation in which the adequacy of value standards, the vocabulary of our evaluative language generally, is made thematic. To be sure, in the discussions of art, music, and literary criticism, this happens in an indirect way. In this context reasons have the peculiar function of \textit{bringing us to see} a work or performance in such a way that it can be perceived as an authentic expression of an exemplary experience, in general as the embodiment of a claim to authenticity.\textsuperscript{17} A work validated through aesthetic experience can then in turn take the place of an argument and promote the acceptance of precisely those standards according to which it counts as an authentic work. In practical discourse reasons or grounds are meant to show that a norm recommended for acceptance expresses a generalizable interest; in aesthetic criticism grounds or reasons serve to guide perception and to make the authenticity of a work so evident that this aesthetic experience can itself become a rational motive for accepting the corresponding standards of value. This provides a plausible explanation of why we regard aesthetic arguments as less conclusive than the arguments we employ in practical or, even more so, in theoretical discourse.

Something similar holds for the argument of a psychotherapist who specializes in training the analysand to adopt a reflective attitude toward his own expressive manifestations. We also apply the term “rational”—even with a special emphasis—to the behavior of a person who is both willing and able to free himself from illusions, and indeed from illusions that are based not on errors [about facts] but on self-deceptions [about one’s own subjective experiences]. We are dealing here with the expression of one’s own desires and inclinations, feelings and moods, which appear with the claim to truthfulness or sincerity. In many situations an actor has good reason to conceal his experiences from others or to mislead someone with whom he is interacting about his “true” experiences. In such cases he is not raising a claim to truthfulness but at most simulating one while behaving strategically. Expressions of this kind cannot be objectively criticized because of their insincerity; they are to be judged rather according to their intended results as more or less effective. Expressive manifestations can be appraised on the basis of their sincerity only in the context of communication aimed at reaching understanding.

Anyone who systematically deceives himself about himself behaves irrationally. But one who is capable of letting himself be enlightened about his irrationality possesses not only the rationality of a subject who is competent to judge facts and who acts in a purposive-rational way, who is morally judicious and practically reliable, who evaluates with sensitivity and is aesthetically open-minded; he also possesses the power to behave reflectively in relation to his subjectivity and to see through the irrational limitations to which his cognitive, moral-practical, and aesthetic-practical expressions are subject. In such a process of self-reflection, reasons and grounds also play a role. Freud examined the relevant type of argumentation in his model of the therapeutic dialogue between analyst and patient.\textsuperscript{18} In the analytic dialogue the roles are asymmetrically distributed; the analyst and the patient do not behave like proponent and opponent. The presuppositions of discourse can be satisfied only after the therapy has been successful. I shall call the form of argumentation that serves to clarify systematic self-deception \textit{therapeutic critique}.

Finally, on another [but still reflective] level, there are the modes of behavior of an interpreter who sees himself called upon by stubborn difficulties in understanding to make the very means of reaching understanding the object of communication in order to provide relief. We call a person rational if he is ready to come to an understanding and reacts to disturbances by reflecting on linguistic rules. This is a question, on the one hand, of checking the comprehensibility or well-formedness of symbolic expres-
sions, that is, of asking whether symbolic expressions are produced according to rule, in conformity with the corresponding system of generative rules; linguistic inquiry may serve as a model here. On the other hand, it is a question of explicating the meaning of expressions; that is, of asking whether and, if so, how the language of the interpretandum can be clarified—a hermeneutic task for which the practice of translation provides a suitable model. One behaves irrationally if one employs one's own symbolic means of expression in a dogmatic way. On the other hand, *explicative discourse* is a form of argumentation in which the comprehensibility, well-formedness, or rule-correctness of symbolic expressions is no longer naively supposed or contested but is thematized as a controversial claim. 19

We can summarize the above as follows: Rationality is understood to be a disposition of speaking and acting subjects that is expressed in modes of behavior for which there are good reasons or grounds. This means that rational expressions admit of objective evaluation. This is true of all symbolic expressions that are, at least implicitly, connected with validity claims (or with claims that stand in internal relation to a criticizable validity claim). Any explicit examination of controversial validity claims requires an exacting form of communication satisfying the conditions of argumentation. *Argumentation makes possible behavior that counts as rational in a specific sense, namely learning from explicit mistakes. Whereas the openness of rational expressions to criticism and to grounding merely points to the possibility of argumentation, learning processes—through which we acquire theoretical knowledge and moral insight, extend and renew our evaluative language, and overcome self-deceptions and difficulties in comprehension—themselves rely on argumentation (see Figure 2).*

C.—An Excursus on the Theory of Argumentation  The concept of rationality that I have introduced in a rather intuitive way refers to a system of validity claims that, as Figure 2 indicates, has to be elucidated in terms of a theory of argumentation. Notwithstanding a venerable tradition going back to Aristotle, however, this theory is still in its beginnings. *The logic of argumentation does not refer to deductive connections between semantic units (sentences) as does formal logic, but to nondeductive relations between the pragmatic units (speech acts) of which arguments are composed. Thus it also appears under the name of ‘Informal logic.’* 20 The organizers of the first international symposium on questions of informal logic mentioned in retrospect the following reasons and motives behind their efforts:

- Serious doubt about whether deductive logic and the standard inductive logic approaches are sufficient to model all, or even the major, forms of legitimate argument.
- A conviction that there are standards, norms, or advice for argument evaluation that are at once logical—not purely rhetorical or domain-specific—and at the same time not captured by the categories of deductive validity, soundness and inductive strength.
- A desire to provide a complete theory of reasoning that goes beyond formal deductive and inductive logic.
- A belief that theoretical clarification of reasoning and logical criticism in non-formal terms has direct implications for such other branches of philosophy as epistemology, ethics and the philosophy of language.
- An interest in all types of discursive persuasion, coupled with an interest in mapping the lines between the

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- An interest in all types of discursive persuasion, coupled with an interest in mapping the lines between the
different types and the overlapping that occurs among them.\textsuperscript{21}

These convictions are characteristic of a position that Steven Toulmin developed in his pioneering examination of \textit{The Uses of Argument},\textsuperscript{22} and which he took as his point of departure in his investigations—drawing upon the history of science—of \textit{Human Understanding}.\textsuperscript{23}

On the one side, Toulmin criticizes absolutist views that base theoretical knowledge, moral-practical insight, and aesthetic evaluation on deductively conclusive arguments or empirically compelling evidence. To the extent that arguments are conclusive in the sense of logical inference, they do not bring anything new to light; and to the extent that they have any substantive content at all, they rest on insights and needs that can be variously interpreted in terms of changing frameworks or "languages," and that, therefore, do not provide any ultimate foundations. On the other side, Toulmin is just as critical of relativistic views that do not explain the peculiarly constraint-free force of the better argument and cannot account for the universalistic connotations of validity claims such as the truth of propositions or the rightness of norms.

Toulmin argues that neither position is reflexive; that is, neither position can account for its "rationality" within its own framework. The absolutist cannot call upon another First Principle to secure the status of the doctrine of First Principles. On the other hand, the relativist is in the peculiar [and self-contradictory] position of arguing that his doctrine is somehow above the relativity of judgments he asserts exists in all other domains.\textsuperscript{24}

But if the validity of arguments can be neither undermined in an empiricist manner nor grounded in an absolutist manner, then we are faced with precisely those questions to which the \textit{logic of argumentation} is supposed to provide the answers: How can problematic validity claims be supported by good reasons? How can reasons be criticized in turn? What makes some arguments, and thus some reasons, which are related to validity claims in a certain way, stronger or weaker than other arguments?

We can distinguish three aspects of argumentative speech. First, considered as a process, we have to do with a form of communication that is improbable in that it sufficiently approximates ideal conditions. In this regard, I tried to delineate the general pragmatic presuppositions of argumentation as specifications of an ideal speech situation.\textsuperscript{25} This proposal may be unsatisfactory in its details; but I still view as correct my intention to reconstruct the general symmetry conditions that every competent speaker must presuppose are sufficiently satisfied insofar as he intends to enter into argumentation at all. Participants in argumentation have to presuppose in general that the structure of their communication, by virtue of features that can be described in purely formal terms, excludes all force—whether it arises from within the process of reaching understanding itself or influences it from the outside—except the force of the better argument [and thus that it also excludes, on their part, all motives except that of a cooperative search for the truth]. From this perspective argumentation can be conceived as a \textit{reflective continuation}, with different \textit{means of action} oriented to reaching understanding.

Second, as soon as one considers argumentation as a procedure, we have to do with a form of interaction \textit{subject to special rules}. The discursive process of reaching understanding, in the form of a cooperative division of labor between proponents and opponents, is \textit{normatively regulated} in such a way that participants

- thematize a problematic validity claim and,
- relieved of the pressure of action and experience, in a hypothetical attitude,
- test with reasons, and only with reasons, whether the claim defended by the proponents rightfully stands or not.

Finally, argumentation can be viewed from a third standpoint: it has as its aim to \textit{produce cogent arguments} that are convincing in virtue of their intrinsic properties and with which validity claims can be redeemed or rejected. Arguments are the means by which intersubjective recognition of a proponent's hypothetically raised validity claim can be brought about and opinion thereby transformed into knowledge. Arguments possess a general structure, which Toulmin characterizes as follows. An argument is composed of the problematic utterance for which
a certain validity claim is raised (conclusion), and of the reason (ground) through which the claim is to be established. The ground is obtained by means of a rule—a rule of inference, a principle, a law (warrant). This is based on evidence of different kinds (backing). If need be, the validity claim has to be modified or restricted (modifier). This proposal too is in need of improvement, especially as regards the differentiation of various levels of argumentation; but every theory of argumentation faces the task of specifying general properties of cogent arguments, and for this task formal-semantic descriptions of the sentences employed in arguments are indeed necessary but not sufficient.

The three analytical aspects distinguished above can provide the theoretical perspectives from which the familiar disciplines of the Aristotelian canon can be delimited: Rhetoric is concerned with argumentation as a process, dialectic with the pragmatic procedures of argumentation, and logic with its products. As a matter of fact, from each of these perspectives a different structure of argumentation stands out: the structures of an ideal speech situation immunized against repression and inequality in a special way; then the structures of a ritualized competition for the better arguments; finally the structures that determine the construction of individual arguments and their interrelations. At no single one of these analytical levels can the very idea intrinsic to argumentative speech be adequately developed. The fundamental intuition connected with argumentation can best be characterized from the process perspective by the intention of convincing a universal audience and gaining general assent for an utterance; from the procedural perspective by the intention of ending a dispute about hypothetical validity claims with a rationally motivated agreement; and from the product perspective by the intention of grounding or redeeming a validity claim with arguments. Interestingly enough, however, it turns out that in the attempt to analyze the corresponding basic concepts in the theory of argumentation—such as "the assent of a universal audience," or "the attainment of a rationally motivated agreement," or "the discursive redemption of a validity claim"—the separation of the three analytical levels cannot be maintained.

I would like to illustrate this point in connection with a recent attempt to approach the theory of argumentation on only one of these abstract levels, namely that of argumentation as process. Wolfgang Klein's approach has the advantage of giving a consistently empirical-scientific twist to questions concerning rhetoric. Klein chooses the external perspective of an observer who wants to describe and explain processes of argumentation. In doing so he does not proceed objectivistically in the sense of regarding only the observable behavior of participants as acceptable [data]; under strictly behaviorist assumptions, we could not discriminate argumentative behavior from verbal behavior in general. Klein opens himself up to the sense of argumentation; but he wants to investigate it in a strictly descriptivist attitude, without objective evaluation of the arguments employed. He distances himself not only from Toulmin, who starts from the position that the sense of an argumentation cannot be disclosed without at least implicitly evaluating the arguments employed in it; he also distances himself from the tradition of rhetoric, which is interested more in speech that convinces than in its truth content.

Toulmin's schema is in a certain respect much closer to actual argumentation than the formal approaches he criticizes; but it is a schema of correct argumentation. He has not set up an empirical investigation into how people actually do argue. This is true of Perelman/Olbrechts-Tyteca as well, though of all the philosophical approaches they come closest to real argumentation. But the auditoire universel, one of their central concepts, is certainly not a group of actually existing people, for instance the earth's present population; it is some court or other—not easy to pin down in other respects. . . . I am not concerned with what rational, reasonable or correct argumentation is, but with how people, dumb as they are, actually argue. I want to show how Klein, in his attempt to adopt an external perspective in order to separate clearly "de facto" from "valid" argumentation, gets involved in instructive contradictions.

