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Peirce, Pragmatism and the Challenge of Postmodernism

I shall start with some disclaimers. I am neither a Peirce scholar nor an authority on postmodernism. My interests here are thematic and most fundamentally to examine what philosophy should be and indeed can reasonably be after the undermining of foundationalism, metaphysics and anything like a First Philosophy. I shall assume here what I have argued in my *After the Demise of the Tradition*, namely, that such an undermining has been achieved.[1] I argued for it there but I also claimed, as others have as well, that it is a key lesson of the development of philosophy in the twentieth century. Moving away from Frege, Russell and Husserl, there has in contemporary philosophy been from philosophers otherwise very different a thorough-going rejection of foundationalism, an espousal of holism along with a rejection of metaphysics and of anything like a First Philosophy. In short, the grand tradition in philosophy, in all its varied forms, has been set aside. Such a turn was initiated by the classical pragmatists (Peirce, James, and Dewey—most consistently and thoroughly Dewey) and was carried on in different ways by neo-pragmatism with a linguistic turn in Quine, Davidson, Rorty and in Putnam in his recent work, in England with Ryle, Wittgenstein and Austin, and on the Continent with Otto Neurath among the positivists, with Heidegger, Lyotard, Foucault, Baudrillard and Derrida, with the Frankfurt School critical theorists, and with Habermas and Wellmar expanding and developing critical theory. And this has also been true of most feminist philosophy.[2] Dewey and Davidson have done this

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more thoroughly than Austin and Lyotard but the tendency is across the board. For good or for ill it pervades the various cutting edges of contemporary philosophy. There is a lot that distances Davidson and Quine from Derrida and Baudrillard but they all have in common a holism rejecting an atomism or a molecularism and they as well share the other above mentioned nay-sayings. I will here assume that some version of holistic anti-foundationalism is right, i.e., the most plausible stance to take in thinking about philosophy. I shall also assume a naturalism broad enough to qualify Quine, Davidson, Putnam, and Rorty as naturalists, their differences over scientism notwithstanding. What I am interested in here is, given a holistic naturalism and the above nay-sayings, what should philosophy on the other end of that look like? For Quine, Davidson and Putnam, at least in programmatic intent, not very much would change. Foundationalist epistemology is out as is First Philosophy but for Quine and Davidson many of the old metaphysical issues remain and Putnam, while rejecting metaphysics, continues, as does Cavell, to genuflect before it. However, with Dewey, with the Frankfurt School critical theorists and their developers, with Rorty, with Heidegger, and with the postmodernists, philosophy gets in different ways radically transformed: indeed, some would say in some instances abandoned. But while they all transform or replace philosophy, they transform it in different ways or replace it with different things. Habermas, for example, and powerfully, transforms/replaces philosophy with a systematic critical theory both empirically oriented and emancipatory and eschewing transcendental arguments. The most paradigmatic postmodernists (e.g., Derrida on some readings) collapse the distinction between philosophy and literature and transform/replace philosophy with a kind of writing much more akin to literature than philosophy has traditionally been. It eschews in such a transformation argument, proof, conceptual analysis, and systematization. It even eschews the stating of a philosophical position. People get joshed out of philosophical claims, not argued out of them. What replaces epistemology and metaphysics is not a perspicuous representation

of our discourse but an ironist, punning form of literary response more like Kierkegaard and much less like Searle.

Peirce, part of the time, and Dewey all of the time in his mature account, taking his basic approach from a part of Peirce, also transformed philosophy. But Peirce transformed it in a very different way than the postmodernists. In his hands it becomes a distinctive form of critical theory. Peirce arguably articulated the underlying approach more clearly and more subtly than Dewey while Dewey applied it more extensively and more consistently. Taking what is in common to both and explicating Peirce's articulation of it, I shall see if it can plausibly resist the postmodernist onslaught on such thinking as well as Rorty's alternative neo-pragmatism without scientific method. (Rorty himself has been thought by some to be a paradigmatic postmodernist.)

I shall proceed as follows: In Section II I shall set out something of what the postmodernist challenge is. I shall then, in Section III, characterize and elucidate what I shall call pragmatist critical theory, working principally from some canonical texts of Peirce's. Finally, in Sections IV and V, I shall consider what of pragmatism can and should remain in the face of the postmodernist challenge. This will be, in a rather unpostmodernist spirit, something of an attempt to sort out what is viable and what is not in postmodernism.

II

"Postmodernism" and "postmodernist" are terms of art. Unlike terms of established ordinary use they do not have a stable and secure meaning. I shall specify what I am talking about in a way that will square with the way these terms—terms originally at home in talk of architecture—are typically used by the social theorists and philosophers who employ them. In speaking of the challenge of postmodernism I shall set out some contentions characteristic of it that contest the beliefs of the Enlightenment, including the Enlightenment beliefs we find in pragmatism. I shall be concerned to specify the beliefs and attitudes, the stances to-

ward the world, that are characteristic of postmodernism and what has been called the postmodern situation of our allegedly postmodern era. It has had its most extensive expression among a rather heterogenous group of French philosophers, namely, Jean François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Jean Baudrillard, all of whom are reacting against structuralism and particularly against Althusserian structuralist Marxism. But it also has been extended to the work of such neo-pragmatists as Stanley Fish and Richard Rorty.[3]

The label "postmodernist" would not be welcome by some of these philosophers and important interpreters of their work have denied for one or another of them that they should be called postmodernists or identified with that stream of thought. Jacques Derrida, for example, is often taken to be a paradigmatic postmodernist, but both Christopher Norris and Rodolphe Gasché argue that this involves a serious misreading of Derrida.[4] Similar things are even more obviously applicable to Michel Foucault.[5] It is clear that like Rorty he rejects Enlightenment ***rationalism*** but it is anything but evident that he rejects the core values of the Enlightenment. Rather he contextualizes, de-ontologizes and brilliantly reveals their sometimes dark sides. Perhaps the closest to a paradigm case of a postmodernist is Lyotard but even this understanding requires us to stick with his *The Postmodern Condition* (1984) and his work around it and to ignore his later (1988) strangely Kantian *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*.[6]

I shall not be concerned here with such interpretive matters. I am not trying here to take the measure of any of these philosophers but to try to characterize the core stance of postmodernism and to see if it takes the steam out of that fallibilistic, nonrationalist form of enlightenment philosophy that is pragmatism, though, it should also be noted in passing that all of these French thinkers on occasion at least sound very postmodern and that it is indeed understandable that people should turn to them when they are trying to plumb postmodernism. But I shall stick to a thematic approach.

One feature of postmodernism is political. In contrast with

pragmatists such as John Dewey, Sidney Hook and Ernest Nagel and critical theorists such as Jürgen Habermas, postmodernists believe that we are now witnessing the final exhaustion of the resources of modernity and are moving into a situation where all progressive hopes of an enlightened political order, whether liberal, social democratic, socialist, or communist, have been dashed. Progress and emancipatory hopes are illusory. Only disillusionment remains. Moreover, this hopelessness stems from our very human condition and not just from political and economic facts about capitalist and state-socialist societies, facts which have skewed, as both Habermas and Dewey believe, modernity in a way such that its emancipatory potential is impeded. *Au contraire*, postmodernists believe that our Samuel Beckettish world is just our human lot and is not the result of capitalist or communist social structures. But whatever we say here, there is no doubt that there is in our world a deep and pervasive disillusionment and disenchantment. It is very difficult now to be upbeat about our world. Utopian hopes are very much at a discount. The idea that there could be an emancipatory theory, a set of practices or politics that would liberate us from our present ugly situation is, it is pervasively believed, at best laughingly false and at worst incoherent. There can be nothing like an emancipated human condition. This culturally speaking pervasive sense of disillusionment perhaps accounts for the not inconsiderable popularity of postmodernism.

Postmodernism is also deeply distrustful of theory. The very idea of theory seems to them an imposture making claims on which it cannot deliver. The most obvious form this takes is in their suspicion of what Lyotard calls grand meta-narratives, large-scale accounts, à la Hegel or Marx or even à la Weber, Gramsci, Durkheim or Habermas, of the past, present and future development of humankind or of a nation or community. This distrust is strongest when these narratives not only descriptively and explanatorily narrate but as well perform functions of social integration and political legitimation.[7] But postmodernist distrust of theory does not stop there. As is particularly evident with Baudrillard,

there is a pervasive suspicion of all theory: great and small.[8] We are moving, postmodernists believe, into an historical epoch where (a) people are no longer able to believe in their history as an epic of progress or emancipation, (b) where the idea that there is even a need for such a justification no longer has a hold, and (c) where, by contrast to earlier contemporary thinkers such as Merleau-Ponty, Sartre or Camus, there is not, postmodernists claim and themselves exemplify, among people, in what they call the postmodern situation, even a nostalgia for such grand theory, such all encompassing meta-narratives, which would enable us, if such a thing could be pulled off, to see how things hang together, to discover what the truth is and what a just society would look like. These things are no longer believed in or even wished for, the claim goes, by people immersed in the postmodern situation.

It is particularly relevant to pragmatists that postmodernists abandon without nostalgia or regret some of the most cherished beliefs of pragmatists. Whether the promises are socialist or social democratic, there is a pervasive tendency for people to no longer find it possible or even desirable to believe in "promises of prosperity, freedom and justice associated with the Enlightenment project of scientific control over nature and a rational organization of society."[9] Such things have not only failed to materialize but our world has become increasingly Orwellian and there is no reason to think such a condition of emancipation will obtain in the future. Such scepticism, many think, should not be scoffed away as a new failure of nerve but should be recognized to be a tough-minded realism about our condition.

