PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY, AND PROGRESS

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I will explicate the commitments and consequences of three metaphilosophical views: Metaphilosophical Realism (MR), Metaphilosophical Skepticism (MS), and Metaphilosophical Pragmatism (MP). These three views will be distinguished on several grounds, including their views on truth, reason, and progress. I will show that MR views philosophy's relation to history as merely one as a form of pedagogy that is meant to give pupils the self-confidence to make sense of things in a particular way. For MS, philosophy lies forfeit to history, and historiography replaces philosophy as it shows an incommensurable plurality of ways of making sense. MP, however, takes historiography to be an essential part of philosophy for it reconciles distinct ways of making sense by redescribing them. In order to make redescription palatable both to redescriber and redescribed, we must conceive of a way of making sense as a skill rather than a collection of propositions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction : History and Philosophy

"Let my son read and often meditate on history; it is the only true philosophy"

-Napoleon

In this thesis, I engage in a creative and interpolative reading of the neo-pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty regarding the nature of philosophy. Later I argue that certain features of R.G. Collingwood's work provide a Rortian account with valuable additional resources.

What is largely responsible for the uniqueness of my reading is that it focuses on a very early, and what is probably Rorty's most obscure, paper as a central text.[1] The text in question, "Recent Metaphilosophy", outlines three distinct metaphilosophical positions. The thesis is therefore concerned with reading Rorty as developing these metaphilosophical positions throughout his work. The three positions are *metaphilosophical realism* (MR), *metaphilosophical scepticism* (MS), and *metaphilosophical pragmatism* (MP). I take the English philosopher, R.G. Collingwood to be a fellow a traveler of Rorty's, such that not only is Rorty's metaphilosophy helpful for understanding Collingwood, but Collingwood is helpful for ameliorating a weakness in Rorty.

Part 1 of the thesis is a reading of Rorty in terms of the trifecta of metaphilosophical positions, and is composed of four sections, some of which are broken up into constitutive sub-sections.

In section 1.1), by looking at "Recent Metaphilosophy", I outline the commitments that constitute MR, MS, and MP. In elaborating on these

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[1] "Recent Metaphilosophy" is not even cited by serious readers of Rorty, and isn't even contained in a recent collection of early Rorty writings *Richard Rorty: Mind, Language, and Metaphilosophy*. Interestingly enough, Herman Cappellen quoted "Recent Metaphilosophy" at a conference at Simon Fraser University in 2017. Sadly, after quoting Rorty, he admitted to not understanding the paper itself.

commitments, it becomes apparent that all three positions differ on how to understand philosophical disagreement and what to do about it. I also highlight one of the authors discussed by Rorty in "Recent Metaphilosophy", Henry Johnstone. Johnstone argues for the idea that philosophical arguments are actually *ad hominem* as opposed to *ad rem*. While Johnstone's examples of this are not particularly compelling, I argue that MP, in contradistinction from MR and MS, accepts the idea that philosophical argument should be conducted *ad hominem* instead of *ad rem*.

In section 1.2) I introduce the "what-is-philosophy?" question and float the idea that there are two answers to it: the constitutive answer, and the non-constitutive answer. MR and MS endorse the constitutive answer and therefore conceive of philosophy as kind of normal discourse[2]. MP takes the non-constitutive answer, and therefore conceives of philosophy as revolutionary/abnormal discourse, I then expand on how MR, MS, and MP relate to the topics of truth and rationality. MR and MS take the acquisition of true propositions to be the goal of philosophy, whereas MP does not. MR and MS share a view of concepts that presupposes concepts are fully determinate prior to application, while MP takes the content of concepts to be determined by application.

Also in section 1), I use the phrase "making sense" and "making sense of things". Making sense is not given a definition, and a precise definition cannot be given. The phrase comes from Bernard Williams (2002) and is made a big deal of by Adrian Moore (2012). What it takes to make sense of things is to some extent up for grabs. At minimum, making sense has to do with intelligibility, though that may seem like a truism. Making sense also has to do with explanation; by explaining we are making sense. The notions intelligibility and explanation are, at this very high level

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[2] Like Rorty I apply an analog of T.S. Kuhn's distinction between "normal science" and the science involved in "scientific revolutions".

of abstraction, left open too, since commitments as to the nature of intelligibility and explanation would entail taking a stance on first-order philosophical issues, rather than the metaphilosophical level at which MR, MS, and MP are described. Over the course of the thesis it becomes clear that while MR holds there to be only one way of making sense of things, MS believes in a plurality of ways of making sense of things. Like MS, MP is aware of a plurality of ways of making sense, but believes some ways of making sense, are capable of making more or better sense than others.

In section 1.3) the different notions of progress for MR, MS, and MP are elaborated. Here the relevance (or lack thereof) of history to philosophy is discussed. I attach to each of MR, MS, and MP one of the Rorty's genres of philosophical historiography. The genre for MR is *rational reconstruction*, which tells a progressive narrative of how we came to make sense of things the way we now do. MS's genre of historiography, *historical reconstruction*, tells a genealogy of how a way of making sense came to be by distinguishing it from other ways of making sense. Rational reconstructions, I argue, give us the self-confidence to make sense of things the way that we do, and are, for that very reason, not strictly part of philosophy itself, but rather parts of the pedagogy of philosophy. Historical reconstructions give us the self-awareness to acknowledge other ways of making sense, which teaches us to give up on the idea that disagreement is going to be overcome rationally. MP's genre, the *Geistesgeschichte,* tries to have both self-confidence and self-awareness by reconciling different ways of making sense in a new (and historical) way of making sense that makes more sense. Unlike MR, which takes historiography not to be a proper part of philosophy, and MS, which has dispensed with philosophy to make room for historiography, MP sees historiography as philosophy.

Since MP is trying resolve disagreement by providing progressive narratives that retain the insights of prior times (Geistesgeschichte), thereby showing how a new way of making sense of things can make more sense of things, MP needs a political regime which can allow and encourage plurality. It also needs conditions conducive to the production of new consensus. Therefore, MP needs a liberal polity. However, MR and MP can have liberal polities too, and Rorty runs precisely into the issue of not being able to distinguish MP liberalism from MS liberalism because on his account agents will have no reason to see being redescribed (as Geistesgeschichte do) as acceptable. This is why I turn to Collingwood.

In part 2), after building a case to take seriously the idea that Collingwood may hold MP, I show how Collingwood's account of re-enactment is able to make being redescribed acceptable. This is because, while our understanding is always conceptually mediated, the actual object of understanding is not a philosophical view, but an agent. So while a Geistesgeschichte, integrates a plurality of ways of making sense into a new way of making sense, it is actually integrating the making sense capacity of agents. In being properly understood and integrated into a successful Geistesgeschichte that generates assent, and thus dissolves disagreement, we achieve a kind immortality because our capacity to make sense can be preserved beyond our individual will.

1) Richard Rorty: The Taxonomy of Metaphilosophies

"... both controversy that is always in principle adjudicable and controversy that is never in principle adjudicable are pointless. Controversy has a point only if its participants are entitled to hope both that their dispute can be settled and that the conditions under which it arose can be maintained. But this hope is warranted only in [...] the context of history." - Henry Johnstone Jr. , "New Outlooks On Controversy", *Review of Metaphysics*, 1958

1.1) How Rorty Sees Metaphilosophy

In 1961, Richard Rorty moved to Princeton, New Jersey after having spent three years as a faculty member at Wellesley College. Rorty's career was in an upward swing. The world had not been brought to the brink yet. Vietnam had not yet shattered American resolve. There was cause for hope, and optimism. In 1961 it is unlikely many Americans had any idea of what would be in store for them in that decade. This sense of the times might go some way to explain the simultaneously relaxed and self-assured tone of "Recent Metaphilosophy" (Rorty 1961). This highly abstract, synoptic, and ambitious paper, is in effect a comparative book review of Everett W. Hall's *Philosophical Systems* and Henry W. Johnstone's *Philosophy and Argument*. Both books are now long out of print and both authors are victims of obscurity. In spite of this, Rorty's obscure and forgotten paper, about the obscure and forgotten, is an excellent road map for seeing how Rorty saw philosophy.

Rorty defines metaphilosophy as reflection on an inconsistent triad of propositions. The triad is:

(1) A game in which each player is at liberty to change the rules whenever he wishes can neither be won nor lost. (2) In philosophical controversy, the terms used to state criteria for the resolution of arguments mean different things to different philosophers; thus each side can take the rules of the game of controversy in a sense which will guarantee its own success (thus, in effect, changing the rules). (3) Philosophical arguments are, in fact, won and lost, for some philosophical positions do, in fact, prove weaker than others. (Rorty 1961: 299)[3]

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[3] Treating philosophy as a game, i.e. a rule-governed activity, acts as a way of articulating the presence of both ends, and normative constraints on the means to achieving those ends.

The thought behind (1), is that if we think of philosophy as a rule-governed activity (a game) whose rules delineate legal from illegal moves, and if participants in this activity were to be granted the liberty to change these rules, then players could declare their opponents' moves illegal. Any player has the power to deny victory to their opponent, and any player has the power to change the rules to thus reassert victory only to have it denied again. (2) is simply the proposition that gives us that power to change the rules, and thus define our own success and our opponents' failure. Asserting (1) is to take establishing the truth of a propositional thesis as constituting winning. Asserting (2) is to endorse a voluntaristic view about rationality, such that merely by willing it, we can change the very content of rationality, and thus the rules of the philosophy-game. Likewise, denying (2) is to endorse a kind of intellectualism: the rules of rationality do not change at a whim. Asserting (3), is to believe in the possibility of philosophical progress, though the account of progress changes depending on whether (1), or (2), is also asserted.

Rorty called the view that asserted: (1) and (3), *metaphilosophical realism* (MR); (1) and (2), *metaphilosophical skepticism* (MS); (2) and (3), *metaphilosophical pragmatism* (MP) (299-302). As far as I can tell, this is an exhaustive list of positions. I do not know what it would be like for someone to endorse only one of the propositions of the inconsistent triad, while denying the other two. For example, endorsing only (1) while denying (2) and (3). My current contention is that if someone tried to present a view that endorsed only one of the inconsistent triad propositions, it either would prove so weak that the position would be fairly uninteresting, or would, over the course of actually uncovering the substance of the view, turn out to actually endorse a second proposition of the inconsistent triad. No

argument herein depends upon this categorization being exhaustive; only that the three being considered (MR, MS, MP) are serious competitors to one another.

From the point of view of MR, not only is philosophy rule governed, but those rules are not up for grabs. Philosophical problems have criteria that constitute what it takes to count as having solved them. It is in light of these criteria, the rules of the philosophical game, that we are able to justify our proposed solutions to philosophical problems. Of course, there are a number of ways we can account for such immutable and non-negotiable parts of philosophical practice. One way is to appeal to common sense or intuition. This is to claim there are propositions whose truth must be preserved in any systematic philosophical account. Failure to preserve the truth of such propositions is to no long play within the bounds of philosophy. Another response is to delay giving such an answer and believe that a consensus on the constitutive rules of philosophy will inevitably emerge at the end of inquiry. This is what Rorty calls "eschatological" realism (301).[4]

But how do we know the rules of philosophy? And in cases of controversy how are we supposed to resolve disputes, when the method for deciding disputes is the very thing being disputed? I have seen question and answer sessions at conferences and colloquia unsatisfactorily concluded with the proverbial "dull thud of conflicting intuitions". Moreover, appeals to common sense are quickly blunted when it is discovered how uncommon common sense really is. The persistence of disagreement at first-order level results from deep disagreement at a second-order level. As Gary Gutting says, "throughout the philosophical community as a whole, it seems that there is almost always fundamental disagreement about even the

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[4] In a sense, even common sense realism, is eschatological. Since the common sense realist believes philosophical problems (in so far as we are capable of solving them) are solved when the true answers to them are given. This is a project with a conclusion, ie. proving all the answers that we have the capacity to provide.

strongest arguments, so that we can never say that philosophy as a discipline knows

the answer to any central philosophical question" (Gutting 2009: 2). Given the

persistence of disagreement (by virtue of making sense of things differently) what

are we to do? While it may seem like the eschatological realist gets to avoid the

problem, as they only expect consensus to happen at the end of inquiry, this is an

article of faith, and cannot advise one on how to actually achieve consensus.

One answer is to be a dogmatist. We can claim to know the rules of

philosophy better than our peers. While this preserves MR, it comes at the cost of

seeing our peers as in error insofar as they disagree with us. However, any reasons

we could give for why we know the true rules of philosophy while our peers don't

seems to come down to delusions of exaggerated self-importance and insight. Of

course stories of enlightenment and awakening can be told to make it sound more

plausible.

Alternatively, we could switch from denying (2) to endorsing (2), and if we still

affirm 1), we would consequently deny (3). This is MS. MS accepts the fact that we

are able keep disagreement going by, so to speak, turning a modus ponens into a

modus tollens. We are able to change the rules of the philosophy to our own ends.

There is thus no position from which to judge who is ultimately right or wrong.

Instead at a first-order level we see ourselves (and those that agree with us) as right

and those that disagree with us as wrong. But at a second-order level (the level of

the rules of philosophy) we acknowledge our peers are simply changing the rules on

us. From this we might concluded that "philosophy is no occupation for grown men"

(Rorty 1961: 300). As Rorty observed reflecting back on his philosophical

development:

The more philosophers I read, the clearer it seemed that each of them could carry their
views back to first principles which were incompatible with the first principles of their

opponents, and that none of them ever got to that fabled place 'beyond hypotheses'. [...] Eventually I got over the worry about circular argumentation by deciding that the test of philosophical truth was overall coherence, rather than deducibility from unquestioned first principles. But this didn't help much. For coherence is a matter of avoiding contradictions, and St. Thomas's advice, 'When you meet a contradiction, make a distinction,' makes that pretty easy. As far as I could see, philosophical talent was largely a matter of proliferating as many distinctions as were needed to wriggle out of a dialectical corner. More generally, it was a matter, when trapped in such a corner, of redescribing the nearby intellectual terrain in such a way that the terms used by one's opponent would seem irrelevant, or question-begging, or jejune. I turned out to have a flair for such redescription. But I became less and less certain that developing this skill was going to make me either wise or virtuous. (Rorty 1999: 10).

While an adoption of MS may stem, as in Rorty's case, from a realization of the truth of (2), in light of the dialectical powers our colleagues possess, we don't necessarily make this transition self-consciously. One way to look at academic specialization (and hyper-specialization) is that it mimics in practice a gradual transition from MR to MS, since fewer and fewer philosophers are actually "playing the same game". This means we can, in practical terms, think of MR and MS as extremes on a spectrum. At the MR end all inquirers who believe themselves to be talking about/doing philosophy will believe all the others to be talking about/doing the same thing, and intending to be speaking univocally (even if they happen to be in error). At the MS end of the continuum inquirers take themselves to be speaking equivocally with respect to greater and greater numbers of purported colleagues. Such that their group of interlocutors becomes progressively smaller and smaller. At the extreme end, as MS would entail, we take ourselves to be speaking univocally with respect to only those with whom there is complete agreement. When we see more and more of our colleagues, as engaged in projects not univocal with our own, then we may have unconsciously slipped into MS.

We seem forced into one of: 1) a dogmatism to maintain being univocal with fellow inquirers; or 2) holding to empty platitudes about the promise of consensus at the end of inquiry; or acknowledging that persistent disagreement might indicate

deep metaphilosophical disagreement entailing that philosophical discourse is inherently equivocal. This might give us pause to simply dispense with metaphilosophy altogether. In articulating the metaphilosophical worries of Nicholas Rescher and Hilary Kornblith, Bob Plant characterizes metaphilosophy as "a perilous endeavour", since it undermines our confidence in our first order philosophical commitments and puts us in a problematic dilemma between MR and MS (Plant 2012: 582). For both MR and MS it doesn't matter if the practitioners have a metaphilosophy themselves. For MR philosophical disagreement arises because there is genuine error as to how to solve a problem, while for MS disagreement implies equivocation on regarding what the problems are, as well as how to solve them. Yet no practicing philosopher needs to know if persistent disagreement is a product of error or equivocation, and it doesn't help them do philosophy to know. This property of MR and MS will be expanded upon below.

Metaphilosophical Pragmatism (MP) attempts to ameliorated these metaphilosophical worries by, as Rorty says, making "a virtue of necessity" (Rorty 1961: 301). By accepting (2), MP recognizes the power of inquiries to redefine the rules, and thereby change the problems and solutions. Yet, unlike MS, MP believes progress is still possible, and some positions are better than others.

> This game can be won by attending to the patterns by which these rules are changed, and formulating rules in terms of which to judge changes of rules. Those who take this view hold that philosophy in the old style - philosophy as "metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology" -needs to be replaced by metaphilosophy. (301)

"The task of metaphilosophy", says Rorty, "is [to] formulate an ethics of controversy - a set of rules about how to set up rules." (302). That said, the rest of "Recent Metaphilosophy" is incredibly sketchy in this regard. Rorty probably didn't intend to give a full account of what an "ethics of controversy" would amount to here. Instead, I believe the rest of Rorty's career has, in its constructive moments, been an

effort to give flesh to MP, and in doing so, give a fuller account of an "ethics of controversy".

Still, "Recent Metaphilosophy" contains a number of good starting points for getting a better understanding of MP, particularly in the discussion of Henry Johnstone Jr. In Rorty's reconstruction of Johnstone, a distinction is made between the quotidian non-philosophical level of discourse, and the reflective philosophical level. At the non-philosophical level, the realistic commitments of ordinary speech are taken at face value, but "philosophical statements are distinctive precisely in that they are *not* subject to being tested by correspondence"[5] (311). This accompanies a distinction between two views of truth. This is not, however, about competing theories of truth such as correspondence, coherence, or disquotational. In a sense, all of those theories are the same, in that they all take truth to be a property of a sentence. According to Johnstone, that kind of truth is, in fact, non-philosophical. Philosophical statements are taken to be "true to" a problem, and problems are the results of disagreement (312). This order of explanation makes the disagreement between interlocutors prior to a logic that describes the disagreements (313). This disallows employing a neutral logic for describing the controversy. Johnstone claims (but Rorty largely leaves out the explanation), "The truth of any statement is relative to argument when it is impossible to think of a statement as true without at the same time thinking of an argument in its favor, and it is impossible to think of it as false without at the same time thinking of an argument against it" (313). Two interlocutors are in such a controversy because one only sees arguments for their philosophical

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[5] "Correspondence" here is being used in a quotidian sense. For example, if we want to know the dimensions of a piece of paper, the answer to that inquiry corresponds to the measurements a ruler would make. There is a sufficient amount of presupposed agreement here such that the method for determining the answer is assumed. "Correspondence", in this sense can only exist when there is agreement or a lack of controversy. The fact that the philosophical theory of correspondence truth ignores this makes it unacceptable for MP.

statements, and arguments against their opponent's philosophical statements. This looks like where MS ended up, and it would be if it weren't for that fact that there is a bit of a way out. For MS, the story ended here because we could manipulate the rules such that we always had an argument or reasons for our claims, and our opponents could do the same. Consistency was, in principle, assured. Johnstone introduces another level where we can criticize consistency — not between the philosophical statement and the rest of the system, but between the philosophical statement and the intentions of the interlocutor. This is what Johnstone was infamous for; the idea that all successful argument is actually *ad hominem* (to the person). Which was done by showing how the philosophical statements propounded by the interlocutor did not line up with the intentions of the interlocutor himself.

It would thus be an ethics of controversy: not a "substantive" ethics, for it would not tell a man which arguments to propound, but rather a "formalist" ethics which would tell him what his responsibilities were to any arguments which he found himself propounding. Such an ethics would, however, be co-extensive with ethics as a whole, for one does not simply "find oneself" propounding philosophical arguments; on the contrary, these arguments are part and parcel of what, at the moment of propounding them, one essentially is. (This is why sophists cannot be refuted by arguments ad hominem, and hence cannot be refuted at all; because they are uncommitted to their own arguments, they can shrug off counter-arguments.) (Rorty 1961: 314-315).

Here Rorty pointed out some interesting consequences. This ethics of controversy obliges us to be sincere. If we were to propound philosophical statements insincerely, the criticism that they do not line up with our intentions would be powerless, since the philosophical statements were never meant to be consistent with their intentions. Furthermore, since we are trying to learn the intentions of our interlocutors, then more than merely the philosophical statements they propound will need to be brought to bear on the interpretation. The details of this account, however, are not spelled out.