He begins by defining the domain of argumentative speech: "In argumentation there is an attempt to transform something collectively problematic into something collectively valid [geltend] by drawing upon what is already collectively valid." Participants in argumentation want to decide problematic validity claims by adducing reasons; and in the final analysis these reasons draw their power to convince from a collectively shared, unproblematic knowledge. Klein's empiricist truncation of the sense of argumentation can be seen in how he uses the concept of "collect-
On what is collectively valid is conceived only as a social fact, that is, without any internal relation to the rationality of reasons.

It appears to be... arbitrary whether this or that comes to be valid for an individual or a collective; some believe this, others that, and what wins out depends on contingencies, on greater rhetorical skill or on physical force. This leads to consequences that are scarcely satisfying. One would then have to accept the fact that for one individual "love your neighbor as yourself" is valid, while for another it is "slay your neighbor if he gives you trouble." It would also be difficult to see why then one continued to pursue research or strove to gain knowledge at all. Some hold that the earth is a disc, others that it is a sphere, or that it is a turkey; the first collective is the largest, the third the smallest, the second the most aggressive; one cannot accord a greater "right" to any of them [although the second view is undoubtedly correct].

The dilemma consists in the fact that Klein does not want to take relativistic consequences into the bargain, but yet does want to maintain the external perspective of the observer. He is unwilling to distinguish between the social currency [Geltung] and the validity [Gültigkeit] of arguments: 'Concepts of 'true' and 'probable' which abstract from the knowing individuals and the way in which they gain their knowledge may therefore have some use; but they are irrelevant for argumentation. There it is a question of what is valid for the individual.'

Klein looks for a curious way out of this dilemma: "The touchstone for differences in what is valid is not their differences in truth content—for who could decide this?—but the immanently effective logic of argumentation." The term "effectiveness" is systematically ambiguous in this context. If arguments are valid, then insight into the internal conditions of their validity can have a rationally motivating force and a corresponding effect. But arguments can also have an influence on the attitudes of addressees independently of their validity—when they are expressed in external circumstances that guarantee their acceptance. Whereas the "effectiveness" of arguments can be explained in the second case by means of a psychology of argumentation, explanation in the first case calls for a logic of argumentation. Klein postulates, however, a third aspect, namely a logic of argumentation that investigates validity connections as lawlike empirical regularities.

On the other hand, relativistic consequences are unavoidable if what is collectively valid is conceived only as a social fact, that
supposed to depict the laws to which participants in argumentation are subject, in some cases against their inclinations and in opposition to external influences. Such a theory has to analyze what appear to participants as internal connections between valid utterances as external connections between events linked nomologically.

Klein is able to pass off the dilemma that he himself sees only at the cost of a (deliberate?) category mistake: He requires of the logic of argumentation a task that could only be carried out by a nomological theory of observable behavior.

I believe that in the systematic analysis of actual argumentation—as in every empirical analysis—relatively fixed regularities can be found, according to which people argue: precisely the logic of argumentation. And I believe, furthermore, that this concept covers much of what is usually understood by the "rationality of argumentation." 40

Klein wants to cultivate the logic of argumentation as a nomological theory and thus he has to assimilate rules to causal regularities, reasons to causes. 41

Paradoxical consequences of this kind arise from the attempt to sketch the logic of argumentation exclusively from the perspective of the flow of communication processes and to avoid also analyzing consensus-forming processes from the start as the achievement of rationally motivated agreement and as the discursive redemption of validity claims. As a consequence of this restriction to the level of abstraction of rhetoric, the internal perspective of reconstructing validity connections is neglected. There is lacking a concept of rationality that would make it possible to establish internal relations between their standards and ours, between what is valid "for them" and what is valid "for us."

Interestingly, Klein supports the elimination of the truth relation of arguments by pointing out that not all validity claims that can be contested in argumentation can be reduced to truth claims. Many arguments are "not at all [concerned] with statements that one has to decide are ‘true’ or ‘false,’ but with questions like, for example, what is good, what is beautiful, or what one ought to do. It is clear that we are here concerned more than ever with what is valid, with what is valid for certain people at certain times." 42 The concept of propositional truth is in fact too narrow to cover everything for which participants in argumentation claim validity—in the logical sense. For this reason the theory of argumentation must be equipped with a more comprehensive concept of validity that is not restricted to validity in the sense of truth. But it does not at all follow from this that we have to renounce concepts of validity analogous to truth, to expunge every counterfactual moment from the concept of validity and to equate validity with context-dependent acceptability.

For me the advantage of Toulmin’s approach lies precisely in the fact that he allows for a plurality of validity claims while not denying the critical sense of a validity transcending spatio-temporal and social limitations. Nevertheless this approach also suffers from a failure to mediate clearly the logical and empirical levels of abstraction. Toulmin chooses a starting point in ordinary language that does not necessitate his distinguishing between these two levels. He assembles examples of attempts to influence the attitudes of partners in interaction by means of arguments. This can take place in any number of ways—by handing over information, raising a legal claim, raising objections to the adoption of a new strategy [e.g., a business policy] or a new technique [e.g., in the slalom or in steel production], by criticizing a musical performance, defending a scientific hypothesis, supporting a candidate in competition for a job, and so forth. What is common to these cases is the form of argumentation: We try to support a claim with good grounds or reasons; the quality of the reasons and their relevance can be called into question by the other side; we meet objections and are in some cases forced to modify our original position.

Of course, the arguments can be distinguished according to the kind of claim that the proponent wishes to defend. These claims vary with the contexts of action. To begin with, we can characterize the latter by referring to institutions, for instance to law courts, scholarly congresses, meetings of boards of directors, medical consultations, university seminars, parliamentary hearings, discussions among engineers in settling on a design, and so on. 43 The multiplicity of contexts in which arguments can appear can be analyzed in terms of functions and reduced to a few social arenas or "fields." Corresponding to these are different types of claims and just as many different types of argumentation. Thus Toulmin distinguishes the general schema, in which he holds fast to the field-invariant properties of argumentation, from the particular, field-dependent rules of argu-
What gives judicial arguments their force in the context of actual court proceedings? The status and force of those arguments—as judicial arguments—can be fully understood only if we put them back into their practical contexts and recognize what functions and purposes they possess in the actual enterprise of the law. Similarly the arguments advanced in a scientific discussion must be presented in an orderly and relevant manner if the initial claims are to be criticized in a rational manner, open to all concerned. But what finally gives strength and force to those arguments is, once again, something more than their structure and order. We shall understand their status and force fully only by putting them back into their original contexts and recognizing how they contribute to the larger enterprise of science. Just as judicial arguments are sound only to the extent they serve the deeper goals of the legal process, scientific arguments are sound only to the extent that they can serve the deeper goal of improving our scientific understanding. The same is true in other fields. We understand the fundamental force of medical arguments only to the extent that we understand the enterprise of medicine itself. Likewise for business, politics, or any other field. In all these fields of human activity, reasoning and argumentation find a place as central elements within a larger human enterprise. And to mark this feature—the fact that all these activities place reliance on the presentation and critical assessment of “reasons” and “arguments”—we shall refer to them all as rational enterprises.

There is to be sure an ambiguity in this attempt to trace the multiplicity of validity claims and types of argument back to different “rational enterprises” and “fields of argument.” It remains unclear whether these totalities of law and medicine, science and management, art and engineering can be delimited only functionally, for example in sociological terms, or in terms of the logic of argumentation as well. Does Toulmin conceive these “rational enterprises” as institutional expressions of forms of argument that are to be characterized internally, or does he differentiate the fields of argument only according to institutional criteria? Toulmin inclines to the latter alternative, which entails a lesser burden of proof.

If we call upon the distinction introduced above among process, procedure, and product aspects, Toulmin’s logic of argument makes do with the third level of abstraction, at which he pursues the construction and connection of individual arguments. He then tries to grasp this differentiation into various fields of argument from the viewpoint of institutionalization. In doing so he distinguishes at the procedural level among patterns of organization, and at the level of process among functionally specified contexts of action in which argumentative speech is embedded as a problem-solving mechanism. These various fields of argument have to be investigated indirectly; they are accessible only to an empirically generalizing analysis. Toulmin singles out five representative fields of argument, namely law, morality, science, management, and art criticism: “By studying them we shall identify most of the characteristic modes of reasoning to be found in different fields and enterprises, and we shall recognize how they reflect the underlying aims of those enterprises.”

His declaration of intention is, to be sure, not quite so unequivocal as my presentation of it. It is true that Toulmin develops his program in such a way that he always distills the same argumentation schema out of the field-dependent modes of argumentation; to this extent the five fields of argument could be conceived as institutional differentiations of a general conceptual framework for argumentation as such. On this way of viewing the matter, the task of a logic of argumentation would be limited to explicating a framework for possible argumentation. Such different enterprises as law and morality, science, management, and art criticism would owe their rationality to this common core. But in other contexts Toulmin is decidedly opposed to such a universalist view; he doubts that direct access to a fundamental and unchangeable framework of rationality is possible. So he sets a historical-reconstructive investigation of concept and paradigm change over against the unhistorical procedures of a normative theory of science of the Popperian sort. The concept of rationality is said to be accessible only to an historically oriented...
empirical analysis of change in rational enterprises.

On this way of viewing the matter the logic of argumentation would have to deal above all with those substantial concepts that, in the course of history, constitute at any given time the rationality of enterprises like science, technology, law, medicine, and so forth. Toulmin aims at a 'critique of collective reason' that avoids both an a priori delimitation of arguments and abstractly introduced definitions of science or law or art.

When we use such categorial terms as 'science' and 'law,' we do so to refer neither to the timeless pursuit of abstract ideals, defined without reference to our changing grasp of men's actual needs and problems, nor to what the men of each separate milieu themselves happen to give the names of 'science' and 'law.' Rather, we work with certain broad, 'open-textured' and historically developing conceptions of what the scientific and judicial enterprises are there to achieve. These substantive conceptions are arrived at in the light of the empirical record, both about the goals which the men of different milieus have set themselves, in their own cultivation of those rational enterprises, and about the kinds of success they in fact achieved in the pursuit of those goals.

At the same time Toulmin does not want to pay the price of relativism for shunning aprioristic standards of reason. In the change of rational enterprises and their standards of rationality, what participants take to be 'rational' at a given time is not the only thing that counts. The historian who proceeds with a reconstructive intent has to orient himself to a critical standard of his own if he wants 'to compare rationally' the forms of objective spirit. Toulmin identifies this as the 'impartial standpoint of rational judgment,' which he would like, of course, not to presuppose arbitrarily but to obtain by conceptually appropriating the human species' collective enterprise of reason, as Hegel did in the *Phenomenology*.

Unfortunately Toulmin makes no attempt to analyze the quite generally conceived *standpoint of impartiality* and therefore opens himself to the objection that he delivers up the logic of argumentation—which he develops only on the level of the general schema for argumentation and not on the levels of procedure and process—to preexisting notions of rationality. So long as Toulmin does not clarify the general pragmatic presuppositions and procedures of the cooperative search for truth, he is not in a position to specify what it means for a participant in argumentation to adopt an impartial standpoint. This impartiality is to be found not in the construction of the arguments employed; it can be explained only in connection with the conditions for discursively redeeming validity claims. And this basic concept of the theory of argument points in turn to the basic concepts of rationally motivated agreement and the assent of a universal audience.

Although Toulmin recognizes that the validity of a claim... is ultimately established by community-produced consensual decisions, he only implicitly recognizes the critical difference between warranted and unwarranted consensually achieved decisions. Toulmin does not clearly differentiate between these distinct types of consensus.

Toulmin does not push the logic of argument far enough into the domains of dialectic and rhetoric. He doesn't draw the proper lines between accidental *institutional differentiations of argumentation*, on the one hand, and the *forms of argumentation* determined by internal structure, on the other.

This holds first of all for Toulmin's typological demarcation between conflict-oriented and agreement-oriented organization of arguments. Legal proceedings and the working out of compromises can serve as examples of argumentation organized as *disputation*; scientific and moral discussions, as well as art criticism can serve as examples of argumentation set up as a *process of reaching agreement*. In fact, however, the models of conflict and consensus do not stand side by side as forms of organization with equal rights. Negotiating compromises does not at all serve to redeem validity claims in a strictly discursive manner, but rather to harmonize nongeneralizable interests on the basis of balanced positions of power. Arguments in a court of law (like other kinds of judicial discussions, for example, judiciary deliberation, examination of legal tenets, commentaries on the law, and so forth) are distinguished from general practical discourses through being bound to existing law, as well as through the special restrictions of an order of legal proceedings that takes into account the need for an authorized decision and the orientation to success of the contesting parties. At the same time argument in the law court contains essential elements that can be grasped only on the model of moral argument, generally
of discussion concerning the rightness of normative standards. Thus all arguments, be they related to questions of law and morality or to scientific hypotheses or to works of art, require the same basic form of organization, which subordinates the eristic means to the end of developing intersubjective conviction by the force of the better argument.