The incredulity toward grand meta-narratives, the disbelief in theory (more generally in the efficacy of rational discourse) also leads to a disbelief in truth, the possibility of there being critical standards of a critical rationality or any rational standards at all or any coherent conception of objective validity. This takes its most uncompromising form in the work of Baudrillard. Baudrillard claims that we cannot distinguish truth from falsehood, knowledge from ideology or progress from reaction. He, of all the post-

modernists, most deeply rejects the Enlightenment in any of its forms and with this he goes even further and rejects the very idea of there being genuine truth-claims or anything like enlightened critical thought. What on his view is becoming ever more widely the case—and it is, he also believes, nothing to struggle against or regret—is that the very ideas of truth, right reason or validity are simply being set aside as myths which are both unbelievable and oppressive social realities. Critical theory, the claim goes, is as bad as the old metaphysics of foundational philosophy for the very idea of critique is incoherent. There is no way validly to distinguish between reason and rhetoric. It is an illusion, claims Baudrillard, to believe that we can fix belief, criticize existing beliefs or past beliefs, from some superior vantage point of truth, reason or scientific method. Both Marxism and pragmatism, he contends, fall into this error as fully as do the philosophies of the grand metaphysical tradition. Truth is entirely a product of consensus-values and science is simply an honorific label we attach to certain currently prestigious modes of explanation.

The recognition that even truth is a fictive, rhetorical or an imaginary construct, another idol of our tribe, and that theory is a discredited enterprise, makes it impossible, postmodernists have it, for us to engage in rational argument or *Ideologiekritik*. We can, if we like, be playful, ironic, even abusive, but, even if we are rather more pedantic and sober, all we can be doing is telling just-so stories to ourselves and to others. What we take to be reasoned argument is just chatter according to certain perfectly contingent conventions. Moreover, this is not just old fashioned scepticism or any kind of scepticism in new dress, for if there is nothing to be believed there is nothing to be sceptical about either. There is no point in making a big dramatic scene about something that is inescapable.

It is not only that to believe in truth, validity, rationality, knowledge is to believe in myths, they are, as is the Enlightenment world picture itself, repressive myths as well. Here Baudrillard makes common cause with Lyotard and Foucault. Lyotard,

like Paul Feyerabend and Nietzsche before him, claims that these mythical notions of truth, objectivity, knowledge and rational consensus, have a powerful coercive and oppressive side. They enforce a worldview, enforce a unified conception and undermine the plurality of thought. Rather than let many flowers bloom, they coerce us into believing and acting in certain ways: ways that are said to be normal, reasonable and sensible. The world of Orwell's *1984* is not far from our own. Conceptions of truth, objectivity and knowledge are in effect coercive powers. Knowledge and power are inextricably fused. These old normative notions, that is, are in effect authoritarian. Moreover, any conception of a God's eye view of reality, a perspectiveless, determinate, interest-free view of reality, is both incoherent and in its mystified effects authoritarian. All thought is situated; there is and can be no coherent conception of a transcendent reason that can escape this situatedness with its cultural and historical contingencies.

Postmodernists in direct opposition to classical pragmatists have also, and understandably, given the above, looked askew at the growth of the authority of science in modern cultures. It has become the norm in accordance with which beliefs in our society are taken to be justified. It is by reference to science that we are to fix belief in all domains. Where this cannot be done, modernist thought has it, we get mere emoting in one disguise or other. Postmodernists take this pragmatist stance to be scientistic and imperialistic in the sense that the authority of science is being extended into domains where it has no proper authority. With its stress on the pervasive authority of science, it is in effect a colonization of the life-world. More and more science—or what is claimed to be science—determines what it is held reasonable to believe in politics, the media, popular advice manuals, in conceptions of how we are to live our lives and into what is taken to be normal and acceptable and the like. This, as Foucault graphically and powerfully contended, is a power-trip in the name of the claimed superior knowledge and authority of science.[10] What science cannot tell us, the scientistic claim goes, humankind cannot know.

This scientistic, positivistic and pragmatist belief, postmodernists have it, has as a background assumption an incoherent philosophical conception and as well a similarly incoherent conception of the very philosophical enterprise itself. It assumes that a philosopher—and indeed anyone engaging in this activity is perforce a philosopher—can construct theories of knowledge or theories of meaning which, standing free of any practices, any historically and culturally contingent ways of conceiving and doing things, will yield a litmus-paper test for what it does and does not make sense to say, what in any domain is genuine knowledge and what is not, what is literal and what is merely figurative, what is scientific and thus respectable and what is merely superstition and the like. But no such Archimedean point is available, no such litmus-paper test can nonarbitrarily and non-question beggingly be constructed. Such a belief in the attainability of such an Archimedean point, or indeed of any Archimedean point at all, is incoherent. Such a belief in at least the possibility of an Archimedean point is pervasive in the philosophical tradition and it is part of the self-confidence of modernity. But in reality the very idea of an Archimedean point, an absolute historically non-contingent standard of critical appraisal, is incoherent. Epistemologies and theories of meaning are *ersatz* activities that need to be set aside along with general claims to be able to make ideology-critique or to construct foundational theories of morality or politics including the now fashionable theories of justice (e.g. Rawls, Dworkin, Nozick, Gauthier). Such accounts try to show what we would be committed to if we were through and through rational, had a full grasp of the facts and would carefully take these matters to heart. But no such transcending of history and a particular culture is possible. Modern ideals, postmodernists claim, of science, morality (including justice and conceptions of rights), of art, of cultural criticism are *merely* modern "ideals carrying with them specific political agendas and ultimately unable to legitimize themselves as universals."[11] Neither science nor philosophy nor anything else can be the founding discourse for all discourse. Such an idea is

devoid of coherence and the very idea of social or cultural criticism is as well. The very vocation of an intellectual cannot be what modernity has taken it to be.

The idea of writing an essay on "How to Make our Ideas Clear" would elicit strong Nietzschean laughter from thoroughgoing postmodernists. The very idea that by careful thought our perplexities can be cleared up and that we could come to see the world rightly is now seen to be a childish myth on a par with believing in God or believing à la Marx and Habermas in some general human emancipation in the course of human development. Philosophy from Socrates to Dewey and Habermas has thought, and indeed sometimes even just assumed, that something like this can be achieved but to believe that is by now pure naivete. The idea that theory carefully and rigorously practiced could help us even address, let alone redress, the frustrations and dissatisfactions of modern life is a child-like substitute for religious faith. Postmodernists take it as by now ridiculous, as it was not for Descartes and Hobbes or even for Kant, to conceive of people as individual subjects, as isolated minds and wills, whose "vocation is to get clear about the world, to bring it under the control of reason and thus make it available for human projects."[12] Theorists of modernity from Descartes to Habermas think that intellectuals, if they are to be true to their vocation, stand under the imperative of giving a rational account of everything, of interrogating everything. (Foucault has taught us, I remark in passing, to see the dark side of such interrogation.)[13] The era of postmodernity is bringing to an end the essentially Faustian drive, in evidence through the long period of modernity, of questioning endlessly and relentlessly to achieve an ever greater and more comprehensive understanding of our world that would, or so it was believed, or at least hoped, finally yield a harmony and unity in which our fundamental problems, particularly our human problems, would finally be definitively resolved and we would gain a rational mastery of the world, including an emancipatory mastery of ourselves. The era of postmodernity, which is

ever more firmly becoming ours, sees such Faustianism as mythical, full of hubris and indeed as being more dangerous than desirable: the stuff gulags are made of. We do not know, they claim, what undistorted discourse would look like or what it would be to attain consensus under such conditions. But what we do glimpse through a glass darkly should be enough to make us wary. We should look at these faint inklings not merely cynically but with trepidation as containing a totalitarian potential, high-sounding though they be. Dissonance, nay-saying, rejection or even the serious questioning of consensus views simply gets pushed aside, marginalized, as distorted ideological-talk, not to be credited.

Postmodernists do not seek either a Cartesian or Peircean clarity or a Hobbesian or Marxian mastery and control of the world, but, instead, as Jean François Lyotard remarked, they see it as the mission of postmodernist intellectuals to bear witness to the extensive dissonance which is there to be seen as a pervasive feature of our lives.[14] Postmodernists seek "to expose and track the way our modern cognitive machinery operates to deny the intractability of dissonance."[15] The harmony, unity, and clarity promised by this machinery have, postmodernists believe, an inevitable cost. And that cost is borne by those growing but heterogenous groups (the chronically unemployed, gays, lesbians, racial and ethnic minorities) who are engendered by the social system and at the same time "devalued, disciplined, and so on in the infinite search for a more tractable and ordered world."[16]

III

There are a whole range of questions and objections that come trippingly to the tongue concerning postmodernism. On some other occasion I shall pursue them and pursue as well the postmodernist predictable response that the very idea of trying to appraise postmodernism to see if it has made its case, to see if its claims are true and its arguments sound, is a blatant missing of the point for their contention is that there is nothing to be done

here. There are no arguments to be made or to be refuted. There is no getting anything right or getting it wrong; there is only conversation and writing in accordance with a heterogenous and not very clearly specified or perhaps even clearly specifiable clusters of historically and culturally various norms and practices. Even affirming the consequent and denying the antecedent on their view are labels for plain and rather typical failures to reason in accordance with our norms of correct reasoning. If some other culture did not follow them there is little we could do to show that they are mistaken that doesn't come simply to an appeal to our norms: to what we do and reflectively believe we should do. Many of us continue to think that these are not just cultural mistakes. They are not simply mistakes in our culture or mistakes in the Western tradition but mistakes *sans phrase*. But what would it be like to show this? We seem at least to reach rock-bottom fairly quickly. Yet if the postmodernists are not saying something they think is at least approximately so why should we read them and accept what they say any more than those who contend they are mistaken or those who continue on in the good old true and tried analytical fashion simply ignoring them or accept the views of anyone else? Why do they write and why should we read them and reflect on what they say if in some way they are not saying something they think is worth saying? It surely seems at least that they are not just having fun but in effect are in some way appealing to some kind of standard. Even to say "anything goes" makes a claim and as such is an assertion and there is no possibility of making an assertion without at least implicitly utilizing a standard. It is incoherent to say there is nothing to be said about the cogency or lack thereof of what they say. There is no escaping something like assessment though we need not be hide-bound about how this will go.