Johnstone (1952) gives a number of examples of using *Argumentum ad Hominem*. Someone says "I never use correct English", uttered using correct

English (Johnstone 1952: 488-91). The more profound example Johnstone gives though, is that of categorical imperatives. Whereas a hypothetical imperative is criticized and supported via *ad rem* (to the point) arguments (presumably because of the conditional nature of the hypothetical imperative), categorical imperatives need to be checked for consistency with the utterer and, thereby, argued for or against *Ad Hominem*. When someone claims "never tell lies", this utterance can be declared invalid as morally relevant to actions under consideration or evaluation where the utterer has been a deliberate liar (494-5). Setting aside many objections (some of which Johnstone is aware of and addresses) one might have to this, it is unclear how we can generalize the *Ad Hominem* form of argument so that it could be the general form of argument for all philosophy.[6] A proper revival and rescue of Henry Johnstone Jr. maybe called for, but cannot be attempted here.[7] I have belaboured looking at him here, because the *Ad Hominem* form of argument makes essential the agents themselves, and not at the cost of falling into MS.

What then can we now say about MP? MP is about resolving controversy that occurs because we and our interlocutors have the power to change the rules and thereby change the problems of philosophy. Metaphilosophy, thereby, becomes an essential part of philosophy. The hermeneutic task of understanding our interlocutors becomes of primary importance for being able to criticise them. However, what we have so far taken from Rorty has yet to illuminate how and why to do that. So while the resolution of controversy is clearly a good start in

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[6] The fact that hypothetical imperatives have separate means and ends while categorical imperatives do not (one might say because they are ends in themselves), is curiously not explored. One might say that philosophy properly understood deals with controversy about ends-in-themselves rather than the best way to achieve given ends. What seems to be missed by Johnstone is that one could identify when *ad hominem* arguments are appropriate is in evaluating ends-in-themselves. This is something Collingwood suggests, as we shall see.

[7] Unfortunately, this is unlikely to happen, since Johnstone's work is largely out of print, and there is no immediate reason to foresee that to change.

understanding MP's commitment to (3), we don't yet have a particularly good idea of what it is to resolve controversy, or how MP can account for controversies being won or lost.

One premise of this essay is that much of Rorty's career can be read as the attempt to fill out the meaning of MP (and by contradistinction MR and MS too). Unfortunately, because MP rejected (1), and endorsed (2), Rorty's readers/critics may have assumed that Rorty endorsed MS instead of MP. In what follows, I hope to show how we can learn from Rorty to better illuminate MP and, thereby, undermine the idea that MR and MS are our only metaphilosophical options.

1.2) The What-Is-Philosophy-Question, and How it Can Be Answered

What makes a problem a philosophical problem? This is *the* metaphilosophical question, and can be formulated as the 'what-is-philosophy?' question. There are two general kinds of answer to this question. The first kind is to say that philosophical problems are just the problems that constitute the subject matter of philosophy, such that to philosophize is to talk about candidate solutions to the constitutive problems. The problem of epistemology — what is knowledge per se? — or the problem free will — can we be held responsible for our actions? — are paradigmatic examples of such constitutive answers. I will call this *the constitutive answer* to the what-is-philosophy question. Then there is the *non-constitutive answer* to the what-is-philosophy question. The non-constitutive answer denies that there is a defining subject matter that constitutes philosophy.[8] For this answer, then, the activity of philosophizing is always, in part, about justifying its subject matter. In

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[8] When I refer to:the constitutive" and "non-constitutive answer" these terms each refer to a class of answer, and not one specific answer.

other words, the non-constitutive answer takes second-order or metaphilosophical reflection to be an essential part of philosophy.

As suggested in the previous section, MR and MS take up the constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question. MP takes up the non-constitutive answer. Rorty's classic work, *Philosophy and The Mirror of Nature* (PMN) helped to articulate this distinction in its practical form. It is quite clear that Rorty is criticizing MR in PMN as being the implicit metaphilosophical outlook of professional "analytic" philosophy. While I will contend that MS shares the same constitutive answer super-category as MR, it is difficult to identify philosophers who hold MS. Indeed, it is likely if they believed in MS they decided to go into some other profession. So, while MR is far more Rorty's target, MS is also obliquely targeted as the second variety of the constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question.

In PMN Rorty took himself to be adapting to philosophy T. S. Kuhn's picture of the history of science as developed in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn distinguishes between periods of "normal" science and periods of "crisis" in a science. These latter are eventually resolved by "shifts in the scientific community's conception of its legitimate problems and standards" (Kuhn 1996:108) so significant as to be "revolutionary". Kuhn's categories serve two purposes. They refer to both the ideational elements (concepts) of a science at a time, as well as its research practices.

Rorty's tale of the history of "analytic" philosophy starts with Descartes, and moves on to the neo-Kantian movement in nineteenth century Germany. It is from these sources that the "analytic" idea of "philosophy as centered in epistemology" emerges (Rorty 1979: 133-4). Hegel had made philosophy "too popular, too interesting, too important, to be properly professionalised" (135). It was by replacing

Hegel with Kant, and interpretation with epistemology, that philosophy would be put

"on the secure path of a science" (137). Putting philosophy on the secure path of a

science required finding those constraints that specify what it is to solve its

constitutive problems. Having epistemology be the core of philosophy was not

simply a choice among many possible subjects. Epistemology, in some sense, was

proto-metaphilosophy: when you had an articulated epistemology you would have at

least a partial (and perhaps full) account of the rules that constituted philosophical

practice. In the early twentieth century, the philosophy of language began to

supplant epistemology as the "core" of philosophy. In spite of how radical the shift

may have seemed at the time, at the level of description I am concerned with here,

the same project continued. Since if the rules of the practice in place we would be

able to solve the constitutive problems of philosophy. This view is what I call the

conception of, and desire for, *Philosophy-as-Normal-Discourse* (Phil-as-ND).

 Phil-as-ND contrasts with *Philosophy-as-Revolutionary-Discourse* (Phil-as-

RD). Phil-as-ND takes the constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question,

while Phil-as-RD takes the non-constitutive answer. A major premise here is that we

only truly understand the constitutive and non-constitutive answers by understanding

the views they give rise to. From Rorty's summary of the distinction between the

"normal" and "revolutionary" (or "abnormal") discourse we can begin to get a sense

of what the differences between these two metaphilosophies are.

 "Normal" science is the practice of solving problems against the background of a
consensus about what counts as a good explanation of the phenomena and about what it
would take for a problem to be solved. "Revolutionary" science is the introduction of a new
"paradigm" of explanation, and thus a new set of problems. Normal Science is as close as
real life comes to the epistemologist's notion of what it is to be rational. Everybody agrees
on how to evaluate everything everybody else says. More generally, normal discourse is
that which is conducted within an agreed-upon set of conventions about what counts as a
relevant contribution, what counts as answering a question, what counts as having a good
argument for that answer or a good criticism of it. Abnormal discourse is what happens when

someone joins in the discourse who is ignorant of these conventions or sets them aside (Rorty 1979: 320).[9]

MR and MS are both forms of Phil-as-ND. What about MP? MP is the only form of Phil-as-RD. The contrast for Phil-as-ND, is Phil-as-RD, whereas the contrast for MP, is MR and MS. Of course, given that Phil-as-RD has MP as its only instantiation, the terms refer to the same view.

In the previous section, I mentioned the essentiality of metaphilosophy for MP, and metaphilosophy's inessentiality for MR and MS. I would now like to elaborate on this.

Firstly, since the inessentiality of metaphilosophy to the practice of philosophy is a property shared by MR and MS, it is more properly a property of their super-category, Phil-as-ND. By virtue of taking on the constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question, the question of philosophy's subject matter is never up for grabs once an answer is given. While there may be as many philosophies as there are philosophers, as the believer in MS would contend, they still believe that philosophy is constituted by what is being talked about. And MR (which may be a bit more hard-minded by insisting that insofar as philosophers are talking about philosophy they are talking about the same thing) would still agree that the subject matter of philosophy is what makes philosophy, philosophy. This is what leads Phil-as-ND to see disagreement either as error or equivocation. This does seem to be how many think of the other disciplines — we define them by their subject. Psychology is the study of the psyche, chemistry is the study of matter, and so on…

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[9] Given these remarks, the reader might begin to question how I could put MS into the Phil-as-ND category, given the fact that MS sees all disagreement as equivocal. It is true that MR, has a different vision of how philosophy in practice works: communal projects, shared knowledge, "rational" debate, and progressive consensus etc. While MS, allows for consensus, the idea of 'communal projects' and "shared knowledge" their presence, if there truly is any, is largely capricious. That being said, the reason MS interprets disagreement as an equivocation is because it sees where the disagreement is coming from is as a competing normal discourse.

Further, we do not educate people in these subjects with long systematic units on the philosophy or history of that subject. In other words, we do not need a particularly good idea of precisely what we are talking about in order to talk about it. In principle, one does not need to know the rules of a game in order to play it, because we could make perfectly legal moves in a game in spite of not knowing why they are legal.

Robert Piercey likens this to Gilbert Ryle's distinction between knowing-how and knowing-that (Piercey 2010: 339). Summarizing Ryle, Piercey says "I can know how to perform an activity without having any theory about it whatsoever" (339). Ryle's discussion of *knowing how* and *knowing that* in *The Concept of Mind* is only an analogy, and is not definitive in saying one way or the other that his philosophy of mind entails an anti-metaphilosophy metaphilosophy like Phil-as-ND. But the analogy does seem compelling, since so many of the things we do are conducted with know-how, for which we are at a complete loss for words to explain how we do it. I can tie my shoelaces, but I couldn't for the life of me explain how I do it.

Phil-as-RD would of course deny this. We can tie shoelaces, ride bikes and play sports, without thinking about it, but to suggest we could philosophize without thinking about it seems to be an aberration. This lack of self-consciousness prevents us from generating an explicit metaphilosophy (340). This is not seen as a problem for Phil-as-ND. Remember, Phil-as-ND is not saying there is no such thing as metaphilosophy, simply that it isn't required in order to do good philosophy. Phil-as-ND philosophers take the subject matter of philosophy as given, as something that doesn't need to be argued for, because it is beyond controversy. So, as a matter of fact (because it is beyond controversy), interlocutors are either equivocating or 'univocating'. Whether or not this is something we are aware of

largely doesn't matter because it doesn't affect whether or not we are providing correct or incorrect answers to philosophical questions. The whole issue of epistemic humility, generated by disagreement, forces a philosopher to choose between judging interlocutors as in error or equivocating, can be separated from philosophy and put into metaphilosophy and kept at arm's length. Because one (metaphilosophy) is about the epistemic situation of an agent, the other (philosophy) is about whether or not what is being asserted answers a philosophical question (is a solution to a philosophical problem).

For Phil-as-ND, when evaluating a philosophical theses (determining whether or not suggested answers are satisfactory), who puts forward the thesis (or theses) doesn't matter. Arguments for or against a particular thesis should be arguments *ad rem,* not *ad hominem*. As Daniel Garber says, "what seems to count in analytic philosophy is the argument, not its pedigree" (Garber 2005: 131). In this way, we can begin to see why Phil-as-ND, would deflate the value of history, which will be more fully discussed in the following section. The philosophical thesis stands or falls based on its correctness or incorrectness, not on its etiology. The truth of a belief is not affected by disagreement among peers.

Phil-as-RD has a radically different perspective. By not taking the non-constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question, Phil-as-RD cannot take for granted what we are talking about when we talk philosophy. This means philosophy has no given subject matter. In Phil-as-RD what is being talked about has to be justified. Philosophers operating in Phil-as-RD, must take responsibility for their subject matter, and provide justification for it. In Phil-as-ND, the philosopher simply had to judge whether or not interlocutors were speaking equivocally or univocally, taking the subject matter as given. In Phil-as-RD the philosopher moralizes as to

what the subject matter of philosophy should be. Put more generally, with Phil-as-RD it is incumbent upon the philosopher to explain what they and their interlocutors should be talking about. (How this is supposed to be done, is a tale unto itself which we will begin in the following section, and is the entire motivating question behind Part 2.) The philosopher, according to Phil-as-RD is responsible for explaining why what they have to say is *important*.

It may be observed that *importance* need not be a factor in Phil-as-ND. What determines why a philosopher talks about one problem rather than another is instead *interest*. John McCumber was apoplectic with indignation after quoting what the philosopher of religion Eric Wielenberg, said in *Newsweek*,

> [Wielenberg:] I find a question or puzzle that interests me. I try to figure out a solution, usually reading what others have had to say about it along the way. If I come up with anything good, I write it down and see if anyone is interested in publishing it. (McCumber 2013, 4).

This brings McCumber to question sardonically why would the public take any interest in philosophy, and surrender resources to employ philosophers? To be fair, Phil-as-ND does not logically entail philosophy's irrelevance. However, the fact that it does not require philosophers to provide justification for why what they are talking about is what should be talked about means they are largely deaf to the concern that they have become enclosed in an echo chamber. For MR and, thereby, professional analytic philosophy, the echo chamber is constituted by the professional institutions (journal review boards, academic publishers, editors, conferences, professional societies, and graduate programs). For MS, the echo chamber is a room of one's own, where only those that agree are considered interlocutors. On the other hand, McCumber's indignation is understandable. Why was Eric Wielenberg so candid in saying that he engaged in research that he merely found interesting? Why wasn't

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there at least the pretence of being important? Perhaps, it is because philosophers, as Rorty says, "tend to take for granted that the problems that they were taught to discuss in graduate school are, simply by virtue of that very fact, important." (Rorty 2007, 126). Graduate students are trained to carry on a particular conversation. Their success in graduate school classes can depend upon them internalizing certain standards that make up the discipline.

From this we can see that from the perspective of Phil-as-RD, Phil-as-ND is a regressive form of philosophy. As Rorty says, "the value of philosophy itself is a matter of its relation not to a subject-matter but to the rest of the conversation of humankind" (129). Ignoring the rest of the conversation of humankind is to shirk the responsibility to provide justification for what one is talking about. Shirking this responsibility makes analytic philosophy (Phil-as-ND), "undesirably unconversable" (130).

Philip Kitcher has described how he sees contemporary philosophy's conception of itself — which is pretty much what I am calling Phil-as-ND — and makes recommendations regarding how it should be revised. His revision amounts to Phil-as-RD. Kitcher gives an identifying name to the constitutive subject matter that makes up philosophy for Phil-as-ND. He calls these the "core areas" (Kitcher 2011: 248). For Phil-as-ND, these "core areas" make up what we are talking about when we talk philosophy. However, there is also the "applied" periphery. The implication, evinced by the modifier "applied," is that "applied philosophy" isn't really philosophy proper. "Applied philosophy" is what happens when we take theories from the "core areas" and use them in real world cases. The truth of a theory (itself an answer to a proper philosophical problem), is supposed, assumed, or taken to have already been established, and the theory itself is utilized in order to provide

guidance in answering the real world problem. But this is a top-down one way

relationship. In this way Phil-as-ND, conceives of the relationship between the "core"

and "applied" philosophy, as analogous to the relationship between "pure" and

"applied" mathematics. Moreover, among philosophers who assume or affirm Phil-

as-ND, there is a tendency to look down on those who do "applied" work as "second

raters" (Kitcher 2011: 248). Kitcher's call for a renewal of philosophy, to turn

philosophy inside out is characteristic of Phil-as-RD. However, Kitcher is not simply

calling for a shift in focus, or asking his fellow philosophers to stop condescending to

those who do "applied philosophy". He is calling for a switch from the constitutive

answer to the what-is-philosophy question, to the non-constitutive answer. This is

why Kitcher quotes Dewey's line about philosophical problems: "[w]e do not solve

them: we get over them" (252). And Kitcher maintains Phil-as-RD's disdain for Phil-

as-ND's anti-metaphilosophy.

Graduate programs in philosophy currently train highly intelligent and imaginative young
people, whose lives will be dominated for decades by the problems their mentors and
colleagues take to be central to the field. We train them well by giving them studies that
improve their facility for thinking precisely and rigorously. If, however, our image of
philosophy fails to distinguish the preliminary studies from the genuine work, if it treats what
is most important as mere periphery, as a place in which the second-raters slum it, then their
education will have failed them. (259-60)

Kitcher's words did not go unheard. His reputation as a member of the

analytic mainstream sparked a response. A Leiter Report discussion was prompted

and typical of internet message boards, a flurry of opinions, misreadings, replies and

counter replies followed. Of particular note was Peter Ludlow's reply.

I'm not here to renew philosophy and I don't care what philosophy (whatever that is)
needs from me for its renewal (whatever that means). More generally, I don't see that any of
us are here for the benefit of philosophy or its renewal. Maybe, just maybe, could philosophy
be here for us? And if some people like to work on core issues, then God bless them. And if
some people like to work on peripheral issues, then God bless them too. And if that is self-
indulgent, well so is telling people that they need to channel their research interests into
some abstract notion of what philosophy needs for its renewal (tu quoque). No one pays us

enough to work for the renewal of Mr. Philosophy. Or at least, no one pays us enough to take marching orders from people that think they know.[10]

Ludlow's response to Kitcher says a lot about how Phil-as-ND feels about being talked down to. The animosity that exists between holders of Phil-as-ND and Phil-as-RD, as we have seen, goes beyond their logical contradiction, and extends to existential contempt.[11] The philosophers of Phil-as-RD think the philosophers of Phil-as-ND are time wasters engaged in what Kitcher, borrowing the expression from Dewey, calls a "sentimental indulgence for a few" (250). And the philosophers of Phil-as-ND think those in the Phil-as-RD camp are arrogant moral crusaders who have no right to tell other philosophers what they should and shouldn't do. Perhaps as Ludlow suggests, the problem is philosophers aren't paid enough. If we simply bumped up their salaries, they might start talking about what is important rather than what merely happens to be of interest to them. But somehow I don't believe that would really quite work.

Piercey is aware of just how opposed Phil-as-ND and Phil-as-RD are, and how difficult the issues that separate them are even to enjoin. He acknowledges that there isn't going to be a simple argument we can appeal to demonstrate the rational superiority of Phil-as-RD, or even Phil-as-ND. But Piercey points out that just because there may not be deductive arguments doesn't mean that people won't change their minds. He appeals to Alasdair MacIntyre's example of how Thomism supplanted Augustinianism.

When one scheme supplants another in this way, it is not as a result of knockdown arguments. The arguments that a Thomist would give in defense of Thomism would presumably appeal to Thomistic criteria and thus, as far as an Augustinian is concerned, beg the question. The arguments that an Augustinian would level against Thomism would do the same. Rather, when one scheme prevails over another, it is because the first scheme proves

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[10] URL=<http://leiterreports.typepad.com/blog/2011/04/kitcher-on-reconstruction-in-philosophy.html>. Comment dated April 05. At 5:38PM

[11] I here personifying Phil-as-ND, and Phil-as-RD. This is just a pathetic fallacy that shouldn't be taken literally.

more successful than the second in ways that adherents of the second can understand and accept. The first may, for example, succeed in all the same ways as the second and solve a nagging problem that the second has been unable to solve on its own. According to MacIntyre, this is exactly how Thomism supplanted Augustinianism in the thirteenth century. Like Augustinianism, Thomism provided a comprehensive Christian view of the world. But Thomism succeeded in answering questions about the will that had always vexed Augustinians. (347)

Piercey then applies this sort of analysis to the conflict(s) between reflexive philosophy (his equivalent of Phil-as-RD), and non-reflexive philosophy (his equivalent of Phil-as-ND).

The reflexive approach fares better, since it is compatible with the existence of deep philosophical disagreement. Indeed, it predicts such disagreement. It originates in the observation that philosophy is torn by interminable disagreement and that as a result its nature must be different than we first suppose. On this view, it is no surprise that philosophers disagree about nearly everything, including how to do philosophy. Moreover, reflexive philosophy can make its appeal plain to its rival. It can solve a problem that non-reflexive philosophy cannot: the existence of interminable disagreement, with respect to both first-order questions and metaphilosophical debates. For the non-reflexive philosopher, disagreement is a puzzle and an embarrassment. For the reflexive philosopher, it is exactly what the nature of philosophy would lead us to expect. Reflexive philosophy not only has an advantage over the non-reflexive variety; it can communicate this advantage to its rival by solving a problem its rival cannot. (Piercey 2010: 348)

I do not believe the advantages of reflexive philosophy (Phil-as-RD) are quite as straightforward as Piercey suggests. Firstly, in our discussion of MR and MS we discovered that while disagreement is an awkward and frustrating issue for Phil-as-ND, disagreement was not fatal. While being placed in the dilemma between seeing our interlocutors as being in error or equivocation is not pretty, it isn't incoherent. Piercey's claim that disagreement can be made sense of better by Phil-as-RD is a actually a moot point from the perspective of Phil-as-ND[12]. But we, as philosophers of Phil-as-RD, are not actually trying to refute Phil-as-ND. We are trying convince interlocutors. Once again the fact that MP deals in arguments *ad hominem* rather

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[12] As Rorty says:

> There is no way, as far as I can see, in which to argue the issue of whether to keep the Kantian "grid" in place or set it aside. There is no "normal" philosophical discourse which provides common commensurating ground for those who see science and edification as, respectively, "rational" and "irrational," and those who see the quest for objectivity as one possibility among others to be taken account of in *wirkungsgeschichtliche Bewusstsein*. If there is no such common ground, all we can do is to show how the other side looks from our own point of view. That is, all we can do is be hermeneutic about the opposition-trying to show how the odd or paradoxical or offensive things they say hang together with the rest of what they want to say, and how what they say looks when put in our own alternative idiom. (Rorty 1979: 364-5)

than arguments *ad rem* has become relevant. The means by which we demonstrate the superior making sense capacity of reflexive philosophy is by telling an "historical narrative about its track record" (349). However, that historical narratives should be seen as persuasive and our sense making is part of Phil-as-RD, and not Phil-as-ND. Moreover, unlike Thomism's triumph over Augustinianism, Phil-as-RD has not clearly triumphed over Phil-as-ND. Thomism, according to Piercey, actually convinced people out of Augustinianism and into Thomism. We cannot say the same for Phil-as-RD, since it is at present a minority view, no triumph analogous to Thomism has occurred. But we can hope such a narrative would be convincing. There is no a priori neutral way of demonstrating the superiority of Phil-as-RD over Phil-as-ND. They are so opposed at so many fundamental levels that one cannot get purchase on the other via argument. This thesis itself is written in the hope that by articulating the conceptual space of MP (Phil-as-RD) that readers will freely choose Phil-as-RD over Phil-as-ND.