It is especially evident in his classification of fields of argument that Toulmin does not clearly distinguish the internally motivated differentiation of various forms of argumentation from the institutional differentiation of various rational enterprises. In my view, his mistake lies in not clearly separating conventional claims, which are context-dependent, from universal validity claims. Let us consider a few of his preferred examples:

1. The Oakland Raiders are a certainty for the Super Bowl this year.
2. The epidemic was caused by a bacterial infection carried from ward to ward on food-service equipment.
3. The company's best interim policy is to put this money into short-term municipal bonds.
4. I am entitled to have access to any papers relevant to dismissals in our firm's personnel files.
5. You ought to make more efforts to recruit women executives.
6. The new version of King Kong makes more psychological sense than the original.
7. Asparagus belongs to the order of Liliaceae.

Sentences (1) to (7) represent utterances with which a proponent can raise a claim vis-a-vis an opponent. The kind of claim usually springs from the context. If one sports fan makes a bet with another and utters (1) in the process, it is not at all a question of a validity claim that can be redeemed by argument, but of a claim about winning that will be decided according to conventional rules of betting. However, if (1) is uttered in a debate among sports cognoscenti, it might be a matter of a prognosis that could be supported or contested with reasons. Even in cases in which it is already clear from the sentences employed that they could be uttered only in connection with discursively redeemable validity claims, it is the context that decides what kind of validity claim is involved. Thus interested laypersons or biologists could argue about the botanical classification of asparagus and utter (7) in the process. In this case the speaker is raising a claim to the truth of a proposition. However, if a teacher is explaining Linnaean taxonomy in a biology class and corrects a pupil who has incorrectly classified asparagus, in uttering (7) he raises a claim concerning the correctness of a semantic rule.

It is, further, by no means the case that fields of argument discriminate adequately among the various kinds of validity claims. Although (4) and (5) can be assigned to different fields of argument, namely to law and to morality, in normal circumstances a speaker could only be raising normative validity claims with both of these utterances. In each case he is appealing to a norm of action; in the case of (4) the norm is presumably covered by a firm's organizational regulations and thus has a legal character.

Moreover, the same validity claim, be it propositional truth or normative rightness, can appear in modalized form. We can understand assertions that are formed with the aid of simple predicative sentences, general propositions, or existential sentences, and promises or commands that are formed with the aid of singular or general ought-sentences, as paradigmatic for the basic modes of utterances that can be true or right. It is clear, however, in connection with predictions like (1), explanations like (2), or classificatory descriptions like (7), and with justifications like (4) or admonitions like (5) that the mode of an utterance normally refers to something more specific; it also expresses the spatio-temporal or substantive perspective from which the speaker relates to a validity claim.

Fields of argument such as medicine, business, politics, and the like are essentially related to expressions that admit of truth; but they differ in their relation to practice. A recommendation of strategies [or technologies] as in (3) is directly connected with a claim to the efficacy of the measures recommended; it rests on the truth of corresponding prognoses, explanations, or descriptions. An utterance like (2), on the other hand, presents an explanation from which technical recommendations can readily be derived in practical contexts, for instance in the public health system, with the help of an imperative to check the spread of an epidemic.

These and similar considerations speak against any attempt to take the institutional differentiations into fields of argument as the guiding thread for a logic of argumentation. The external differentiations build rather on internal differentiations between
various forms of argument, which remain closed to a view that shunts everything into functions and goals of rational enterprises. The forms of argument are differentiated according to universal validity claims, which are often recognizable only in connection with the context of an utterance, but which are not first constituted by contexts and domains of action.

If this is correct, a considerable burden of proof is placed upon the theory of argumentation; it has to be in a position to specify a system of validity claims. To be sure, it does not have to provide a derivation for such a system in the sense of a transcendental deduction; a reliable procedure for testing corresponding reconstructive hypotheses suffices. I shall confine myself here to a preliminary observation on this point. A validity claim can be raised by a speaker vis-à-vis a hearer (or hearers). Normally this takes place implicitly. In uttering a sentence the speaker makes a claim which, were he to make it explicitly, might take the form: "It is true that p," or "It is right that a," or "I mean what I say when I here and now utter s" (where p stands for a proposition, a for the description of an action, and s for a first-person sentence). A validity claim is equivalent to the assertion that the conditions for the validity of an utterance are fulfilled. Whether the speaker raises a validity claim implicitly or explicitly, the hearer has only the choice of accepting or rejecting the validity claim or leaving it undecided for the time being. The permissible reactions are taking a "yes" or "no" position or abstaining. Of course, not every "yes" or "no" to a sentence uttered with communicative intent amounts to a position on a criticizable validity claim. If we call normatively unauthorized—that is, arbitrary—demands "imperatives," then a "yes" or "no" to an imperative likewise expresses assent or rejection, but only in the sense of the willingness or refusal to comply with the expression of another's will. These yes/no reactions to power claims are themselves the expression of arbitrary choice [Willkür]. By contrast, yes/no positions on validity claims mean that the hearer agrees or does not agree with a criticizable expression and does so in light of reasons or grounds; such positions are the expression of insight or understanding [Einsicht].

If we now go through our list of sample sentences from the standpoint of what a hearer could in each case say "yes" or "no" to, we find the following validity claims. If (1) is meant in the sense of a prediction, with his "yes" or "no," the hearer is taking a position on the truth of a proposition. The same holds for (2). A "yes"-or "no" to (4) means taking a position on a legal claim, more generally on a claim to the normative rightness of a way of acting. The same holds for (5). Taking a position on (6) means that the hearer regards the application of a value standard as appropriate or inappropriate. Depending on whether (7) is used in the sense of a description or as an explication of a semantic rule, the hearer, in taking a position, refers either to a truth claim or to a claim that an expression is comprehensible or well formed.

The basic modes of these utterances are determined according to the validity claims implicitly raised with them, claims to truth, rightness, appropriateness or comprehensibility (or well-formedness). The semantic analysis of sentence forms leads to the same modes. Descriptive sentences, which serve to ascertain facts in the broadest sense, can be accepted or rejected from the standpoint of the truth of a proposition; normative sentences (or ought-sentences), which serve to regulate actions, from the standpoint of the rightness (or justice) of a way of acting; evaluative sentences (or value judgments), which serve to appraise something, from the standpoint of the appropriateness or adequacy of value standards (or the "good"). and explications, which serve to explain operations like speaking, classifying, calculating, deducing, judging, and so on, from the standpoint of the comprehensibility or well-formedness of symbolic expressions. Starting from the analysis of sentence forms, we can go on to clarify the semantic conditions under which a corresponding sentence is valid. As soon, however, as the analysis advances to the possibilities of backing or "grounding" the validity of statements, the pragmatic implications of the concept of validity come to the fore. What grounding means, can be explained only in connection with the conditions for discursively redeeming validity claims. Because descriptive, normative, evaluative, explicative, and, moreover, expressive sentences are distinguished by their form, semantic analysis makes us aware that the meaning of "grounding" changes in specific ways with changes in the sentence form. "Grounding" descriptive statements means establishing the existence of states of affairs; "grounding" normative statements, establishing the acceptability of actions or norms of action; "grounding" evaluative statements, establishing the preferable values; "grounding" expressive statements, establishing the transparency of self-presentations; and "grounding" explicative statements, establishing that symbolic expressions have been produced correctly. The meaning of the cor-
respondingly differentiated validity claims can be explicated through specifying in each case the logical (in the sense of the logic of argumentation) conditions under which these can be established.

I cannot further pursue here these formal-semantic points of connection for systematizing validity claims, but I would like to note two important limitations: Validity claims are not only contained in communicative utterances; and not all validity claims contained in communicative utterances have a direct connection with corresponding forms of argumentation.

Sentence (6) is an example of an aesthetic evaluation; this evaluative statement refers to the value of a film. The film is thereby regarded as a work that itself appears with a claim, let us say, to be an authentic representation, an instructive embodiment of exemplary experiences. We could imagine that in a discussion concerning the comparatively positive evaluation of the remake—which, in the speaker's opinion, subtly develops the ambivalence in the relations between King Kong and his victim—the standard of value that is at first naively applied might itself be called into question and thus rendered thematic. A similar shift takes place in moral argument when a norm that has been introduced to justify a problematic action is itself placed in doubt. Thus sentence (5) could also be understood in the sense of a general ought-sentence or a norm for whose validity claim a sceptical hearer is demanding a justification. Similarly, a discourse connected with sentence (2) could shift to the underlying theoretical assumptions concerning infectious diseases. When cultural systems of action like science, law, and art are differentiated out, arguments that are institutionally stabilized and professionally organized, carried out by experts, relate to such higher-level validity claims, which are attached not to individual communicative utterances but to cultural objectivations—to works of art, to moral and legal norms, to theories. It is at this level of culturally stored and objectivated knowledge that we also find technologies and strategies in which theoretical or professional knowledge is organized with a view to specific practical contexts such as medicine and public health, military technology, business management, and the like. Despite this difference in level, the analysis of individual expressions uttered with communicative intent remains a heuristically productive starting point for systematizing validity claims, since no validity claim appears at the level of cultural objectivations that would not also be contained in communicative utterances.

On the other hand, it is no accident that among the examples of criticizable utterances that can, so to speak, be taken up in argumentation, we do not find any sentences of the type:

8. I must confess that I am upset by the poor condition my colleague has been in since leaving the hospital.

At first glance, this is rather remarkable, since expressive sentences uttered in the first person are certainly connected with a validity claim. For example, a second colleague could pose the question: “Do you really mean that, or aren't you also somewhat relieved that he's no competition for you at the moment?” Expressive sentences that serve to manifest subjective experiences can be accepted or rejected from the standpoint of the truthfulness or sincerity of the speaker's self-presentation. Of course, the claims to sincerity connected with expressive utterances is not such that it could be directly redeemed through argument as can truth or rightness claims. At most the speaker can show in the consistency of his actions whether he really meant what he said. The sincerity of expressions cannot be grounded but only shown; insincerity can be revealed by the lack of consistency between an utterance and the past or future actions internally connected with it.

A therapist's critique of his patient's self-deceptions can, of course, also be understood as an attempt to influence attitudes by means of arguments, that is, to convince the other. The patient, who does not recognize himself in his desires and feelings, who is trapped in illusions about his experiences, is indeed meant to be brought by argument in the analytic dialogue to the point of seeing through the heretofore unnoticed untruthfulness of his expressive utterances. Nevertheless, there is not the relation here between a problematic validity claim and discourse proper. Argumentation does not connect up in the same way with the validity claim contained in the communicative utterance in this case. In a therapeutic dialogue directed to self-reflection, some important presuppositions for discourse in the strict sense are not fulfilled: the validity claim is not regarded as problematic from the start; the patient does not take up a hypothetical attitude toward what is said; on his side, it is by no means the case that all motives except that of cooperatively seeking the truth are put out of play; the relations between the partners in dialogue are not symmetrical, and so on. Nonetheless, in the psychoanalytic view, the
healing power of analytic dialogue owes something to the convincing force of the arguments employed in it. To begin with, I would like to take account of these special circumstances by always speaking of “critique” instead of “discourse” when arguments are employed in situations in which participants need not presuppose that the conditions for speech free of external and internal constraints are fulfilled.

The situation with discussions of value standards, for which aesthetic criticism provides a model, is somewhat different. Even in disputes about questions of taste, we rely upon the rationally motivating force of the better argument, although a dispute of this kind diverges in a characteristic way from controversies concerning questions of truth and justice. If the description suggested above is accurate, the peculiar role of arguments in this case is to open the eyes of participants, that is, to lead them to an authenticating aesthetic experience. Above all, however, the type of validity claim attached to cultural values does not transcend local boundaries in the same way as truth and rightness claims. Cultural values do not count as universal; they are, as the name indicates, located within the horizon of the lifeworld of a specific group or culture. And values can be made plausible only in the context of a particular form of life. Thus the critique of value standards presupposes a shared pre-understanding among participants in the argument, a pre-understanding that is not at their disposal but constitutes and at the same time circumscribes the domain of the thematized validity claims. Only the truth of propositions and the rightness of moral norms and the comprehensibility or well-formedness of symbolic expressions are, by their very meaning, universal validity claims that can be tested in discourse. Only in theoretical, practical, and explicative discourse do the participants have to start from the (often counterfactual) presupposition that the conditions for an ideal speech situation are satisfied to a sufficient degree of approximation. I shall speak of “discourse” only when the meaning of the problematic validity claim conceptually forces participants to suppose that a rationally motivated agreement could in principle be achieved, whereby the phrase “in principle” expresses the idealizing proviso: if only the argumentation could be conducted openly enough and continued long enough.