The above suggests what is a frequent but I still think a mistaken way of disposing of postmodernism. It is an argument as old as Plato and has been used repeatedly to refute skeptics, relativists, sophists, and the like. Postmodernists deny that there is

such a thing as truth. If what they say is true it is false and if what they say is false it is, of course, false. Either way they lose. Their very claim is self-refuting. Similar things could be said for what they say about validity, knowledge and the like. This refutes the letter of what some incautious postmodernists say (Baudrillard, for example) but the force of what they say could be less incautiously put in a way that escapes this classical objection. Various criteria for truth have been offered over cultural space and historical time but there is in reality only local and historically fleeting agreement about these criteria. Different people at different times have offered different and sometimes conflicting criteria and we have no reason to think that we can articulate, or find, a non-question begging ground for showing certain of these criteria are not just ours but are the really right criteria. We seem at least, the claim continues, to be utterly stuck here. It is not that that remark itself soars above all historical contingency and somehow must just be so. It is a remark on the same contingent and fallibilistic footing as the others. But, given what we can see standing where we are now, it seems at least to be the most plausible thing to say. Similar things could be said for knowledge, validity, rationality, reasonability and the like. We do not have, when we view the matter historically and culturally, a consensus beyond a few truisms which are not sufficient to secure cross-cultural agreement about what the criteria for knowledge, rationality, etc. are. We do not have such a consensus concerning what we know or can know or what it is rational to do or reasonable to believe. Perhaps someday we will get such criteria but given our track record that is hardly likely. This brings out the force of what Baudrillard was saying in an incautious or hyperbolic way and is not subject to self-referential refutation. Postmodernism does not collapse because if what they say is true then it is false and if what they say is false then it is indeed false. They are not so skewered.

Eschewing such allegedly knock-down refutations, what is to be said when we begin to contrast pragmatism and postmodernism?

Does postmodernism in any way importantly (or indeed at all) undermine pragmatism or, put the other say around, does pragmatism refute or show how deeply flawed postmodernism is so that it should be set aside as a frivolous, or at least a deeply confused, fashion or alternatively, and at a minimum, that it should be seen to be a very problematic view of things which hardly merits the extensive attention it has received? I shall go at this indirectly by first saying something about Peirce's pragmatism (pragmaticism, if you will) and in doing so show in effect how it should respond to postmodernism. I shall then in the last two sections show explicitly where pragmatism can meet the challenge of postmodernism and where things appear at least to be intractable or at least on contested terrain where there does not appear to be any clear resolution in sight.

I shall take certain parts of Peirce's thought, parts that have come down and have become canonical parts of the pragmatic tradition, and set them against the core claims of postmodernism and—doing a very unpostmodernist thing—see if we can sort out what should be said here. But before I turn to that I want first to note what different "worlds" Peirce and the postmodernists inhabit. For postmodernists, as we have seen, there is no truth, knowledge, justified belief, validity, rightness, desirability or reasonability to be established, either critically or acritically; there are no methods to be followed which can yield anything objective; theory should be utterly distrusted as a melange of grandiose delusions; science rather than being a tool of human emancipation is taken to be a oppressive power resting on nothing more objective than what turns out, among a group of powerful ruling elites of our society, to be the currently most prestigious ways of explaining where explaining really comes to telling stories. What, as Christopher Norris well puts it, all postmodernists have in common is "a deep suspicion of any theory that claims a vantage-point of knowledge or truth, a self-assured position of 'scientific' method from which to criticize the various forms of 'ideological' false-seeming or commonsense perception."[17]

Peirce's world, by contrast, is very different indeed. While as a good fallibilist he believes "nothing can be proved beyond the possibility of doubt"[18] he also thinks science yields knowledge and that indeed with the growth of science we gain, and continue to gain, *plus en plus*, more knowledge more systematically and coherently related, and that, in domain after domain, our truth-claims get more adequately validated and more perspicuously displayed. He speaks perfectly unselfconsciously of there being progress in science (V 21). Indeed we live in an era of a great explosion of knowledge and this knowledge can be reasonably utilized in a way that will answer to the interests of humankind. This presupposes there are genuine human interests and that we can ascertain what they are. Moreover, there can, as Peirce has it, be no reasonable doubt that there are genuine discoveries and that there is scientific knowledge. "A man," he remarks, "must be downright crazy to deny that science has made many true discoveries" (V 106).

Peirce not only thinks that science yields genuine knowledge but that logic and careful reasoning in everyday life yields knowledge as well. What we need to do, he believes, is strike on the right method of inquiry: the right method of fixing belief. Peirce is justly famous for his assault on Cartesianism and the depth and thoroughness of his anti-Cartesianism.[19] But, that notwithstanding, like Descartes, for Peirce, and for the other pragmatists following after him as well, the key to coming to grips with our world, to mastering it through a thorough understanding of it, is to gain, and then correctly apply, the right method of inquiry. On this fundamental point, a point postmodernists would scoff away as methodolatry, Descartes and Peirce are one. Where, as we shall see, they differ deeply and profoundly is over what the correct method is.

For Peirce, logic plays a key role. He—a world apart from postmodernists—believed that there are such things as normative sciences. Logic, along with aesthetics and ethics, was one of them. (It is clear enough that in speaking of normative sciences he is

not at all embarrassed by the idea of objective norms.) As a normative science, logic for Peirce is "the doctrine of what we ought to think" (V 25). Normative science, he has it, gives us grounds for distinguishing good and bad; logic does this "in regard to representations of truth" (V 26). Indeed it is for Peirce the master normative science of the three and, like Russell, during the period of his life that was most philosophically influential, logic for Peirce was taken to be the essence of good philosophical method, though—including abduction, induction and deduction—he construed "logic" more broadly than it is generally construed. Logic, he has it, "will tell you how to proceed to form a plan of experimentation" (VII 44). It is a core part of scientific method and scientific method, essentially the experimental method (the systematically joined use of deduction, induction and abduction), will enable us to gain secure but fallibilistic knowledge; it will, that is, tell us how things really are. Serious thinking is not "mere rumination, reflection, dialectical inquiry"; what is needed in addition, to yield a reliable method of fixing belief, is "experiment, observation, comparison, active scrutiny of facts" (VII 43). Logic, Peirce believed, is vital here; it will not, of course, "undertake to inform you what kind of experiments you ought to make in order best to determine the acceleration of gravity, or the value of the Ohm, but it will tell you how to proceed to form a plan of experimentation" (VII 44). It is, he remarks, "the art of devising methods of research—the method of methods" (VII 44). And this, Peirce continues, "is the true and worthy idea" of the normative science of logic (VII 44).

All of this he regards, being a through and through modernist, as a great liberating force for humankind. "Modern methods have created modern science; and this century, and especially the last twenty-five years, have done more to create new methods than any former equal period. We live in the very age of methods" (VII 45). To improve the logical powers of human beings and their knowledge and understanding of scientific method will be for them, and more generally for humankind, a great liberating

force (VII 45-48). Peirce, in a way that would seem utterly wrong-headed to Feyerabend and Rorty, as well as to postmodernists, claims that in this "age of methods the university which is to be the exponent of the living condition of the human mind must be the university of methods" (VII 45). People with a scientific mentality and schooled in scientific method, working together, will "gradually come to find out truth" (VII 38). Peirce exuberantly talks of such people casting "their whole being into the service of science" and of "storming the stronghold of truth" such that with the "triumph of modern science" we will gain real truth, though the truths we gain will never be a complete list. There will, however, with the relentless use of such rational inquiry, be a steady increase in the number of truths that we know and in their systematic interrelation and perspicuous representation. John Dewey followed him in this and with them we get a through and through modernist picture of the world, the very picture of the world that postmodernists so thoroughly reject.

So here we have two striking and contrasting clusters of attitudes—the postmodernist ones and Peirce's fully modernist ones with not a trace of what one commentator called postmodernist modernity. Against the spirit of postmodernism, Peirce was an unabashed theoretician. I will depict central elements of his theory and then see how well they stand against postmodernism. Here I shall concentrate on his pragmatism and critical commonsensim and their linkage, his assault on Cartesianism (which for him covered the mainstream of modern philosophy from Descartes through Kant), his conception of how belief should be fixed, how to sort out sense from nonsense, what he took scientific method to be and why he took it to be the method which, if carefully pursued, would give us reliable knowledge, enable us to distinguish what it makes sense to say and what should be set aside as nonsense. This cluster of conceptions and beliefs is the part of Peirce that was taken over by John Dewey and such later pragmatists as Ernest Nagel and Sidney Hook. It is this pragmatism or, as Peirce called it, pragmaticism, that I think in its essentials is

very close to the mark and which I think can withstand the onslaught of postmodernism and provide a sound defense of modernity and the values of the Enlightenment without what Rorty calls Enlightenment rationalism.[20] This influential part of Peirce's philosophy is by no means the whole of his philosophy. I set aside Peirce's metaphysics, his scholastic realism, his doctrines of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness, his theory of signs, and even his theory of truth. The texts that convey for me the core of that part of Peirce I wish to defend are papers III, IV, V, VI, VII of his published papers in Volume 5 of his *Collected Papers*, Chapters 2 and 3 (papers not published in his lifetime) in Book III of that same volume, Lectures I, VI and VII of his 1903 "Lectures on Pragmatism" also published in Volume 5 of his *Collected Papers*, and Book II on Scientific Method from Volume VII of his *Collected Papers*.[21]