It is then important to further articulate the differences that arise out of choosing the constitutive vs non-constitutive answers to the what-is-philosophy question. Phil-as-RD and Phil-as-ND see the goal(s) of philosophy very differently. In particular, they differ regarding whether or not truth (conceived of as a property of a proposition) is the goal of inquiry. Secondly, Phil-as-RD and Phil-as-ND, understand conceptual content and the nature of rationality differently. Finally, by far the most important difference regards the notion of progress. Again, MR and MS will bifurcate on this. The notion of progress determines the importance of history to philosophy. For that reason, while truth and rationality will be discussed here in two subsections, progress will be discussed in the context of the next section.

1.2.1) Truth[13]

Mystery surrounds the concept of truth. Philosophy is sometimes described as a "search" or "quest" for truth. Nietzsche even described the drive of the philosophers as "the will to truth" (Nietzsche 1989). Truth transcends being a specialist subject. While it does have its own literature, that literature crosses the distinctions between philosophy of language, logic, philosophy of logic, metaphysics, and epistemology. And the characteristic property of valid inference, is "truth preservation". All of this seems to demand some comment. Even if we don't like it, we can't hide from "truth".

Phil-as-ND's two species, MR and MS, both accepted (1) of the metaphilosophical triad. This was a commitment about what was required to "win" the philosophy-game. For Phil-as-ND, winning is providing correct answers to the constitutive questions of philosophy. These answers are expressed propositionally.

Truth being a property of a sentence is not inherently objectionable. Of course there are true sentences. We speak, and write well-formed true sentences all of the time. We also make classical logical inferences all of the time. The conflict between Phil-as-ND, and Phil-as-RD, is not about whether or not there is a particular meta-linguistic phenomenon. Both Phil-as-ND and Phil-as-RD, agree that "truth" is a meta-linguistic property of sentence. This fact about truth is banal.

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[13] In my initial draft of this thesis, I had wanted to avoid the topic of truth altogether. While it was a major point of discussion for Rorty, it was not for Collingwood. So it was not a particularly good point of contact for them. Moreover, as an undergraduate I had studied the analytic literature on truth fairly seriously, and noticed that as the disquotational/minimalist theory of truth became more widely spread there didn't arise fundamental changes to the methodology of philosophy, so I became disenchanted with the idea of truth being the ultimate metaphilosophical battlefield. Since, if the correspondence theory had finally fallen from popular support, why hadn't paradise been delivered unto us? In particular, thanks to Collingwood, I came to believe the notion of 'progress' was more important and underappreciated. However, avoiding truth altogether proved difficult, and started to gain the appearance of an elephant in the room. So while truth may have had its centrality and metaphilosophical relevance overblown, it's metaphilosophical relevance is non-zero.

There is a theory of truth, sometimes referred to as "Truth Minimalism". It has many other names: "disquotationalism", "deflationism", and its early form "the redundancy" theory. The minimalist theory claims that truth is property of propositions. That performs the metalinguistic function of allowing us to talk about propositions. Which then allows us to talk about certain logical properties of propositions. For example, "both P and not-P cannot be true". The other thing the minimalist theory claims is what Paul Horwich calls the "equivalence schema" (Horwich 2005 6).

(E) It is true *that* P iff P

This schema is sometimes expressed as, 'P' is true iff P. The "is true", allows one to pull off the quotation surrounding 'P'. This is why the minimal theory is sometimes called disquotationalism. I have no reason to believe that anyone denies these positive claims about Truth Minimalism. They are so banal, trivial, and platitudinous that I cannot imagine why someone would deny it. Where the objections with Truth Minimalism begin, is with the fact that the minimalist theory of truth says that is all there is to be said about truth. Ne plus ultra declares the minimalist.[14]

A lot of philosophers of course would say there is more to truth, and there is reason to think that. Paul Horwich himself, in his book *Truth*, defends the minimal theory against 39 different objections. I am not going to engage with those debates. The reader may have noticed that the minimal theory of truth only seems to address our usage of "true" in phrases like "what she said was true". But it doesn't seem to make sense of what Christ meant when he told Pilate that he came to bear witness

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[14] Rorty does mention three distinct uses of the term of "true": the endorsing use, the cautionary use and the disquotational use (Rorty 1991, 128). The disquotational use, is the metalinguistic use, used in the equivalence schema. The cautionary use, is when we hedge that in spite of the justification we have for our belief in P, P may turn out to not be true. This use however, doesn't require a separate truth theory, it is just a commitment to fallibilism. The endorsing use, too does not require adding to the truth. When we say, for example, "I agree that is true", we are just agreeing with the assertion.

to "the Truth". "Truth" and "true", are not merely words, they can be an entire idiom. We can burden truth with a lot of explanatory power. And there are many reasons for and against doing so. However, in describing how Phil-as-ND and Phil-as-RD conceive of truth and its metaphilosophical importance, truth does not *have* to do much heavy lifting at all.

This is not to say truth is incapable of doing the heavy lifting for inflationary theories of truth are definitely possible. Rorty, for example, routinely attacks the correspondence theory of truth. The correspondence theory, as Rorty understands it, does the same work that the constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question does for MR. The correspondence theory allows for MR to presume that there is something our beliefs (understood as propositional attitudes) confront. This means that the metaphysical entity that our beliefs have to confront, like "the world", "reality", or "mind-independent facts", gets to fix the subject matter of philosophy. Since, insofar as philosophy is a search for truth, there are only so many propositions for which this correspondence relation will obtain. What is and isn't true isn't up for negotiation, only what we believe to be true might be. This move made by the correspondence theory, as Rorty understands it has the effect disjointing the question of "meaning" from the question of "truth", such that would could talk about what proposition purports to be the case without any commitment to what is the case. The constitutive answer does this too, by putting constraint on what can count as a correct answer.

The issue that divides Phil-as-ND from Phil-as-RD is whether or not to consider "truth" to be the goal of inquiry. Phil-as-ND considers "truth" to be the goal of inquiry. Providing the correct answers to the constitutive questions is the goal of philosophy for Phil-as-ND. This is not to suggest Phil-as-RD doesn't care about

giving correct answers; it does. However, it doesn't consider providing such answers to be the goal of philosophy simply because it doesn't take the constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question. Therefore, justification of one's subject matter would have to precede getting the right answers to questions raised. Justification comes from the progressive narrative one is able to tell about a new way of making sense of things. Such a narrative will colligate many right answers and the corresponding questions. For Phil-as-RD, then, the goal of philosophy is not truth, but progress.

What seems to be the issue that commonly arises when "truth" is pushed to the sidelines doesn't actually have to do with truth per se. What seems to always come up is the issue of the intelligibility of evidence. Evidence for a proposition is purported to improve the likelihood of it being true. If we accept the minimalist theory of truth for both Phil-as-ND and Phil-as-RD, talking that way is fairly banal since we are just saying evidence increases the warranted assertability of a proposition (which is equivalent to saying justification is warrant). Instead, for Phil-as-ND, because it believes there are constitutive questions, evidence can only improve the warranted assertability of the answers to such questions. Since Phil-as-RD is unable to appeal to constitutive questions, evidence does not come with an interpretation. So for Phil-as-RD, evidence does not have some pre-established metaphysical link to what it is evidence for.

This does not mean that the connection between evidence and warranted assertability disappears for Phil-as-RD. There is a constraint on what evidence can be construed as evidence for. That constraint comes from what we and our peers are willing to accept. As Rorty says, "The need to justify our beliefs and desires to ourselves and to our fellow agents subjects us to norms" (Rorty 1998: 26). These

epistemic norms of what evidence is evidence for, have historical origins. The

history of science in particular is a collection of the creation of these epistemic

norms. But if we are acknowledging the potential fallibility and potential call to revise

these epistemic norms then MR will agree with MP that our current norms for

warranted assertability indeed are historically arrived at, but add the further norm,

"get at the right answer to the constitutive questions", which our epistemic norms

could conform to.[15] The idea being the contingent epistemic norms that we have can

be revised in light of getting closer to the right answers to the constitutive questions.

This is not an option for MP, however it is not clear what a norm to get the right

answer really makes a difference in practice. For MP, epistemic norms can still be

revised in light of other concerns, namely progress. Moreover, it isn't clear that a

norm to get the right answer would sway any argument for new epistemic norms.

All of this just goes to show, "Why Truth is Not Important In Philosophy", as

Robert Brandom titled one of his chapters in *Reason in Philosophy*. In short, the

minimalist theory of truth does not rob us of truthfulness because if it does not rob us

of norms of warranted assertability, then there is no ground for denying epistemic

honesty or sincerity (Brandom 2009: 156-7). I believe the real issue between all

three — MR, MS, and MP — to be more general than one about truth and epistemic

norms. Instead of asking just what is evidence, evidence for, we should ask what

determines what is a reason for what.

1.2.2) Rationality and Concepts

In Plato's *Euthyphro*, Socrates puzzled Euthyphro by asking whether the

pious was the pious because it was loved by the gods, or if it was loved by the gods

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[15] Here I am translating into minimalist terms what Rorty identifies as Crispin Wright's additional norm
to truth. "Wright thinks our statement-making practices are regulated by two distinct norms: warranted
assertability and truth." (27).

because it was pious. This issue re-emerged in medieval philosophy, and the natural law tradition, when Luther and Calvin challenged the Thomistic view that God acted according the eternal laws. Over the course of modern moral philosophy this issue became secularized and generalized to be an issue about the relation between reason and the will. Here the metaphor of treating philosophy as a game gets hypostatized. The "rules of the game" become the concepts applied in judgements. Philosophy as a discipline, which has philosophers who are participants and are distinguished from everybody else (the non-participants), gets broadened to Reason which applies to rational agents that are distinguished from non-rational animals and inanimate matter. MR and MS differ on whether or not to assert (2) of Rorty's metaphilosophical triad. For MR, the Will ought to conform to Reason. For MS, Reason obeys the Will. For MR, the content of *some* concepts are not up to us, and these concepts characterize the philosophical questions that constitute philosophy. That is why a thinker can fall into error. For MS, the content of concepts is up to us, and it is for that reason we are able to pick our own philosophical questions — to pick our own "philosophy". This modern, secularized version of the Euthyphro dilemma involves MR taking up and defending the intellectualist position that actions and judgements are rational by virtue of conforming to a determinate and prior reason. MS takes up the voluntarist position, that one's actions and judgements determine what is rational.

While MP asserts (2) just as MS does, I will argue that MP is not straight forwardly voluntaristic. Yet while MP and MS are not of one mind on this matter, MP and MS resemble each other (in this case) far more than MP and MR do. There is a difference between Phil-as-ND and Phil-as-RD that accounts for this. Phil-as-ND, takes on what Brandom calls the "Verstand" conception of concepts (Brandom 2009:

89). *Verstand* conceives of concepts as having "*Fregean* determinateness", meaning every application of the concept is already accounted for by the content of the concept (Brandom 2009: 88, emphasis original). MP, instead of conceiving of concepts in this way, conceives of concepts along Hegelian "Vernunft" lines (89). According to the *Vernunft* conception, concepts get their content from a history of applications where precedential applications of a concept determine its content. After some general remarks about concepts, I will discuss the *Verstand* conception of Phil-as-ND, after which I will go on to articulate Phil-as-RD's *Vernunft* conception.

Concepts determine what is a reason for what. They account for the intelligibility of the material inferences we make. Why does Jones think *This* follows from *That*? Because Jones has a concept that "says" *This* follows from *That*. Concepts, therefore, have domain over our practices of justification. The constitutive inferential connections of a concept are not only positive (demarcating what we are obliged or permitted to infer) but also negative (demarcating what is incompatible, what we are forbidden from inferring). Applying the concept "cold" when asserting "this beer is cold", is incompatible with asserting "this beer is hot". Judgements are composed of concepts. This is because judgments express inferential relations. Thus, we can extensionally define concepts by the true judgements they figure in. Judgments are the minimum bearers of responsibility. We make judgements, and bear responsibility for making them. This means not only do we make judgements in first-personal deliberation, but we can also ascribe judgements third-personally to others. Because of this we can ascribe how someone conceives the content of a concept. Disagreement arises when we ascribe to our interlocutor an understanding

of a concept we do not share.[16] For example, A could say "marriage should be a spiritual and legal arrangement between two members of the opposite sex", and then ascribe to their interlocutor B the following: "B believes, that marriages should be a spiritual and legal arrangement between any number of members of any sex". This is a disagreement. A will see proper applications of the concept of 'marriage' as excluding many of the applications B would consider proper (and B would see the concept of 'marriage' as including many applications that A would exclude). In other, words there will be judgements which B will believe to be true that A will believe to be false.

1.2.2.1) Verstand

So far what I have said about concepts applies to all of MR, MS, and MP. Phil-as-ND's (MR and MS) *Verstand* conception adds the notion of "*Fregean determinateness*" to concepts (Brandom 2009: 88). Fregean determinateness means that the concept has all of its content already settled. As Brandom describes it:

> What corresponds to Fregean determinateness for conceptual contents [...] is that for every potential material inference in which any judgement that results from applying the concept figures as a premise or conclusion, it is definitely settled semantically, in advance of any actual applications, whether it is a good inference, and similarly for the relations of material incompatibility that hold between those judgements and any others. Here the sharp, complete boundaries that must be semantically settled definitely are those around the sets of materially good inferences and materially incompatible sets of sentences. (88-89)

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[16] I have so characterized 'disagreement" in-order to obviate objections of the kind raised below by Lepore and Fodor, who say:

You think that Abraham Lincoln owned a dog; I think that he didn't. So there are some inferences about dogs that you are prepared to accept and that I am not (for example, 'if Alfred was Abraham Lincoln's pet, then Alfred wasn't a dog' is sound according to me but not according to you). But now meaning holism says that what the word 'dog' means in your mouth depends on the totality of your beliefs about dogs, including, therefore, your beliefs about whether Lincoln owned one. It seems to follow that you and I mean different things when we say 'dog'; hence that if you say 'dogs can fly' and I say 'dogs can't fly' we aren't disagreeing. (Lepore and Fodor 1993, 638).

Lepore and Fodor are right that we would technically 'mean different things' by 'dog', but that is precisely the nature of disagreement. By defining disagreement in this general way, there is room both for judgements of error and equivocation. Their notion of disagreement is needlessly narrow, and only serves the pugnacious end of trying to browbeat holism because it can't account for "disagreement".

This is significant because Fregean determinateness makes concepts self-sustaining. Concepts do not require application to have content. Their identity is constituted by the inferences they allow for and those they deny. Applications of a concept — the actual making of judgements by agents — do not change or constitute the concept.[17] This makes agents concept *users* for whom concepts are simply tools waiting to be used to construct judgements. The *Verstand* conception also introduces an epistemic gap between us and the content of concepts. We may only know so many of the applications of a concept. We may know of 'gold' that it has a yellowish colour, but recognize that we don't know its melting or boiling point. And there certainly are things we don't even know we don't know about the concepts we use.

1.2.2.1.1) Intellectualism

MR and MS will now part ways. MR takes the stance that the concepts that articulate philosophical questions are not just up to us. Our progress in answering the constitutive questions of philosophy is linked to coming to know more about the very concepts that articulate it. In fact, knowing the answer to a philosophical question would be achieved given sufficient knowledge of the concepts that articulate it. Solving the mind-body problem for MR comes down to knowing the content of concepts like "mind", "body", and "interaction". This, of course, does not speak to how MR claims to come to know the content of such concepts. If analytic philosophy is rightly thought of as a species of MR, then it is no accident that analytic philosophy became associated with "conceptual analysis". But this sense of "conceptual analysis" is not bound to a particular method, not even one that would

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[17] It is no wonder then that Frege thought it necessary to introduce a "third realm" which was the domain of thought (thinkables) that could be apprehended by agents, in "The Thought" (Frege 1956, 302).

consider itself "conceptual analysis".[18] Regardless, the progressive knowledge of

conceptual content through some method characterizes MR. Since for MR there

exists an epistemic gap between our knowledge and the content of concepts, some

method to bridge that gap is called for. Rorty had identified Kant's Copernican

Revolution as the explicit point when philosophy had the inward turn and made

philosophy about examining our own conceptual structure. That Kant thought there

was a universal transcendental structure to reason itself that was not something we

could change by the will, puts him on the side of MR. Kant thought he had put

philosophy on "the secure path of a science", says Rorty, "by putting outer space

inside inner space" (Rorty 1979: 137).

There are two broad types of cognitive contexts in which concepts are used to

produce judgements. These are the *context of assessment* (CA) and the *context of*

deliberation (CD). CA is the third-personal context of judgement, because the

judgement's modality is third-personal[19]. CD is the first-personal context of

deliberating. It may seem like CA and CD are the contexts that delineate theoretical

from practical reason, with CA being the context of theoretical reason, which holds

court over what we ought to believe, and CD being the context of practical reason

holding domain over what we ought to do. While this comparison seems to have

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[18] For example, Kant defended the truth of Euclidean geometry on the grounds that they were
synthetic a priori judgements would still count as a method of conceptual analysis. While it may seem
like the fact that they are synthetic judgements, and therefore not true by virtue of the conceptual
content but by virtue, in the Kant case, of the pure forms of intuition, this is not really an issue. The
Brandom-inferentialist definitions of concepts seem to entail that all truth is analytic truth, and in one
sense that is right, because concepts are functions of judgements. But it is more accurate to say at
this level of abstraction the difference between analytic and synthetic truth doesn't even arise.
Accounting for the presence or lack of a distinction between analytic and synthetic truth, is a part of
first-order philosophy, and involves having a view that explains what exactly they mean.
        Furthermore, we don't need to go to examples as arcane as Kant. Even simple empirical
observations could be conceptually informative at this level of abstraction. This level of abstraction
simply doesn't speak to how we come to know any conceptual contents at all. Quine, Kant and Kripke,
should all be comfortable with how MR is characterized.
[19] We could also describe the CA as the objective context. This sense of 'objective' is not the
normative sense that is sometimes used to honor epistemic rigor. The CA is objective in the sense
that it is 'of objects'. So the CA is the context of assessing whether or not some predication of an
object is correct.

some intuitive pull, I will try to show it really only makes sense for MR. For MR and MS disagree on which context subordinates which. MR's rejection of (2) means MR believes assessment (CA) to subordinate deliberation (CD). Likewise MS's acceptance of (2) means it believes the CD to subordinate the CA. What does this mean? This is exactly the intellectualist/voluntarist divide. In the CA, we are trying to make a judgement, and because we are invested in being truthful, we want to make a 'true' or 'correct' judgement. We simply need to understand the relevant concepts to do this. If we know all the relevant facts, and all of the relevant concepts for the particular judgement, we can generate a true judgement. For example, if we are trying to assess whether or not String Theory could be empirically adequate, knowing all the relevant facts about String Theory, as well the concept of empirical adequacy, we should be able to determine whether or not String Theory could be empirically adequate. The idea here is that the thing being assessed has facts about it that are relevant to being evaluated by some criteria constitutive of the concept.[20] But we can also describe the assessment as making explicit the contents of the concept, because we are talking about the proper and improper predication cases and every predication involves a material inference.

Now what about the CD? The CD is an inherently agential and first personal context. We can even be aware of it phenomenologically, as in moments of moral crisis and uncertainty. In the CD we can weigh up reasons for and against, and try

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[20] Does this mean MR denies nominalism about properties? Yes, and No. An MR philosopher could not be a nominalist about everything, but doesn't need to be realistic about everything. Someone who is a nominalist about everything probably subscribes to MS (I say 'probably' because MP could be described as a nominalist view; Rorty describes himself as a nominalist on occasion). There has to be something about which an MR philosopher is a realist in-order to count an MR philosopher. Since I have defined MR as a species of Phil-as-ND, MR needs to be a realist about what it takes to be the constitutive question of philosophy.

