

with the German hermeneutical philosopher Hans-Georg GADAMER, is the figure most responsible for what has come to be called the “interpretive turn” in the human sciences. Ricoeur’s most outstanding contribution to philosophy has undoubtedly been the way he has enabled his readers to think afresh that age-old and central question of philosophy: the question as to who we ourselves are.

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Rorty

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Richard Rorty (1931– CE) has stressed his adherence to *antirepresentationalism*, by which he means an account “which does not view knowledge as a matter of getting reality right, but rather as a matter of acquiring habits of action for coping with reality” (Rorty, 1991a, p. 1). Rorty is frequently accused of being an antirealist, but that is to

confuse antirealism with antirepresentationalism. Antirepresentationalism rejects the whole antirealist/realist problematic, denying “that the notion of ‘representation,’ or that of ‘fact of the matter’ has any useful role in philosophy” (Rorty, 1991a, p. 2). So while Rorty is emphatically rejecting realism, he is not an antirealist. He is neither a realist nor antirealist. He is rejecting the whole idea that beliefs can represent reality.

Antirepresentationalism, which goes with the perspectivism and contextualism of pragmatism, rejects the so-called discipline of epistemology as well as metaphysics. There is no grand Appearance/Reality distinction, as we find in PLATO, DESCARTES, OR KANT, for, on an antirepresentationalist account, there can be no gaining a glimpse at how things are in themselves. Some allegedly privileged types of vocabulary – say physics – are thought by representationalists accurately to represent reality, while the other discourses are said to be mired in appearance. But with the demise of representationalism goes the very idea that there is some determinate way the world is, there to be discovered and accurately represented by some “true philosophy” – perhaps an epistemology or a philosophy of language (à la Michael DUMMETT) taken as First Philosophy, a philosophy foundational for the rest. Moreover, there is no science or yet-to-be-developed science that is going to be able to step in and do the job – giving the one true description of the world – that philosophy failed to do. There is no sense, if antirepresentationalism is on the mark, in claiming that one vocabulary is “closer to reality” than another. There just are different forms of discourse answering to different interests.

Rorty, consistently with his antirepresentationalism, is a *minimalist* about truth. He rejects correspondence, coherentist, and pragmatist theories of truth. Indeed, he thinks, we should have no *theory* of truth at all, though, given the long history of theories of truth, it is a good idea to have a descriptive account of how “true” functions in our language-games. His minimalist account says that a sentence “S” is true if and only if S. Thus “‘The cat is on the mat’ is true” if and only if the cat is on the mat. This bare and correct statement of what it means to assert something to be true does not commit one to a correspondence, coherence, or pragmatic theory of truth or indeed to any *theory* of truth at all. It does not say “that behind the true sentence S, there is a sentence-shaped piece of non-linguistic reality called ‘the fact of S’ – a set of relations between objects which hold independently of language – which makes ‘S’ true” (Rorty 1991a, p. 4). We do not have any understanding of what it would be for such a correspondence to obtain. But this denial of correspondence must not lead us to think that truth is something we make up or construct. Our linguistic practices do not determine what is true, though we can only *speak* of something being true or false by engaging in the appropriate linguistic practices. That, however, is a different thing from saying our linguistic practices produce truth or make certain things true. However, Rorty also rejects claims made by correspondence theories of truth to a correspondence between language and the world. They require of us the impossible, namely to be able to stand somewhere outside of language and to compare language and the world to see whether they do or do not correspond to each other like a map corresponds to what is mapped or a photograph to what is photographed.

There are, of course, links between our language and the rest of the world, but these links are *causal* not *epistemological*. Our language like our bodies is shaped by our environment. Indeed, our language could no more be “out of touch” with our

environment – grandiosely the world – than our bodies could. What Rorty denies is that there is any *explanatory* or *epistemic* point in trying to pick out and then choose among the contents of our language – or of our minds – and then claim that this or that item “corresponds” to reality in a way some other item of a different type does not, e.g. all ethical characterizations of our situation are out of touch with reality, while the correct characterizations of physics are not. Moreover, the property truth is neither a normative property giving us criteria for correcting our beliefs nor an explanatory property explaining why we have the beliefs we have or regard some beliefs as justified and warranted and other beliefs not.