Like the classical empiricists Peirce believes that "all our knowledge rests upon perceptual judgments" but these are not the isolated sense impressions or sense-data of classical empiricism but, as part of a web of judgments, they are robust judgments and are linked to human actions. In short we have with Peirce, as we have with Quine and Davidson, a thoroughgoing holism.[22] Peirce also contended that there were three kinds of reasoning: abduction, induction and deduction (V 90). Inquiry must make use of all three but it is abduction, which is itself a concise expression of pragmatism, which has been neglected in the history of thought and which is vital in the attainment of knowledge, for neither induction nor deduction can "originate any idea whatever" (V 90). Deduction is necessary reasoning, as in mathematics, showing what is entailed by what. It is solely concerned with validity and not with the truth or the probable truth of any other correctness of the premises. Induction, by contrast, is "the experimental testing of a theory" (V 90). At any stage of an inquiry a conclusion may be more or less erroneous; the repeated application of induction will, if persisted in long enough, correct the error (V 90). But it is also important to realize that "the only thing that induc-

tion accomplishes is to determine the value of a quantity. It starts out with a theory and it measures the degree of concordance of that theory with fact. It never can originate any idea whatever" (V 90). Rather, Peirce claims, "all the ideas of science come to it by way of abduction" and indeed it becomes clear that for Peirce all critical beliefs come by way of abduction. Where there are genuine doubts (doubts always taking place against a massive background of secure belief), if, in fixing belief, we are to get beyond mere word-pictures or idle ruminations, we must use abduction which "consists in studying the facts and devising a theory to explain them" (V 90). In good pragmatic fashion, Peirce claims that "its only justification is that if we are ever to understand things at all, it must be in that way" (V 90 & V 106). Abduction works this way:

> The surprising fact, C, is observed;
> But if A were true, C would be a matter of course,
> Hence, there is a reason to suspect that A is true.
> Thus, A cannot be abductively inferred, or if you prefer the expression, cannot be abductively conjectured until its entire content is already present in the premise, "If A were true, C would be a matter of course." (V 117)

This forming of an explanatory hypothesis "merely suggests that something ***may*** be. Its only justification is that from its suggestion deduction can draw a prediction which can be tested by induction, and that, if we are ever to learn anything, or to understand phenomena at all, it must be by abduction that this is brought about" (V 106). It is in such a manner that we must proceed if we are ever to distinguish genuine knowledge from its counterfeit, to successfully resolve our doubts—our genuine non-paper doubts—and to ascertain what it makes sense to say: to separate, as Peirce puts it, "the sheep from the goats" (V 26). Reasoning, where it is not mere piffle disguised as reasoning, must so combine deduction, induction and abduction. He further remarks that "if you carefully consider the question of pragmatism you will see

that it is nothing else than the question of the logic of abduction" (V 121).

To see a little more what abduction is we should see how Peirce distinguishes good abductions from bad ones. Good abductions "must explain the facts" (V 122). In seeing what they are we will also see how abduction succinctly expresses the core of pragmatism. To ascertain what these conditions for good abductions are we should consider what end abduction is to meet (V 122-23). Its end, Peirce tells us, is, through subjection to the test of experiment, to lead to the avoidance of all surprise and to the establishment of a habit of positive expectation that shall not be disappointed (V 123). Hypotheses are admissible, no matter how much they may be the result of fancy, flights of the imagination, remote from practical considerations or observation, "provided they are capable of experimental verification, and only in so far as [they] are capable of such verification" (V 123). It is this condition which must be met for it to be the case that we can have a good abduction. The good ones are the ones that are verified and a condition for their being good is that they are verifiable. This, Peirce goes on to remark, "is approximately the doctrine of pragmatism" (V 123).

Experimental verification, in turn, "involves the whole logic of induction" (V 123). So reasoning of a disciplined scientific sort involves this mix of deduction, induction and abduction. This is what scientific method comes to and it fits well with the aim of science which Peirce characterizes as seeking "to find out facts and work out a satisfactory explanation of them" (VII 59). Philosophers, metaphysicians and the like, who are far from the spirit of experimentalism, imagine that they have a more sublime or deeper form of reasoning. They think they have something of a purely conceptual or dialectical character; but, Peirce contends, in good naturalistic fashion, the more distant it is from scientific reasoning and the closer it comes to having a *purely* conceptual character, "the nearer it approaches to verbiage" (V 91).

In what is perhaps his best known essay, "The Fixation of Be-

lief," Peirce sets the scientific method of fixing belief against three other methods he discerns in human history: (1) ***the method of tenacity*** (the holding onto whatever beliefs we as individuals may happen to have and the dismissing of any considerations which might appear to conflict with them); (2) ***the method of authority*** (where the state or the community does what with the first method isolated individuals do); and (3) ***the a priori method*** (the method of appealing to what is felt to be agreeable to reason) (V 239). The last method is the method that has been repeatedly utilized in the philosophical tradition (the grand tradition in philosophy) and most extensively in modern philosophy of an essentially Cartesian or Kantian conception. But it is the method of any philosophy which is distinctly metaphysical. Peirce argues against these methods not by arguing, as one might expect, that they are irrational but by showing that they break down in practice. That this is so is tolerably evident for ***the method of tenacity*** and ***the method of authority*** and I shall not rehearse Peirce's arguments here (V 234-38). But I shall attend a bit to the ***a priori method*** for (as I have remarked) it has been the method of the Philosophical Tradition and is, either self-consciously or in effect, used by many philosophers.

The basic idea of the ***a priori method*** is that we should not settle opinions by caprice or authority but by an appeal to what after careful inspection is clear to the light of reason. It will "not only produce an impulse to believe, but shall also decide what proposition it is which is to be believed" (V 230). It does this "by showing us which fundamental propositions are 'agreeable to reason'" (V 238, Peirce's scare quotes). Peirce remarks that "the most perfect example of it is to be found in the history of metaphysical philosophy. Systems of this sort have not usually rested upon any observed facts, at least not to any degree. They have been chiefly adopted because their fundamental propositions seemed 'agreeable to reason'" (V 238). Peirce believes that such talk of reason when looked at cooly will be seen to be mere arm waving. To speak of something being agreeable to reason, he remarks, "does

not mean that which agrees with experience" or coincides with facts, but it is "that which we find ourselves inclined to believe" (V 239). For Descartes, for example, self-consciousness was to furnish us with our most fundamental truths and decide what was agreeable to reason. But this was to be done by rumination or reflection or by in addition the providing of abstract definitions. But such activities "never enable us to distinguish between an idea seeming clear and really being so" (V 249). We must rather, to gain a clear conception of what we are thinking, ascertain the sensible effects of our ideas, the observable circumstances that would count for their being true or for their being false: whether, that is, they coincide with ascertainable facts (V 246, 257-58). When, for example, we claim that diamonds are harder than chunks of granite we will know this is true if we can observe diamonds being used to scratch granite but not the reverse. Without such experimental testing of what reflection, self-consciousness and abstraction yields through tracing the sensible effects of the propositions expressive of these thoughts, we will not be able to distinguish between an idea just seeming to be clear—being agreeable to reason—and one really being so. The sense of propositions being agreeable to reason does not discriminate, or even give us a hint at how to discriminate, between a clear idea and one that merely seems so.

The use of the ***a priori method*** common to the philosophical tradition "makes of inquiry something similar to the development of taste" (V 241). But taste, Peirce continues, "is always more or less a matter of fashion" and philosophical doctrines, as is evident in metaphysical disputes, disputes in ethical theory, and in epistemology, have like a pendulum swung back and forth between radically opposing views and have led to no rational consensus, or indeed any other kind of non-local consensus, as to what is to be believed.[23] In this way philosophy—or at least philosophy of the traditional sort—stands in a marked contrast to science where there has been a relatively stable growth of knowledge rooted in a reasonable stable consensus by scientific practitioners from many

cultures. Applying inductive reasoning to the *a priori* method, we can disconfirm the hypothesis that utilizing the *a priori* method will deliver our opinions from accidental and capricious elements.

The clash of opinions, theories, beliefs, conceptions is evident enough to us and causes in the big brained animals that we are the irritation of doubt. The method of tenacity, authority and the *a priori* method all fail in their very practice to relieve our doubts. "To satisfy our doubts . . . it is necessary that a method should be found by which our beliefs may be determined by nothing human, but by some external permanency," that is, by our beliefs coinciding with facts (V 242). This does not involve some mysterious correspondence of propositions to facts, but the experimental or experiential testing of our ideas by what is either directly or indirectly observable. Whether or not perceptual judgments are or are not our starting point they are essential for checking the truth, probable truth or indeed of even the possible truth of our beliefs. Where no such empirical check is possible we cannot justifiably claim that any substantive matter of fact claim is true or even could be true.

It remains for me to say something about Peirce's critical commonsensism, its relation to pragmatism, to his assault on Cartesianism and to his setting aside of metaphysics. Many critics of pragmatism claim that pragmatists do not push their inquiries far enough, do not really challenge the full range of beliefs or presuppositions of our thought. In that way, the claim goes, pragmatism is really a step backwards from the spirit of Cartesianism. Peirce, in the spirit of the above reaction to pragmatism, puts into the mouth of a hypothetical critical the sarcastic comment, "So passionate a lover of doubt [as the pragmatist] would make a clean sweep of his beliefs" (V 364). But this, Peirce responds, incoherently conceives of the mind as a *tabula rasa*. Such a making of a clean sweep of things is as impossible as it is unnecessary. Like Wittgenstein, particularly in *On Certainty*, Peirce stresses that doubt is only possible where there is belief. We have a vast, hardly specifiable in its entirety, body of background beliefs, many

perfectly mundane; it is only against this extensive background of secure interlocked beliefs that we are able to doubt at all or question at all. Belief comes first and the power of doubting long after. "Doubt, usually, perhaps always, takes its rise from surprise, which supposes previous belief; and surprises come with novel environment" (V 364). Real live doubt, which emerges from a concrete problematic situation where inquiry becomes blocked, drives scientific inquiry: the setting out and testing of hypotheses to explain anomalous facts which do not square with other facts, facts which form parts of the web of our belief-systems.