What if the constitutive question regards realism or nominalism itself? For example, "Are mathematical objects real?". In this case the criteriological concept is "real". An MR philosopher could come down as a nominalist or a realist about mathematical object. But by virtue of being an MR philosopher they think there is a fact of the matter as to which is correct.

to come to an all things considered judgement. Whereas in the CA we are exercising reason, in the CD we are exercising our will. Whereas the CA is a domain of order and constraint, the CD is the domain of our agency. Now, what about the subordination relation I mentioned?

Which context is subordinate to the other makes some profound differences. The intellectualist position of MR places the CD in a subordinate relation to CA. Being subordinate to the CA, the CD becomes a locus of assessment. In deciding what to do we would try to construct judgements that describe possible courses of actions, and consult the relevant concepts. This has the possibility to create some problems. One action may conform to the criteria of being "moral", while another might conform to being "prudential", and generate a "why be moral?" problem. Maybe, the philosopher could ask if there was an action that was the best "all things considered". However, that would simply pass the problem on, setting up a conflict between what is "prudential" and what is best "all things considered". This is not an internal issue for MR. It is a feature, not a bug. But the subordination of the CD to the CA means that the creative agential power to choose something to stand for is gone. The freedom of the will is reduced to be being the freedom to be right or wrong. Since conceptual contents are fixed under MR we had better hope we are happy with the answers to the constitutive questions, because they could be, like so many things in life, disappointing.

1.2.2.1.2) Voluntarism

"Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod
Re-judge his justice, be the God of God" - Alexander Pope

The voluntaristic position of MS puts the CA subordinate to the CD. What is ostensibly attractive about voluntarism is the creative power it give us. The presence and efficacy of concepts in the material world depends on us. However, under the *Verstand* conception, concepts are autonomously determinate. This means, that we don't "create concepts" in the sense that their content depends on us. Instead, we choose them. The options available are certainly infinite, but it would be better to describe the will (as conceived by MR) as pulling the concepts out of possibility space rather than creating it. But the real worry that makes people uneasy about voluntarism is that since priority is given to the CD, the choice of concepts is arbitrary. The priority of CD to CA means we are choosing our concepts, which means we cannot cite concepts to justify our choices. An MS philosopher recognizes that when philosophers give ostensible justifications for what they do, they are simply giving reasons that they chose. Rorty himself gives voice to this voluntarism as a metaphilosophical position.

> The more philosophers I read, the clearer it seemed that each could carry their views back to first principles which were incompatible with the first principles of their opponents and that none of them ever got to that fabled place 'beyond hypothesis'. There seemed to be nothing like a neutral standpoint from which these alternative first principles could be evaluated. (Rorty 1999: 10)

Without some universal first principles to arbitrate disagreement, inquiry becomes a free for all. Given that there is no rational reason to prefer one concept over another, the fancy of our whims decide. Choose first rationalize later, is the voluntarists motto. The explanation for as to why you made a choice could not be described in terms of reasons, but only in terms of non-rational causes. This is the

essentially naturalizing power of the voluntaristic position. We are returned to what one might call an 'intellectual state of nature'.

The worry of arbitrariness manifests itself from three different perspectives. Firstly, and most importantly, is first personal arbitrariness. This is the arbitrariness of our own decisions, and is simply what straightforwardly follows by giving primacy to the CD over the CA. The other manifestations of arbitrariness are the third-personal, and second-personal. Third-personal arbitrariness is when we naturalize other agents. While we may recognize the purported conceptual content implicit in the actions, and beliefs of other agents, we don't take it at face value. We understand the assertions and actions of other agents not as commitments (after all they could simply will something else) but products of chaos or products of natural causes. Finally, second-personal arbitrariness regards the dialectical position between interlocutors. This kind of arbitrariness, means we acknowledge that our interlocutors are trying to convince us of something they have willed, and we acknowledge that they have no non-question begging reasons they can give. We often like to say that we should be, and our interlocutors **should** be persuaded by, the force of the "better reason". But for the voluntarist, what it is for something to be the "better reason" is up to the will, and is therefore itself beyond reason. Were anyone to win a dialectical contest it would be for purely non-rational reasons. The difference between indoctrination and rational persuasion is, for the voluntarist, a difference of degree and not of kind.

1.2.2.2) Vernunft

Things are different for the *Vernunft* conception of concepts. Under the *Vernunft* conception, concepts don't have *Fregean determinateness.* Whereas on

the *Verstand* conception, concepts were determinate before any actual applications

of them, with the *Vernunft* conception, concepts are determined by their applications.

As Brandom elucidates, the *Vernunft* conception is temporally perspectival.

> Looked at *retro*spectively, the process of determining conceptual contents (and of course at the same time the correct applications of them) by applying them appears as a theoretical, epistemic task. One is "determining" the conceptual contents in the sense of finding out which are the right ones, what norms really govern the process (and so should be used to assess the correctness of applications of the concepts in question), that is, finding out what really follows from what and what is really incompatible with what. A *recollective reconstruction* of the tradition culminating in the current set of conceptual commitments-and-contents shows, from the point of view of the set of commitments-and-concepts, taken as correct, how we gradually, step by step, came to acknowledge (in our attitudes) the norms (normative statuses such as commitments) that all along implicitly governed our practices - for instance, what we were really, whether we knew it or not, committed to about the melting point of a piece of metal when we applied the concept of *copper* to it. From this point of view, the contents of our concepts have always been perfectly determinate in the Kant-Frege Verstand sense, though we didn't know what they were.
> Looked at *pro*spectively, the process of *determining* conceptual concepts by applying them appears as a practical, constructive semantic task. By applying concepts to novel particulars one is "determining" the conceptual contents in the sense of *making it* the case that some applications are correct, by *taking it* to be the case that they are. One is drawing new, more definite boundaries, where many possibilities existed before. By investing one's authority in an application as being correct, one authorizes those who apply the concept to future cases to do so also. If they in turn recognize one in this specific respect, by acknowledging that authority, then a more determinate norm has been socially instituted. From this point of view, conceptual norms are never fully determinate in the Kant-Frege Verstand sense, since there is always room for further determination. (Brandom 2009: 92-3).

This long and pregnant passage is worth unpacking in the idiom I have been

using. What Brandom calls the recollective reconstruction has a prospective and

retrospective element. The retrospective part is intellectualist; conceptual contents

are already determined. This is why we "discover" the melting point of copper. The

prospective part is voluntarist. Since concepts do not have Fregean

determinateness, the acts of will are genuinely creative, as the will is given the power

to authorize inferential relations that hitherto had not been authorized. More

importantly, the creative determining of the will is constrained by having to be

consistent with the already determined. However, the very act of giving a

recollective reconstruction is voluntarist. So while the content of a recollective

reconstruction is both intellectualist (in its retrospective part) and voluntarist (in its

prospective part), the entire recollection is produced by an act that is voluntarist. MP and MS both endorse (2), but here we start to see how MP and MS are different. MP is voluntaristic but not arbitrary.

Some general remarks are advisable. MS and MR treat the will as ex-nihilo. For MR the will could conform to an independent criteria of rationality. While for MS, the will chooses arbitrarily the content of reason. This from-nothing agency of the will may seem to be a result of the high level of abstraction. In the case of MS, our first-personal deliberation is arbitrary because every single concept is up for grabs and can be chosen to have whatever content one pleases. This problem of arbitrariness is the motivating concern of existentialist philosophy and literature. As in Dostoyevsky's famous line in *The Brother's Karamazov* "Without God and the future life? It means everything is permitted now, one can do anything?" (Dostoyevsky 1992: 499). I read this as implying that if there is no privileged universal set of conceptual contents, then all possible conceptual contents are permitted.

Heidegger provided what I think to be the clearest expression of how to overcome the potentially nihilistic and relativistic worries brought on by voluntarism, "Dasein comes back to itself, discloses current factical possibilities of authentic existing, and discloses them *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness as thrown, *takes over*" (Heidegger 1962: 435 emphasis original). "Dasein", Heidegger's idiosyncratic term for first-personal phenomenological being (understood in a non-Cartesian way), never finds itself without any conceptual contents already endorsed. While the anxiety-ridden state of being burdened with the Godly power to choose the meaning of things, to choose conceptual contents, we only ever come to that stage of self-consciousness after having uncritically lived life with many practices which we

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accepted at face value. These practices give us the conceptual contents we have already been using to *make sense* of things. This is what Gadamer called our prejudices, "conditions whereby be we experience something - whereby what we encounter speaks to us" (Gadamer 1976: 9). Having these prejudices, whose acquisition predates our coming to voluntaristic self-awareness, means the choice of conceptual contents doesn't have to be arbitrary. As Heidegger had said, Dasein "takes over" what is given to it by heritage. This means it comes to reassert the conceptual contents that it now realizes make up its prejudices also make possible its *sense making* ability. This may seem like mere dogmatic self-reassurance but it is not. The practices that make up our prejudice are not already themselves *made sense* of. In other words, while we may certainly be operating within certain practices, we do not initially have an interpretation of these practices. The conceptual content of these practices is initially only implicit, waiting to be made explicit.

Making explicit the practices by which we already *make sense* of things is the recollective reconstruction that Brandom talked about.

> The right kind of recollection is one that picks out a trajectory through the previous results of one's actual integrations that is *expressively progressive*. That is, it must exhibit a history that both culminates in one's current view and has the form of the gradual making *explicit* of what can now retrospectively be seen all along to have been *implicit*. Doing that is showing for each previous episode (of those that are selected as, as it were, precedential, as revelatory of what one now takes always already to have been there) how that set of commitments can be seen as a partial, and only partially correct revelation of things as they are now known (or at least taken) to be. That is, one must show how each of the recollectively privileged prior integration made progress toward one's current constellation of commitments - both in the judgments that are endorsed and in the consequential and incompatibility relations taken to articulate the concepts applied in those judgments. (Brandom 2009: 100, emphasis original)

The hermeneutic activity inherent in the *Vernunft* conception enables MP to get away from the accusations of arbitrariness. While our practices, our prejudice, are not something we can choose, the content of them is up to us. How can this

overcome the worry of arbitrariness when it seems like we have simply traded points at which the arbitrariness occurs? Firstly, third and second personal arbitrariness is overcome simply by introducing prejudices, under the Vernunft conception. Since other agents are constrained by their prejudices too, we can understand their precedential determinations, not as arbitrary, but as according to conceptual norms that have been there all along. By understanding a precedential determining, we are making explicit conceptual contents that explain why the agent, who did the precedential determining, did what they did. So we are able to *make sense* from the third-personal CA. Furthermore, we can explain why, e.g., Lavoisier was right to have discovered oxygen, when Priestly was wrong to have invented "dephlogisticated air", because oxygen is part of the progressive story to the present of chemical science, while "dephlogisticated air" is not. (Of course such a story was not available to Lavoisier or Priestly at the time) What about second-personal dialectic? Can we make sense of someone having the "better reason"? Yes, because we can recognize new precedential determinations, which in turn would be a new episode in a recollective reconstruction. But the arbitrariness of CD, our first-personal deliberation, seems to still give us problems. Since the content we give to these recollective episodes is up to us, the arbitrariness seems harder to shake. As stated above, our own *sense making* abilities are given to us by our heritage. The prejudices we inherit are unarticulated, and implicit conceptual contents, which limit what we can *make sense* of. Because of that, there is a constraint on what we can determine prospectively (this is precisely why we can explain other agent's precedential determinations as rational). However, the hermeneutic task of interpreting past precedential episodes is only possible because the determination

has already taken place. In the CD we don't have this, so something more is needed to dissolve the threat of arbitrariness. Again, Heidegger has the answer.

Heidegger doesn't deny that there would be cases where our choices felt arbitrary. That was the condition of inauthentic Dasein. Authentic Dasein is resolute about itself. It is the rare unity of self-consciousness and self-confidence. Heidegger's phenomenological description of being resolute about our factical historicality, that our rational constitution is given to us by the past, is fate. As Heidegger says, "[o]nce one has grasped the finitude of one's existence, it snatches one back from the endless multiplicity of possibilities which offer themselves as closest to one [...] and brings Dasein into the simplicity of its *fate*" (Heidegger 435). Seeing one's entire life as having prepared one for what one is about to do is fate. When we are resolute, the concern that we could just as legitimately choose some other conceptual contents is gone, because when we are resolute it doesn't *make sense* to choose otherwise. We are resolute in that our novel determination of conceptual content, fits into a retrospective narrative in which our current determination is the only determination we could rationally make.

Of course this is not the end of the story. We have an answer as to how MP and its conception of concepts evades the arbitrariness of its voluntarism. However, while the phenomena of resoluteness is a valid answer, we are left with questions as to why we should be resolute. To what end are we resolute? We already know that Phil-as-RD denies Phil-as-ND's philosophical goal of producing answers to the constitutive questions of philosophy. What then is the goal of philosophy of Phil-as-RD? If we have such ends in mind we would have an answer to what there is to be resolute about. As mentioned earlier MP's (Phil-as-RD's) answer to such questions is progress. I will now move on to the shape progress must take.

1.3) Rorty And History

Analytic philosophy is often accused of being ahistorical, or even anti-historical. While sometimes stated in the same breath, these are not identical accusations. Being anti-historical, is not necessarily a philosophical position, as anti-historicism is simply a distaste for, or disinterest in "history". Being ahistorical on the other hand, is treating history in an insufficiently "historical way". As with all talking about monoliths like "analytic philosophy", there is a grain of falsity amongst the heap of truth. When we look at the faculty listings of "analytic departments" we will come across faculty actively engaged in research projects concerned with the history of philosophy. Specialist journals and conferences in the history of philosophy, as well as mandatory courses in the history of philosophy for philosophy students, damage the credibility of the anti-historical accusation. However, the greater presence of the history of philosophy doesn't necessarily speak to philosophical usefulness or importance. Instead, the addition of history of philosophy to analytic departments seems to be one among many research specializations. As Quine is famously supposed to have quipped "people go into philosophy for one of two reasons: some are interested in the history of philosophy, and some in philosophy" (Rorty 1981: 211). That there is a distinction between genuinely philosophical work, and historical work, distinguishes those that specialize in historical work, often taking on the mantle of "scholar", and those that specialize in philosophical work, taking the mantle of "philosopher" in the "proper" sense of the term. "As analytic philosophers", says Robert Scharff, "move away from the ahistorical position of positivism, they must ask how philosophy's history *should figure* in present practice" (Scharff 2014, xii emphasis original).

Of course, there are different ways to answer the question posed by Scharff. MR, MS, and MP each have their own genre of historiography. MR engages in *rational reconstructions*, MS tells *historical reconstructions*, and MP edifies with Geistesgeschichte. Rorty identified these three different genres, in "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres" (1984). Associating each metaphilosophical position with an "appropriate" genre of historiography is not, however, explicit in Rorty. It is instead a part of my interpolative reading.

Rational reconstruction and historical reconstruction have pedagogical functions that fit MR and MS respectively. *Rational reconstructions* tell us a story of progress that fortifies our self-confidence to make sense of things. *Historical reconstructions* give us a sense of contingency that makes us self-aware that, while we have hitherto made sense of things in one particular way, there are other ways of making sense. *Geistesgeschichte* are, in a loose sense, a synthesis of the first two genres. A Geistesgeschichte is both a story of progress as well as of contingency. It is both rationalistic as well as naturalistic. In what follows I will argue that what separates Geistesgeschichte from rational reconstruction and historical reconstruction is a different notion of progress. Rational and historical reconstruction presuppose a *teleological* view of progress — progress as defined by its approach to some end point — while Geistesgeschichte uses an *originary* view of progress — progress as defined by improvement over some origin state of affairs.[21] Progress only happens in time, as progress is always comparative. It is most aptly discussed the context of discussion of history and historiography.

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[21] I have personal reservations about this terminology. For example, it would be a mistake to think that the teleological view, has a monopoly on purposiveness. As I will show that the originary view is still a very purposive view of progress. However, since this is the terminology established by Philip Kitcher (2015), and he is not alone in that use of the term "teleological" for a view of progress, I will acquiesce to this terminology.

1.3.1) The Teleological View

Phil-as-ND subscribes to a teleological view of progress. A teleological view thinks of progress as approaching an end point. We progress in a race by approaching the finish line. Moreover "progress", is a generic term for the means by which we approach a predefined end. For Phil-as-ND, the goal is to answer the constitutive questions, and progress is coming up with more comprehensive (and ultimately right) answers to them. This means-end relationship is presumably why Kitcher calls this view "teleological" (Kitcher 2015, 478). We have an image of philosophical labour being to achieve some hypothetical state of affairs, i.e. the knowledge of the answers to the constitutive questions. (Any given labourer need not know exactly what end they are working towards, of course.) The end of progress is the end of philosophy (to be understood with all the ambiguities of the word "end"). Note, however, that having a teleological view of progress doesn't entail one thinks there actually is any such progress. Remember that while MR asserts proposition (3) of the inconsistent triad, MS denies it. Thus, MR takes progress to indeed be possible, while MS takes it to be impossible.

1.3.1.1) Rational Reconstruction

Rational reconstruction is the historiographic genre native to MR and, by implication, analytic philosophy. At its core, to perform a rational reconstruction is to interpret an author as trying to answer (at least one of) the constitutive questions of philosophy. This means that the assertions of the interpreted author are evaluable according to how well they answer these questions. One might say, not entirely wrongly, that this is to treat an author as a contemporary. Moreover, rational reconstruction is concerned with an author's reasons for their claims, but not the

causes. There is taken to be a distinction between the context of justification, and the context of discovery. In other words, there is what makes an answer to a philosophical question a correct answer (reasons), against why that candidate's answer is being proposed by a particular person at a particular time and place (causes). For rational reconstruction these are completely separate issues. To this extent matters of biography and historical context are irrelevant to historical reconstruction. In light of reducing the past to the contemporary, one may wonder what is the point of the this genre of historiography? Rorty identified that evaluating the philosophers of the past gave us self-confidence to make sense of things. What sense? That over the course of human history we have been getting closer to the right answers to the constitutive philosophical questions. In this section, I will show how while "progress" has both a hermeneutic use and is meant to give us self-confidence, it remains inessential to philosophy as conceived by MR.

To give a rational reconstruction is to present someone else's views in one's own native idiom. Since our idiom and the idiom of our contemporaries is generally the same, rational reconstruction is generally not required.[22] The translation of idiom is not intended to be a mere relabeling of words. It is meant to articulate the conceptual contents of a philosopher who hitherto may have been obscure. Articulating conceptual contents is to articulate what one takes to be a reason for what, i.e. to articulate material inferences. This is why analytic historians of philosophy are so often concerned with presenting the arguments of the mighty dead. By virtue of being concerned with arguments and conceptual contents, rational reconstructions are meant to articulate, in light of what a philosophical view

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[22] Of course, an MS inclined philosopher, could put pressure on such a point, and try to suggest that, contrary to the apparent sharing of idiom, we actually use idioms that only superficially resemble one another, and in reality use idiolects, and hence equivocate regularly.

was internally justified. Put differently, a rational reconstruction tries to make sense of the mighty dead.

The actual interpretive act of rational reconstruction implies that we can *make sense* of who we interpret while also being able to ascribe error to them. Or put another way, MR needs the question of what an author means to be separate from the question of whether or not it is true. Note that this is precisely what MS denies. As far as MS is concerned, *making sense* entails truth. But if MR needs a view's correctness to be a separate issue, then what explains a philosopher's presumption of univocality with the authors? For MS, agreement on the constitutive problems and solutions would suffice, but MR needs to be able to ascribe error. One answer would be to say, we are all, and always, in some sense, univocal with one another. For Phil-as-RD, and thereby for MP, this wouldn't be so bizarre an answer, since it takes the non-constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question, and so univocality is not constituted by sameness of subject matter. For MR, to take on this hyper-universalist position, would be for it to commit to the idea that, insofar as something is interpretable, it is in some way about the constitutive questions of philosophy; meaningfulness would therefore entail philosophical content. This clearly is a very extreme view, that can only be tempered by the idea that while everything that can be interpreted as philosophical, that philosophical dimension is not always primary. However that raises the question of when isn't it primary? And I fear the cynical answer that the philosophical aspect of a text or utterance is primary only when it is published in an academic journal or book, or said in a classroom or conference context. But my personal fears do not reflect what is indeed logically an option for MR as a philosophical position. Rather, this highlights exactly why an MR philosopher might take a text or utterance to be philosophical has several possible

answers. It is not really an objection to MR that it lacks a good answer as to why it takes a text or utterance to be philosophical or not. For MR, interpretation is not itself a philosophical issue. Since, it accepts the *Verstand* conception of concepts and is intellectualist, criticising an argument is not identical to criticising a person. This is why, even in cases of ascribing error, we may say "don't take it personally". Accurate ascription of arguments is not itself a part of philosophy, and is therefore not itself of philosophical value. While we may say that an agent is wrong or in error, we are actually only ascribing error to them because of the false beliefs they hold, and the belief would be false regardless of who held it. This is to highlight the fact that Johnstone's idea of the centrality of the agent is not present here.