2. Some Characteristics of the Mythical and the Modern Ways of Understanding the World

Our excursus into the outer court of the theory of argumentation was meant to supplement our provisional specification of the concept of rationality. We took the use of the expression “rational” as a guideline in elucidating conditions of rationality both for speaking and acting subjects and for their expressions. Naturally, owing to its individualistic and unhistorical stamp, this concept is not directly serviceable from a sociological point of view.

Even when we are judging the rationality of individual persons, it is not sufficient to resort to this or that expression. The question is, rather, whether A or B or a group of individuals behaves rationally in general; whether one may systematically expect that they have good reasons for their expressions and that these expressions are correct or successful in the cognitive dimension, reliable or insightful in the moral-practical dimension, discerning or illuminating in the evaluative dimension, or candid and self-critical in the expressive dimension; that they exhibit understanding in the hermeneutic dimension; or indeed whether they are “reasonable” in all these dimensions. When there appears a systematic effect in these respects, across various domains of interaction and over long periods (perhaps even over the space of a lifetime), we also speak of the rationality of a conduct of life. And in the sociocultural conditions for such a conduct of life there is reflected perhaps the rationality of a lifeworld shared not only by individuals but by collectives as well.

In order to elucidate the difficult concept of a rationalized lifeworld, we shall take up the concept of communicative rationality and examine the structures of the lifeworld that make rational orientations of action possible for individuals and groups. The concept of the lifeworld is of course too complex to explicate satisfactorily in the framework of an introduction. Rather than attempt to do so, I shall take up the cultural interpretive systems or worldviews that reflect the background knowledge of social groups and guarantee an interconnection among the multiplicity of their action orientations. Thus I shall first inquire into the conditions that the structures of action-orienting worldviews
must satisfy if a rational conduct of life is to be possible for those who share such a worldview. This way of proceeding offers two advantages: on the one hand, it forces us to turn from conceptual to empirical analysis and to seek out the rationality structures embodied in worldviews; and, on the other hand, it keeps us from supposing without further ado that the rationality structures specific to the modern understanding of the world are generally valid and forces us instead to consider them in an historical perspective.

In attempting to elucidate the concept of rationality through appeal to the use of the expression "rational," we had to rely on a preunderstanding anchored in modern orientations. Hitherto we have naively presupposed that, in this modern understanding of the world, structures of consciousness are expressed that belong to a rationalized lifeworld and make possible in principle a rational conduct of life. We are implicitly connecting a claim to universality with our Occidental understanding of the world. In determining the significance of this claim, it would be well to draw a comparison with the mythical understanding of the world. In archaic societies myths fulfill the unifying function of worldviews in an exemplary way—they permeate life-practice. At the same time, within the cultural traditions accessible to us, they present the sharpest contrast to the understanding of the world dominant in modern societies. Mythical worldviews are far from making possible rational orientations of action in our sense. With respect to the conditions for a rational conduct of life in this sense, they present an antithesis to the modern understanding of the world. Thus the heretofore unthemated presuppositions of modern thought should become visible in the mirror of mythical thinking.

The earlier discussion of Lévy-Bruhl's theses on the mentality of "nature peoples" showed that we cannot postulate a "prelogical" stage of knowing and acting for the "savage mind." The well-known investigations of Evans-Pritchard concerning the belief in witchcraft among the African Azande confirmed the view that the differences between mythical and modern thought do not lie at the level of logical operations. The degree of rationality of worldviews evidently does not vary with the stage of cognitive development of the individuals who orient their action within them. Our point of departure has to be that adult members of primitive tribal societies can acquire basically the same formal operations as the members of modern societies, even though the higher-level competences appear less frequently and more selectively in them; that is, they are applied in more restricted spheres of life. The rationality of worldviews is not measured in terms of logical and semantic properties but in terms of the formal-pragmatic basic concepts they place at the disposal of individuals for interpreting their world. We could also speak of the "ontologies" built into worldviews, providing that this concept, which stems from the tradition of Greek metaphysics, is not restricted to a special world-relation, that is, to the cognitive relation to the world of existing things. There is no corresponding concept in philosophy that includes relations to the social and the subjective worlds as well as to the objective world. The theory of communicative action is also meant to remedy this lack.

I shall begin with [A] a rough characterization of the mythical understanding of the world. For the sake of simplicity I shall confine myself to the results of Lévi-Strauss' structuralist investigations, above all to those stressed by M. Godelier. (B) Against this background the basic concepts constitutive of the modern understanding of the world, and thus intuitively familiar to us, begin to stand out. In this way we can, from a cultural- anthropological distance, link up again with the concept of rationality introduced above. (C) The discussion sparked by Peter Winch's provocative essay on the conventional character of scientific rationality will provide us with an opportunity to clarify the sense in which the modern understanding of the world can claim universality. (D) Finally, I shall take up Piaget's concept of decentration in order to indicate the evolutionary perspective we can adopt if we want, with Max Weber, to posit a world-historical process of rationalization of worldviews. This process issues in an understanding of the world that opens the way to a rationalization of the lifeworld.

A.—The deeper one penetrates into the network of a mythical interpretation of the world, the more strongly the totalizing power of the "savage mind" stands out. On the one hand, abundant and precise information about the natural and social environments is processed in myths: that is, geographical, astronomical, and meteorological knowledge; knowledge about flora and fauna; about economic and technical matters; about complex kinship relations; about rites, healing practices, waging war, and so on. On the other hand, this information is organized in such a way
that every individual appearance in the world, in its typical aspects, resembles or contrasts with every other appearance. Through these contrast and similarity relations the multiplicity of observations is united in a totality. Myth constructs

a gigantic mirror-effect, where the reciprocal image of man and the world is reflected ad infinitum, perpetually decomposing and recomposing in the prism of nature-culture relations... By analogy the whole world makes sense, everything is significant, everything can be explained within a symbolic order, where all the positive known facts... may take their place with all their rich abundance of detail.

Structuralists explain this synthetic accomplishment through the fact that the "savage mind" fastens in a concretistic way upon the perceptual surface of the world and orders these perceptions by drawing analogies and contrasts. Domains of phenomena are interrelated and classified from the vantage points of homology and heterogeneity, equivalence and inequality, identity and contrariety. As Lévi-Strauss has put it, the world of myths is both round and hollow. Analogical thought weaves all appearances into a single network of correspondence, but its interpretations do not penetrate the surface of what can be grasped perceptually.

The concretism of thought that is tied to perception and the establishment of similarity and contrast relations are two formal aspects under which "savage thought" can be compared with ontogenetic stages of cognitive development. The categories or basic concepts of mythical worldviews, however, originate in domains of experience that have to be analyzed sociologically. On the one hand, the reciprocity structures of kinship systems, the relations of give-and-take between families, sexes, and generations provide an interpretive schema that can be applied in multifarious ways. "The fact that the imaginary societies where mythical ideal characters live, die and are eternally resuscitated are invested with an organization based on relationships of blood and alliance can have its origin neither in the 'pure principles' of thought nor in any models found in nature." On the other hand, the categories of action acquire constitutive significance for mythical worldviews. Actor and the capacity for action, intention and goal-setting, success and failure, active and passive, attack and defense—these are the categories in which a fundamental experience of archaic societies is expressed: the experience of being delivered up unprotected to the contingencies of an unmastered environment.

In the undeveloped state of their productive forces these risks cannot be brought under control. Thus arises the need to check the flood of contingencies—if not in fact at least in imagination—that is, to interpret them away. Through analogy, the invisible causes and forces which give rise to and regulate the non-human world [nature] or the human world [culture] assume the attributes of man, i.e. present themselves spontaneously in consciousness as beings endowed with consciousness, will, authority and power, therefore as beings analogous to men, but different in that they know what man does not know, they do what man cannot do, they control what he cannot control; they are different from man and are superior to him.

If one considers how these categories, which are derived from the model of the kinship system and used to interpret experiences of interacting with an overwhelming nature, work together with the operations of a concretistic and analogical mode of thought, the familiar magical-animistic characteristics of mythical worldviews can be understood somewhat better. What we find most astonishing is the peculiar leveling of the different domains of reality: nature and culture are projected onto the same plane. From this reciprocal assimilation of nature to culture and conversely culture to nature, there results, on the one hand, a nature that is outfitted with anthropomorphic features, drawn into the communicative network of social subjects, and in this sense humanized, and on the other hand, a culture that is to a certain extent naturalized and reified and absorbed into the objective nexus of operations of anonymous powers. From the perspective of enlightened thought, the "savage mind" gives rise to a double illusion, an illusion about the world and an illusion about itself; an illusion about itself because the mind endows ideals with an existence outside of man and independent of him; these ideals are engendered spontaneously and thus the mind alienates itself by its own representations; an illusion about the world because the mind peoples it with imaginary beings similar to man, capable of understanding his needs and responding to them in a favorable or hostile fashion.
Such an interpretation of the world, in which each appearance is in correspondence with every other appearance through the influence of mythical powers, makes possible not only a theory that explains the world narratively and renders it plausible, but also a practice through which the world can be controlled in an imaginary way. The technique of magically influencing the world is a logical inference from the mythical interrelation of perspectives between man and world, between culture and nature.

After this rough sketch of some basic features of mythical thought, I would like to return to the question of why these worldview structures do not allow action orientations that might be called rational by the implicit standards of today.

B.—What irritates us members of a modern lifeworld is that in a mythically interpreted world we cannot, or cannot with sufficient precision, make certain differentiations that are fundamental to our understanding of the world. From Durkheim to Lévi-Strauss, anthropologists have repeatedly pointed out the peculiar confusion between nature and culture. We can understand this phenomenon to begin with as a mixing of two object domains, physical nature and the sociocultural environment. Myths do not permit a clear, basic, conceptual differentiation between things and persons, between objects that can be manipulated and agents—subjects capable of speaking and acting to whom we attribute linguistic utterances. Thus it is only consistent when magical practices do not recognize the distinction between teleological and communicative action, between goal-directed, instrumental intervention in objectively given situations, on the one hand, and the establishment of interpersonal relations, on the other. The ineptitude to which the technical or therapeutic failures of goal-directed action are due falls into the same category as the guilt for moral-normative failings of interaction in violation of existing social orders. Moral failure is conceptually interwoven with physical failure, as is evil with the harmful, and good with the healthy and the advantageous.

On the other hand, the demythologization of worldviews means the desocialization of nature and the denaturalization of society. This process—which is easily accessible on an intuitive level and often treated in descriptive terms, but which is by no means well and thoroughly analyzed—apparently leads to a basic conceptual differentiation between the object domains of nature and culture. This way of looking at the matter does not take into consideration the fact that the categorical distinction between object domains depends, for its part, on a process of differentiation that can better be analyzed in terms of basic attitudes toward worlds. The mythical concept of powers and the magical concept of conjuring systematically impede the separation of an objectivating attitude to a world of existing states of affairs from a conformist or nonconformist attitude to a world of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations. Regarded as object domains, nature and culture belong to the world of facts about which true statements are possible; but as soon as we are to specify explicitly wherein things are distinct from persons, causes from motives, happenings from actions, and so forth, we have to go beyond differentiating object domains to differentiating between a basic attitude toward the objective world of what is the case and a basic attitude toward the social world of what can legitimately be expected, what is commanded or ought to be. We make the correct conceptual separations between causal connections of nature and normative orders of society to the extent that we become conscious of the changes in perspective and attitude that we effect when we pass from observing or manipulating to following or violating legitimate expectations.

To be sure, the confusion of nature and culture by no means signifies only a conceptual blending of the objective and social worlds, but also a—by our lights—deficient differentiation between language and world; that is, between speech as the medium of communication and that about which understanding can be reached in linguistic communication. In the totalizing mode of thought of mythical worldviews, it is apparently difficult to draw with sufficient precision the familiar (to us) semiotic distinctions between the sign-substratum of a linguistic expression, its semantic content, and the referent to which a speaker can refer with its help. The magical relation between names and designated objects, the concretistic relation between the meaning of expressions and the states-of-affairs represented give evidence of systematic confusion between internal connections of meaning and external connections of objects. Internal relations obtain between symbolic expressions, external relations between entities that appear in the world. In this sense the logical relation between ground and consequence is internal, the causal relation between cause and effect is external (symbolic versus physical causation). Mythical interpretation of the world and magical control of the world can intermesh smoothly because internal and external rela-
tions are still conceptually integrated. Evidently there is not yet any precise concept for the nonempirical validity that we ascribe to symbolic expressions. Validity is confused with empirical efficacy. I am not referring here to special validity claims—in mythical thought diverse validity claims, such as propositional truth, normative rightness, and expressive sincerity are not yet differentiated. But even the diffuse concept of validity in general is still not freed from empirical admixtures. Concepts of validity such as morality and truth are amalgamated with empirical ordering concepts, such as causality and health. Thus a linguistically constituted worldview can be identified with the world-order itself to such an extent that it cannot be perceived as an interpretation of the world that is subject to error and open to criticism. In this respect the confusion of nature and culture takes on the significance of a reification of worldview.