Cartesianism, Peirce tells us, "teaches that philosophy must begin with universal doubt," that the ultimate test of truth "is to be found in the individual consciousness," and that "the multiform argumentation of the middle ages is [to be] replaced by a single thread of inference depending often upon inconspicuous premises" (V 156). In this respect, as I have already remarked that Peirce remarks, "most modern philosophers have been, in effect, Cartesians" (V 156). And it is this Cartesianism which is deeply mistaken in all the above respects. Peirce remarks we "cannot begin with complete doubt. We must begin with all the prejudices which we actually have when we enter upon the study of philosophy. The prejudices are not to be dispelled by a maxim, for they are things which it does not occur to us *can* be questioned. Hence this initial skepticism will be mere self-deception, and not real doubt; and no one who follows the Cartesian method will ever be satisfied until he has formally recovered all those beliefs which in form he has given up" (V 156-57). But these methodological doubts are mere paper-doubts (V 361).

However, so rejecting the idea of trying to wipe the slate clean by universal doubting does not dispense with the need to have a critical attitude, for in the course of our studies, with the rough bumps inquiry will give us, we will *in specific circumstances* find reason to doubt what we began by believing (V 157). But with such a non-methodological doubt we will have a *positive reason* for doubting and we will understand how in principle at least to pro-

ceed to resolve our doubts. A person may not always be able to resolve his doubt; indeed he may frequently fail, but he will know how he is to proceed to resolve his doubt, if he can in fact do so, and will understand what counts as success and failure here.

The scientific method is important here but so is what Peirce called critical commonsensism. Critical commonsensism is, Peirce has it, "A variety of the Philosophy of Common Sense" going back to the Scots philosopher Thomas Reid (V 292). But Peirce's critical commonsensism has certain features that give it a critical edge lacking in the Scotish philosophy (V 293). Peirce's commonsensism is critical because it sticks with the fallibilism and the experimentalism of pragmatism while, with the commonsensists, believing

> that there are indubitable beliefs which vary a little and but a little under varying circumstances and in distant ages; that they partake of the nature of instincts, this word being taken in a broad sense; that they concern matters within the purview of the primitive man; that they are very vague indeed (such as that fire burns) without being perfectly so; that while it may be disastrous to science for those who pursue it to think they doubt what they really believe, and still more so really to doubt what they ought to believe, yet, on the whole, neither of these is so unfavorable to science as for men of science to believe what they ought to doubt, nor even for them to think they believe what they really doubt; that a philosopher ought not to regard an important proposition as indubitable without a systematic and arduous endeavor to attain to a doubt of it, remembering that genuine doubt cannot be created by a mere effort of will, but must be compassed through experience; that while it is possible that propositions that really are undubitable, for the time being, should nevertheless be false, yet in so far as we do not doubt a proposition we cannot but regard it as perfectly

> true and perfectly certain; that while holding certain propositions to be each individually perfectly certain, we may and ought to think it likely that some one of them, if not more, is false. (V 347)

This is what Peirce calls the core of critical commonsensism and he believes that a pragmatist to be consistent ought to embrace it (V 347). The first part of his characterization seems to me particularly important. For Peirce there are both acritical propositions and acritical inferences that are indubitable in the sense that we cannot in critical inquiry go behind them and give them a foundation or justification. They are acritical beliefs that we do not think can be doubted and we have (*pace* the Kantian critical philosopher) no understanding at all of what it would be like to find a critical foundation which could support them (V 354-58). They are, though vague, as certain as anything we can conceive of (V 293). They are not something we can fix in the fixation of belief; we cannot justify them by reasoning where by that we mean, as we ought to mean, "the fixation of one belief by another as is reasonable, deliberate, self-controlled" (V 293-93). These commonsense beliefs and the acritical inferences that go with them are instinctual and ahistorical in that all people (or all statistically normal people) everywhere everywhen have these beliefs. They are the same as Wittgenstein's *Vor-Wissen* or Moore's commonsense beliefs. Moreover, as Peirce puts it, "instinct seldom errs, while reason goes wrong nearly half the time, if not more frequently" (V 297). But what a critical commonsensism realizes in the way the Scots philosophers of common sense did not is that these commonsense beliefs "only remain indubitable in their application to affairs that resemble those of a primitive mode of life" (V 297). But is is also crucial to realize that these acritically indubitable beliefs and inferences are invariably vague, though Peirce stresses, none the worse for that (V 298). Indeed for them to play the role in the stream of life they do it is essential for them to be vague. That human beings are often selfish is such a com-

monsense belief, but "The ultimate spring for action is self-interest; human beings always and only do what they take to be in their own self-interest" is not. "Pleasure is good and pain is bad" are other bits of "acritically indubitable" common sense while "Pleasure and pleasure alone is intrinsically good and pain and pain alone is intrinsically evil" are not. These latter supposedly more precise beliefs are just bits of bad metaphysics parading as fundamental principles of ethics or deep claims about fundamental human motivation. The vague, but sometimes useful, acritical commonsense beliefs are truisms, but true, or at least reasonably believed to be true, for all of that. (Truisms, after all, can be true.) They are background beliefs that we reasonably accept without argument in our reasonings and doubtings where the engine is not idling.

If, however, in the course of some real inquiry, caused by some real doubt, we actually come to have a *positive* reason for doubting one or another of them, at least on a certain reading of them, then in that context they would become dubitable and indeed should be doubted, but before in that *context* abandoning them we should seek to formulate them more precisely, turning them from acritical beliefs into critical beliefs. But there are many such acritical beliefs that we will never so doubt nor will they ever stand in need of being doubted. They, vague though they be, are as secure as any beliefs we have; they are there and should remain as background beliefs for our other believings, believings that occur in the context of our inquiries. Indeed we do not have any idea of what it would be like for us to think, inquire, doubt or deliberate without their being in the background.

The critical commonsensist attaches real value to doubt but it has to be the real thing and no à la Descartes counterfeit or paper substitute. It must be a doubt that arises in the course of actual inquiry where, something in our belief-system breaks down or threatens to break down. But this doubting *(pace* the skeptic) can only take place against the background of a massive but indeterminate number of beliefs which are not in doubt and many of

which will never be doubted. Actual doubting must be specific and roughly *seriatim* and not holus bolus where everything all at once is supposedly open to systematic doubt. In the course of actual inquiry anything could, if there is a positive reason for it, be doubted and, if indeed there really is a positive reason, should be doubted, but many things will not be doubted and indeed the whole belief-system just like that could not be doubted. The very idea of such a thing is incoherent. Thus critical commonsensism and fallibilism ride in tandem. We have a commonsensism without dogmas or a crude metaphysics (or indeed any metaphysics at all) and we have pragmatism, a robust empiricism without dogmas and a naturalism without subjectivism and skeptical danglers. Critical commonsensism and pragmatism are one in arguing, against Descartes and against Locke, and later Husserl and Brentano, that we have "no infallible introspective power" to ascertain what is true and what is false or even what we believe and doubt (V 347). A good philosopher, as a good scientist, will not doubt a whole mass of acritical beliefs. They will just be accepted and there will for him be a building on the work of other similar like-minded people. The pragmatist will not be like the Lone Ranger, always trying, starting from scratch, or rather trying to start from scratch, to articulate unshakeable foundations. In cumulative, cooperative work with other scientists and philosophers who also have a scientific attitude, he will operate with critical beliefs already for the nonce established; but in the live contexts of actual inquiry he will not take uncritically, as something just to be accepted as indubitable, *any* important arguable proposition. He will go the way neither of the global scepticism of the philosophical sceptic nor of the *a priori* assurances (at best false) of the rationalist. Pragmatism "will be sure to carry critical commonsensism in its arms" (V 348). I shall, in concluding my setting out of Peirce's account, give Peirce himself the last word.

> [N]othing is so unerring as instinct within its proper field, while reason goes wrong about as often as right—perhaps oftener. Now those vague beliefs that appear to

> be indubitable have the same sort of bases as scientific results have. That is to say, they rest on experience—on the total everyday experience of many generations of multitudinous populations. Such experience is worthless for distinctively scientific purposes, because it does not make the minute distinctions with which science is chiefly concerned; nor does it relate to the recondite subjects of science, although all science, without being aware of it, virtually supposes the truth of the vague results of uncontrolled thought upon such experiences, cannot help doing so, and would have to shut up shop if she should manage to escape accepting them. No "wisdom" could ever have discovered argon; yet within its proper sphere, which embraces objects of universal concern, the instinctive result of human experience ought to have so vastly more weight than any scientific result, that to make laboratory experiments to ascertain, for example, whether there be any uniformity in nature or no, would vie with adding a teaspoonful of saccharine to the ocean in order to sweeten it. (V 365-66)

IV

Postmodernists, as well as neo-pragmatists without method such as Richard Rorty and Stanley Fish, would take Peirce's account to be an extreme form of methodolatry. They would be one with him, as would Quine and Davidson as well, in repudiating the Cartesian dream of a foundation for scientific method firmer than science itself. There can be no such First Philosophy, no such certainty, no such foundations. But a scientific philosophy, even as a handmaiden to science, will not, these postmodernists believe, give us objectivity either. We cannot, as Peirce believes, specify something called the aim of science or a set of interests it answers to. Science, they claim, is and does many things answering to many different interests and what it does and what aims (if any) it has are very much dependent on the particular science in ques-

tion. There is nothing called the aim of science which an activity must aim at to even count as a science. There is no aim of science which will give us a key, or even a clue, to what scientific method is or to what sort of explanations are admissible. "The scientific method" is a reification that neither can be determined by finding out what the aim or function of science is nor from making a useful general characterization from the diverse practices that are generally accepted in the various domains as science. Moreover, even if we are justified in making some rational reconstructions or stipulations here, there is not much we can in general say about scientific method. Peirce stresses the importance of setting out explanatory hypotheses capable of empirical test. But pure observation, as Popper has well-argued, gives us only negative evidence by being able to falsify the observational categoricals implied by a proposed theory. The very holism that Peirce shares with later philosophers such as Quine, Putnam, Rorty and Davidson makes it the case that on his account it must always be the case that there are alternative ways of accommodating recalcitrant observations. Experimental testing is hardly ever, if ever, decisive. To add further features in the characterization of scientific method such as simplicity, systematicity, economy and elegance yield criteria which not infrequently conflict, are very indeterminate (what, for example, counts as need in the maxim not to multiply conceptions beyond need), have no lexical ordering rules, do not all apply to all the sciences and are rather subjective. We have vague maxims for scientific method but no rules set in lexical order. Physics, biology, archaeology, clinical psychology and social anthropology are too different for there to be anything determinate called the scientific method that they all utilize. There is just a bunch of different things that different people with different interests and under different conditions do. These diverse practices have (a) no determinate end that they all share, (b) no distinctive method common to them all, and (c) they are not something that could properly be said to provide an objective view of the world in accordance with the objective facts (facts specifiable independently

of theory). There is, as well, and similarly, no way that we could appeal to evidence that is independent of any theory to choose between competing theories. Evidence, like facts, is theory-dependent. What counts as evidence and how it is characterized is determined by the theory that is being accepted.