If this is right, then it is highly questionable what if any use MR has for history. For MR the use of history is pedagogical by informing us of the progressive development of a particular way of making sense. This inspires confidence in one's own knowledge: confidence to redescribe others in one's own idiom and subject them to one's own standards; and confidence to think of our evaluative standards, given to us by our concepts, as not parochial but universal. Rational reconstruction delivers this, by showing us the errors of the past, while fitting past philosophers into a narrative of errors being corrected and vindicating our present.

> We want this [rational reconstruction] not simply because it is nice to feel one up on one's betters, but because we would like to be able to see the history of our race as a long conversational interchange. We want to be able to see it that way in order to assure ourselves that there has been rational progress in the course of recorded history — that we differ from our ancestors on grounds which our ancestors could be led to accept. The need for reassurance on this point is as great as the need for self-awareness. We need to imagine Aristotle studying Galileo or Quine and changing his mind, Aquinas reading Newton or Hume and changing his, etc. We need to think that, in philosophy as in science, the mighty mistaken dead look down from heaven at our recent successes, and are happy to find that their mistakes have been corrected. (Rorty 1984: 51)

This re-educating of the mighty dead idealises them into reasonable beings who can come to accept that, while they made mistakes, they contributed something too. As

Rorty says, the conversation we try to have with the dead when we rationally reconstruct them "is the sort one has with somebody who is brilliantly and originally right about something dear to one's heart, but who exasperatingly mixes up this topic with a lot of outdated foolishness" (52).

To this end Rorty cites Peter Strawson, and in particular Peter Strawson's book on Kant, *The Bounds of Sense,* as such a conversation with the dead. In more contemporary times, Scott Soames' *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century* explicitly sees the history of analytic philosophy as this kind of self-confidence building progressive story.

> It is because philosophy has progressed, and we know more now, that we can separate the essential from the inessential in presenting the contributions of a philosopher like Russell. That is the spirit in which I approach the task. The opposing spirit denies philosophical progress, or at best adopts a value-neutral stance, and as a result takes the historical enterprise to consist simply in elucidations of all the different strands of past philosophical thought, and identification of lines of influence. There are, of course, other less tendentious routes to this antiquarian conception of the history of philosophy, but they are beside the point. My aim was to present an historically accurate picture of the main lines of progress in the analytic tradition. (Soames 2006: 651).

The reader of a Soames book, does not need to begin with self-confidence in contemporary analytic philosophy. They can read *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century* and be told a progressive story from the errors of Russell and Frege to the truths of Kripke. One of Soames' critics, Michael Kremer, describes Soames' history of philosophy as "a *royal* road to me" (Kremer 2013, 311). This "royal road" that Soames travels is, "a road we have the kingly prerogative to travel upon because of the philosophers that we already are" (311). Soames' history of philosophy reassures himself of the progress of his own views over the past, and gives others the chance to feel that kingly superiority too.[23] However, Soames takes this in stride arguing that, "[i]f you don't think that progress is made in philosophy, or

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[23] It is not a necessary requirement that a philosopher already possess self-confidence, in-order to write a rational reconstruction. The kingliness of a rational reconstruction derives from the fact that a one's own view turns out to be right, and the past is judged in light of it. The writing or even reading of a rational reconstruction might be seen as a therapeutic activity giving a philosopher self-confidence.

that history should chronicle it, why should we be interested in the subject, or its history?".[24] Soames' ethos is not difficult to sympathize with. The hope that the errors of the past have been corrected is the idea that our disagreements are resolvable.

For MR, the idea that over time disagreements wane and error is corrected is important for dissolving the issue of seemingly deep and persistent disagreement. If the mistakes of the past have been corrected, because in the end reason triumphs over unreason, and truth triumphs over falsity, then even deep disagreement will ultimately resolve itself over time. If only Hume had read Moore or Geach[25], he wouldn't have made the mistakes that he did. This line of thought reveals that while rational reconstructions are at pains to articulate just the reasons for and against answers to philosophical questions, it actually presupposes a particular causal view of the world.

Eschatology was always an option for MR, as we saw in 1.1). While it was no less dogmatic than the other forms of MR, the hope it had for the erosion of disagreement and rise of consensus does ameliorate the concern that there may be other ways of making sense of things, thereby restoring self-confidence in one's own way of making sense. Kant himself had elaborated such an eschatology in his *The Idea of a Universal History from A Cosmopolitan Point of View*, in which nature was revealed to work purposively, manipulating agents over time so their institutions and character would be sufficiently altered as to allow them to achieve their moral perfection. So it turns out that using the historiographical genre of rational reconstruction presupposes a philosophy of history.

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[24] From Scott Soames' "Reply to Critics of Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century: Christopher Pincock, Thomas Hurka, Michael Kremer, and Paul Horwich" delivered at Pacific Division Meetings of the American Philosophical Association on March 25 2006. URL = <http://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/678/docs/Replies/Rep__Philosophical_Ayalysis.pdf>
[25] What I have in mind, is Geach's "Acriptivism" (1960).

Perhaps we can now answer why MR interprets other philosophers as univocal. MR interprets other philosophers as univocal because they fit a progressive narrative. The ascription of error to other philosophers, while not philosophically productive (since they don't get us the right answer but require us to presume that we already know better), is pedagogically productive. Why are Russell's "On Denoting" and Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*, about the same thing? Because Kripke represents a progress over Russell, a fortiori Russell and Kripke are univocal with one another. Therefore, the extent to which an MR philosopher interprets others as univocal with them is the extent to which they believe a progressive narrative from error to correctness can be told. What we have learned here is that MR does not ascribe univocality in order to ascribe error. Rather, error is ascribed in order to ascribe univocality. And it is from that univocality that MR philosophers gain their self-confidence.

This still leaves a lot of freedom for different varieties of MR. In particular, the exact content an MR philosopher gives to their constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question does matter. Also, to what extent they are able to interpret other philosophers as univocal with them can vary. Some cases will be easier than others. It is, for instance, extremely easy to read Russell and Kripke as univocal on the subject of names. But it is quite difficult to read David Lewis and John Locke as univocal on the subject of the value of art (as neither obviously had a such a view).

As we saw, a grand presumption of univocality prior to an ascription of error is available to MR. Philosophers who take that option are *perennialists*. They think of philosophy as something that has always been there. And work on the constitutive problems of philosophy began with the pre-Socratics, and more or less some work on all of the problems began with Plato. Whether or not analytic philosophy is

continuous with the rest of philosophy is an open question.   The perennialist

believes that analytic, and perhaps continental philosophy, are univocal with the rest

of philosophy, and thus share the same subject matter. Others will deny this. Gilbert

Harman is famous for having put sign outside his departmental office saying "Just

say no to the history of philosophy" (Sorell 2005: 43). Intrigued by this, Tom Sorell

asked Harman whether this indeed was true and what he thought of the history of

philosophy, and received this response:

> I believe my views about the history of philosophy are mostly orthodox nowadays. The history of philosophy is not easy. It is very important to consider the historical context of a text and not just try to read it all by itself. One should be careful not to read one's own views (or other recent views) into a historical text. It is unwise to treat historical texts as sacred documents that contain important wisdom. In particular, it is important to avoid what Walter Kaufmann calls 'exegetical thinking': reading one's views into a sacred text so one can read them back out endowed with authority. For the most part the problems that historical writers were concerned with are different from the problems that current philosophers face. There are no perennial philosophical problems. (Sorell 2005: 43-4)

Harman denies perennialism, and consequently doesn't see contemporary

philosophy as continuous with the past. Likewise, Harman does not believe the

history of philosophy is particularly useful for students of philosophy.

> For reasons I do not fully understand, I have sometimes upset people by distinguishing between philosophy and the history of philosophy or by noting that philosophy is what the history of philosophy is the history of. I also think as an empirical matter that students of philosophy need not be required to study the history of philosophy and that a study of the history of philosophy tends not to be useful to students of philosophy. (Note 'tends'.) Similarly, it is not particularly helpful to students of physics, chemistry, or biology to study the history of physics, chemistry, or biology. (44)

Harman's view makes sense when you consider the fact that the need for self-

confidence is not a necessity. One might not need a 'royal road to me' story

because they don't need to made to feel self-confident. A lack of self-confidence

isn't presently a concern for some philosophers and they therefore do not need their

confidence to make sense of things a particular way to be reassured. It may even

raise questions as to the real worth of such of "royal road to me" stories. Either way,

Harman's denial of perennial problems is not a radical break with philosophers like

Soames. Some people lack self-confidence and the kind of story Soames tells can give it to them. It does not, however, do productive philosophical work, giving us new philosophical knowledge, since it has to rely on ostensibly already established knowledge. Whether or not one needs to read past philosophers as univocal with contemporary problems is not itself a philosophical question, as far as MR is concerned. For MR it is a psychological question about whether or not one needs to gain self-confidence in one's own view.

There is in fact the concern that history can undermine self-confidence as much as ground it. Hans Reichenbach had said as much in the conclusion to *The Rise of Scientific Philosophy*.

> Those who work in the new philosophy do not look back; their work would not profit from historical considerations. They are as unhistorical as Plato was, or Kant, because they like those masters of a past period of philosophy they are only interested in the subject they are working on, not in its relations to previous times. I do not wish to belittle the history of philosophy; but one should always remember that it is history, and not philosophy. Like all historical research, it should be done with scientific methods and psychological and sociological explanations. But the history of philosophy must not be presented as a collection of truths. ***There is more error than truth in traditional philosophy***; therefore, only the critically minded can be competent historians. ***The glorification of the philosophies of the past***, ***the presentation of the various systems as so many versions of wisdom, each in its own right, has undermined the philosophic potency of the present generation***. (Reichenbach 1954: 325, my emphasis).

This confidence-undermining danger does not come from rational reconstructions, obviously, but from a different genre of historiography, historical reconstruction. Historical reconstruction will be discussed in the following section, but Reichenbach makes a point that speaks to just how easy it is dismiss the history of philosophy. I believe both Harman and Reichenbach have realized that for MR the history of philosophy doesn't have any philosophical value. However, it isn't clear to me that Reichenbach and Harman are actually opposed to perennialism.   This claim may seem strange given Harman's earlier remarks. At this metaphilosophical level, we can suspend judgement as to whether or not there is a fact of the matter as to

whether or not old past philosophers were talking about the same problems contemporary philosophers ostensibly are. Harman and Reichenbach, would probably agree that we can treat past philosophers as though they were talking about the same problems as contemporaries. And in that case, the question really is, should we bother? In that case Reichenbach and Harman could probably be persuaded to agree that as far as the edifying use of history for giving us self-confidence, when self-confidence is need, it is worth bothering. But I take it they would insist that when it comes to doing philosophy they would say, "Do the philosophy, and put the history to the side ".

1.3.1.2) Historical Reconstruction

Historical reconstruction is rational reconstruction's polar opposite. Rational reconstruction aims to give us self-confidence; historical reconstruction gives us self-awareness. Rational reconstruction demonstrates the possibility of progress by showing the correction of past error; historical reconstruction shows there is no progress. While rational reconstruction involves a level of universality, historical reconstruction rejects any attempts at universality and thus is completely othering. And finally, while rational reconstruction is ultimately a story of positivity, error being corrected, and ignorance being educated, historical reconstruction is purely negative, showing the equivocality where there was once thought univocality. When MS denies proposition (3) of Rorty's inconsistent triad it is denying the possibility of progress. Because of the *Verstand* conception of concepts and its commitment to voluntarism, we are able to will the truth of any proposition. This means we are able to will the answers to all the constitutive questions of philosophy we can think of. Moreover we recognize this to be the case for everyone else too. There is no real

sense of progress because we can will the end of philosophical inquiry with any assertion. The beginning and end of inquiry is simultaneous. There is no point at which one way of making sense of things could be said to be objectively better than another way of making sense of things.

In historical reconstruction the dead are represented as speaking using their own terms. In rational reconstruction we see the mighty dead as providing answers to our problems; in historical reconstruction they are addressing their own problems. And while rational reconstruction gives us a sense of progress, historical reconstruction gives us a sense of "self-awareness". Whereas rational reconstruction is concerned with evaluating the truth of what other philosophers have written or said, historical reconstruction can bracket out the question of truth (since, according to MS, any asserting is true for whomever asserts it), and instead asks what is meant. This means that, unlike MR, MS cannot come to know the meaning of a past author via appeal to truth or falsity, which the progressive rational reconstructions allowed. Instead MS realizes "the meaning of an assertion is a matter of placing that assertion in a context" (Rorty 1984: 55). This is not a rational context of other beliefs standing in justification relationships with one another, but ultimately a causal context. What exactly is contained in this "causal context" is up for grabs. Historical reconstructions can range from the most naturalistic reductionism too loose genealogies. (I will give an example of such a genealogy below.) The historical reconstruction is trying to explain why the will acted as it did, and unlike rational reconstructions, understanding the cause of that act of willing is actually relevant.

In this endeavor, an historical reconstruction is not actually making sense of an act of willing. Agents can will whatever subject matter they please, and in

choosing the problems, they also choose the solutions. For MS an act of willing cannot, strictly speaking, be made sense of, since what is being willed are the conceptual contents in light of which things make sense. But the historical reconstruction can articulate *how* someone makes sense, and the non-rational causes that caused them to make sense in that way. For example, the Catholic worldview, that many people still use to make sense of things today, is not a worldview that has always been around. Such a worldview, as a distinctive worldview, has a long history going back to the Council of Nicaea (which would determine whether Catholicism would accept Arianism). Further, it is probably safe to say that Catholicism would not be what it is if there had never been a Protestant reformation. A contemporary Catholic owes their self-identity as a Catholic as much to Martin Luther and Jan Huss, as they do to Constantine. There are two lessons in this example. Firstly, that the content of Catholicism only became clear when what it was incompatible with (Arianism, Lutheran doctrine of predestination), was apparent. That Catholicism took one shape over another, as far MS is concerned, was a battle of wills. Catholicism could have been Arian had Arius wielded greater political and/or persuasive power at the Council of Nicaea. Secondly, that what enabled one concept of Catholicism over another to prevail were contingent factors that caused historical events to take shape as they did.

Not all historical reconstructions need to be of grand traditions like Catholicism. It is sufficient to show how a view that one need not assert *makes sense*. In interpreting philosophers, the historical reconstructor shows why the philosopher thought as they did, why they believed what they believe, and how it was shaped by past inheritance, and made different by personal idiosyncracy. In this

way, biographical detail is useful to the historical reconstructor, as well as philological, historical, sociological, and psychoanalytic erudition.

What we get out of an historical reconstruction is what Rorty calls "self-awareness" (Rorty 1984: 51). By showing us different ways of sense making it is made explicit to us what we are asserting. Just as Catholicism was made what it is by a series of controversies, our own way of making sense of things is constituted by what it denies. The act of willing is ultimately an act of negating. We are what we are only in light of what we are not. So we educate ourselves about the past, and even contemporary ways of making sense, so that we can distinguish ourselves in our acts of willing. It is only in the ways of making sense that we deny that we can understand our willings to have any meaning at all. By showing us what we can deny, by showing us the controversies showed that there were divergent ways of making sense, we are liberated from our stultifying naivety that there are limits to the capacity to make sense of things.

From the perspective of MS, historical reconstructions are really all there is to be done, since there really isn't any productive philosophy to do anyway. They are negative enterprises meant to educate people out of their "naive" realism. For MS any mention of progress is anathema. Talk about progress, to the ears of MS, sounds like arrogant self-congratulatory rhetoric, and perennialism a dangerous megalomania. As far as MS is concerned, the only thing left for philosophers to do, is the negative enterprise of trying to undermine the self-assuredness of realists.

This is precisely what Reichenbach was afraid of. That if we looked at a history too much we might see it as historical reconstructions portray it, and start to lose confidence in our way of making sense as the only and best one. We might, as Reichenbach said, loose our "potency". It is a strange phenomena that those who

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are the least self-aware are often the most confident. In part, this is because they

don't know any better; they don't know all the things that can go wrong, or all the

objections and criticism. And the most self-aware people are the most hesitant and

risk averse. They think before they do, and may end up not doing anything. And, if I

can be permitted a broad generalization: most people switch between these attitudes

over the course of their lives. We enter conscious life acculturated in a world of

practices that, when we learned them, we were too ignorant to assert or deny. But

when, roughly at the point of adolescence, we learn about other cultures and history,

gaining worldliness and erudition, we may become jaded. We realize that our values

— the way we make sense of things — is only the way *we* make sense of things

because that is how we were raised. And, perhaps with a stiff swig of cynicism, we

recognize the mountains of bodies upon which claims of progress have been made.

"Progress is a storm", said Benjamin (Benjamin 2007: 258). The Angel of History

sees the past as "a single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage"

(257). It is no wonder then that teenagers, are so quick to take up relativism, and

are metaphilosophical skeptics by the time they go to college or university. It is also

no wonder that teenagers are so quick to rebel against their parents. One's parents

are, in most cases, one's first authority, the first and most present force trying to

impose its way of making sense upon you. And when one is sufficiently

understanding, one may realize that in all disagreements one's parents have had

coercive advantage over oneself. At some point the teenager realizes that one's

parents don't have disagreements just about what the facts are, but about how to

make sense of things. They suspects that their parents have not been getting their

way because they had truth and reason on their side (there are no such

universalities), but because they have had the ability to coerce. The adolescent

realizes that their parents do not respect otherness, their otherness, their own way of making sense of things. They realize that human history is a slaughter bench, a shambles, with self-confident psychopaths running rampant obliterating the others they do not understand and refuse to conform.

I believe, it actually does say something good about a society if there are many teenagers that have this experience. People have to be very sensitive, and tolerant, in order see others as making sense of things in a fundamentally different way. But analytic philosophy professors don't seem particularly appreciative of this fact. When a student in a first-year class, says something like "true for me" or "rational for them", they cringe and bemoan the relativistic attitudes of their students. If and when students realize that their relativism has earned the contempt of their professors, they either adopt a progressively more realist attitude, or turn away from philosophy, and go to departments of sociology, history, political science, or comparative literature. I find this a sad state of affairs. The philosophy professors are, in part, right to have contempt of their relativist students. MR and MS are not just incompatible doctrines but viciously antagonistic to one another. However, while it may have hitherto seemed so, self-awareness and self-confidence are not opposed to one another. They only appear so because they often accompany incompatible doctrines. In MP and its genre of historiography, Geistesgeschichte, self-confidence and self-awareness can exist in harmony. We should not belittle our young people for the self-awareness they have acquired, through erudition, and we should not resent the older established classes for the self-confidence they obstinately hold. Self-awareness without self-confidence is impotent, self-confidence without self-awareness is blind.

1.3.2) The Originary View

Unlike MR or MS, MP adopts an originary view of progress. Instead of thinking of progress as reducing the distance to a goal, progress is increasing distance from a starting point. This way of thinking of progress does not make the notion of better beholden to a notion of best. Under the originary view, 'best' has only a comparative meaning (best relative to the alternatives). Whereas for the teleological view, progress was a means to an end (the better was only better in light of the best), for the originary view progress is an end in itself. "Progress", said Rorty, "is, as Thomas Kuhn suggested, measured by the extent to which we have made ourselves better than we were in the past rather than by our increased proximity to a goal." (Rorty 1998: 28).

1.3.2.1) Geistesgeschichte

Rational reconstructions are a kind of interpretation that takes meaning for granted (since the author would be translated into one's own idiom), and thus only establishes the truth value of what is said. Historical reconstruction does the opposite and ignores the truth value (in our idiom) of what it interprets, looking rather for meaning. Rorty said that, "[t]here seems to be a dilemma: either we anachronistically impose enough of our problems and vocabulary on the dead to make them conversational partners, or we confine our interpretive activity to making their falsehoods look less silly by placing them in the context of the benighted times in which they were written." (1984: 49). This dilemma is the choice between rational and historical reconstructions. Soames, seems to have been cognizant of this dilemma and opts for rational reconstruction. Yet Rorty does not really believe there is a dilemma here. However, his reasons for this are actually not clear. At first

Rorty's says, "[w]e should do both of these things, but do them separately" (49). This seems to suggest that the two genres can both be practiced: one for gaining self-confidence in the pursuit of truth and the other for gaining self-awareness. However, given that Rorty is a committed Davidsonian, one might wonder how he thinks we could engage in two separate and independent enterprises that treat truth and meaning as so distinct when Davidson preaches their interdependence. In fact, Rorty seems to catch himself here:

> The two genres can never be that independent, because you will not know much about what the dead meant prior to figuring out how much truth they knew. These two topics should be seen as moments in a continuing movement around the hermeneutic circle, a circle one has to have gone round a good many times before one can begin to do either sort of reconstruction. (53: fn 1.)