Linguistic communication and the cultural tradition that flows into it are only set off as a reality in their own right from the reality of nature and society to the degree that formal world-concepts and nonempirical validity claims are differentiated. In communicative action we today proceed from those formal presuppositions of intersubjectivity that are necessary if we are to be able to refer to something in the one objective world, identical for all observers, or to something in our intersubjectively shared social world. The claims to propositional truth or normative rightness actualize these presuppositions of commonality for particular utterances. Thus the truth of a proposition signifies that the asserted state of affairs exists as something in the objective world; and the rightness of an action in respect to an existing normative context signifies that the interpersonal relation established merits recognition as a legitimate element of the social world. Validity claims are in principle open to criticism because they are based on formal world-concepts. They presuppose a world that is identical for all possible observers, or a world intersubjectively shared by members, and they do so in an abstract form freed of all specific content. Such claims call for the rational response of a partner in communication.

Actors who raise validity claims have to avoid materially prejudicing the relation between language and reality, between the medium of communication and that about which something is being communicated. Under the presupposition of formal world-concepts and universal validity claims, the contents of a linguistic worldview have to be detached from the assumed world-order itself. Only then can we form the concept of a cultural tradition, of a temporalized culture, whereby we become aware that interpretations vary in relation to natural and social reality, that beliefs and values vary in relation to the objective and social worlds. By contrast, mythical worldviews prevent us from categorially uncoupling nature and culture, not only through conceptually mixing the objective and social worlds but also through reifying the linguistic worldview. As a result the concept of the world is dogmatically invested with a specific content that is withdrawn from rational discussion and thus from criticism.

Hitherto we have used the formula "confusing nature and culture" with reference only to external nature or the objective world. But an analogous mixing of domains of reality can be shown as well for the relationship of culture and internal nature or the subjective world. Only to the extent that the formal concept of an external world develops—of an objective world of existing states of affairs and of a social world of norms—can the complementary concept of the internal world or of subjectivity arise, that is, a world to which the individual has privileged access and to which everything is attributed that cannot be incorporated in the external world. Only against the background of an objective world, and measured against criticizable claims to truth and efficacy, can beliefs appear as systematically false, action intentions as systematically hopeless, and thoughts as fantasies, as mere imaginings. Only against the background of a normative reality that has become autonomous, and measured against the criticizable claim to normative rightness, can intentions, wishes, attitudes, feelings appear as illegitimate or merely idiosyncratic, as nongeneralizable and merely subjective. To the degree that mythical worldviews hold sway over cognition and orientations for action, a clear demarcation of a domain of subjectivity is apparently not possible. Intentions and motives are just as little separated from actions and their consequences as feelings are from their normatively fixed, stereotyped expressions. In this connection it has been observed that the members of archaic societies tie their own identities in large measure to the details of the collective knowledge set down in myths and to the formal specifications of ritual prescriptions. They do not have at their disposal a formal concept of the world that could secure the identity of natural and social reality in the face of the changing interpretations of temporalized cultural traditions; nor can the individual rely on a formal concept of the ego that could secure his own
identity in the face of a subjectivity that has become independent and fluid.

Relying on ordinary language, in which we employ the symmetrical concepts of an internal and external world, I am speaking of the subjective world in distinction from the objective and social worlds. To be sure, the expression “world” might easily lead to misunderstandings in this connection. The domain of subjectivity is complementary to the external world, which is defined by its being shared with others. The objective world is presupposed in common as the totality of facts, where “fact” signifies that a statement about the existence of a corresponding state of affairs, p, can count as true. And a social world is presupposed in common as the totality of all interpersonal relations that are recognized by members as legitimate. Over against this, the subjective world counts as the totality of experiences to which, in each instance, only one individual has privileged access. The expression “subjective world” is justified inasmuch as here too we are dealing with an abstract concept which, in the form of common presuppositions, delimits from the objective and social worlds a domain for each member of what is not common. The concept of the subjective world has a status similar to that of its complementary concepts. That can also be seen from the fact that it can be analyzed with reference to an additional basic attitude and an additional validity claim.

The expressive attitude of a subject who reveals a thought, makes known a wish, expresses a feeling, who exposes a bit of his subjectivity before the eyes of others, is distinct in a characteristic way from the objectifying attitude of a manipulating or observing subject toward things and events and from the conformative (or nonconformative) attitude of a participant in interaction toward normative expectations. Moreover, we also connect expressive utterances with a criticizable validity claim, namely the claim to truthfulness or sincerity. Thus subjective worlds, as domains of noncommonality with privileged access, can also be drawn into public communication.

Hitherto we have discussed the “closedness” of mythical worldviews from two points of view: the insufficient differentiation among fundamental attitudes to the objective, social, and subjective worlds; and the lack of reflexivity in worldviews that cannot be identified as worldviews, as cultural traditions. Mythical worldviews are not understood by members as interpretive systems that are attached to cultural traditions, constituted by internal interrelations of meaning, symbolically related to reality, and connected with validity claims—and thus exposed to criticism and open to revision. In this way we can in fact discover through the quite contrasting structures of “the savage mind” important presuppositions of the modern understanding of the world. Of course, this does not yet prove that the supposed rationality expressed in our understanding of the world is more than a reflection of the particular features of a culture stamped by science, that it may rightfully raise a claim to universality.

C.—This question became pressing toward the end of the nineteenth century as reflection on the foundations of the historical Geisteswissenschaften set in. The discussion was carried out basically under two aspects. From a methodological point of view it was concentrated around the question of the objectivity of Verstehen or interpretive understanding. With Gadamer’s investigations in philosophical hermeneutics this aspect of the discussion has drawn to a certain close. At the same time, under the rubric of the problem of historicism, concern was directed above all to the substantive question of the uniqueness or commensurability of civilizations and worldviews. Toward the end of the 1920s, this part of the discussion did not so much come to an end as break down, because the problem could not be given a sufficiently sharp formulation. This may be due in part to the fact that the object domain of the Geisteswissenschaften—above all, intellectually elaborated testimonies from the golden ages of civilizations, passed on in written form—did not—as did mythical traditions, rites, magic, and so forth—force a radical confrontation on the one fundamental question: whether and in what respect the standards of rationality by which the investigator was himself at least intuitively guided might claim universal validity. In cultural anthropology this question played a big role from the start. Since the 1960s it has once again stood at the center of a discussion carried on among social scientists and philosophers, a discussion prompted by two publications of Peter Winch. I shall pursue only one line of argument which is important in the present context. For the sake of simplicity, rather than following the actual course of the discussion I shall construe it as a series of six pairs of arguments for and against a universalistic position.

[a] The first round is still situated at the perimeter of the discussion. Steven Lukes has pointed to a prior decision that could obviate the controversy itself:
ceived as part of a cooperative process of interpretation aiming at situation definitions that are intersubjectively recognized. The concepts of the three worlds serve here as the commonly supposed system of coordinates in which the situation contexts can be ordered in such a way that agreement will be reached about what the participants may treat as a fact, or as a valid norm, or as an aesthetic perception.

To the extent that the worldview remains sociocentric in Piaget's sense, it does not permit differentiation between the world of existing states of affairs, valid norms and expressive subjective experiences. The linguistic worldview is conflated as the world order and cannot be seen as an interpretive system open to criticism. Within such a system of orientation, actions cannot reach that critical zone in which communicatively achieved agreement depends upon autonomous yes/no responses to criticizable validity claims. Against this background it becomes clear which formal properties cultural traditions have to exhibit if rational action orientations are to be possible in a lifeworld interpreted correspondingly, if they are to be able to consolidate into a rational conduct of life.

The lifeworld also stores the interpretive work of preceding generations. It is the conservative counterweight to the risk of disagreement that arises with every actual process of reaching understanding; for communicative actors can achieve an understanding only by way of taking yes/no positions on criticizable validity claims. The relation between these weights changes with the decentration of worldviews. The more the worldview that furnishes the cultural stock of knowledge is decentered, the less the need for understanding is covered in advance by an interpreted lifeworld immune from critique, and the more this need has to be met by the interpretive accomplishments of the participants themselves, that is, by way of risky (because rationally motivated) agreement, the more frequently we can expect rational action orientations. Thus for the time being we can characterize the rationalization of the lifeworld in the dimension "normatively ascribed agreement" versus "communicatively achieved understanding." The more cultural traditions predecide which validity claims, when, where, for what, from whom, and to whom must be accepted, the less the participants themselves have the possibility of making explicit and

examining the potential grounds on which their yes/no positions are based.

If we assess cultural systems of interpretation from this standpoint, we can see why mythical worldviews represent an instructive limit case. To the degree that the lifeworld of a social group is interpreted through a mythical worldview, the burden of interpretation is removed from the individual member, as well as the chance for him to bring about an agreement open to criticism. Thus for the time being the participants themselves, that is, by way of risky (because rationally motivated) agreement, the more frequently we can expect rational action orientations. Thus for the time being we can characterize the rationalization of the lifeworld in the dimension "normatively ascribed agreement" versus "communicatively achieved understanding." The more cultural traditions predecide which validity claims, when, where, for what, from whom, and to whom must be accepted, the less the participants themselves have the possibility of making explicit and

against this background it becomes clear which formal properties cultural traditions have to exhibit if rational action orientations are to be possible in a lifeworld interpreted correspondingly, if they are to be able to consolidate into a rational conduct of life.

a) The cultural tradition must make available formal concepts for the objective, social, and subjective worlds; it must permit differentiated validity claims (propositional truth, normative rightness, subjective truthfulness) and stimulate a corresponding differentiation of basic attitudes (objectivating, norm-conformative, and expressive). Symbolic expressions can then be produced on a formal level at which they are systematically connected with reasons and accessible to objective assessment.

b) The cultural tradition must permit a reflective relation to itself; it must be so far stripped of its dogmatism as to permit in principle that interpretations stored in tradition be placed in question and subjected to critical revision. Then internal interconnections of meaning can by systematically elaborated and alternative interpretations can be methodically examined. Cognitive activities of the second order emerge: learning processes guided by hypotheses and filtered through arguments in the domain of objectivating thought, moral-practical insight, and aesthetic perception.

c) In its cognitive, moral, and evaluative components the cultural tradition must permit a feedback connection with specialized forms of argumentation to such an extent that the corresponding learning processes can be socially institutionalized.
In this way cultural subsystems can arise—for science, law and morality, music, art, and literature—in which traditions take shape that are supported by arguments rendered fluid through permanent criticism but at the same time professionally secured.

d) Finally, the cultural tradition must interpret the lifeworld in such a way that action oriented to success can be freed from the imperatives of an understanding that is to be communicatively renewed over and over again and can be at least partially uncoupled from action oriented to reaching understanding. This makes possible a societal institutionalization of purposive-rational action for generalized goals, for example, the formation of subsystems, controlled through money and power, for rational economics and rational administration. As we shall see below, Max Weber regards the formation of the subsystems mentioned under c) and d) above as a differentiation of spheres of value that represent for him the core of the cultural and societal rationalization in the modern age.

If we employ Piaget's concept of decenteration as a guiding thread in this way, in order to clarify the internal connection between the structure of a worldview, the lifeworld as the context of processes of understanding, and the possibilities of a rational conduct of life, we again encounter the concept of communicative rationality. This concept relates a decentered understanding of the world to the possibility of discursively redeeming criticizable validity claims. Albrecht Wellmer characterizes this concept (in connection with the anthropologically inspired debate about rationality) as follows:

"Discursive rationality" is not a "relational" conception of rationality in the same sense as the "minimal" notions of rationality advanced by Winch, MacIntyre, Lukes and others are. Such minimal conceptions of rationality are simple derivatives of the law of non-contradiction and can be expressed in the form of a postulate of coherence. Now "discursive rationality" does not just signify a specific standard of rationality which would be "parasitic" on the minimal standard of rationality, as are, for example, the specific standards of rationality which are operative in primitive magic or in modern economic systems. "Discursive rationality" rather signifies [a] a procedural conception of rationality, i.e., a specific way of coming to grips with incoherences, contradictions and dissension, and [b] a formal standard of rationality which operates on a "meta-level" vis-à-vis all those "substantive" standards of rationality which are "parasitic" on a minimal standard of rationality in Lukes' sense.48

Wellmer considers such a concept of rationality complex enough to admit Winch's justified misgivings as lines of questioning—both his scepticism in regard to the one-sidedly cognitive-instrumental self-understanding of modern rationality and his motive of learning from other cultures in order to develop an awareness of this one-sidedness of the modern self-understanding.