When it comes to determining what we are justified in believing and doing, what is needed is as thorough a coherence of beliefs as we can attain, though crucially some of those beliefs will be considered judgments which will be taken to have some *initial* credibility. They are part of our inescapable cultural given. There will be some such givens in all cultures, though the content will vary *in part*. However, there will also be a considerable overlap from culture to culture. But if some of our considered judgments, even our firmest ones, do not fit into a wide coherentist pattern, then they should either be modified until they do fit or be rejected. And this could be true of any of them. None is immune from the *possibility* of rejection. Attaining this pattern of coherence will be a matter of winnowing some of them out, but not *holes bolus* trying to throw out all of them or even the bulk of them. We justify one belief in terms of others by weaving and unweaving our web of beliefs until we, for a time, get the most coherent pattern we can forge. But we never escape fallibilism and historicism. What we are justified in believing – taking for true – comes to forging what for a time is the widest and most coherent pattern of beliefs we can muster. We also need to have an intersubjective consensus concerning this. It is these two things which, Rorty has it, give us the only viable conception of objectivity that we can have or need (Rorty, 1991a, pp. 175–96).

Such a coherentist account is not only antirepresentationalist but antifoundationalist and holist as well. There are no basic beliefs yielding certainties or even near certainties on which all the rest of our knowledge and justified beliefs are based. Neither science nor philosophy, nor anything else, can deliver such beliefs. There is no point at which our words or thoughts just represent our sense impressions or atomic facts on which all our other knowledge is based. We have no such simple certainties or foundational knowledge. What we have instead is a fallibilistic, coherentist method of fixing belief, replacing epistemology and replacing as well a deductivist model of justification with a coherentist one.

With the abandonment of foundationalism and with it a Kantian understanding of the key task of epistemology, we abandon a classical self-image of the philosopher as someone who stands in some privileged perspective and can tell us in all domains, or indeed in any substantive domain, what counts as genuine knowledge. We give up the deceptive self-conceit that the philosopher can know things that no one can else can know so well. There is no possible transcendental perspective where, independently of some particular social practices and some particular domains, we can say what knowledge is, and correct the ways of science or common sense or our common life by appealing to some conception of superior *philosophical* knowledge which enables us to judge common-sense beliefs and science and give the “real foundations of knowledge.”

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Rousseau

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Together with most other philosophers of the age of Enlightenment, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778 CE) stood for the forces of reason and light in their struggle against the dark brutalities of superstition. But in contending that the diffusion of knowledge had promoted vice rather than virtue, he also denied one of the Enlightenment's most central claims. He agreed with its advocates that human nature was fundamentally good and that mankind had a limitless capacity for self-improvement. In his *Discourse on Inequality* of 1755 he even coined the word *perfectibility* to encapsulate the optimism so widely embraced in eighteenth-century theories of progress, which, like his own philosophy, rejected the Christian notion of original sin. Yet no statement could be more subversive of what is sometimes termed "The Enlightenment Project" than his contention, in his first *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* of 1750, that our arts, letters, and sciences are "spread like garlands of flowers around the iron chains by which mankind is weighed down."

Rousseau's diverse accounts of the stages of human history portray his deep hostility to the trappings of civilization as he understood them, including its specious learning, false refinements, political despotism, and moral decadence. As against most advocates of enlightenment, he lamented the loss of mankind's primitive simplicity and purity in passing from its state of nature to the domains of culture. Especially in his pronounce-

ments on Sparta and Rome, he was one of the most conspicuous supporters of the ancients against the moderns. Such themes estranged him from progressive and cosmopolitan thinkers of his day and at the same time endeared him to romantic critics of the age of reason, and in the French Revolution to republicans who opposed the old regime on similar grounds.

He thought that the history of all our social institutions and practices, from music and language to private property and the state, illustrated the extent and depth of the self-inflicted corruption of mankind. While the enchanting languages of antiquity once expressed our natural passions, the prosaic languages we now employ are best suited for commerce and trade, he claimed. If the classics of modern jurisprudence are designed to teach us to respect the rule of law, in Rousseau's philosophy they instead explain how our transformation from savages into citizens had been made possible by our own consent to despotism, which we had confused with justice. More than any other major Western thinker, he was convinced that our social qualities were acquired characteristics and had not been implanted within us by Nature. Contradicting HOBBS and LOCKE among the pre-eminent political thinkers of the modern world, he claimed that neither war nor property could have existed in our original state. Our ancestors must have been self-reliant and robust, but with the establishment of society, he argued, their nature would have been transformed as every individual would have come to perceive his or her identity only through the opinions of others.

Such themes are elaborated in a number of Rousseau's writings, from his *Discourse on Inequality* to his *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, dating largely from the 1760s. According to his philosophy, civilization had plunged us into barbarism rather than freed us from it. Society had not offered us a solution to the defects of our original condition, since that condition had not been defective and it was society itself which generated the harm it purported to cure. The guiding thread of all his writings is articulated in the opening line of *Emile*, published in 1762, where Rousseau remarks that "everything is good when it springs from the hands of our creator; everything degenerates in the hands of man." In subscribing to an optimistic theory of human nature which estranged him from the Church, and to a pessimistic theory of human history which estranged him from other philosophers of his day, he was to spend virtually the whole of his adult life in conflict with both the conservative and the progressive intellectual establishments of his day. His was a distinctive account of mankind's fall, which, unlike that of the Bible, was attributed to the ravages of our social history rather than to Adam's sin.