This comment is easily passed over as the conclusion of an overlong footnote, but it is extremely telling. Firstly, it seems that Rorty was perfectly aware that rational reconstructions could only provide their progressive narrative if they are already committed to the truth or falsity of an author's thought. Further, Rorty seems to be suggesting that rational and historical reconstructions are devolved genres, relying on premises not explicitly stated. When Rorty finally gets to the point of talking about his favoured genre of philosophical history — Geistesgeschichte — Rorty's Davidsonian commitments come rushing back.

> Just as determining meaning is a matter of placing an assertion in a context of actual and possible behavior, so determining truth is a matter of placing it in the context of assertions which we ourselves should be willing to make. Since what counts for us as an intelligible pattern of behavior is a function of what we believe to be true, truth and meaning are not to be ascertained independently of one another. (56)

Perhaps we should see what Rorty actually takes Geistesgeschichte to be, if it is the superior historiographic genre for which rational and historical reconstruction are but sundered parts.

Geistesgeschichte are the broad sweeping histories of philosophy represented by books like Foucault's *The Order of Things*, MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, and Rorty's own *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (56). Geistesgeschichte don't take for granted what the philosophical problems are. They are not necessarily what the mighty dead self-consciously think they are, and they are not necessarily what appears in contemporary journals. When we are engaged in telling a Geistesgeschichte we are using "philosophy" as an honorific term. The questions we take the mighty dead to be answering are the ones we think "*ought* to be debated" –– which "*should* have been on the minds of thinkers of all places and times, whether these thinkers managed to formulate these questions explicitly or not" (58-9). So the Geistesgeschichte is written for the sake of justifying what one thinks the problems are. There is the self-awareness from historical reconstructions and the self-confidence from rational reconstructions here. The history of philosophy is a history of progress, but it is a history we are self-aware of and knowingly responsible for. A Geistesgeschichte, thus, does justice to the past, *as* past, as well *as* relevant to present concerns because it partly determines those concerns.

The Geistesgeschichte is the genre for MP (and Phil-as-RD) because it is inherently revolutionary. It cannot take meaning for granted. It cannot assume univocation or equivocation. The Geistesgeschichte cannot work from assumed subject matter. Instead the very point of creating a Geistesgeschichte is to establish what the subject matter is. Rorty refers to the function of Geistesgeschichte as canon formation; it is meant to show why particular problems are important to discuss. This is why Rorty says that the "Geistesgeschichte, works at the level of problematics rather than of solutions to problems" (57).

The Geistesgeschichte, therefore has two interdependent tasks. It is meant to articulate the problematics of philosophy, and is meant to justify, i.e. provide persuasive force that problematic is indeed important. However, it is difficult to understand justification in this context in any traditional way. Normally, justification comes from a material inferential relation — conceptual contents. Yet, it would be self-defeating to be appealing to a Geistesgeschichte, since we are trying to establish what the conceptual contents are. Instead the narrative of a Geistesgeschichte does the justifying. Each canonical philosopher, is taken to be a conceptual determiner, determining conceptual contents. But because MP uses the *Vernunft* conception of concepts, no concepts are fully determinate. While philosophers of the past clearly thought of themselves as solving philosophical problems, it's their problematics that we care more about than their particular solutions.

It [Geistesgeschichte] typically describes the philosopher in terms of his entire work rather than in terms of his most celebrated arguments (e.g., Kant as the author of all three Critiques, the enthusiast for the French Revolution, the forerunner of Schleiermacher's theology, etc., rather than Kant as the author of the 'Transcendental analytic'). It wants to justify the historian and his friends in having the sort of philosophical concerns they have - in taking philosophy to be what they take it to be - rather than in giving the particular solutions to philosophical problems which they give. It wants to give plausibility to a certain image of philosophy, rather than to give plausibility to a particular solution of a given philosophical problem by pointing out how a great dead philosopher anticipated, or interestingly failed to anticipate, this solution. (57)

How though is progress meant to fit into the Geistesgeschichte? For historical reconstruction there was no progress. And for rational reconstruction, there was the accumulation of answers to philosophical questions and the belief in gradual consensus. In the case of rational reconstruction, progress could be said to happen and transitions could be assessed as progressive. This is not necessarily the case for the Geistesgeschichte. There indeed may be times we want to say one philosopher was a linear progress over another, as in the case raised by Robert

Piercey (borrowing from MacIntyre), that Thomism was strictly superior to Augustinianism. That form of progress, which is assessed as a transition between states is only a derivative form in the context of the Geistesgeschichte. For MR, the teleological view entails, measuring a loss in distance from the final end of philosophy is how we assess a transition as progressive. But for MP, the originary view means we cannot invoke the notion of a final end, and instead have to have a common measure which can be used to judge any transition. Moreover because MP is voluntaristic instead of intellectualistic, it puts the CD before the CA. This means that we cannot appeal to some prior assessment of progress to inform a deliberation between ostensibly progressive options. Instead, our deliberation informs our assessment of progress. So, we are taking ourselves as having solved some new problematic, while at the same not sacrificing prior problem solving ability. But this retrospective look is not the presiding over a royal road to me that Kremer admonished Soames for. "[T]ravelling on the road of philosophical history will carry us to a destination which we will recognize as our own, because it will reflect the philosophers we have become through our own hard work along the road" (Kremer 2013: 311). What Kremer is talking about here is how our very conception of philosophical problematics is a result of our acquaintance with the history of philosophy. To be progressive, is to be able to retain those problematics into the future. Kremer summed up Cora Diamond's big lesson from a paper on Tarski as follows: "Tarski has not simply given us new answers to our old problems - he has given us a new question, and an answer to it" (315).

Now, in the case of MR, "progress" was shorthand for "progress in philosophy". MR was concerned with "progress in philosophy" because it is a species of Phil-as-ND, which takes the constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy

question. This means progress is always in terms of answering the constitutive

philosophical questions. But MP is a species of Phil-as-RD, and thus doesn't have

constitutive philosophical questions. So "progress", for MP, is just "progress"

unmodified. Philosophy, for MP, is the unconditional conversation. It therefore

cannot take the importance of anything for granted and must tell a Geistesgeschichte

to demonstrate what problems are relevant and important. Because of this, like

historical reconstruction, the Geistesgeschichte is not distinguishable from general

history.

It is not clear how far Rorty intended to go with regard to the identification of

history with philosophy. Part of Rorty's motivation for coming up with the

Geistesgeschichte seemed more to be with the desire to allow for alternate

philosophical canons in order to combat perennialism and doxography. Doxography

is the fourth historiographic genre Rorty discusses. It is the drab kind of

historiography found in introductory textbooks that start with Thales and end on

some more contemporary figure. Doxography "has resulted in desperate attempts to

make Leibniz and Hegel, Mill and Nietzsche, Descartes and Carnap, talk about some

common topics, whether the historian or his readers have any interest in those topics

or not" (62). A fifth genre, 'intellectual history', is introduced in-order to keep

Geistesgeschichte "honest" (71). Doxography represents the degenerative form of

Geistesgeschichte, since it no longer takes "philosophy" to be an honorific term, and

no-longer takes responsibility for the problems of philosophy. Thus it treats

philosophy like a natural kind. We are kept honest not just by remembering the

mighty dead, but the forgotten dead too. Figures such as Walter Lippmann, Matthew

Arnold, Weber, Freud, and Paracelsus are all treated with dignity, and are ready to

be taken up, if one wishes, into a new canon (70). The reasons doxographies

emerge, are things like publisher expectation as well as professional forces like journal review and curriculum committees. Familiarity with intellectual history will lead us to appreciate how such forces can lead us "to such extreme cases as Heidegger's attempt to write 'the history of Being' by commenting upon texts mentioned in Ph.D. examinations in philosophy ... one may begin to find it suspicious that Being stuck so closely to the syllabus" (71).

Here Rorty overstates the point. Raymond Geuss recounts that Rorty had at one point (presumably during Rorty's Princeton years) desired to teach a course with the title "An Alternative History of Modern Philosophy" (Geuss 2008: 89). According to Guess, Rorty had intended to make no mention of Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, Hume, or Mill, and instead start with Petrus Ramus (90). However, Rorty found it impossible to write Kant out of the canon, and in spite of Geuss's recommendation that he skip from Jacobi to Fichte, Rorty remained unconvinced (93-4). Geuss tells us that Rorty never gave a reason for why he struggled to write Kant out of the canon, nor why Rorty remained unsatisfied with Guess's suggestion. But I think Geuss is wrong in saying that "even to mention Kant would be to violate the rationale of the enterprise" (93). The rationale seemed to have been exactly the task of keeping Geistesgeschichte honest by showing us the alternative narratives that could be told.

But isn't this what historical reconstructions do? The historical reconstruction shows that there alternative ways of making sense. Geistesgeschichte show that there is a way of making sense of alternative ways of making sense. Does that mean intellectual history shows that there are alternative ways of making sense of alternative ways of making sense? The answer to that question is not straightforward. It is true that being familiar with broader intellectual history is meant

to give us the knowledge to realize how when a Geistesgeschichte is being told, many authors fall by the wayside. However, this isn't to suggest, as in the case of historical reconstruction, that neglect is unjustifiable. A Geistesgeschichte is making a judgement about what is important, about what should be the topic of conversation. Intellectual history is meant to give us resources so that we do not fall into doxographies. But the figures themselves do not fully determine the narrative. An alternative history of philosophy could just as well be told even if one left all of the figures the same. Ostensibly, that is what Heidegger's history of being did. Dispensing with the old canon was just an extreme and dramatic way of demonstrating that it is possible to tell different narratives, to tell a new Geistesgeschichte, as opposed to a doxography written for introductory textbooks or mandated by curriculum committees. The fact that Rorty couldn't write a canon without Kant, is not a challenge to Geistesgeschichte in general; it is perhaps telling of the times we live in that we still cannot do philosophy without the sage of Königsberg. It is far more trouble to write such figures out of the history of philosophy than it is to simply "redescribe" them for the new Geistesgeschichte.

But all this doesn't answer the question of how far Rorty would go with identifying history with philosophy. The question really being asked here isn't just whether or not we can elevate Freud and Weber to the status of philosophers. (It isn't really even that controversial in Weber's case). The real question, is to what extent could even historical actors, so called "men-of-action", be appropriately added to a Geistesgeschichte. Could Solon, Pericles, Octavian, Charlemagne, Saladin, Genghis Khan, Charles V, Rudolf II, Henry IV, Napoleon, Bismark, Pedro II, and maybe even Hitler and Mussolini, be part of a Geistesgeschichte? Unfortunately Rorty never makes a comment, as far as I know, that would actually help answer this

question. We may think that while everyone makes sense of things, not everyone describes how they make sense of things. Philosophers are just those kinds of agents that describe how they make sense of things. However, whatever description a philosopher gives of how they make sense of things isn't necessarily the last word on how they in fact make sense of things (they could be insincere in their description). If one of the Geistesgeschichte's tasks is to understand how a philosopher makes sense, there is no reason it couldn't in principle be just as much done with regard to figures of history in general as much as figures in the "history of philosophy". While it may be permissible to include such figures in one's Geistesgeschichte, it is not obligatory. Plus, it will be hard to shake (and we don't necessarily need to shake) the canon because so many of us have learned to talk about how to make sense of things from the canonical philosophers.

"Four Genres" also contains a very puzzling passage that is worth examining. Given that the Geistesgeschichte is the historiographical genre of MP, which has the task of constructing and justifying our subject, we need the past for philosophy and in that way show MP to be a truly historicist philosophy. However, Rorty says that philosophers should feel entitled to "ignore the past altogether" (Rorty 1984: 67). It seems odd, for Rorty to make the past optional. This is a mistake on Rorty's part, though not a fatal one. A philosopher who chooses to "ignore the past altogether", is still able to make conceptual determination, and thus propose problematics that need to be solved. However, were such a philosopher to forget the past, and not write a Geistesgeschichte, they would fail to achieve progress. But couldn't they happen to achieve progress by accident? Couldn't they happen to stumble upon a way of making sense that indeed was progressive? No, they cannot. The reason for this is because of MP's voluntarism. Since the CD is put before the CA, we can't first be

asked to assess progress before having deliberated about what would be progress. However, this failure to be progressive does not entail worthlessness. Even if one is not progressive, one can still make conceptual determinations and propose problems. Therefore, one could choose to "ignore the past altogether", while still being productive.

A word of caution here. The possibility of ignoring the past, should not be taken to be a license to ignore the past. Not every problem can be placed into a progressive Geistesgeschichte. Some problems are insoluble. Some Marxist-inspired philosophers can fall into the trap of treating the threat of capitalism as so huge and amorphous that it is impossible to combat. Since, if the goal of philosophy for MP is the achievement of progress, the presence of sincerely endorsed, yet insoluble, problems frustrates our ability to put forward new views and to be able to justify them in light of their purportedly progressive features, given they will never be able to solve some problems. When encountering supposed insoluble problems it is better to consider them a muddle and attempt to break them down, or 'redescribe' them as soluble problems.

A Geistesgeschichte shows us that we are both univocal and equivocal with the past. We are trying to preserve the problem solving capacity that was important to those of the past, but we are also trying solve some new problems. Insofar as we are doing the former, we are univocal with the past; in so far as we are doing the latter, we are equivocal. We must always do both insofar as we are going to be able to progress beyond the past without losing it.

We are now at the point at which we can really appreciate the power of the Geistesgeschichte. It is both a creative and conservative enterprise. By preserving other ways of making sense, while expanding our sense making ability by solving

new problems, we are able be both self-aware, and self-confident. Because MP does not assume Fregean determinateness, we know that our proposing new problems and solutions matters as new conceptual determinations — that we are adding to the conceptual content that will be inherited by future generations. We have to trust that future generations will be full of metaphilosophical pragmatists who will feature us in their Geistesgeschichte. There is no certainty that we will be understood, but we have to have the self-confidence to try. Others can be enticed by our Geistesgeschichte because it will preserve the conceptual contents that they identify with. And the Geistesgeschichte will solve disagreement not by ascribing error and hoping the other side will change their mind, nor by assuming persistent equivocation, but by generating consensus on an progressive view.

1.4) Rorty's Politics and the Public Private Distinction

With the Geistesgeschichte now articulated, the method of MP has been outlined. However, MR, MS, and MP each have a view as to the "mindset" fellow inquirers/rational agents must be in for these metaphilosophical views to operate as intended. This is to say each metaphilosophical view needs its fellow inquirers to recognize their own method as persuasive. For MR, these are arguments which ostensibly establish the truth-value of a proposition relevant to a constitutive question. For MS, these are the genealogies and reductions which caution against imposing one's own way of making sense of things on others. Metaphilosophical pragmatists want to be convinced by a Geistesgeschichte, which realize novel and progressive ways of making sense of things. Each of these methods for the metaphilosophical views is their prefered form of non-violent persuasion. All of these metaphilosophical views, need a polity which can permit disagreements to be

resolved via these non-violent means. The polity that privileges the use of non-violent persuasion over coercion or violent persuasion is liberalism. MR and MS have the option of being liberal but it is a matter of first-order philosophical commitment for them. MP on the other hand, as a metaphilosophical position, *requires* a liberal polity. This is because MP needs a polity where controversy can exist and then be resolved by a successful Geistesgeschichte. Therefore, I here want to examine some of Rorty's theorizing regarding liberalism.

Coordination can be broken down into cooperation and coercion. Agents cooperate when they freely agree as to how they should act, and are able to act accordingly. Coercion, on the other hand, lacks free agreement: an agent or group of agents is able to exercise coercive power over another agent or group of agents compelling them to act in away they otherwise would not. The key notions of "free agreement" and "coercive power" are, at this level of abstraction, empty formalisms. It is up to individual first-order philosophies to give content to these concepts. This means that there can be species of MR that disagree as to where to make the demarcation between "free agreement" and "coercion". The same goes for MS and MP. In addition, different species of MR can disagree as to what are legitimate uses of force. But the same does not go for MS. For MS, the idea of legitimate and illegitimate uses of force doesn't make sense. At MS's reflective standpoint the concepts of legitimate and illegitimate uses of force, are chosen arbitrarily. It therefore does not make sense to talk about an illegitimate or legitimate use of force when operating in a context in which the content of those concepts hasn't yet been decided. So while MS views history as a slaughter bench, and tends to see history more as the use of "coercive force" rather than "free agreement", it does not judge the use of force by the great tyrants of history as "illegitimate". Rather, the crime of

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tyrants is in insisting that others make sense of things the way they do. MP can

have a notion of the legitimate use of force, but such demarcation lines are up for

revision, and have their literal embodiment in law, which is subject to repeal and

replacement.

Liberalism is the political philosophy that tries to manage disagreement, taking

it to be fact of life that disagreement is not likely to go any away.[26] MR, MS, and MP,

are all capable of accepting liberal policies. And there will be cases, where at the

level of policy, MR, MS, and MP will be indistinguishable (regardless of whether or

not the political philosophy they accept can be called 'liberalism'). Nonetheless, they

have very different political visions. In particular, the three metaphilosophies have

different views as to the use of liberalism. This is because of the different views of

progress each held by MR, MS, and MP. For the MR liberal, the liberal polity is

simply the correct answer to the question of justice, so political progress is the

establishment of a liberal political order. For the MS liberal, the liberal polity is an

alliance of convenience, as it is the political arrangement which can help fight

sadistic realists, who would impose their way of making sense on others. For MP,

the liberal polity is intended to be the conditions to make the achievement of

progress likely. Liberalism, therefore, faces the reality that disagreement takes time

to resolve, because a Geistesgeschichte that will actually change how agents make

sense of things can be a very difficult and labour-intensive task. Moreover, the

political culture needs to be one in which the citizens are willing to be convinced by

something like a Geistesgeschichte.

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[26] John Rawls, identified this fact as the Fact of Pluralism. The Fact of Pluralism becomes the Fact of Reasonable Pluralism in cases where in spite of disagreements there is a sufficient amount of relevant overlapping-consensus among agents that a well-ordered liberal polity is possible (Rawls 1993: 35-38).

Rorty's mature political views were broadly liberal. Rorty enjoyed an intensely political upbringing. Both of his parents were associated with the Communist Party, though progressively moved away from communism, when according to Rorty they had learned the extent to which it was "run from Moscow" (Rorty 1998: 59). In spite of breaking with communism they remained involved with leftist politics, and moved in socialist circles. Young Rorty found himself surrounded by New York intellectuals who, at the time, were part of the anti-communist reformist Left. According to Rorty's mother, he had the honor of serving "little sandwiches to the guests at a Halloween Party attended by John Dewey and Carlo Tresca", the same party was also attended by Sidney Hook, Lionel Trilling, Whittaker Chambers, and Suzanne Le Follete (61). Many of the guests at this party were involved in the Dewey Commission. At the age of twelve Rorty read the Dewey Commission's two volumes, *The Case of Leon Trotsky* and *Not Guilty*. This seems to have had a serious impact on him. It did not make him a communist, but rather made him bitter against Stalin. Thus, he came to believe "the war against Stalin was as legitimate, and as needed, as the war against Hitler" (57). But both Hitler and Stalin were tyrants, so this only aligns Rorty's liberalism against MR. In fact, Rorty is difficult to identify in this regard. He is often so concerned with fleeing from MR that he forgets he needs to end up with MP, and be just as disassociate from MS and MR. In *Achieving our Country,* Rorty does remedy this issue, by aligning himself with the reformist pre-60s left, which represents an MP form of liberalism, and opposes the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary left, and the more contemporary post-60s Cultural Left. It is by opposing the Cultural Left that Rorty is able to establish that he stuck with MP, even into its political philosophy.

1.4.1) Final Vocabularies and Redescriptions

Rorty believes everyone has what he calls a "final vocabulary". It is not called "final" because it is the last vocabulary someone possesses. Rather, it is "final" because it is where someone's "spade is turned" such that, "if doubt is cast on the worth of these words, their user has no non-circular argumentative recourse" (1989:73). It is also the vocabulary in which we articulate our hopes, dreams, principles and ideals (1989: 73). The notion of a final vocabulary lets us refer to the concepts that constitute one's ability to make sense of things. There is no rule (aside from rules of thumbs and examples) of what makes some concepts part of the final vocabulary (if there is, Rorty never mentions it). But we do know the function of final vocabularies is to talk about what enables us to make sense of things.[27]

Rorty's protagonist in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (CIS) is the "ironist". The ironist is firstly someone who is aware that they have a final vocabulary. Furthermore, 1) they have radical doubt about their own final vocabulary, because they are aware of and have been impressed by other final vocabularies; 2) they realize that there is no way for them to get the argumentative upper hand on other final vocabularies; arguments against radically different final vocabularies are always going to be question begging; 3) nor do they believe their final vocabulary is "closer to reality than others" (73). These three conditions, amount to a denial of MR. Remember that MR thinks there is really only one true way of making sense of things, so all other 'seemingly' different ways of making sense of things have some

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[27] That "final vocabulary" is meant to refer to the sense making part of one's conceptual scheme in my interpolative reading of Rorty. On another note, Rorty's decision to focus on linguistic instruments (words) rather than the concepts referred to by those words is puzzling but not problematic. I do not believe Rorty was a Whorfian (at least not in the strong sense), and thus I don't think he meant to say that our words literally had the power to make sense of things. And to define "final vocabulary" as a set of words is not wrong, since we invariably must use words to make sense of things. But, I take it to be a bit of an oversight on Rorty's part, since we can obliquely reference our sense making concepts with metaphors (particularly in poetry).

defect that arguments can exploit to expose this purported way of making sense as not really making sense of things. Merely from this we cannot tell whether or not the ironist falls under MS or MP.