If one understands the concept of egocentrism as broadly as that of decenteration and assumes that egocentrism is renewed at each stage, learning processes are accompanied by the shadow of systematic error.49 It could very well be the case that even with a decentered understanding of the world there arises a special illusion—namely, the idea that the differentiation of an objective world means totally excluding the social and the subjective worlds from the domains of rationally motivated agreement.

This illusion of reifying thought will be discussed below. A complementary error of modernity is the utopianism which thinks it possible to derive the "ideal of a completely rational form of life" directly from the concepts of a decentered world understanding and of procedural rationality.50 Forms of life do not consist only of worldviews that can be ranked from structural perspectives as more or less decentered, nor only of institutions that fall under the viewpoint of justice. Winch is right to insist that forms of life represent concrete "language games," historical configurations of customary practices, group memberships, cultural patterns of interpretation, forms of socialization, competences, attitudes, and so forth. It would be senseless to want to judge such a conglomeration as a whole, the totality of a form of life, under individual aspects of rationality. If we do not want altogether to relinquish standards by which a form of life might be judged to be more or less failed, deformed, unhappy, or alienated, we can look if need be to the model of sickness and health. We tacitly judge life forms and life histories according to standards of normality that do not permit an approximation to ideal limit values. Perhaps we should talk instead of a balance among non-self-sufficient moments, an equilibrated interplay of the cognitive with the moral and the aesthetic-practical. But the attempt to provide an equivalent for what was once intended by the idea of the good life should not mislead us into deriving this
idea from the formal concept of reason with which modernity's
decentered understanding of the world has left us.

For this reason we can only specify certain formal condi­
tions of a rational life—such as a universalistic moral con­
sciousness, universalistic law, a reflexive collective identi­
ty, and the like. But insofar as we are dealing with the
possibility of a rational life or a rational identity in the sub­
stantial sense, there is no ideal limit value that could be
described in terms of formal structures. There is, rather, only
the success or failure of the endeavor to realize a form of
life in which unconstrained individual identities, together
with unconstrained reciprocity among individuals, become
a palpable reality. 51

In speaking of a "rational life in the substantial sense,"
Wellmer does not, of course, mean to suggest that we resort
to the conceptual framework of substantively rational worldviews.
But if we have to renounce that, there remains only the critique
of deformations inflicted, in two ways, on the life forms of capi­
talistically modernized societies: through devaluation of their tra­
ditional substance and through subjection to the imperatives of
a one-sided rationality limited to the cognitive-instrumental. 52

A critique of this sort can indeed be based on the procedural
concept of communicative rationality if it can be shown that the
decentration of world understanding and the rationalization of
the lifeworld are necessary conditions for an emancipated society.
It is only the confusion of a highly developed infrastructure of
possible forms of life with the concrete historical totality of a suc­
cessful form of life that is utopian.

3. Relations to the World and Aspects of Rationality in
Four Sociological Concepts of Action

The concept of communicative rationality that emerged from
our provisional analysis of the use of the linguistic expression
"rational" and from our review of the anthropological debate
concerning the status of the modern understanding of the world
is in need of a more precise explication. I shall pursue this task
only indirectly, by way of a formal-pragmatic clarification of the
concept of communicative action, and only within the limits of
a systematic look at certain positions in the history of social
theory. We can begin with the claim that the concept of commu­
icative rationality has to be analyzed in connection with achiev­
ing understanding in language. The concept of reaching an under­
standing suggests a rationally motivated agreement among par­
ticipants that is measured against criticizable validity claims. The
validity claims (propositional truth, normative rightness, and sub­
jective truthfulness) characterize different categories of a
knowledge embodied in symbolic expressions. These expressions
can be more closely analyzed in two ways—with respect to how
they can be defended and with respect to how actors relate
through them to something in a world. The concept of commu­
nicative rationality points, on the one side, to different forms of
discursively redeeming validity claims (thus Wellmer speaks also
of discursive rationality); on the other side, it points to relations
to the world that communicative actors take up in raising validi­
ty claims for their expressions. Thus the decentration of our
understanding of the world proved to be the most important
dimension of the development of worldviews. I shall pursue no
further the discussion of the theory of argumentation. However,
if we return to the thesis introduced at the outset—that every
sociology with theoretical pretensions faces the problem of ration­
ality on both the metatheoretical and methodological planes—
we come upon the path of examining formal concepts of the
world.

I would like to support the first part of my thesis by draw­
ing out the "ontological"—in the broader sense—presuppositions
of four action concepts relevant to theory formation in the
When his audience is also convinced in this way about the show he puts on—and this seems to be the typical case—then for the moment at least, only the sociologist or the socially disgruntled will have doubts about the "realness" of what is presented. At the other extreme...the performer may be moved to guide the conviction of his audience only as a means to other ends, having no ultimate concern with the beliefs of his audience; we may call him cynical, reserving the term "sincere" for individuals who believe in the impression fostered by their own performance.32

The manipulative production of false impressions—Goffman investigates techniques of "impression management," from harmless segmentation to long-term information control—is by no means identical with strategic action. It too remains dependent on a public that takes itself to be present at a performance and fails to recognize its strategic character. Even a strategically intended self-presentation has to be capable of being understood as an expression that appears with the claim to subjective truthfulness. As soon as it is judged only according to criteria of success by the audience as well, it no longer falls under the description of dramaturgical action. We then have a case of strategic interaction in which participants have conceptually enriched their objective world in such a way that opponents can appear in it who are capable not only of purposive-rational action but of subjective expressions as well.

C.—With the concept of communicative action there comes into play the additional presupposition of a linguistic medium that reflects the actor-world relations as such. At this level of concept formation the rationality problematic, which until now has arisen only for the social scientist, moves into the perspective of the agent himself. We have to make clear in what sense achieving understanding in language is thereby introduced as a mechanism for coordinating action. Even the strategic model of action can be understood in such a way that participants' actions, directed through egocentric calculations of utility and coordinated through interest positions, are mediated through speech acts. In the cases of normatively regulated and dramaturgical action we even have to suppose a consensus formation among participants that is in principle of a linguistic nature. Nevertheless, in these three models of action language is conceived one-sidedly in different respects.

The teleological model of action takes language as one of several media through which speakers oriented to their own success can influence one another in order to bring opponents to form or to grasp beliefs and intentions that are in the speakers' own interest. This concept of language—developed from the limit case of indirect communication aimed at getting someone to form a belief, an intention, or the like—is, for instance, basic to intentionalist semantics.33 The normative model of action presupposes language as a medium that transmits cultural values and carries a consensus that is merely reproduced with each additional act of understanding. This culturalist concept of language is widespread in cultural anthropology and content-oriented linguistics.34 The dramaturgical model of action presupposes language as a medium of self-presentation; the cognitive significance of the propositional components and the interpersonal significance of the illocutionary components are thereby played down in favor of the expressive functions of speech acts. Language is assimilated to stylistic and aesthetic forms of expression.35 Only the communicative model of action presupposes language as a medium of uncurtailed communication whereby speakers and hearers, out of the context of their preinterpreted lifeworld, refer simultaneously to things in the objective, social, and subjective worlds in order to negotiate common definitions of the situation. This interpretive concept of language lies behind the various efforts to develop a formal pragmatics.36

The one-sidedness of the first three concepts of language can be seen in the fact that the corresponding types of communication singled out by them prove to be limit cases of communicative action: first, the indirect communication of those who have only the realization of their own ends in view; second, the consensual action of those who simply actualize an already existing normative agreement; and third, presentation of self in relation to an audience. In each case only one function of language is thematized: the release of perlocutionary effects, the establishment of interpersonal relations, and the expression of subjective experiences. By contrast, the communicative model of action, which defines the traditions of social science connected with Mead's symbolic interactionism, Wittgenstein's concept of language games, Austin's theory of speech acts, and Gadamer's hermeneutics, takes all the functions of language equally into consideration. As can be seen in the ethnomethodological and hermeneutic approaches, there is a danger here of reducing social
action to the interpretive accomplishments of participants in communication, of assimilating action to speech, interaction to conversation. In the present context I can introduce this concept of communicative action only in a provisional way. I shall restrict myself to remarks concerning: [a] the character of independent actions; and [b] the reflective relation to the world of actors in processes of understanding.

(a) In order to avoid mislocating the concept of communicative action from the start, I would like to characterize the level of complexity of speech acts that simultaneously express a propositional content, the offer of an interpersonal relationship, and the intention of the speaker. In the course of the analysis it will become evident how much this concept owes to investigations in the philosophy of language stemming from Wittgenstein. Precisely for this reason it might be well to point out that the concept of following a rule with which analytic philosophy of language begins does not go far enough. If one grasps linguistic conventions only from the perspective of rule following, and explains them by means of a concept of intentions based on rule consciousness, one loses that aspect of the threefold relation to the world of communicative agents that is important to me.37

I shall use the term "action" only for those symbolic expressions with which the actor takes up a relation to at least one world (but always to the objective world as well)—as is the case in the previously examined models of teleological, normatively regulated, and dramaturgical action. I shall distinguish from actions the bodily movements and operations that are concurrently executed and can acquire the independence of actions only secondarily, through being embedded, for instance, in play or teaching practices. This can easily be shown through the example of bodily movements. Under the aspect of observable events in the world, actions appear as bodily movements of an organism. Controlled by the central nervous system, these movements are the sub-stratum in which actions are carried out. With his actions the agent changes something in the world. We can, of course, distinguish the movements with which a subject intervenes in the world [acts instrumentally] from those with which a subject embodies a meaning [expresses himself communicatively]. In both cases the bodily movements bring about a physical change in the world; in the one case this is of causal relevance, in the other of semantic relevance. Examples of causally relevant bodily movements are straightening the body, spreading the hand, lifting the arm, bending the leg, and so forth. Examples of semantically relevant bodily movements are movements of the larynx, tongue, lips, etc. in the generation of phonetic sounds; nodding the head; shrugging the shoulders; finger movements while playing the piano; hand movements while writing, drawing; and so on.

Arthur Danto has analyzed these movements as "basic actions."38 This has given rise to a broad discussion which is biased by the idea that bodily movements do not represent the sub-stratum through which actions enter into the world but are themselves primitive actions.39 In this view, a complex action is characterized by the fact that it is performed "through" carrying out another action: "through" flicking the light switch I turn on the light; "through" raising my right arm I greet someone; "through" forcefully kicking a ball I score a goal. These are examples of actions performed "through" a basic action. A basic action is characterized in turn by the fact that it cannot be performed by means of an additional act. I regard this conceptual strategy as misleading. In a certain sense, actions are realized through movements of the body, but only in such a way that the actor, in following a technical or social rule, concomitantly executes these movements. Concomitant execution means that the actor intends an action but not the bodily movements with the help of which he realizes it.40 A bodily movement is an element of an action but not an action.

As far as their status as nonindependent actions is concerned, bodily movements are similar to just those operations from which Wittgenstein developed his concepts of rules and rule following. Operations of thought and speech are always only executed concomitantly in other actions. If need be, they can be rendered independent within the framework of a training exercise—for instance, when a Latin teacher, in the course of a lesson, demonstrates the passive transformation with a sample sentence formed in the active voice. This explains the special heuristic utility of the model of social games. Wittgenstein preferred to elucidate operational rules with reference to chess. He did not see that this model has only limited value. We can certainly understand speaking or doing sums as practices constituted by the grammar of a particular language or the rules of arithmetic, in a way similar to that in which chess playing is constituted by the familiar rules of the game. But the two cases are as distinct as is the concomitantly executed arm movement from the gymnastic exercise that is carried out by means of the same movement. In applying
arithmetic or grammatical rules we generate symbolic objects such as sums or sentences; but they do not lead an independent existence. We normally carry out other actions by means of sums and sentences—for example, schoolwork or commands. Operationally generated structures can, taken by themselves, be judged as more or less correct, in conformity with a rule, or well-formed; but they are not, as are actions, open to criticism from the standpoint of truth, efficacy, rightness, or sincerity, for they acquire relations to the world only as the infrastructure of other actions. Operations do not have to do with the world.