In several botanical and autobiographical works, especially his posthumously published *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, he evoked images of blissful solitude in Nature's wilderness, which were to inspire generations of poets after him who were equally drawn to the robust attractions of an uncultivated world. But while he sought to disengage himself from the trifling and noxious adornments of civilization and from all forms of dependence on other persons, Rousseau was also captivated by notions of spontaneous social development, cooperation and even the collective identity of individuals in pursuit of common ideals. His programme of education in *Emile* has as its central aim the freeing of children from the tyranny of adult expectations, so that their faculties may develop, each in its good time. Children should be permitted to pass from infancy to puberty and adolescence before they become adults, he argued, in pro-

pounding a scheme of natural education instead of doctrinal pedagogy such as he associated with teachings of Locke. This aspect of his philosophy also set him apart from other thinkers of the Enlightenment, like Helvétius and James Mill after him, who supposed that human nature was infinitely malleable and that therefore the right education could achieve everything. While totalitarian schemes of political indoctrination are often said to follow from Rousseau's philosophy, his own plan of education was actually designed to do everything by doing nothing, as he put it, rather than to train minds or breed character.

His remarks on the education of women in *Emile* continue to attract fierce criticism from commentators who, like Mary WOLLSTONECRAFT at the end of the eighteenth century, dispute his claim that sexual differences give rise to differences of spiritual or intellectual needs. Rousseau believed that women ought not to partake of the same education as men, since they have greater powers of observation but less genius, and even as adults appear to retain a central feature of their childhood, the proper function of their sex being to produce children themselves. His main point about the sexuality of women really follows from his Platonic notion that the human soul is possessed by love. Men and women find their fulfilment in each other, he thought, with a fully developed moral being formed out of the union of husband and wife.

In his own lifetime, while also afflicted with paranoia in his later years, he suffered real persecution above all for his philosophy of religion. His argument for a purely civil profession of faith, which figures in his *Social Contract* of 1762, excluded all holy canons or sacraments. He insisted that no genuine republic could be Christian, since true Christians care only for the salvation of their souls and are indifferent to the worldly preservation of their state. In his "Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar" of *Emile*, he elaborated the principles of a natural as opposed to revealed religion, according to which God has granted everyone conscience to love the good, reason to know it, and freedom to choose it. God's plain truth is not secreted in arcane books of Scripture, Rousseau claimed, but inscribed in all languages in the open book of Nature. Such propositions excited the censure of the Roman Catholic Church in particular, and in 1762 Rousseau was forced to flee France for his safety, with both *Emile* and the *Social Contract* denounced not only there but also in his native Geneva, of which he had been a proud citizen.

While living in a world dominated by principles of commerce and luxury most prevalent in vast monarchies like France, Rousseau always regarded himself as a fiercely independent republican of a small Protestant country whose citizens of modest taste were politically equal. Following Montesquieu, he stressed the need for a state's civil laws to correspond with the laws engraved in its people's hearts – that is, their customs. He agreed with other social contract thinkers before him that the only form of legitimate rule in a state is the consent of its subjects, but as distinct from earlier advocates of that doctrine, he maintained that the fundamental purpose of political association is to realize its members' freedom in a sovereign assembly of all citizens rather than to forfeit their liberty by transferring their rights to their government. His notion of the general will incorporates that principle of the absolute sovereignty of the people to rule themselves, which excludes any system of representation according to which people merely elect their legislators. Parliaments whose business was financed by taxation, he thought, were no less corrupt than monarchical despotism, since the

subjects of such states just hired their deputies, contributing to the public domain with their purses and not their persons. For this reason, Rousseau was as hostile to the political system of England as he was to that of France. In each case, he thought, the administrators of the people's will had become their rulers, executive government standing in place of popular sovereignty. No one in the eighteenth century was more adamant that democracy and representation are incompatible, each with the other.

In his *Letter on the Theater* of 1758, he opposed theatrical notions of representation as well, insisting that in festivals and public spectacles the captive witnesses to stage performances should become actors themselves and thus the authors of their own amusements. In the constitutions he drafted for Corsica in 1764 and then for Poland in 1770, he extolled the same virtues of national self-determination and popular self-reliance which had inspired readers of his *Social Contract* in those fledgling states to turn to him for guidance. In appealing to the political values of the republics of antiquity, Rousseau put forward a conception of liberty in connection with equality and fraternity which was to make him appear the philosophical legislator of modern France. In 1794, his ashes were enshrined in the Pantheon of Paris.