Many think that this, or something bearing a family resemblance to this, is a cluster of lessons that contemporary philosophy of science or the history of science establishes. But on Peirce's behalf this much could be said in response: He, unlike Carnap, was not setting rigid rules that all or indeed any sciences must follow. He clearly saw, with his very considerable knowledge of science, how different the various sciences are (VII 55-57). But that notwithstanding, descriptive-interpretive sciences such as social anthropology and clinical psychology in much of what they do may not fit very well with Peirce's conception of scientific method. His conception of scientific method was meant to be general. While it may not be perfectly general, given these at least apparent exceptions, it does capture crucial elements in most of science such that anything claiming to be physics, biology, geology or archaeology, for example, while lacking those features, would be at best very problematical examples of such sciences—elements on its speculative edge and thus on its margins.[24] Abduction is vital for we plainly need hypotheses to try to explain anomalous facts (theory dependent though they may be) or occurrences; we need deduction to derive testable propositions to test the hypotheses of the theory or show their various implications and connections; we need inductive procedures to test the truth of the propositions so derived. Our tests may very well never be decisive and what is claimed may be subject to various alternative accommodations, but confirmation and infirmation can and often do show how one theory or one hypothesis can be more plausible than another. Without any kind of experimental testing there is no distinguishing pure speculation from disciplined empirical inquiry and that is a distinction we plainly need. The distinction is not as sharp as was formerly thought but still there are differences between pure

speculation and science; the very practice of science shows that it is not the case that anything goes. Thinking in the case of science (non-formal science, if you will) does not make something so. We have good reasons for rejecting procedures lacking provision for empirically testable hypothesis. Aside from the valuably vague commonsense beliefs, beliefs we have no positive reason to doubt, where there is no such hypothesis construction and elaboration, we have good grounds for denying that propositions not so constrained yield knowledge of the world (to be pleonastic). Moreover, where there is some, positive reason for doubting a specific commonsense belief, it must, for it to remain acceptable, be transformed into a more precise critical belief which is verifiable. (Peirce's account is, as we have seen, a *critical* commonsensism.) And it is not so off the mark to say with Peirce that the aim of science is to seek out facts and explain them. This remains true even though it is not the case that there are any facts which exist independently of a theory. There is nothing anomalous in saying that scientists seek to discover the facts and explain them even if it is not the case that there are facts or evidence just there to be discovered no matter what theory we devise or do not devise.[25] Theory may frame what is discoverable, but within that frame discoveries can be made and there can be no genuine discoveries without verification.

Postmodernists, skeptical about knowledge claims and about the objectivity of science, will also be skeptical of the idea that there just are such facts there to be sought out and explained. Peirce, though no defender of the correspondence theory of truth, still speaks unselfconsciously of beliefs resting on observed facts, of beliefs coinciding with ascertainable facts and of the concordance of theory with fact. We can, in favourable circumstances, he believes, perceive the facts. Indeed, as we noted, for Peirce, all knowledge rests on perceptual judgments (V 88). All the ideas of science come to it by the way of abduction which "consists in studying the facts and devising a theory to explain them" (V 90). Facts, for him, are something there to be discovered. But it does

not follow from that that facts are *just* there to be discovered *independently of theory.*

It is by so proceeding and only by so proceeding that we will come to understand things at all. And in this struggle to understand, the hypotheses we form in abducting, to be admissible hypotheses at all, must be, as he puts it, "capable of experimental verification" (V 123). Indeed a hypothesis is admissible "only insofar as it is capable of such verification" (V 123). But what exactly does this consist in? There seems, on Peirce's account, to be something like the confrontation of facts with experience, his Kantian inclinations to the contrary notwithstanding. But we have a plethora of uncashed in metaphors here. It is anything but clear what we are saying. Facts are not like rocks in being something we could stumble on or collide with or simply confront like a bear on a hiking trail. Postmodernists would take them to be constructions. (But such talk is also very paradoxical and unclear.) To say facts are what true statements state may be true enough but it doesn't tell us much and certainly does not show that facts are just there to be discovered. Facts, unlike stones or trees or bears, are, as we have remarked, very theory dependent. They do not speak for themselves. They are read in the light of theory. (Still they are read; they are there to be discovered.) Peirce, like Davidson, conceives of beliefs as being determined by some external permanency (V 242). But we have different vocabularies for talking about those external permanancies and it is not clear how we could decide, if we could decide, which is the right vocabulary or when we have the right vocabulary. It is not even evident that we have a coherent conception of what it is to have the right vocabulary. But, for all of that, it remains true that for all of these vocabularies, if they are to be such that we understand what we are saying when we use them and can ascertain whether they are making claims which can be true or false, they must contain sentences capable of being used to make statements that can be empirically tested.[26] This gives us a way of sorting out sense from nonsense. We are not left with the merry-go-round of postmodernism.

Let us now turn to critical commonsensism. Postmodernists would surely not find much to applaud in critical commonsensism. They would (a) question its criticalness and (b) say that commonsense cannot be the basis for anything, cannot yield truth or provide knowledge or reasonable belief. But that response to Peirce is absurd for there is no doubt at all that fire burns, that water is wet, that snow is normally white, that cats are different than dogs, that people grow old and die, that people are sometimes selfish, that pain is bad, that pleasure is good, that there is some order in nature, and a host of other things. These truths are vague and in most circumstances their assertion is banal but they are truths and we are more certain of them than we are of any theory which would deny them or try to provide a foundation for them. Any foundational claims we may proffer will be less certain than they are. As for the *criticalness* of critical commonsensism, it enters in the pragmatic link with commonsensism. We have, for example, the banality, true for all of that, that people are often selfish. Suppose a theoretician comes along and tries to strengthen this by saying that people invariably in the key ares of their lives, in their deepest relations with other persons, including the ones they love, put their own interests first. This is generated from the recognition of the truth of the banality, from reflecting on our lives, from observations of things around us, and from perplexities about what selfishness or putting your own interests first comes to. Moving from the vague commonsense beliefs we go to a critical belief that tries to capture what someone thinking about the import of the commonsense belief surmises (perhaps mistakenly) is really involved in the commonsense belief. Transformed it becomes a critical belief in need of clarification and then test by way of verification or falsification. There is there, where such a transformation is justifiably sought, a problematic situation where there is the live irritation of a real doubt. The truth of the truism will not settle the issue but Peirce, fully recognizing that, has pointed to a method, a cluster of ways, of proceeding which can resolve that doubt in a way that would plainly have intersubjective

validity. This is but an example, but there are hosts of similar cases where real doubts are generated as problematic situations arise and in turn are answered in this way. Postmodernists have given us no reason at all to think there is no reasonable fixing of belief or for thinking that speaking of "reasonable" in such circumstances is mere arm waving.

Let me now turn to matters where the case is not so one-sided against postmodernism. I have, sticking with what they say (or rather some of what they sometimes flatly claim), represented postmodernists as denying that there is knowledge, truth, justice, a way of distinguishing specious from valid forms of argument or a way of distinguishing rational inquiry and reasonable procedures from irrational ones. I have noted their claim that what we call science is little more than the currently prestigious procedures for settling certain things. Peirce shows, if any of this needs showing, that none of this is so. He shows ***au contraire*** that we have reliable procedures for fixing beliefs and that while science certainly is not everything it does make discoveries, resolves, not infrequently in an objective manner, some questions about how things are and sometimes in a cross-cultural way provides us with canons of rational inquiry that actually work in many domains. Moreover, its knowledge is cumulative. Scientists, unlike many other scholars and intellectuals, including philosophers, as the decades and centuries go by, stand on each others' shoulders though nothing like ultimate truth or certainty or a grasp of ***the truth*** is in this progression even contemplated or indeed even understood. Fallibilism is the name of the game.

However, while postmodernists say the absurd things I have just noted them saying, they also say other things with which pragmatists and indeed many others would extensively agree and which I would surmise is what postmodernists really have in mind when they make the above wild denials I have characterized as absurd. (As should always be the case, a principle of charity of interpretation is operating.) They speak in hyperbole and often achieve a shock effect. But, ***sans*** the rhetorical exaggeration, they have a

deep critique of Enlightenment *rationalism* and of whatever residues there are in modernity which are still held captive to rationalism. But that should not include the whole of the Enlightenment. As it developed the Enlightenment has transcended Enlightenment rationalism. The pragmatists, Max Weber and Sigmund Freud are paradigmatic modernists and children of the Enlightenment. But they (Freud less clearly than the others) are as free of rationalism as any postmodernist and Weber is as pessimistic and Freud nearly so.