The ironist that Rorty really cares about, is the liberal ironist. When Rorty describes liberalism in CIS, he returns to Judith Sklar's dictum that a liberal is someone who believes "cruelty is the worse thing we do" (85). CIS pretty much ignores the concerns of physical cruelty humans inflict on one another. Instead, Rorty is much more concerned with the cruelty derived from humiliation.

The type of humiliation of most concern to Rorty comes from not being treated on one's own terms —— by being treated in an undignified manner, by having one's will denied. The main mechanism for enacting humiliation is "redescription". To redescribe is to alter or reject a final vocabulary. To take someone's final vocabulary and redescribe it is to replace it with another final vocabulary. Redescription replaces one way of making sense of things with another.

The notions of redescription and humiliation are understood differently by MR, MS, and MP. To MR, a redescription is just a rational reconstruction. The rational reconstruction translates one idiom into another idiom, but that is all it does, because MR takes there to be only one set of concepts ultimately capable of making sense, everything else is error, muddle and confusion. A rational reconstruction makes sense of the individuals it interprets, by placing them into the reconstructor's way of making sense (this is done by the ascription of error). This is why in rational reconstructions past philosophers look as though they are taking positions on already set problematics. Redescribing someone for an MR philosopher is trying teach someone to use words a certain away, which is to train them to think with the concepts that actually make sense of things. As Rorty says:

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Presumably the relevant difference is that to offer an argument in support of one's redescription amounts to telling the audience that they are being educated, rather than simply reprogrammed - that the Truth was already in them and merely needed to be drawn out into the light. Redescription which presents itself as uncovering the interlocutor's true self, or the real nature of a common public world which the speaker and the interlocutor share, suggests that the person being redescribed is being empowered, not having his power diminished. This suggestion is enhanced if it is combined with the suggestion that his previous, false, self-description was imposed upon him by the world, the flesh, the devil, his teachers, or his repressive society. The convert to Christianity or Marxism is made to feel that being redescribed amounts to an uncovering of his true self or his real interests. He comes to believe that his acceptance of that redescription seals an alliance with a power mightier than any of those which have oppressed him in the past. (90)

So from the perspective of MR, redescriptions aren't humiliating, but are instead educating. From Kremer's comments on Soames, we have already seen how that can be a patronizing and kingly way of thinking. Whether or not this is humiliating depends on who is being redescribed and how it will be humiliating when we see in these situations the will of the redescribed is being denied by the redescription. MR's intellectualism means they will never see their redescriptions this way (Soames does not take himself to be humiliating Russell), since the will is rationally constrained. But for the voluntaristic MS and MP, there is plenty of licence to see acts of redescription as denials of the will.

For the ironist, "[r]edescription often humiliates" (90). This is because the ironist sees redescriptions not merely as alterations of idioms for the sake of getting closer to the right concepts, but as the alteration of idiom for the sake of conceptual change. From the perspective of MS, this is exactly what MR does without knowing it. An MR philosopher self-confidently makes sense of others (not respecting how they make sense of themselves) by ascribing error to them rather than equivocation. Non-philosophers, too, are capable of humiliating each other, often without realizing it. In retrospect, the way homosexuals have been treated through most of history and in many cultures would count as humiliation, as it redescribed their sincere feelings of affection as sexual deviance and debauchery. When we redescribe we

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risk humiliation because in a redescription we don't describe using the concepts those redescribed ostensibly have willed.

The liberal ironist, therefore, needs to be concerned with the humiliating potential of redescriptions. So much so, in fact, that Rorty's liberal ironist political philosophy seems almost to revolve around reducing human suffering chiefly by reducing humiliation via redescriptions. For liberal ironists, their "sense of human solidarity is based on a sense of common danger", that danger being the threat of humiliation by redescription (91). Here Rorty walks on a knife's edge. There is nothing wrong with wanting to prevent humiliation. In fact, from MS and MP's perspective a humiliating redescription is a kind of death. Since the conceptual contents that you will enable you to make sense of things, they are what enable you to give meaning and purpose to your life. So far it isn't clear if the ironist falls under the metaphilosophy of MS or MP, and it is precisely on this issue of humiliation and the extents to which we will go to avoid it that determines with which metaphilosophy we will find ourselves.

1.4.2) The Public Private Distinction: Rorty as Fukuyamaist

In order to minimize humiliation Rorty introduces a distinction between the private and the public. This distinction, as it is presented in CIS, turns Rorty's ironism into a form of MS. In my view, Rorty later came to his senses and returned to MP, at least by the time of *Achieving Our Country*. In short, the distinction between the public and private has the potential to reduce controversy so completely that there is no more opportunity for progress. If there is no more controversy, there is no need to develop new ways of making sense of things that reconcile the old with

the new. Rorty went so far in CIS, as to call contemporary liberalism "the last

conceptual revolution" needed by western political thought (67).

In Rorty's short autobiographical piece, "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids", we

are told that the public/private distinction is not just his primary motivation for writing

Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity, but at the heart of his very motivation for going to

college and becoming an intellectual. The very title, "Trotsky and the Wild Orchids",

is an oblique reference to the public/private distinction, Trotsky being the symbol of

the public-minded hope for social justice, and the wild orchids the symbol of

bourgeois, leisurely, private indulgence. At the age of 12, Rorty had read the two

volumes of the Dewey Commission, *The Case of Leon Trotsky* and *Not Guilty*, and

had formed the opinion that "the point of being human was to spend one's life

fighting social injustice" (1999: 6). At around the same age, Rorty had become an

orchid enthusiast, and could identify wild orchids in northwestern New Jersey (7).

The pensive child was distraught by the idea that Trotsky would not approve of his

interest in orchids (7). The project that he had in mind when he went to study at the

University of Chicago was reconciling Trotsky and the wild orchids. A brief stint with

Christianity was undertaken in the hope that it would give him the resolve to abandon

his private preoccupations. But a lack of sincerity while reciting the General

Confession, prevented any spiritual benefits from materializing. Eventually, Trotsky

and the wild orchids, were replaced by *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and

Remembrance of Things Past, which Rorty described as the "greatest achievements

of the species" (11). Rorty then tells us that after *Philosophy and the Mirror of*

Nature, he became weary of the hope of reconciling the public and private. Rorty

says, that for some people the public and private do not come apart, and are not in

tension with each other. However, those who do have both public ideals and private

idiosyncrasies should feel no special obligation to reconcile them, or attempt to

disavow them. At 15, Rorty had gone to college with the hope that he could hold

Trotsky and wild orchids in a single vision, at 58 he had abandoned that hope - was

this the wisdom of age, or the jading of the soul?

The distinction divides our final vocabulary into two parts. The public section

is dependent upon agreement with others, and requires cooperation. Changes in the

public part of a final vocabulary require public consensus, and for the liberal ironist

aims at reducing humiliation and suffering. Private self-descriptions can go on

autonomously of whether or not they would generate communal endorsement. They

are not even necessarily brought forth for public judgement. So the private parts of

one's final vocabulary, if one wished, could be known only to oneself. But in a liberal

polity, the pursuit of one's private projects would not entail public ridicule. We permit

idiosyncratic self-descriptions because we recognize that if we were to redescribe

them we may cause them the suffering of humiliation.

This end of the search for the single vision, Rorty believed, put him in line with

Fukuyama's thesis about the end of history.

> We should stop using "History" as the name of an object around which to weave our
> fantasies of diminished misery. We should concede Francis Fukuyama's point (in his
> celebrated essay, *The End of History*) that if you still long for total revolution, for the Radical
> Other on a world-historical scale, the events of 1989 show that you are out of luck.
> Fukuyama suggested, and I agree, that no more romantic prospect stretches before the Left
> than an attempt to create bourgeois democratic welfare states and to equalize life changes
> among the citizens of those states by redistributing the surplus produced by market
> economies. (Rorty 1998b, 229).

There is much irony in this. Fukuyama reintroduced speculative philosophy,

which had been out of fashion since Spengler and Toynbee, only to say that

speculative philosophy of history had come to end. And a further irony: Fukuyama

was not appreciative of Rorty's support.[28] Rorty, in fact, seemed to embrace the idea that we would become what Nietzsche's Zarathustra feared, the culture of the "last men" (Rorty 1998: 230). It is comments like this, that make Rorty sound as though he has slipped into MS.

The picture Rorty gives us is that we have to keep part of our final vocabularies separate between public and private in order to minimize humiliation. Public solidarity is only for keeping us out of each other's business — not letting our differences getting in the way of cooperation, and thus coordination. Instead of letting differences in our final vocabularies be candidates for controversy, we cordon them off to be merely 'private'. The only redescriptions allowed are those that were to help establish liberalism, which would entail the forbidding of any future redescriptions (this is the end of history/the last conceptual revolution). With no more redescriptions, it is unlikely we would be able to colligate the problems of the past with the problems the contemporary in order to achieve progress.

There is something wrong with such a characterization. Even within the pages of CIS Rorty doesn't give up on talk of progress. An ironist, Rorty tells us, "is trying to get out from under inherited contingencies and make his own contingencies, get out from under an old final vocabulary and fashion one which will be all his own" (97). Now that may seem just as true for MS as for MP, but when you add "willingness to endure suffering for the sake of future reward was transferable from individual rewards to social ones, from one's hopes for paradise to one's hopes for one's grandchildren", it becomes harder see this as purely limited to the realm of establishing liberalism (85). But then again, when Rorty says "poetic, artistic, philosophical, scientific, or political progress results from the accidental coincidence

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[28] See Fukuyama's "The End of History, Five Years Later" pp. 35-36

of a private obsession with a public need", I am baffled that Rorty would denigrate progress to "accidental coincidence" (37). Since a successful Geistesgeschichte is, in retrospect, not convincing to anyone arbitrarily, but because it speaks to people at a deep level. Perhaps Rorty only meant to say that, the alignment of redescription with consensus for that redescription (as opposed to humiliation), cannot be known in advance, and that is clearly correct. But the aloofness with which Rorty speaks, is objectionable because it suggests that we should not actively pursue turning a private part of our final vocabulary into part of the public part. If Rorty forbids such a transition, then in what way can we pass down parts of our final vocabulary to our children and grandchildren? Is it only limited to the public part that makes up the via negativa of liberalism?

It is therefore unclear whether or not Rorty intends liberalism to represent a kind of finality (as suggested by phrases like "the last conceptual revolution") or a new beginning. Is liberalism the end of history or the start of some "higher history"? It appears that Rorty indeed rethought the rigidity of the public private distinction. The political scientist Lior Erez says the public/private distinction was more a difference of degree than of kind. He tells us that "Rorty's use of the adjective 'firm' for the distinction in CIS is unfortunate, as it does not cohere with the way he describes the way it functions" (Erez: 202). Since there is a large amount of wiggle room within liberalism, such that we can subject parts of our final vocabulary to public scrutiny in the hope that the change in final vocabulary will be taken on by others and passed down on through the generations. Seeing the public private distinction as one simply of degree means it no longer has the rigidity that would make a deliberate transition from private to public seem unreasonable. Instead, the purely negative implication of the private public distinction that there shouldn't be an

obligation to put everything under a single vision (which would amount to collapse the public and private) allows that our idiosyncrasies may legitimately become future and lasting parts of culture.

This change allows us to talk about private and public progress not as completely distinct, but as stages which can transition from one to the other. Thus, when Rorty says that, "progress, for the community as for the individual, is a matter of using new words as well as of arguing from premises phrased in old words", we look for, and hopefully create situations in which a private progress, can transition to communal progress (48-9). With a difference of degree, the terms "public" and "private" have the flexibility and vagueness needed for describing transitions that are slow and extended over a long period time, rather than an overnight revolution that would seem necessitated by a rigid distinction between the two. The "Thus I willed it", which an ironist triumphantly utters when they redescribe the past, so as to overcome it, may over the course of time become a "Thus we willed it" (97). Private irony could eventually become public solidarity.

Rorty even seems to have been aware, that his philosophical views could have been construed as a form of MS rather than MP.

I did not foresee what has actually happened: that the popularity of philosophy (under the sobriquet "theory") in our literature departments was merely a transitional stage on the way to the development of what we in America are coming to call "the Academic Left." This new sort of "left" has been called, by Harold Bloom, "the School of Resentment," and the name fits. Its members are typically no more interested in the romance of the Nietzsche-to-Derrida tradition than in that of the Shakespeare-Milton-Wordsworth tradition or the Jefferson-Jackson-Teddy Roosevelt-John F. Kennedy tradition. They prefer resentment to romance. [...] The political uselessness, relative illiteracy, and tiresome self-congratulatory enthusiasm of this new Academic Left, together with its continual invocation of the names Derrida and Foucault, have conspired to give these latter thinkers a bad name in the United States. Nevertheless, philosophical colleagues who have remained resolutely analytic often say to me: "See what you've done!" You helped smooth the way for these creeps! Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" [...] But I am not ashamed. I can only repeat once again: *Habent sua fata libelli.* One cannot judge an author or a book by what a particular set of readers do with it. (Rorty 2000: 153).

In *Achieving our Country*, Rorty sought to remind people that there is a 'reformist left'; one that would not stimulate the creation of reactionaries, and leave political procedure frustrated and deadlocked with progressively partisan politics (the academic left, or school of resentment, or Cultural Left). The Cultural Left, is the left's form of MS. It doesn't believe in social progress, only social justice. It therefore   only seeks the elimination of humiliation, and to get Americans to "recognize otherness" (Rorty 1998b, 79). These are noble and laudable goals, and as Rorty points out, the cultural academic left has done important good, particularly for women and homosexuals, but has done so at the cost of forgetting about real politics. Dealing only with problems of humiliation, the Cultural Left doesn't grapple with problems that face societies as whole. In 1998, when *Achieving our Country* was published, the concerns of increasing inequality, globalization, and the creation of the "international super-rich" (whose livelihood and political loyalties are not tied to any nation) may have seemed like exaggerations, since a coming tech boom would ensure an new source of economic growth from which all classes (or at least a majority) could benefit (87). Now Rorty's prescience seems startling. If we turn the prevention of humiliation into our only political goal, we miss out being able to solve other problems.

In order to tell a Geistesgeschichte we very often have to be able to redescribe our social problems. Disagreements that persist do so because they are not resolvable simply by introducing more evidence. To resolve such disagreements with a Geistesgeschichte that can convince agents to make sense of things in a new way that is genuinely progressive, we need to be able to redescribe bad formulations of problems. We need to be able look past the repugnant and find the sincerity. If the Cultural Left never allows us to redescribe, we may never be able to write new

Geistesgeschichten, and without new Geistesgeschichten we may never be able to resolve deep disagreement. We have to be willing to risk humiliation, in order to achieve progress.

Rorty's realization that he did not need to put his personal hobbies in the same vision as his hopes for social justice, is still right. Not every difference needs to be the subject of controversy, but the elimination of controversy means we will have to tolerate a growing lack of cooperation because, if we make sense of things differently, we can have conflicting priorities and goals. When cooperation becomes difficult we will not be able to combat social challenges. When we no longer have the luxury of free cooperation we will be forced to resort to coercive coordination.

But why should we accept being redescribed, and in light of what are we expecting those we redescribe not to feel humiliated? Put another way, how is what we will able to survive redescription, if a redescription isn't just a change in idiom but is a change in concepts? This is a question for which Rorty has no answer. Therefore, we must graduate from Rorty to someone who does have a promising way of letting the contents that we will survive redescription. That person is R.G. Collingwood.

2) Collingwood: The Arrival of Historicism

2.1) Was Collingwood an Historicist?

In her book *Collingwood and the Metaphysics of Experience* Giuseppina D'Oro contrasts Rorty's pragmatist view with her own understanding of Collingwood: "Collingwood's philosophical approach differs drastically from that of pragmatism" (D'Oro 2002: 52). She characterizes pragmatism as rightly dispensing with a

Platonist metaphysics and a perennialist metaphilosophy, but as having gone too far in a naturalist direction, thus throwing out any methodological criteria that would structure inquiry (48-52). D'Oro favours a reading of Collingwood that dispenses with Platonism but keeps the methodological criteria that pragmatism dispensed with. Therefore, D'Oro sees Collingwood as a neo-Kantian.

A major problem in interpreting Collingwood lies in the seeming differences between his middle works, most characteristically *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, and his later works, most characteristically *An Essay on Metaphysics*. T.M. Knox, Collingwood's literary executor and editor of both *The Idea of Nature* and *The Idea of History*, posited the "radical conversion hypothesis". The "radical conversion hypothesis" claims that Collingwood's middle works represent a good, traditional, ahistorical Collingwood, while the later works represent a regress to a bad, historicist, naturalist, relativist Collingwood. While the radical conversion hypothesis enjoyed some popularity during the first wave of Collingwood scholarship, more contemporary readers like D'Oro seek to undermine the hypothesis by arguing for a greater sense of unity across Collingwood's works. D'Oro's strategy to achieve that has been, as the Kantian reading suggests, to deny the historicism. Contrary to D'Oro I prefer the opposite strategy. I believe Collingwood was an historicist, but not in the sense that D'Oro seems to attach to that term.[29] When she describes "pragmatism" it seems she is thinking of MS rather than MP. Contrariwise, I believe Collingwood to have been a metaphilosophical pragmatist, and to have more or less been so throughout his career.[30]

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[29] D'Oro defines the term historicism as "a thesis in the sociology of knowledge according to which the conditions in which knowledge originates determine both the content of knowledge (what is believed) and the epistemic validity of knowledge claims (whether what is believed is true)" (79). D'Oro's use of the term historicism is more representative of MS than MP.

[30] The exception being the period of time while an undergraduate at Oxford studying with John Cook Wilson, when Collingwood self-identified as a 'realist' (Collingwood 2013: 22).

Collingwood's views about the relationship of history to philosophy have puzzled philosophers.[31] The most salient sources of puzzlement have been the supposedly ahistorical style of *An Essay on Philosophical Method*, which includes comments distinguishing philosophy from history (Collingwood 2005: 193-8), juxtaposed with the dramatic claim that "philosophy as a separate discipline is liquidated by being converted into history" (1995: 238). My proposed way of dealing with the puzzlement is to show how some of the perplexities present in Collingwood's varying remarks on the notion of progress can be solved by reading Collingwood as a metaphilosophical pragmatist. MP's account of progress stems from how it deals with the non-constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question.

2.2) Collingwood and Progress

The importance and priority given to the idea of progress that is characteristic of MP is shared by Collingwood. In 1934, Viscount Herbert Samuel wrote a letter to the editor of the journal, *Philosophy*. In this letter, Samuel expresses concerns familiar to us by way of Kitcher. The seeming counter-intuitiveness, and therefore irrelevance of epistemology, brings Samuel to conclude that a "divorce between philosophy and life" is transpiring (Samuel 1934:135). Collingwood opens his reply by agreeing with Samuel (Collingwood 1934: 262). Then, remarkably, Collingwood comments on, "the false conception of progress as due to a cosmic force which can be trusted to advance human life automatically, without the active cooperation of human beings, and (the natural reaction from this) an equally false denial that progress is possible at all" (264). That a conception of progress could lead both to

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[31] See Rubinoff (1968: 363-6) for an overview of this puzzlement, and responses and differences of opinion on the radical conversion hypothesis.

the idea of inevitable progress, and the denial of progress was precisely what we saw with MR and MS. Collingwood asserts that "[w]hat is needed to-day is a philosophical reconsideration of the whole idea of progress" (264). He goes on to elaborate on how any defensible notion of progress must be "genuinely" and "consciously creative", and that institutions are both created and conserved by human will (264). These are all features that I hope are familiar to us as voluntarism under the *Vernunft* conception of concepts.

I have argued that it is how one conceives of philosophical problems that determine whether one goes down the path of Phil-as-RD or Phil-as-ND. There exist two passages where Collingwood seems to endorse the non-constitutive answer to the what-is-philosophy question. First, in *An Autobiography*:

> Was it really true, I asked myself, that the problems of philosophy were, even in the loosest sense of that word, eternal? Was it really true that different philosophies were different attempts to answer the same questions? I soon discovered that it was not true; it was merely a vulgar error, consequent on a kind of historical myopia which, deceived by superficial resemblances, failed to detect profound differences. (Collingwood 2013: 60-1)

Then, in *An Essay on Metaphysics,* Collingwood says, "there are no 'eternal' or 'crucial or 'central' problems in metaphysics" (1998: 72). These comments are, on their own, only denials of perennialism. But the context in which the *Metaphysics* comment occurs also advises against giving an MR reading, since it assumes a plurality of ways of making sense of things. However, there is a seemingly strange comment from *An Essay on Philosophical Method* where Collingwood opines that "the entire history of thought is the history of a single sustained attempt to solve a single permanent problem" (2005: 195). The idea that we are trying to solve a single permanent problem may sound like MR, but can be read as more like MP, since for MP in a sense there is only one problem: the problem of justifying the subject matter of philosophy.

