Introduction: Approaches to the Problem of Rationality

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

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withdrawn self-critically behind itself; in the question of what it can accomplish with its reflective competence within the framework of scientific conventions, it has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

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

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

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

The situation is somewhat different in political economy. In the eighteenth century it entered into competition with rational natural law and brought out the independence of an action system held together through functions and not primarily through
norms. As political economy, economics still held fast at the start to the relation to society as a whole that is characteristic of crisis theories. It was concerned with questions of how the dynamic of the economic system affected the orders through which society was normatively integrated. Economics as a specialized science has broken off that relation. Now it too concerns itself with the economy as a subsystem of society and absolves itself from questions of legitimacy. From this perspective it can tailor problems of rationality to considerations of economic equilibrium and questions of rational choice.

In contrast, sociology originated as a discipline responsible for the problems that politics and economics pushed to one side on their way to becoming specialized sciences. Its theme was the changes in social integration brought about within the structure of old-European societies by the rise of the modern system of national states and by the differentiation of a market-regulated economy. Sociology became the science of crisis par excellence; it concerned itself above all with the anomic aspects of the dissolution of traditional social systems and the development of modern ones. Even under these initial conditions, sociology could have confined itself to one subsystem, as the other social sciences did. From the perspective of the history of science, the sociologies of religion and law formed the core of the new discipline in any case.

If I may—for illustrative purposes and, for the time being, without further elaboration—refer to the schema of functions proposed by Parsons, the correlations between social-scientific disciplines and subsystems of society readily emerge (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1](image-url)

A: adaptation, G: goal-attainment, I: integration, L: pattern-maintenance
To be sure, there has been no lack of attempts to make sociology a specialized science for social integration. But it is no accident—rather a symptom—that the great social theorists I shall discuss are fundamentally sociologists. Alone among the disciplines of social science, sociology has retained its relations to problems of society as a whole. Whatever else it has become, sociology could not, as other disciplines could, shove aside questions of rationalization, redefine them, or cut them down to small size. As far as I can see, there are two reasons for that.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let the belief \( p \) represent an identical store of knowledge
at the disposal of \( A \) and \( B \). \( A \) (as one of several speakers) takes
part in communication and puts forward the assertion \( p \); \( B \) (as
an isolated actor) selects means that he regards, on the basis of
the belief \( p \), as suited in a given situation to achieve a desired effect. A and B use the same knowledge in different ways. In one case the relation of the utterance to the facts (and its amenability to grounding) make possible an understanding among participants in communication about something that takes place in the world. It is constitutive of the rationality of the utterance that the speaker raises a criticizable validity claim for the proposition \( p \), a claim that the hearer can accept or reject for good reason [begriindet].

In the other case the relation of the rule of action to the facts (and its ability to be grounded) make possible a successful intervention in the world. It is constitutive of the action's rationality that the actor bases it on a plan that implies the truth of \( p \), a plan according to which the projected end can be realized under given conditions. An assertion can be called rational only if the speaker satisfies the conditions necessary to achieve the illocutionary goal of reaching an understanding about something in the world with at least one other participant in communication. A goal-directed action can be rational only if the actor satisfies the conditions necessary for realizing his intention to intervene successfully in the world. Both attempts can fail; the consensus sought can fail to come to pass, the desired effect can fail to take place. But even the nature of these failures shows the rationality of the expressions—failures can be explained.

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

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

1. Only actions under actual or potential control by the agent are suitable for diianoetic appraisal. . . 

2. Only actions directed toward some end-in-view can be reasonable or unreasonable. . . 

3. Dianoetic appraisal is relative to the agent and to his choice of end-in-view. . . 

4. Judgments of reasonableness are appropriate only where there is partial knowledge about the availability and efficacy of the means. . . 

5. Dianoetic appraisal can always be supported by reasons.'

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

(b) The phenomenologist does not rely upon the guiding thread of goal-directed or problem-solving action. He does not, that is, simply begin with the ontological presupposition of an objective world; he makes this a problem by inquiring into the conditions under which the unity of an objective world is constituted for the members of a community. The world gains objectivity only through counting as one and the same world for


a community of speaking and acting subjects. The abstract concept of the world is a necessary condition if communicatively acting subjects are to reach understanding among themselves about what takes place in the world or is to be effected in it. Through this *communicative practice* they assure themselves at the same time of their common life-relations, of an intersubjectively shared *lifeworld*. This lifeworld is bounded by the totality of interpretations presupposed by the members as background knowledge. To elucidate the concept of rationality the phenomenologist must then examine the conditions for communicatively achieved consensus; he must analyze what Melvin Pollner calls, with reference to Alfred Schutz, "mundane reasoning."