So far I have just continued my nay-saying to postmodernism. But it is here meant to lead up to the following which puts things in a somewhat different light. What is on the mark in postmodernism is their rejection of grand meta-narratives purporting to give us "ultimate truth," to tell how history must go and to reveal what it is finally to gain human emancipation so that all human beings can be so emancipated. Postmodernists claim as well and rightly that there are neither privileged epistemic structures securing "final truth" nor a foundational knowledge more secure than anything achievable by sciences or in everyday life and free from the contingencies of time and place. If to say there is no truth or knowledge is to say that there is no *such* truth or *such* knowledge then such a claim is not absurd but arguably true and perfectly in accord with pragmatism and the modern temper.

Similar things should be said for the postmodernist's denial that there is such a thing as a privileged access to reality, any ultimate or final explanations, any final truth behind appearances, any omniscient or God's eye perspective, any (*pace* Bernard Williams) Absolute conception, any ultimate sources of justification or legitimation in any domain, any guarantees that reality must be such and such, any possibility of our problems being *finally* solved by a closed set of procedures or indeed by any procedures and the like.

Postmodernists are right, or at least arguably right, in making all these denials but they do not herald a new postmodern era but are themselves the very hallmark of modernity: the result of

the relentless applying of Enlightenment ways of viewing things. And they are also the claims of pragmatism, logical positivism, existentialism (though existentialism does anguish over the absence of the old guarantees). Indeed many analytical philosophers and scientists would think these postmodernist denials are commonplaces so plainly true as to hardly deserve notice let alone argument about or dramatizing. Where, the claim might go, we stick with hyperbole postmodernism is absurd; where we set that aside (demythologize postmodernism) it is true but platitudinous.

V

Is that all there is to be said? Not quite. There are three complicating points I want, in closing, to attend to.

Some postmodernists (Lyotard, for example) take at certain junctures a kind of Wittgensteinian turn. It is not only the case that no 'ultimate meta-discourse' (no language-game for all language-games) will succeed in situating, characterizing and appraising all other discourses or that no systematic and relatively holistic social theories (first-order theories), such as Weber's, Durkheim's, Mead's, or Habermas's, will enable us to ascertain the direction of social change, but we should recognize, as well, the claim goes, that science (particular scientific practices and disciplines) has no pride of place among our various practices in ascertaining how things are.[27] They are just one cluster of language-games and social practices among a multitude of diverse language-games and social practices, none of which are more authoritative than any other in making discoveries, ascertaining the facts, predicting what will happen, interpreting events, and the like. But (*pace* Lyotard) if you want to take a trip up the Amazon and want to know what shots to have before you go, how wide the river is at its mouth and how deep, what kind of fish are in its waters, what is safe for you to eat and drink, and the like it is plainly better to rely on scientific language-games than any other. They may, of course, get some of these things wrong or partially wrong, but still it is better to rely on the relevant scientific prac-

tices than on any other practices. Here things are not like they may be in discussing quantum mechanics or scientific cosmology. Where there are plainly facts of the matter at issue that might come into question, scientific language-games better guide us here than any of the other language-games. With the development of science in the last few centuries our ability to predict, control, to explain and to systematically account for what we have explained has explosively grown. Scientism, as Habermas has been particularly effective in showing, is indeed an ill and there is, as Peirce stressed, no need for a scientific understanding of a lot of common sense (as long as it remains common sense) but it is an impoverished understanding of our history not to see how special science is in the business of understanding, explaining and gaining knowledge: in coming to know how things are.[28]

The second point I wish to make cuts against the pragmatists and for the potmodernists. Pragmatists as a matter of fact have been much too optimistic about the emancipatory powers of sciences and all the good things really scientific thinking will bring us. Enlightenment hopes here have not been realized or at best only sporadically so. Peirce's picture of the universe and even more so Dewey's was far too rosy and this continued on (though somewhat muted) with later pragmatists (Hook and Nagel) who, given the actual course of history, should have known better. (Contrast for a more realistic view of things here such other Enlightenment figures as Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno.)[29] Science and scientific intelligence has not freed us from prejudice, impoverishment, degradation, exploitation, and other great social and personal ills. The world we live in is not something to cheer about or rest content with. Baudrillard and Foucault powerfully show us how rotten things are and give us good reason to think a rosy future is not just around the corner. Foucault in particular is a genius in revealing the dark underside of things that at first seem emancipatory and progressive or at least as things making for human welfare rather than illfare. He shows how pervasively and insidiously they harm human beings crippling in all kinds of

complicated ways their self-realization. But from this we cannot draw the conclusion (something that Baudrillard in particular leaps to) that we cannot know anything, that everything is irrational, that science is a myth, and the like. This cannot follow from his account of how rotten things are. Indeed it is even incompatible with it. For only if his description is reasonably accurate and his interpretations are reasonable (plausible) can it be the case that we have reason to believe that things are as he says they are. If there is no such thing as accurate description, reasonable interpretation and rational inquiry, then there is no way of showing things are rotten or indeed are any other way. There just can be no showing what is the case. Moreover, Chomsky in our time, Russell before him and Weber still earlier powerfully conveyed a sense of the rottenness of things while resolutely applying scientific procedures. Weber with very few changes could have been a Peircean with respect to underlying methodology and was with Peirce in his respect for and confidence in the explanatory power of science. Yet his view of the world was, if anything, bleaker than even Baudrillard's or Foucault's. Science shows us, he thought, that we are in the iron-cage, not that our future is rosy and that democracy (bringing with it great blessings) will triumph. I am inclined to think that science neither shows us that we are in the iron-cage nor that our future is rosy. But that is not to the point here. The present point being rather that pragmatism with its trust in scientific method does not commit us to belief in a world of sweetness and light, where, with the progress of science, societies will become free, human beings emancipated, and the world just. A pragmatist could as consistently have a Weberian or Orwellian vision of the world as a Deweyan one. Confidence in the reliability of scientific method in fixing, and objectively fixing, belief and in the explanatory power of well-formed abductions is one thing; belief in science as a force for the good leading to a world that, with the spread of scientific ways of thinking, will become better and progressively more just is another thing altogether. Postmodernist scoffing at the latter is (though still perhaps

mistaken) very much to the point but it shows nothing at all against science's capacity to explain, interpret and accurately describe how things are.

Finally, I want to turn to a powerful point postmodernists have made about the self-image and role of intellectuals in general and philosophers in particular. In that respect almost all philosophers, whether they are pragmatists, Humeans, Kantians, Davidsonian holists, or Dummettian molecularists, see themselves as getting clear or at least clearer about things. Standardly this is viewed as a lonely endeavor, but even if it, as Peirce sometimes viewed it, is seen as a cooperative endeavor of disciplined logicians and scientist-philosophers, it still is viewed as a matter of getting clear about things—in some cases by some philosophers (though not by pragmatists) as getting finally and completely clear about things. The assumption is that there is the possibility of some such getting clear about things and that with that getting clear or at least clearer a greater enlightenment or emancipation will obtain at least for the successful inquirer herself but generally it is thought that it will, by spreading the word a bit, be more generally enlightening, emancipatory and liberating.

This is an image, a deep self-image, yielding, in a Weberian conception, a sense of vocation for philosophers. But it is a conception that postmodernists, along with Wittgenstein, challenge: Foucault with a kind of disguised moral passion and Derrida mockingly, ironically and playfully. There is, as Wittgenstein argued, no coherent conception of complete clarity; we can assemble reminders for a particular purpose and sometimes unblock a particular conceptual confusion; moreover, as Peirce and Dewey stressed, where in a specific situation with respect to a determinate problem there is the irritation of doubt, we can clarify these particular things and with a good abduction, subsequently tested, sometimes resolve that doubt. But it is not evident that this actually incrementally or by some quantum leap would add up to a clearer picture of the world rather than, as we muddle along, to the generating of further problems and so on indefinitely with the

old solutions frequently forgotten. The underlying but seldom articulated idea is that we can, if we only work at it very hard and very intelligently (using our "scientific intelligence"), finally really get clear about what rationality is, about how language works and about what the concept of truth is really like, and the like. We will then with this, proceeding as good scientific and commonsense reasoners—or perhaps as philosophical reasoners—gain the truth or at least get an edge up on the truth and what it is to think and perhaps to live rationally.

This familiar and comforting idea is for postmodernists the subject not only of considerable suspicion but of some not inconsiderable irony and ridicule as well. Truth, as later pragmatists such as Quine, Davidson and Rorty have argued, is not very useful as an explanatory concept.[30] We may very well, as Quine and Rorty think, get along perfectly well with disquotation. Moreover, while we can learn many truths (perfectly objective truths) often easily enough, we haven't the foggiest notion of what *the* truth is. Even the notion of a "true theory" is not very perspicuous and the notion of the true perspective of or on the world, the right picture of the world, or the correct (true) description of the world, is, for reasons Goodman, Rorty and Putnam have powerfully brought forth, probably (very probably) a Holmesless Watson. We do not know what we are talking about when we talk about the one true description of the world or the finally correct vocabulary; and, without a God's eye view or perspective or an Absolute conception of the world or a view from nowhere, nothing like this is even possible. But such conceptions themselves are at best impossible and at worst incoherent, with the best betting going on incoherence.