Jan van der Dussen notes that Collingwood seems to have held four different attitudes towards the concept of progress: "a) It is dependent on a point of view; b) It is meaningless; c) It is meaningful; d) It is necessary" (van der Dussen 1990: 33). On matter a), I think van der Dussen is right that Collingwood does have a perspectivist view regarding progress. Croce, according to Collingwood, recognized that one person's progress could be another's decay, but still believed in an overall progress that was seemingly based on some transcendent criterion (Collingwood 1965: 16). Collingwood rightly admonished Croce for what we can recognize as MR, and in response says "[t]he historian's duty is surely not to pick and choose: he must make every point of view his own" (16). Collingwood's reply to Croce is precisely what MP takes to be the task of Geistesgeschichte — colligating the plurality of ways of making sense of things into a new and progressive way of making sense of things.

With regard to b) van der Dussen discusses two ways in which progress might be "meaningless". The first of these is that Collingwood seems to think that there are certain topics for which progress is impossible (or simply not applicable). The second is that progress requires choice between alternatives (35-6). I will not discuss the first of these topics, since to give it adequate attention would takes us far afield into Collingwood's philosophy of art. Furthermore, that there might be domains on which progress is impossible is more informative about Collingwood's view about those domains than his view of progress. The second of these, however, is worth noting because, that progress is about a choice between alternatives is a feature of MP's view of progress (36). This is because of the MP's voluntarism, meaning it puts the CD prior to the CA. So we are not to judge whether or not any hypothetical way of making sense of things is progressive over the other. That kind of judgement would require a teleological view of progress. Instead we judge whether or not a live option

for replacing the status quo is progressive. So judgements of progress occur between our current way of making sense of things, and the new way of making sense of things. As to whether or not we could make some past historical period's way of making sense into a live option, Collingwood is skeptical; "[t]here is probably no one, deeply versed in any period of past history, who, if a fairy offered him the choice of going to live in that period or continuing to live in the present, would not prefer to live in the present" (Collingwood 1965: 84-5). This too is perfectly consistent with MP since we already have a way of making sense of things that is a product of our practices. We have practices that already imply our own way of making sense of things. Past historical periods contain different practices, and therefore a different way of making sense of things. We would then always prefer an historical period which would be hospitable to our way of making sense (i.e. where we would find the most cooperation), and that would just be the historical period which inculcated that way of making sense in us.

With regard to c), van der Dussen points out that the account given of progress in *The Idea of History*, doesn't clearly fit with *An Essay on Metaphysics*. A distinctive feature of *An Essay on Metaphysics* is Collingwood's account of metaphysics as the study of what he calls "absolute presuppositions". Absolute presuppositions are like Rorty's final vocabulary in that they are part of one's conceptual scheme that is responsible for one's way of making sense. Van der Dussen claims that Collingwood believes that a metaphysician "should be a neutral observer who is not in a position to express judgement on the absolute presuppositions he surveys" (van der Dussen 1990: 38). But van der Dussen's reading of *An Essay on Metaphysics* is not the only plausible reading. Rex Martin for example believes that the, "fact that these contrasting absolute presuppositions are

found in different stages of a historical process of development in no way precludes such judgments of progress." (Martin 1989: 512). In my view, van der Dussen's reading is right insofar as we are simply recognizing the fact that we could not judge progress by meditating a priori on the absolute presuppositions themselves. There is no clear progressive trajectory from the Newtonian absolute presupposition that "some events have causes" to the Kantian, "all events have causes" to the Einsteinian "no events have causes" (Collingwood 1998: 54-5). Instead, one would have to actually look at the problems that are solved by the purportedly progressive constellation of absolute presuppositions. This is why Collingwood says that Einstein made an advance on Newton, "by knowing Newton's thought and retaining it within his own, in the sense that he knows what Newton's problems were, and how he solved them, and disentangled the truth in those solutions from whatever errors prevented Newton from going further" (1993: 333). One could not know that continuity exists between the Newtonian and Einsteinian absolute presuppositions simply by a priori contemplation; it takes actual historical investigation to see such a continuity.

With regards to d) van der Dussen did not identify any problems of consistency. Instead, van der Dussen refers to salient passages regarding Collingwood's understanding of the necessity of progress. In fact, the passages that van der Dussen chose are of particular use in corroborating the claim that Collingwood fits within MP. One of these major passages (which I shall quote more completely than van der Dussen did) concludes *The Idea of History*:

> If we want to abolish capitalism or war, and in doing so not only to destroy them but to bring into existence something better, we must begin by understanding them: seeing what the problems are which our economic or international system succeeds in solving, and how the solution of these is related to the other problems which it fails to solve. This understanding of the system we set out to supersede is a thing which we must retain throughout the work of superseding it, as a knowledge of the past conditioning our creation of the future. It may be impossible to do this; our hatred of the thing we are destroying may

prevent us from understanding it, and we may love it so much that we cannot destroy it unless we are blinded by such hatred. But if that is so, there will once more, as so often in the past, be change but no progress; we shall have lost our hold on one group of problems in our anxiety to solve the next. And we ought by now to realize that no kindly law of nature will save us from the fruits of our ignorance. (Collingwood 1993: 334).

The "no kindly law of nature" comment is clearly a reference to the view of inevitable progress that we found had to be taken by rational reconstruction and made explicit by Kant in *The Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*. Furthermore, the main lesson of this passage, that "knowledge of the past" must condition a progressive "creation of the future", by increasing our power of solving problematics, is just to tell a Geistesgeschichte. As van der Dussen points out, the title of the essay on progress that appears in *The Idea of History*, is "Progress as created by Historical Thinking". This is the familiar priority of the CD, which is perfectly expressed when Collingwood says "progress is not a mere fact to be discovered by historical thinking: it is only through historical thinking that it comes about at all" (333). The second salient passage, with regard to the necessity of progress, that van der Dussen points out is:

The question whether, on the whole, history shows a progress can be answered, as we now see, by asking another question. Have you the courage of your convictions? If you have, if you regard the things which you are doing as things worth doing, then the course of history which has led to the doing of them is justified by its results, and its movement is a movement forward" (Collingwood 1965: 120, quoted in van der Dussen 1990: 40).

Here we have Collingwood again expressing something familiar to us. This Heideggerian sounding line is precisely an expression of the idea that by enabling us to value the things that we value, the past has been a progress. The past is the "road to me" (but not a royal road) that Kremer talked about; it is both edifying in the self-confidence it gives us, and the self-awareness it bestows. History, as the quote suggests, just is what Brandom called a *recollective reconstruction* and Rorty called a Geistesgeschichte.

2.3) Collingwood and Redescription

Now that I have given some evidence to consider Collingwood as someone operating with MP as his metaphilosophy, we can turn to establishing that Collingwood believed in redescriptions and our right to them. If we are going to show that there is reason not to be humiliated by redescription, I suggest we need the idea that what we will is something that is not itself conceptual. For that reason, I am introducing the idea of "ideational content". We often recognize that verbal disagreements arise out of confusing a difference of words for a difference in concepts. Such disagreement can be dissolved by recognizing that the disputants actually mean the same thing. Analogously, two different conceptual schemes could be said to share ideational content. But what exactly is ideational content? Since it is non-conceptual, it is non-propositional, but not in the same way that the "sensory given" was believed to be non-conceptual. Nor is ideational content ineffable. It is expressed by the conceptual, and we are only acquainted with it via conceptual mediation.

My contention is that Collingwood believed his favoured form of historical explanation, re-enactment, lets us grasp (if only obliquely) the ideational content of others. The object of historical investigation for Collingwood is *res gestae* (things done) though today it is common just to talk about actions as distinguished from mere events — the former being so distinguished by being intentional (Collingwood 1999: 44). To be intentional is to be purposive (1993: 309). Collingwood says that "All history is the history of thought", but what is it to re-enact a thought (215)? Given what I have just written, it may seem as if to re-enact a thought is to identify its purpose, and to identify a purpose is to identify what problem the action was a

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solution to. Collingwood seems to sum it all up when he says that all the historian

needs is "that there should be evidence of how such thinking has been done and that

the historian should be able to interpret it, that is, should be able to re-enact in his

own mind the thought he is studying, envisaging the problem from which it started,

and reconstructing the steps by which its solution was attempted" (312).

Collingwood had caused much head scratching when he said that the "fact

that we can identify his problem is proof that he solved it; for we only know what that

problem was by arguing back from the solution" (2013: 70). This means that we

cannot interpret someone who failed to achieve their goal. This does make sense,

because if we allowed the ascription of failure in interpreting, we would, all of a

sudden, open up the floodgates to allow any kind of wild speculation, since any given

action is a failure to do many things. The action is the thing that needs to be

explained. We cannot reason from solution to problem if we believe the action to be

a failure. The action itself is the strongest piece of evidence for the intention that is

to explain it, as Collingwood says in reference to Nelson, whom we take to have

been successful in achieving his aims at Trafalgar: "[e]ven if we had the original

typescript of the coded orders issued by wireless to his captains a few hours before

they began, this would not tell us that he had not changed his mind at the last

moment, extemporized a new plan on seeing some new factor in the situation, and

trusted his captains to understand what he was doing" (70).

However, Collingwood's claim has puzzled many. Van der Dussen believes

Collingwood didn't actually mean it because he seemingly attributes a failure to

Caesar's invasion of Britannia (van der Dussen 2012: 102).[32] Collingwood claims

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[32] At the APA Pacific Division meeting of the Society for the Philosophy of History, all three panelists
(Kenneth B. McIntyre, Serge Grigoriev, and Andrius Galisanka) expressed the view that they believe
Collingwood to be mistaken in forbidding interpreting a failure. I tried to defend Collingwood precisely
on the grounds I just gave, but they seemed unconvinced.

that Caesar planned "the complete conquest of the country" but had, of course, failed (Collingwood 2013: 131). But in this case, what is being explained has changed. In the passage where Collingwood ascribes failure to Caesar, the object of explanation switches from being 'Caesar's invasion of Britain', to 'the content of the Caesar's *Commentaries*'. What Collingwood is actually explaining is why Caesar didn't explain his intentions for invading Britain in the *Commentaries*. And the explanation for that was Caesar's trying to conceal his failure, and in that he succeeded. The action that has actually been explained is a fact about Caesar's *Commentaries* rather than one about intentions for invading Britain. So we don't actually have an explanation of why Caesar did what he did, we just have evidence that if his intention was to conquer it, he failed.

We should also consider that for Collingwood there are two kinds of purposes, and one and the same action can exhibit both kinds. These are: 1) when something is done for some end that is materially distinct from the means that brought about that end; and 2) ends-in-themselves. If we return to Collingwood's essay on progress in *The Idea of History*, we will see special attention being paid to ends-in-themselves. Collingwood gives the example of a society that is sustained by fishing. In the example, the younger generation has devised a way of doubling their fishing yield, and then decide to work half as much since they are able to catch the same five fish in half the time as before. Collingwood says that this increase in leisure time for the younger generation would not constitute progress because the older generation does not share the same way of life as the younger, and so the older generation "only wants his five fish a day, and he does not want half a day's leisure" (Collingwood: 1993: 325). The older generation sees that the "change is not progress, but a decadence" (325). The reason the older generation sees the change

as decadent is not because the younger generation has failed to achieve a communally recognized goal, but because they have taken up a way of life that seems to be incompatible with that of the older generation. From the perspective of the older generation the young have neglected certain ends-in-themselves, that constitute their way of life. While the younger generation may have gained something in their way of life (acting on other ends-in-themselves), "the problem of setting loss against gain is insoluble", because ends-in-themselves are not susceptible to a commensurate measure (329). Ends-in-themselves, therefore, put constraints on means, i.e. we would not achieve a given end if it meant compromising some principle. This means that problems, the problems that we are re-enacting for the sake of being able to achieve progress are worth solving as ends-in-themselves. And we would be able to identify any action as a success if we were able to identify in what way it was done as an end-in-itself. This is the same as saying an actions are expressions of a conception of the good. If we didn't have to reconcile with competing ends-in-themselves, we wouldn't need our account of progress to be the accumulation of problem solving ability, since we could either commensurate problems under a single end (like utility), or simply ignore other ends-in-themselves.

Now, how are we to identify the ends-in-themselves that constitute the problems which we are trying to interpret? What requires the intervention of philosophy, from the perspective of MP, is deep disagreement. The deep disagreement arises from competing ways of making sense of things, and neither party hitherto is able to make sense of the other way of making sense. This means that when we recognize a deep disagreement, we are recognizing that there is something (namely an alternate way of making sense) which we cannot make sense

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of. A Geistesgeschichte is arrived at when we make sense of the alternate way(s) of making sense. But what are we actually informed of when we progressively make sense of things? The answer is, we are informed about our own capacity to make sense. This is why Collingwood says "all knowledge is self-knowledge", and a failure to make sense of things is a failure to understand ourselves (Collingwood 1924: 252). When we are faced with a controversy we cannot make sense of, the only way to progressively resolve the disagreement is by understanding what way of life we would be willing to take up that would respect the problems (and thus ends-in-themselves) of the disputant's way of making sense of things. This self-knowledge is not self-knowledge in the sense that we are coming to know something that was already dormant within us, or something we always already possessed. Rather, our expanded capacity to make sense of things is something willed.

So far we are not actually much further than we were with Rorty, since then we already knew that Geistesgeschichte made sense of making sense, and we were (by our final vocabularies) responsible for sense making. Where Collingwood goes further is that re-enactment is not merely the identification of problems, but of thoughts. But we should not fall into the trap of thinking that thoughts, understood as conceptions of problems and their potential solutions, in some sense exist out there in the minds of others distinct from us. That may very well be a true description of things in retrospect, when we actually garner agreement with our Geistesgeschichte. But if we reify the notions of thought and problem, we are no longer acquiring knowledge of our own capacity for making sense, but have made ourselves answerable to a fact of the matter as to how another agent makes sense of things.[33]

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[33] Collingwood even has a name for this mistake, he calls it "historical Dogmatism" (282-7).

However, the alternative is not to come to know each other, and ourselves by some immediate intuition. Rather, as Collingwood says:

> The mind is not one among a number of objects of knowledge, which possesses the peculiarity of being alone fully knowable: it is that which is really known in the ostensible knowing of any object whatever. In an immediate and direct way, the mind can never know itself: it can only know itself through the mediation of an external world, know that what it sees in the external world is its own reflection. Hence the construction of external worlds- works of art, religions, sciences, structures of historical fact, codes of law, systems of philosophy and so forth ad infinitum—is the only way by which the mind can possibly come to that self-knowledge which is its end. (315)

The mind is always known conceptually but not exhausted by concepts. This is where the notion of ideational content fits in.[34] These ideational contents are themselves not explicit to us (only what is conceptual is explicit), even the ones we ostensibly will. But we do express these ideational contents by making sense of things. We can then recognize that our making sense of things is done by us, and capable of being redescribed.

> The collapse of a system of thought is therefore not equivalent to the cancellation of the process by which it came into being. It collapses, but it does not perish. In constructing and destroying it, the mind has learnt a permanent lesson: it has triumphed over an error and so discovered a truth. The destroyed system collapses not into bare nothingness but into immediacy, into a characteristic or attribute of the mind itself, passes as it were into the muscle and bone of the mind, becomes an element in the point of view from which the mind raises its next problem. (317)

Collingwood believes what I call ideational content can and does survive under redescription. We do not have before the mind, a description, a redescription, and the ideational content; there is only the description and redescription. We can then recognize the preservation of ideational content between description and redescription but we cannot explain at the level of ideational content its persistence

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[34] Whereas Collingwood uses the word "mind", I use "ideational content". The difference is only that that Collingwood uses "mind", as a mass noun, and "ideational content" is a count noun. That way we can talk about preservation of ideational contents between redescriptions, even if the redescription in question did not capture their entire way of making sense of things. For example, a Geistesgeschichte may coligate ways of making sense of economic inequality, and the redescribed parties may even assent to it, and progress will be achieved. However, that does not mean all controversy has been eliminated. It is possible to recognize that we are understood on a particular subject matter while not being understood on others. So the use of a count noun means we can better make sense of cases of partial success.

between redescriptions, since we have no immediate sense of ideational content. We may have two competing Geistesgeschichten before us and recognize that one was progressively expressive over the other, and even allowing that the successive Geistesgeschichte may be comparatively simpler than the prior.

This begins to address the issue of redescription from the perspective of the redescriber, but what about from the perspective of the redescribed? One way Collingwood describes the distinction of actions over against events is that events only have the property of being outward, whereas actions have the additional property of inwardness. Inwardness should not be equated with being purposive. It is more like having mind, or as I prefer, ideational content. The distinction between inwardness and outwardness is generically a distinction between a self-same individual entity and the greater whole of which the individual is part. An individual electron has outwardness in being distinct and self-same from everything else, but possess inwardness in being able to combine with other electron neutrons and protons to form atoms (Collingwood 1999: 255). Collingwood even describes the forming of an atom, for an electron, as the overcoming of its outwardness. This process of inwardness overcoming outwardness in nature progressively scales up to the point of agents and actions, such that when we get to actions, the inner life of an action is the thought behind it. In coming to re-enact that thought, we are integrating the way of making sense that rationalized the re-enacted action. If we are able to fit that way of making sense into a Geistesgeschichte, we have taken up their way of making sense into a progressive way of making sense. By doing this, our distinctness as individual entities is overcome by mutual understanding. The overcoming of our outward distinctness so that we may achieve a spiritual unity, is

Collingwood's conception of God (266-7). God emerges when we successfully make sense of each other's way of making sense.

A mind is not only an object but a subject, it is not only knowable, it is also a knower. Consequently the actions and experiences of minds, if they are really taken up into the being of God, must be taken up not merely as facts that have happened, which might be called an objective immortality, but also as acts that are being done; that is to say, they must enjoy a subjective immortality. Not only the deed but the doer must become an eternal increment to the being of God. Thus all minds must be immortal; but they can only be immortal in so far as they are really minds, that is to say, so far as they overcome the outwardness or sheer difference that separates them from nature and each one of them from the rest. (269)

In order to explain why Collingwood would bring up immortality at this time let us revisit the idea of the *Ad Hominem* in philosophy. MR was forced into a kind of dogmatism because it recognized only a single way of making sense of things. Moreover, a particular MR view couldn't recognize things that didn't make sense to it, as was evinced by how it handled disagreement by ascribing error. We therefore would never be able to refute an MR view by arguing *ad rem*. Instead, we try to argue *ad hominem* by arguing that there are things our interlocutors (understood as an actual agent) cannot make sense of. Notice, that I am not equating the view to the agent. The agent's way of making sense may be describable in terms of a philosophical view which makes sense of things, but over time new discoveries and new controversies will show that agent that there are things they cannot make sense of. This is not because their view lacks the power to make sense of new controversies. Rather, it is because the *agent* cannot make sense of the new controversies. In other words, the agent loses confidence in their way of making sense. In understanding someone for the sake of Geistesgeschichte, we are not understanding them as the embodiment of a view that makes sense of things, but as an actual being that makes sense of things. So when we understand an agent by re-enacting their thought, we are taking up, not a way of making sense as instantiating a view, but an individual agent's capacity to make sense of things. While we may

represent to ourselves this understanding as propositions that describe the colligation of problems and solutions, what we have taken up into ourselves (if we can even call it "ourselves" anymore) is another agency. This is why we achieve immortality. By being understood, our way of making sense lives on in others, to be passed down to other generations informing their inculturation and thus ways of making sense of things. Our way of making sense of things can (if one so chooses) be filled with ideals worth living for and principles worth dying (ends-in-themselves); it can be transferred to our children and grandchildren.

So the answer then to why we should not recoil at the thought of being redescribed is that it is the key to our immortality. If we find ourselves unable to make sense of things, realizing the error in ascribing error to alternate ways of making sense, we should be open to being redescribed because that could be the only way of becoming able to make sense of things which we otherwise could not. This is not to say that there is any guarantee of successful redescription. There is no way to tell whether or not a redescription is apt in its redescribing aside from whether or not one is able to bring one's self to assent to it. For that reason, we may need to be patient, even though I believe (if naively) that simply the recognition of the possible validity of redescriptions will actually increase the chances of successful Geistesgeschichte.

In the meantime, we must be patient. Rorty and Collingwood have not at anytime been widely understood. I can only hope that through me, and being better understood, they are closer to immortality. We may fitly conclude our odyssey to understand Rorty and Collingwood with the poet Longfellow (From *The Psalm of Life*):

> Lives of great men all remind us
> We can make our lives sublime,

And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

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