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

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

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

The concept of cognitive-instrumental rationality that emerges from the realist approach can be fit into this more comprehensive concept of communicative rationality developed from the phenomenological approach. That is to say, there are internal relations between the capacity for decentered perception and manipulation of things and events on the one hand, and the capacity for reaching intersubjective understanding about things and events on the other. For this reason, Piaget chooses the model of social cooperation, in which several subjects coordinate their interventions in the objective world through communicative action. The contrasts stand out only when one tries, as is usual in empiricist research traditions, to separate the cognitive-instrumental rationality based on the monological employment of descriptive knowledge from communicative rationality. This shows up, for example, in concepts like "responsibility" and "autonomy." Only responsible persons can behave rationally. If their rationality is measured by the success of goal-directed interventions, it suffices to require that they be able to choose among alternatives and to control (some) conditions in their environment. But if their rationality is measured by whether processes of reaching understanding are successful, recourse to such capacities does not suffice. In the context of communicative action, only those persons count as responsible who, as members of a communication-community, can orient their actions to intersubjectively recognized validity claims. Different concepts of autonomy can be coordinated with these different concepts of responsibility. A greater degree of cognitive-instrumental rationality produces
a greater independence from limitations imposed by the contingent environment on the self-assertion of subjects acting in a goal-directed manner. A greater degree of communicative rationality expands—within a communication-community—the scope for unconstrained coordination of actions and consensual resolution of conflicts (at least to the extent that the latter are based on cognitive dissonance). This last qualification is necessary so long as we are oriented to constative utterances in developing the concept of communicative rationality. Pollner also limits "mundane reasoning" to cases in which there is disagreement about something in the objective world. But the rationality of persons is obviously not exhibited solely by the ability to utter well-grounded factual beliefs and to act efficiently.

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

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

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

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

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

To sum up, we can say that actions regulated by norms, expressive self-presentations, and also evaluative expressions, supplement constative speech acts in constituting a communicative practice which, against the background of a lifeworld, is oriented to achieving, sustaining, and renewing consensus—and indeed a consensus that rests on the intersubjective recognition of criticizable validity claims. The rationality inherent in this practice is seen in the fact that a communicatively achieved agreement must be based in the end on reasons. And the rationality of those who participate in this communicative practice is determined by whether, if necessary, they could, under suitable circumstances, provide reasons for their expressions. Thus the rationality proper to the communicative practice of everyday life points to the practice of argumentation as a court of appeal that makes it possible to continue communicative action with other
means when disagreements can no longer be repaired with everyday routines and yet are not to be settled by the direct or strategic use of force. For this reason I believe that the concept of communicative rationality, which refers to an unclarified systematic interconnection of universal validity claims, can be adequately explicated only in terms of a theory of argumentation.

We use the term argumentation for that type of speech in which participants thematize contested validity claims and attempt to vindicate or criticize them through arguments. An argument contains reasons or grounds that are connected in a systematic way with the validity claim of a problematic expression. The "strength" of an argument is measured in a given context by the soundness of the reasons; that can be seen in, among other things, whether or not an argument is able to convince the participants in a discourse, that is, to motivate them to accept the validity claim in question. Against this background, we can also judge the rationality of a speaking and acting subject by how he behaves as a participant in argumentation, should the situation arise.

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

Corresponding to the openness of rational expressions to being explained, there is, on the side of persons who behave rationally, a willingness to expose themselves to criticism and, if necessary, to participate properly in argumentation.

In virtue of their criticizability, rational expressions also admit of improvement; we can correct failed attempts if we can successfully identify our mistakes. The concept of grounding is interwoven with that of learning. Argumentation plays an important role in learning processes as well. Thus we call a person rational who, in the cognitive-instrumental sphere, expresses reasonable opinions and acts efficiently; but this rationality remains accidental if it is not coupled with the ability to learn from mistakes, from the refutation of hypotheses and from the failure of interventions.
The medium in which these negative experiences can be productively assimilated is theoretical discourse, that is, the form of argumentation in which controversial truth claims are thematized. The situation is similar in the moral-practical sphere. We call persons rational who can justify their actions with reference to existing normative contexts. This is particularly true of those who, in cases of normative conflict, act judiciously, that is, neither give in to their affects nor pursue their immediate interests but are concerned to judge the dispute from a moral point of view and to settle it in a consensual manner. The medium in which we can hypothetically test whether a norm of action, be it actually recognized or not, can be impartially justified is practical discourse; this is the form of argumentation in which claims to normative Tightness are made thematic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

C—An Excursus on the Theory of Argumentation

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

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

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**Figure 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference Dimensions</th>
<th>Problematic Expressions</th>
<th>Controversial Validity Claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical discourse</td>
<td>Cognitive-instrumental</td>
<td>Truth of propositions; efficacy of teleological actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical discourse</td>
<td>Moral-practical</td>
<td>Rightness of norms of action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic criticism</td>
<td>Evaluative</td>
<td>Adequacy of standards of value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapeutic critique</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Truthfulness or sincerity of expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicative discourse</td>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensibility or well-formedness of symbolic constructs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
different types and the overlapping that occurs among them."