Davidson and Rorty have shown us that this does not land us in conceptual relativism (the very idea being incoherent), in nihilism or in subjectivism or any such bad things, but it does leave us without a view from nowhere yielding the one true description of the world.[31] We have no idea of what this would be like. Our discontents here, given our traditional self-image of our vocation,

will be exacerbated if beyond this we also think, as there are deep impulses in philosophy prompting us to think, that we need this one true description to help us to come to understand, or at least to gain some understanding of, "the truth about life." Perhaps the big-true-picture-image could be separated from the truth-about-life-image, as in Pascal and Kierkegaard, but both images, though for different reasons, are (to put it minimally) deeply problematic and perhaps, in spite of the wish of some of us to gain some inkling concerning "the truth about life," such conceptions are nonsensical and would be set aside by anyone who was clearheaded and toughminded. (Feminists have made us aware that we ought to query such vocabulary.) Indeed there may be good Freudian reasons for being suspicious of the soundness of the motives of anyone with a penchant for finding out what "the truth about life really is," though we should not forget that Freud had his tale to tell here too. (After all, didn't he think he was telling us, in a way we were bound to resist, something about the truth about life?)

In any event, it is certainly not unnatural to think that such considerations should be set aside. It is not only that we do not have the foggiest idea about what the one true description of the world is but we do not have the foggiest idea about what the truth about life is either. But then what does our self-image as attempting to get clear about things come to? It is not, let us now assume, getting clear about the "truth about life" or discovering or articulating what a just and truly humane society really is and how it could be sustained or the gaining of a greater approximation to the "true description of the world." But then what is it? Is it just to resolve, giving a perspicuous representation, some conceptual puzzles? Just any puzzles? Key puzzles? But, if we say the latter, on what ground do we say they are key? Austin thought that if we could show that it is not true that all cans are constitutionally iffy, then that resolution of this puzzle about cans would show us either the falseness or the problematicity ("determinism" being a name for nothing clear) of determinism

and that such a showing would in turn aid us in gaining a truer picture of the world. Something like this over a variety of issues has repeatedly been an underlying assumption of linguistic philosophers and others as well. But this seems at least to be implicitly appealing (and requiring that appeal) to the at least seemingly incoherent conception of the one true description of the world or at least something which is itself parasitic on that, namely, a truer or more adequate description of the world. But postmodernists and philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Rorty, Goodman, and Putnam have powerfully challenged whether we have any coherent conception of that. It seems at least that we have nothing coherent here. But then what happens to our self-image of getting clear or clearer about things?

We might take a Wittgensteinian turn and say we assemble reminders to break the spell of a particular conceptual confusion that has a grip on us. This might be good therapy. But if there is no correct description of the world why care about breaking conceptual confusion? Indeed what can "being unconfused" come to as distinct from "being confused"? What can Wittgenstein's sometimes talk about seeing things rightly come to? What, if we look at it toughmindedly, is the virtue of being unconfused, particularly if ever new confusions lurk around the corner and we do not at least, as one by one we dispel them, crawl toward a greater clarity of understanding: we do not come in time to in any more global or holistic sense to command a clearer view of things? That we can come to command such a clearer view at least looks very problematic, so problematic that it is natural enough to wonder if we have any coherent understanding of what that is. But if that is so, what (if anything) is the end of inquiry?[32] What is it that we are trying to do and why do we try to do it?

Wittgenstein sometimes, though with great ambivalence and skepticism, hoped an-occasion-by-occasion clarity concerning particular philosophical obsessions, rooted in particular confusions about the workings of our language, might sometimes help us to see our situation a little better and perhaps even to respond to it

more adequately without giving us (what he thought impossible and perhaps not even coherent) the correct or more nearly correct picture of our world or (what very well might come to the same thing) the correct overall picture of our language. (We see here the distance between Wittgenstein and Dummett.) But, as Wittgenstein was perfectly aware, there is at least as much reason for incredulity about so responding—that is, about so straightening the bent twigs of lives which are (as Kant believed) by their very nature prone to be crooked—as there is for being incredulous about gaining the right vocabulary which will finally yield the one true description of the world or for a time the best approximation to it. (If we have no understanding of what it is, we will have no understanding of its approximation either.)

What have we left then? For scientists, abductions that in turn can be confirmed or infirmed and deductively elaborated. For philosophers, by contrast, (where they are not themselves practicing a science or characterizing, as Peirce and Carnap did, its logic) all that seems to be left is the solving of puzzles (how is it possible that Achilles can catch up with the tortoise?) with no ulterior purpose or rationale. That, though small potatoes, can be good fun for those who like that sort of thing and so we come to a Derridian playfulness.

Peirce endeavored to ascertain how we can make our ideas clear, as did the logical positivists, in an effort to separate the wheat from the chaff, sense from nonsense, by providing us with a criterion of cognitive or at least factual significance, so that we could somehow gain a more adequate understanding of our world. I, for reasons the preceding paragraphs gesture at, am anything but sure that we understand what we are talking about here or that such an endeavor even makes sense. Yet I remain Peircean in retaining some such ***hope***. It goes, I believe, with the vocation and the vocation has a grip (perhaps an unfortunate grip) on how we—that is we philosophers—reflectively think about life. Postmodernists do us a good service in challenging this conception of ourselves as philosophers. It is a challenge that as far as I can see

has not been met and perhaps cannot be met. It will not do to knee-jerk react to them as the new irrationalists or obscurantists. That clouds things and perhaps does little more than reveal the anxieties of people who so react. What I hope for, to end on a more upbeat note, is that, while for Rortyish-Putnamish reasons we should reject all talk about the one true or correct description of the world, we could, that notwithstanding, perhaps give some reasonable sense to the idea of coming to know how things are without identifying the latter with the former. I am ambivalently inclined to think that Peirce did something toward that without having any very clear understanding of what I am saying. I throw it out to you as a vague abduction that might, just might, be precised into something which has something more than a suggestive, and perhaps only a mythical, import.

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NOTES

1. Kai Nielsen, *After the Demise of the Tradition* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991).

2. Linda J. Nicholson, ed., *Feminism/Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1990), Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell, eds., *Feminism as Critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).

3. Stanley Fish, *Doing What Comes Naturally* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990) and Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), and Richard Rorty, "Feminism and Pragmatism," *Radical Philosophy* 59 (Autumn 1991), 3-14. See also C.G. Prado, *The Limits of Pragmatism* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1987).

4. Christopher Norris, *What's Wrong with Postmodernism?* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 134-65, Christopher Norris, *Derrida* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), and Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

5. Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 32-120, David Couzens Hoy, ed., *Foucault: A Critical Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 1-40, 190-47, and Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

6. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1979) and *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

7. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* and Frederick Crews, *Skeptical Engagements* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 159-78.

8. Jean Baudrillard, *Oublier Foucault* (Paris: Editions Galilé, 1977), *Les Strategies Fatales* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1983), Mark Poster, ed., *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988). For critical comment see Christopher Norris, *What's Wrong with Postmodernism*, 164-93. See also W.J.T. Mitchell, ed., *Against Theory: Literary Theory and the New Pragmatism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

9. Peter Dews, *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (London: Verso, 1987), 6. See also his very perceptive introduction to Jürgen Habermas's *Autonomy and Solidarity* (London: Verso, 1986), 1-34.

10. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1980) and *Foucault Reader*, 239-89.

11. Nancy Fraser and Linda J. Nicholson, "Social Criticism Without Philosophy: An Encounter Between Feminism and Postmodernism", in Linda J. Nicholson, ed.,*Feminism/Postmodernism*, 19-38.

12. Stephen K. White, *Political Theory and Postmodernism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3.

13. See references in note 10.

14. Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*,xiii, 140-42.

15. White, *op. cit.*, 20.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Norris, *What's Wrong With Postmodernism*, 28.

18. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, eds. *Charles Sand-Peirce: Collected Papers, Vol. V* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934) and Arthur W. Burks, eds., *Charles Sanders Peirce: Collected Papers, Vol. VII* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958). References to Peirce will be from these texts and will be given in the text with the volume indicated by the volume number.

19. This feature of Peirce's thought is well articulated by W.B. Gallie, *Peirce and Pragmatism* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1952), 59-138.

20. Richard Rorty, *Essays on Heidegger and Others* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 164-76.

21. See references in note 18.

22. John P. Murphy brings out these links well in his *Pragmatism from Peirce to Davidson*(Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990).

23. Kai Nielsen, "Can There be Justified Philosophical Beliefs?" *Iyyun* 40 (July 1991), 235-70.

24. The "thus" there might be challenged. It is surely elliptical. I think, however, that the ellipses can be filled in. But I would not deny that here I am skating on what may be thin ice.

25. See Ernest Nagel, *Teleology Revisited and Other Essays in the Philosophy and History of Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 1-48, 64-94.

26. The holism here leaves the door open for there being individual sentences used to make truth-claims which are not themselves verifiable. It is just that they must be part of a cluster of sentences at least some of which are verifiable. But verification is not the only way of warding off mischief. Moreover, in being a part of a web of sentences, many of which are verifiable, it is not clear what it means to deny that there are any non-analytic indicative sentences there which are not verifiable, unless we wish arbitrarily to restrict 'being verifiable' to being 'di-

rectly verifiable'.

27. Nagel in the collection of essays cited in note 25 sought to resist that last claim. I did as well, particularly in Chapter 8 of my *After the Demise of the Tradition*, 163-94. But it is not, as I claimed there, that there is a general difference between scientific language-games and other language-games in the way words and things are related. Barry Allen's critique of me there is well-taken, but still the practices of experimental testing embedded in scientific practices, and thus in scientific language-games, give us a more reliable way of fixing belief than we have in other domains. There is, I am claiming, something of central importance about scientific method in the ascertainment of truth. Other conversations are not as good at tracking truth.

28. See the references to Nagel cited above. For Habermas on scientism see Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1970), 62-122.

29. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

30. See John P. Murphy, *Pragmatism From Peirce to Davidson*, Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, 126-61, W.V. Quine, *Pursuit of Truth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

31. Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, and Donald Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) and his "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge" in Alan Malachowski, ed., *Reading Rorty* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 120-38.

32. Richard Rorty, "Life at the End of Inquiry," *London Review of Books* (Aug 2 - Sep 6, 1984). See also his "Putnam on Truth," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 52 (1992) 415-418.