This can be seen in the fact that operational rules can serve to identify an operationally generated structure as more or less well formed, that is, to make it comprehensible but not to explain its appearance. They permit an answer to the question of whether certain scrawled-out symbols are sentences, measurements, computations, etc.; and if they are, say, a computation, just which one it is. To show that someone has calculated, and indeed correctly, does not, however, explain why he carried out this computation. If we wish to answer this question, we must have recourse to a rule of action; for example, to the fact that a pupil used this sheet of paper to solve a mathematical problem. With the help of arithmetic rules, we can, it is true, state the reason why he continues the number series 1, 3, 6, 10, 15 . . . with 21, 28, 36, and so forth; but we cannot explain why he writes this series on a piece of paper. We are explicating the meaning of a symbolic structure and not giving a rational explanation for its coming to be. Operational rules do not have explanatory power; following them does not mean, as does following rules of action, that the actor is relating to something in the world and is thereby oriented to validity claims connected with action-motivating reasons.

(b) This should make clear why we cannot analyze communicative utterances in the same way as we do the grammatical sentences with the help of which we carry them out. For the communicative model of action, language is relevant only from the pragmatic viewpoint that speakers, in employing sentences with an orientation to reaching understanding, take up relations to the world, not only directly as in telological, normatively regulated, or dramaturgical action, but in a reflective way. Speakers integrate the three formal world-concepts, which appear in the other models of action either singly or in pairs, into a system and presuppose this system in common as a framework of interpretation within which they can reach an understanding. They no longer relate straightaway to something in the objective, social, or subjective worlds; instead they relativize their utterances against the possibility that their validity will be contested by other actors. Reaching an understanding functions as a mechanism for coordinating actions only through the participants in interaction coming to an agreement concerning the claimed validity of their utterances, that is, through intersubjectively recognizing the validity claims they reciprocally raise. A speaker puts forward a criticizable claim in relating with his utterance to at least one "world"; he thereby uses the fact that this relation between actor and world is in principle open to objective appraisal in order to call upon his opposite number to take a rationally motivated position. The concept of communicative action presupposes language as the medium for a kind of reaching understanding, in the course of which participants, through relating to a world, reciprocally raise validity claims that can be accepted or contested.

With this model of action we are supposing that participants in interaction can now mobilize the rationality potential—which according to our previous analysis resides in the actor's three relations to the world—expressly for the cooperatively pursued goal of reaching understanding. If we leave to one side the well-formedness of the symbolic expressions employed, an actor who is oriented to understanding in this sense must raise at least three validity claims with his utterance, namely:

1. That the statement made is true (or that the existential presuppositions of the propositional content mentioned are in fact satisfied);
2. That the speech act is right with respect to the existing normative context (or that the normative context that it is supposed to satisfy is itself legitimate); and
3. That the manifest intention of the speaker is meant as it is expressed.

Thus the speaker claims truth for statements or existential presuppositions, rightness for legitimately regulated actions and their normative context, and truthfulness or sincerity for the manifestation of subjective experiences. We can easily recognize therein the three relations of actor to world presupposed by the social scientist in the previously analyzed concepts of action; but in the concept of communicative action they are ascribed to the
perspective of the speakers and hearers themselves. It is the actors themselves who seek consensus and measure it against truth, rightness, and sincerity, that is, against the "fit" or "misfit" between the speech act, on the one hand, and the three worlds to which the actor takes up relations with his utterance, on the other. Such relations hold between an utterance and:

1. The objective world (as the totality of all entities about which true statements are possible);  
2. The social world (as the totality of all legitimately regulated interpersonal relations);  
3. The subjective world (as the totality of the experiences of the speaker to which he has privileged access).

Every process of reaching understanding takes place against the background of a culturally ingrained preunderstanding. This background knowledge remains unproblematic as a whole; only that part of the stock of knowledge that participants make use of and thematize at a given time is put to the test. To the extent that definitions of situations are negotiated by participants themselves, this thematic segment of the lifeworld is at their disposal with the negotiation of each new definition of the situation.

A definition of the situation establishes an order. Through it, participants in communication assign the various elements of an action situation to one of the three worlds and thereby incorporate the actual action situation into their preinterpreted lifeworld. A definition of the situation by another party that prima facie diverges from one's own presents a problem of a peculiar sort; for in cooperative processes of interpretation no participant has a monopoly on correct interpretation. For both parties the interpretive task consists in incorporating the other's interpretation of the situation into one's own in such a way that in the revised version "his" external world and "my" external world can—against the background of "our" lifeworld—be relativized in relation to "the" world, and the divergent situation definitions can be brought to coincide sufficiently. Naturally this does not mean that interpretation must lead in every case to a stable and unambiguously differentiated assignment. Stability and absence of ambiguity are rather the exception in the communicative practice of everyday life. A more realistic picture is that drawn by ethnomethodologists—of a diffuse, fragile, continuously revised and only momentarily successful communication in which participants rely on problematic and unclarified presuppositions and feel their way from one occasional commonality to the next.

To avoid misunderstanding I would like to repeat that the communicative model of action does not equate action with communication. Language is a medium of communication that serves understanding, whereas actors, in coming to an understanding with one another so as to coordinate their actions, pursue their particular aims. In this respect the teleological structure is fundamental to all concepts of action. Concepts of social action are distinguished, however, according to how they specify the coordination among the goal-directed actions of different participants: as the interlacing of egocentric calculations of utility (whereby the degree of conflict and cooperation varies with the given interest positions); as a socially integrating agreement about values and norms instilled through cultural tradition and socialization; as a consensual relation between players and their publics; or as reaching understanding in the sense of a cooperative process of interpretation. In all cases the teleological structure of action is presupposed, inasmuch as the capacity for goal-setting and goal-directed action is ascribed to actors, as well as an interest in carrying out their plans of action. But only the strategic model of action rests content with an explication of the features of action oriented directly to success; whereas the other models of action specify conditions under which the actor pursues his goals—conditions of legitimacy, of self-presentation, or of agreement arrived at in communication, under which alter can "link up" his actions with those of ego. In the case of communicative action the interpretive accomplishments on which cooperative processes of interpretation are based represent the mechanism for coordinating action; communicative action is not exhausted by the act of reaching understanding in an interpretive manner. If we take as our unit of analysis a simple speech act carried out by S, to which at least one participant in interaction can take up a "yes" or "no" position, we can clarify the conditions for the communicative coordination of action by stating what it means for a hearer to understand what is said. But communicative action designates a type of interaction that is coordinated through speech acts and does not coincide with them.
for embodying rationality structures in concrete forms of life.

13. This is not altered by modern reflexivity and the development of a critical tradition. What does change is that fewer elements of the cultural tradition are exempted from problematization and that this problematization increasingly takes place in methodical and reflective form within specialized cultural spheres.

14. It is clear from the tables on pp. 214, 215 of Vol. 2 that each of the reproductive processes contributes to the maintenance of all three structural components of the lifeworld; a disturbance in any one of them leads to crisis manifestations in all three dimensions.

15. This strategy is to be distinguished from Parsons's treatment of culture, society, and personality as action systems that form environments for one another. Habermas examines at some length Parsons's various attempts to integrate action theory and systems theory (chap. VIII). While he finds much to learn there, he concludes that Parsons failed to integrate the two approaches: Whereas he consistently maintained that social-action theory was logically prior to social-systems theory, his later work clearly cedes conceptual hegemony to the latter. As a result, he was unable to project a concept of society from the perspective of action theory and play it off against the systems-theoretical concept.

16. There is, however, another type of medium that also serves to reduce the amount of interpretive energy needed in particular action situations and thus to enhance coordination and reduce risks; it does so by "condensing" rather than replacing consensus formation in language. Although they remain tied in the end to lifeworld contexts, these "generalized forms of communication" can be technologically enhanced and organizationally mediated. Thus writing, the printing press, the electronic media make it possible to free communication from narrow spatio-temporal limitations and to employ it in multiple contexts; such mass media play a central role in the formation of various "public spheres," with both authoritarian and emancipatory potential (2:573).

17. "The expression Verrichtlichung refers quite generally to the tendency toward an increase of statutory law. We can distinguish here between the expansion of law, that is the legal regulation of new social situations, which were previously regulated informally, and the intensification of law, as specialists further break down global statutory definitions into individual definitions" (2:524).

Author's Preface

1. See Michael Theunissen, Sein und Schein (Frankfurt, 1978).
2. Parts of this chapter have been published in English translation as "New Social Movements," Telos 49 (1981): 33-37.

Chapter 1. Introduction: Approaches to the Problem of Rationality

2. See Jürgen Habermas, "Does Philosophy Still Have a Purpose?" in Philosophical-Political Profiles [MIT Press, forthcoming].
10. See F. Jonas, Geschichte der Soziologie, vols. I-IV (Reinbek, 1968/69); R. W. Friederichs, A Sociology of Sociology (New York, 1970); and

Section I.1: "Rationality"—A Preliminary Specification
4. Of course, reasons play different pragmatic roles according to whether they are meant to explain a disagreement among conversation partners or a failed intervention. A speaker who makes an assertion has to have a “reserve supply” of good reasons at his disposal in order to be able, if necessary, to convince his conversation partners of the truth of his statement and bring about a rationally motivated agreement. On the other hand, for the success of an instrumental action it is not necessary that the actor be able to ground the rule of action he is following. In the case of teleological actions, reasons serve only to explain the fact that the application of a rule in certain circumstances was or was not successful, could or could not have been successful. In other words, there does exist an internal connection between the validity (efficacy) of a technical or strategic rule of action and the explanations that can be given for its validity; but knowledge of this connection is not a necessary subjective condition for successfully applying the rule.

6. For an overview, see W. Stegmüller, Probleme und Resultate der Wissenschaftstheorie und Analytischen Philosophie (Heidelberg, 1965), 1:335ff.
7. See Niklas Luhmann, Zweckbegriff und Systemrationalität (Tübingen, 1968).
10. Jean Piaget, Introduction à l'épistemologie génétique (Paris, 1950), 3:202. Two types of reciprocal action are combined in social cooperation: the "reciprocal action between the subject and objects," which is mediated through teleological action, and the "reciprocal action between the subject and other subjects," which is mediated through communicative action.
12. Richard Norman, Reasons for Actions (New York, 1971), pp. 63-64. On pp. 65ff. Norman discusses the status of evaluative expressions which, owing to their partly normative and partly descriptive meanings, have been called Janus-words by such authors as Hare and Nowell-Smith.

17. Compare R. Bittner, "Ein Abschnitt sprachanalytischer Ästhetik," in R. Bittner and P. Pfaff, Das ästhetische Urteil (Köln, 1977), p. 271. "What matters is one's own perception of the object, and aesthetic judgments seek to guide it, to provide pointers and open perspectives for it. Stuart Hampshire formulates this as follows: It is a question of bringing someone to perceive the special attributes of the special object. Isenberg gives it a negative formulation: Without the presence or direct recollection of the object discussed, aesthetic judgment is superfluous and meaningless. These two determinations are not contradictory. In the terminology of speech acts, the situation can be described as follows: The illocutionary act normally carried out with utterances like 'The drawing x is particularly balanced' belongs to the species of statements, whereas the perlocutionary act which is as a rule carried out with such utterances is to guide someone to his own perception of the object's aesthetic qualities. I make a statement and thereby guide someone in his aesthetic perception, in just the same way that one can make a statement and thereby make him cognizant of the relevant facts, or that one can ask a question and thereby remind someone of something." Bittner is here picking up a line of argument traced through the works of M. MacDonald, A. Isenberg, and S. Hampshire; see the bibliography he provides on pp. 281ff.


25. J. Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien."

26. Toulmin has developed this analysis in Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik, An Introduction to Reasoning. He summarizes it as follows: "It must be clear just what kind of issues the argument is intended to raise (aesthetic rather than scientific, say, or legal rather than psychi-


32. Klein, "Argumentation," p. 18. For purposes of illustration, Klein refers to a sectarian group that grounds the statement that religion is harmful to the people by pointing out that this assertion can be found in Lenin's writings. In this group, appeal to the authority of Lenin suffices to transform something "collectively problematic" into something "collectively valid." He intentionally uses these concepts in such a way as to leave aside the question of what grounds these people, who may appear sectarian to us, could give, if the situation arose, in order to convince others that the theoretical explanations Lenin offers for relevant phenomena are superior to competing explanations, say to those of Durkheim or Weber.