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

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

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

But if the validity of arguments can be neither undermined in an empiricist manner nor grounded in an absolutist manner, then we are faced with precisely those questions to which the logic of argumentation is supposed to provide the answers: How can problematic validity claims be supported by good reasons? How can reasons be criticized in turn? What makes some arguments, and thus some reasons, which are related to validity claims in a certain way, stronger or weaker than other arguments?
We can distinguish three aspects of argumentative speech. First, considered as a process, we have to do with a form of communication that is improbable in that it sufficiently approximates ideal conditions. In this regard, I tried to delineate the general pragmatic presuppositions of argumentation as specifications of an ideal speech situation. This proposal may be unsatisfactory in its details; but I still view as correct my intention to reconstruct the general symmetry conditions that every competent speaker must presuppose are sufficiently satisfied insofar as he intends to enter into argumentation at all. Participants in argumentation have to presuppose in general that the structure of their communication, by virtue of features that can be described in purely formal terms, excludes all force—whether it arises from within the process of reaching understanding itself or influences it from the outside—except the force of the better argument (and thus that it also excludes, on their part, all motives except that of a cooperative search for the truth). From this perspective argumentation can be conceived as a reflective continuation, with different means, of action oriented to reaching understanding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I want to show how Klein, in his attempt to adopt an external perspective in order to separate clearly "de facto" from "valid" argumentation, gets involved in instructive contradictions. He begins by defining the domain of argumentative speech: "In argumentation there is an attempt to transform something collectively problematic into something collectively valid [geltend] by drawing upon what is already collectively valid."** Participants in argumentation want to decide problematic validity claims by adducing reasons; and in the final analysis these reasons draw their power to convince from a collectively shared, unproblematic knowledge. Klein's empiricist truncation of the sense of argumentation can be seen in how he uses the concept of "collect-
tively valid." By this he understands only those views that are actually shared by specific groups at specific times; he screens out all internal relations between what is *de facto* accepted as valid (geltend) and what should have validity (Gültigkeit) in the sense of a claim transcending local, temporal, and social limitations: "The valid and the questionable are thus relative to persons and times."33

In restricting "what is collectively valid" to the convictions that are actually expressed and accepted at a given time and place, Klein puts forward a description of argumentation that foreshortens attempts to convince by an essential dimension. According to his description, it is indeed reasons that motivate participants in argumentation to let themselves be convinced of something; but these reasons are conceived of as opaque incentives for changing attitudes. His description neutralizes all standards that would make it possible to evaluate the rationality of reasons; it closes off to the theoretician the internal perspective from which he could adopt his own standards of judgment. To the extent that we draw upon the concepts proposed by Klein, one argument counts as much as any other, if only it leads to "the direct acceptance of a justification."34

Klein himself recognizes the danger that has to arise for a logic of argumentation when the concept of validity is replaced by that of acceptance: "One might think that in this approach we drop truth and the relation to reality, with which argumentation should possibly also be concerned. It seems as if this way of looking at things focuses only on who gets his way, but not on who is right. But that would indeed be a serious error. . ."35 The logic of argumentation requires a conceptual framework that permits us to take into account the phenomenon of the peculiarly constraint-free force of the better argument.

The unfolding of such an argument is by no means a friendly agreement on some view or other. What is collectively valid can in some cases be pragmatically very unpleasant for a participant; but if it follows from what is valid by way of valid transitions, then it just is valid—whether he wants it to be or not. One cannot very well defend oneself against thinking. Transitions from what is valid take place in us whether or not we like them.36

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

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

Klein looks for a curious way out of this dilemma: "The touchstone for differences in what is valid is not their differences in truth content—for who could decide this?—but the immanently effective logic of argumentation." The term "effectiveness" is systematically ambiguous in this context. If arguments are valid, then insight into the internal conditions of their validity can have a rationally motivating force and a corresponding effect. But arguments can also have an influence on the attitudes of addressees independently of their validity—when they are expressed in external circumstances that guarantee their acceptance. Whereas the "effectiveness" of arguments can be explained in the second case by means of a psychology of argumentation, explanation in the first case calls for a logic of argumentation. Klein postulates, however, a third aspect, namely a logic of argumentation that investigates validity connections as lawlike empirical regularities. Without having recourse to concepts of objective validity, it is
supposed to depict the laws to which participants in argumentation are subject, in some cases against their inclinations and in opposition to external influences. Such a theory has to analyze what appear to participants as internal connections between valid utterances as external connections between events linked nomologically.

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

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

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

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

Interestingly, Klein supports the elimination of the truth relation of arguments by pointing out that not all validity claims that can be contested in argumentation can be reduced to truth claims. Many arguments are "not at all (concerned) with statements that one has to decide are 'true' or 'false,' but with questions like, for example, what is good, what is beautiful, or what one ought to do. It is clear that we are here concerned more than ever with what is valid, with what is valid for certain people at certain times."

The concept of propositional truth is in fact too narrow
to cover everything for which participants in argument claim validity in the logical sense. For this reason the theory of argumentation must be equipped with a more comprehensive concept of validity that is not restricted to validity in the sense of truth. But it does not at all follow from this that we have to renounce concepts of validity analogous to truth, to expunge every counterfactual moment from the concept of validity and to equate validity with context-dependent acceptability.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let us consider a few of his preferred examples:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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