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Royce

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Josiah Royce (1855–1916 CE) was born in the mining town of Grass Valley, California, only five years after that territory had joined the Union as its thirty-first state. Imbued with the spirit of the American frontier, with all its forces of restless seeking, pronounced individualism, and lively ambivalence toward community laws and established authority, Royce created a philosophical system which reflected that early social problematic. Those themes helped to reinforce the orientations of his graduate

studies, at German universities and then Johns Hopkins, in romanticism and post-Kantian idealism. Some main emphases in Royce's mature philosophy, especially those of a pragmatic ideality, of a socially interactive individuality, and of an Absolute Will which authorizes the whole of reality, bespeak the enduring American quest for a rational social order, a quest informed by the dialectics of German voluntaristic idealism. In part, then, Royce's philosophy forms a chapter in the appropriation of certain strains of nineteenth-century German philosophy by the American mind as it sought to interpret itself.

During his immensely influential thirty-year teaching career at Harvard, Royce's philosophical horizons were subtly reframed through critical discussions with such other Harvard philosophers and lecturers as William JAMES, Charles Sanders PEIRCE, and George SANTAYANA. The pragmatism of James, the logicism and metaphysical realism of Peirce, and the critical naturalism of Santayana all contributed to the development of Royce's inquiries. Indeed, Royce developed his version of absolute idealism under the rubric Absolute Pragmatism. Moreover, it was partly due to Peirce's relentless criticism of Royce's early reliance upon a subject–predicate logic that Royce became fully adept at the newer symbolic logic, which served to take him away from schema relying upon an idealistic logic of internal relations and move him toward a realistic logic of external relations. Because of these modifications in his theory of relations, Royce's heightened appreciation of the uniqueness of persons in his mature ethics of loyalty differs from his earlier ethics and social theory, which had treated individuals as aspects of the Absolute. The ethics of loyalty stresses that acts are good not because of some goal attained, but because they are under the guidance of rational norms. These help to identify our allegiance to our actual community, to the ideal community which is implicit in it, and ultimately to God, in whom all loyalty is grounded.

Still, it was Royce's theory of the Absolute, worked out in his two series of Gifford Lectures at the University of Aberdeen in 1898–9, and published as *The World and the Individual*, for which he is best known. It shows to great advantage how his philosophy is embedded in epistemological issues concerning the correctness of judgments and inferences, as those issues arise in the several sciences. What begins for him as a theory of knowledge gradually becomes a theory of being and reality. Since his dissertation at Johns Hopkins had focused on KANT'S approach to the role of the forms or categories in our cognitions, Royce was practiced in using the transcendental method to seek out the perceptual and conceptual conditions which constitute the grounds of our knowledge and lead us to a knowledge of the Absolute. His theory of the Absolute is set out to best advantage, as an answer to his critics, in the famous Supplementary Essay to the First Series of the Gifford Lectures. This Essay is entitled "The one, the many, and the infinite." Royce argues there that an actually infinite multitude is embedded in a vast system of internal relations within the Absolute. Called System Sigma by him, this Absolute replicates or creates mirror images of itself in all the fine detail of interdependent things and events. The Absolute is an organic whole, an infinite, self-representative system whose dispersed characters give only the appearance, but not the reality, of separate existents. For Royce, then, the Absolute is a unity-in-diversity.

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Russell

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Bertrand Arthur William Russell, third Earl Russell (1872–1970 CE), was born into an aristocratic English family with considerable political tradition and influence. Both his parents died before he turned four; he was brought up by his paternal grandmother, who seems to have been a rigid and domineering character with a powerful sense of duty. He went up to Trinity College Cambridge in 1890, and studied mathematics for three years before taking up philosophy. The outbreak of the First World War aroused Russell’s vehement opposition; his anti-war work led to his dismissal from his position as lecturer at Trinity College in 1916, and to his being jailed in 1918. He was reappointed by Trinity in 1920, but soon resigned. Thereafter, he was financially dependent upon sales of books and essays; energy which might have gone into academic philosophy thus went into popular writings. After the Second World War he received the Order of Merit (1949) and the Nobel Prize for literature (1950); he nevertheless devoted much of his time to political activism, in opposition to the establishment. He was motivated by an understanding of the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and, later, by his opposition to the involvement of the United States in Vietnam; in his nineties he again became well known as an anti-war activist.

Russell wrote voluminously, and with astonishing facility, over a immense range both of genres and of subjects. It is, however, his philosophical work on logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and related issues which is of lasting value. His writings on these topics from the first two decades of the twentieth century played a large role in setting the tone and framing the questions for what came to be known as “analytic