34. Ibid., p. 40.


38. Ibid., p. 47.

39. Ibid., p. 48.

41. This explains why, for instance, Klein compares (in a highly im-
plausible manner) pathological deviations from rules of argumentation with the overdetermination of physical phenomena: "Of course, in argumentation other lawlike regularities are at work besides logic, and not everything that is said in an argument corresponds to the latter. Just as falling apples do indeed follow the law of gravitation, and one can study this law in connection with falling apples and other bodies moving relative to one another; but the movement of apples is also determined by other laws. I mention this because I would consider a reference to argumentation among the insane no more of an objection to the explication advanced above than throwing an apple would be considered an objection against the law of gravitation" (p. 50).

42. Ibid., p. 47.
43. Toulmin et al., Introduction to Reasoning, p. 15.
44. Ibid., p. 28.
45. Ibid., pp. 279ff.
46. Ibid., p. 200.
47. Toulmin, Human Understanding, p. 498.
49. Because of this, I earlier regarded court proceedings as a form of strategic action (see J. Habermas and N. Luhmann, Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie [Frankfurt, 1971], pp. 200-201; English translation, Columbia University Press, forthcoming.) I have since been persuaded by Robert Alexy that juridical argumentation in all its institutional varieties has to be conceived of as a special case of practical discourse: R. Alexy, Theorie der juristischen Argumentation (Frankfurt, 1978), pp. 263ff.
50. On the connection between the theory of validity claims and the logic of argumentation, see V. L. Wölting, Begründen, Erklären, Argumentieren (Heidelberg, 1979), pp. 34ff.
51. This important distinction is neglected by Ernst Tugendhat, Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die sprachanalytische Philosophie [Frankfurt, 1976], pp. 219ff; English transl., Traditional and Analytical Philosophy: Lectures in the Philosophy of Language [Cambridge, Eng., 1982].
52. I am referring here only to "genuine" value judgments that are based on value standards of a nondescriptive sort. Evaluations that serve to rank something according to descriptively applicable criteria can be formulated as statements susceptible of truth and do not belong to value judgments in the narrower sense. In this vein P. W. Taylor distinguishes between "value grading" and "value ranking": "In order to make clear the difference between value gradings and value rankings, it is helpful to begin by consid-
I; 

trouble rain to meteorological causes alone while savages believe that Gods or ghosts or magic can influence the rainfall is no evidence that our brains function differently from their brains...I did not come to this conclusion myself by observation and inference and have, in fact, little knowledge of the meteorological process that leads to rain. I merely accept what everybody else in my society accepts, namely that the rain is due to natural causes...Likewise a savage who believes that under suitable natural and ritual conditions the rainfall can be influenced by use of appropriate magic is not on account of this belief to be considered of inferior intelligence. He did not build up this belief from his own observations and inferences but adopted it in the same way as he adopted the rest of his cultural heritage, namely by being born into it. He and I are both thinking in patterns of thought provided for us by the societies in which we live. It would be absurd to say that the savage is thinking mystically and that we are thinking scientifically about rainfall. In either case like mental processes are involved and, moreover, the content of thought is similarly derived. But we can say that the social content of our thought about rainfall is scientific, in accord with objective facts, whereas the social content of savage thought about rainfall is unscientific because it is not in accord with reality and may also be mystical where it assumes the existence of supra-sensible forces.


11. B. Malinowski stresses this theme in Argonauts of the Western Pacific [New York, 1922]. Malinowski showed that the fishermen of the Trobriand Islands employ magical practices primarily on occasions when they experience the shortcomings of their knowledge and recognize the limits of their rational methods; see also his Magic, Science and Religion [Glencoe, Ill., 1948].


13. Ibid., pp. 208-209.


23. Martin Hollis provides an accurate characterization of these suppositions of commonality in "The Limits of Rationality," in Wilson, ed., Rationality, pp. 214ff.

24. Winch, "Understanding a Primitive Society," p. 82.

25. Ibid., p. 81.

26. I owe this comparison to a manuscript by Patrick Burke (who is evidently taking his inspiration from Wittgenstein here) made available to me by Richard Rorty: "Truth and Worldviews" (1976). On page 3 it reads: "Worldviews, like portraits, are cases of 'seeing as.' We have a worldview when we succeed in seeing the sum total
of things as something or other. It is not necessary that we give an account of all the items in the world individually, but of the whole as the whole. So in one sense a worldview must embrace everything, but in another sense not.

27. I introduced the criterion of adequacy in this sense to characterize theoretically useful language systems in "Wahrheitstheorien," pp. 245ff.


29. Ibid., p. 92.

30. Ibid., p. 93.


32. Ibid., pp. 154-55.


36. See the concluding paragraph of Section B, pp. 52-53 above.


38. Horton, "African Traditional Thought," p. 178: "Perhaps the most important occasion of taboo reaction in traditional African cultures is the commission of incest. Incest is one of the most flagrant defiances of the established category-system; for he who commits it treats mother, daughter or sister like a wife. Another common occasion for taboo reaction is the birth of twins. Here, the category distinction involved is that of human beings versus animals—multiple births being taken as a characteristic of animals as opposed to men. Yet another very generally tabooed object is the human corpse, which occupies, as it were, a classificatory no-man's land between the living and the inanimate. Taboo reactions are often given to occurrences that are radically strange or new; for these too [almost by definition] fail to fit into the established category system."


42. On this assumption, the belief in witches that spread in early modern Europe would have to be regarded as a regression. On this point see R. Döbert, "The Role of Stage-Models within a Theory of Social Evolution, Illustrated by the European Witchcraze," in R. Harré and U. J. Jensen, eds., Studies in the Concept of Evolution [Brighton, Eng., 1981].

43. For an overview see J. Piaget, The Principles of Genetic Epistemology [New York, 1972]; J. H. Flavell, The Developmental Psychology of
21. J. L. Austin speaks of the “direction of fit” or the “onus of match,” which Anthony Kenny elaborates as follows: “Any sentence whatever can be regarded as—the term in fact obtains—‘direction of fit’ or ‘onus of match’—a description of a state of affairs. . . . Now let us suppose that the possible state of affairs described in the sentence does not, in fact, obtain. Do we fault the sentence or do we fault the facts? If the former, then we shall call the sentence assertoric, if the latter, let us call it for the moment imperative.” *Will, Freedom and Power* (Oxford, 1975), p. 38. If we conceive of intention sentences as imperatives that a speaker addresses to himself, then assertoric and intention sentences represent the two possibilities of agreement between sentence and state of affairs that are open to objective appraisal.
23. Compare Ottfried Höffe, *Strategien der Humanität* (Munich, 1975): “A strategic game is composed of four elements: 1) The players, the sovereign units of decision, who pursue their ends and act according to their own deliberations and guiding principles; 2) The rules, which fix the variables that each player can control: information conditions, resources and other relevant aspects of the environment; the system of rules fixes the type of game, the totality of behavioral possibilities, and in the end the gains or losses of every player; a change in the rules creates a new game; 3) The end result or payoffs, the utility or value correlated with the alternative results of plays (in chess: win, lose, draw; in politics: public prestige, power and money, for instance); 4) The strategies, the encompassing, alternatively possible plans of action. They are constructed with a view both to heeding and exploiting the rules and to taking account of the possible alternatives open to the opponent. Strategies represent a system of instructions that determine in advance, and often only in a rather global way, how, in every possible game situation, one chooses a move from the set of those allowed by the rules of the game. In the game-theoretical interpretation of social reality, certain strategies are often favorable only for a segment of the contest; new strategies then have to be developed for other segments; individual strategies have the significance of substrategies within the framework of an encompassing overall strategy. The rationality criterion of game theory refers not to the choice of individual moves but to the choice of strategies. Stated in the form of a maxim for decision, the basic pattern runs as follows: ‘Choose the strategy which, in the framework of the rules of the game and in view of your opponents, promises to bring the greatest success.’ ” (pp. 77–78).

25. This does not prejudge the question of whether we, as social scientists and philosophers, adopt a cognitive or a sceptical position in regard to moral-practical questions; that is, whether we hold a justification of action norms that is not relative to given ends to be possible. For example, Talcott Parsons shares with Weber a position of value scepticism; but when we use the concept of normatively regulated action we have to describe the actors as if they consider the legitimacy of action norms to be basically open to objective appraisal, no matter in which metaphysical, religious, or theoretical framework. Otherwise they would not take the concept of a world of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations as the basis of their action and could not orient themselves to valid norms but only to social facts. Acting in a norm-conformative attitude requires an intuitive understanding of normative validity; and this concept presupposes some possibility or other of normative grounding. It cannot be a priori excluded that this conceptual necessity is a deception embedded in linguistic meaning conventions and thus calls for enlightenment—for example, by reinterpreting the concept of normative validity in emotivist or decisionistic terms and redescribing it with the help of other concepts like expressions of feeling, appeals, or commands. But the action of agents to whom such categorically ‘purified’ action orientations can be ascribed could no longer be described in concepts of normatively regulated action.

26. E. Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (New York, 1959). On p. xi of the preface he writes: "The perspective employed in this report is that of the theatrical performance; the principles derived are dramaturgical ones. I shall consider the way in which the individual in ordinary work situations presents himself and his activity to others, the ways in which he guides and controls the impression they form of him, and the kinds of things he may and may not do while sustaining his performance before them. In using this model I will attempt not to make light of its obvious inadequacies. The stage presents things that are make-believe; presumably life presents things that are real and sometimes not well rehearsed. More important, perhaps, on the stage one player presents himself in the guise of a character to characters projected by other players; the audience constitutes a third party to the interaction—one that is essential and yet, if the stage performance were real, one that would not be there. In real life, the three parties are compressed into two; the part one individual plays is tailored to the parts played by the others present, and yet these others also constitute the audience."


28. Goffman, Presentation of Self, p. 31.

29. For the sake of simplicity, I am confining myself to intentional experiences (including weakly intentional moods) in order not to have to deal with the complicated limit case of sensations. The complication consists in the fact that here the misleading assimilation of experiential sentences to propositions is particularly tempting. Experiential sentences that express a sensation have almost the same meaning as propositional sentences that refer to a corresponding inner state brought about by stimulation of the senses. [Habermas uses the term intentional experience in the way that Husserl does, but without wanting thereby to subscribe to the phenomenological concept of intentionality. Trans!] On the extended discussion of expressions of pain that has been sparked by Wittgenstein’s remarks on this topic, see H. J. Giege, Zur Logik seelischer Ereignisse (Frankfurt, 1969); P. M. S. Hacker, Illusion and Insight (Oxford, 1972), pp. 251ff.


32. Goffman, Presentation of Self, pp. 17–18.

33. I shall come back to the nominalistic theory of language developed by H. P. Grice in Chapter III.


37. For similar reasons, M. Roche insists on the distinction between linguistic and social conventions: “The school of conceptual analysis has characteristically seen no contrast between intention and convention; in their view the latter includes the former and vice versa.” M. Roche, “Die Philosophische Schule der Begriffsanalyse,” in R. Wiggershaus, ed., Sprachanalyse und Soziologie (Frankfurt, 1975), p. 187. One could say, Roche allows, “that communicative conventions are a very special kind of social convention, that the life of ordinary language and its use in social situations can be described independently of social interactions in social situations. But it would be difficult to ground this assertion, and conceptual analysis has no interest in clarifying it. Normally it assumes, rightly, that the analysis of concepts requires an analysis of ‘language games’ and social ‘forms of life’ [Wittgenstein], or that
the analysis of speech acts requires an analysis of social action [Austin]. But it then mistakenly infers from this that the conventions of communication are paradigms of the social conventions surrounding them and that a use of language stands in the same relation to communication conventions as a social action does to social conventions" (pp. 188–89).


39. The false impression that bodily movements coordinated with actions are themselves basic actions might be sustained perhaps by looking to certain exercises in which we intend nonindependent actions as such. In therapy or sports training, for purposes of anatomical display, in singing lessons, or foreign language lessons, nonindependent actions typically have to be embedded in a practice that demonstrates or exercises nonindependent elements of action. Of it would be artificial to say:

1. S is opening the window by executing a circular motion with his hand.

For it would be artificial to say:

2. S is (intentionally) raising his right arm by raising his right arm.

Of course, an intentionally executed bodily movement can be understood as part of a practice.

2. During the gym lesson, in raising his right arm S is carrying out the teacher's instruction to raise his right arm.

Nonindependent actions typically have to be embedded in a demonstration or training practice if they are to be able to appear as actions. Instructions of this type always appear in connection with a practice that demonstrates or exercises nonindependent elements of action as such. The exercises may belong to the normal education of growing children; but they may also belong to a training practice that prepares one for special actions, for skills.


42. See Chapter III, section C below.