

WHY IS IT GOOD TO BE RATIONAL?

Wittgenstein, Putnam and the Way Through Universalism and Relativism†

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Brüder! Ist es Euch um wahre Glückseligkeit zu thun, so lasset uns keine Uebereinstimmung lügen, wo Mannichfaltigkeit offenbar Plan und Endzweck der Vorsehung ist. Keiner von uns denkt und empfindet vollkommen so, wie sein Nebenmensch; warum wollen wir den einander durch trügliche Worte hintergeben? (Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, Gesammelte Schriften, Dritter Band, Leipzig, 1843, p. 360)

3.1. INTRO

I'd like to suggest a rough-and-ready sketch of normative inquiry.¹ To call it a model would perhaps be a stretch. Anyone impacted by the later Wittgenstein ought to be skeptical of such grand claims anyway. I aim for something more manageable: The bare outline, some basic parameters—the question.

† This is a shorter version of chapter 3 of my dissertation. The pagination and the footnote-numberings don't correspond.

The account is, in the main, Putnam's. His non-reductive take on the later Wittgenstein is warranted. On this reading, Wittgenstein wasn't a linguistic idealist or a relativist. I know it owes a lot to the effort of others—Cavell and Diamond above all. If I find it more helpful it's because it's guided by a more balanced overall vision. The concepts he brings to task are also better, I think, for a full engagement with normativity in the wake of Wittgenstein and the linguistic turn.² Normative evaluation is key here.³

The challenge is spelling out what this middle stance comes to. Not even Putnam avoids being "gripped" here. It *is* hard endowing the normative with real content and weight.⁴ It's his refusal to turn his back on these difficulties which makes his philosophy more interesting in the end.

3.2. THE FAILURE OF NON-COGNITIVISM

If no cogent, formalized account can be given of factual statements, then to say that value statements are subjective begs the question. They are noncognitive? Why, because they're value judgments?⁵

With the early Wittgenstein, rational sufficiency is reduced to semantic incoherence. Moral: You can't undercut theoretic concepts *and* defend a dichotomy between facts and values, or between norms

and values. If the path from Kant via Kierkegaard to the early Wittgenstein has shown us anything it's that these dichotomies can't be redeemed: They can't be *proved*, conceptually *clarified*, or given *meaning* (cf. esp. chapter 2.2. + 2.7.). The only way to make a clean cut between the cognitive and the evaluative now is showing it's somehow validated by our *language use*.⁶ This presupposes ordinary language has the kind of transparency and definition needed for such a priori work. Is that realistic?

Let's say we wanted to try this. A strong defense would have to include a list of the root-uses by way of one basic principle or rule. This would allow a straight cut between cognitive and non-cognitive uses (the Logical Positivists took this line). The obvious counter-move: Asking if this super-criterion establishing the taxonomy, is coherently self-applied. As it is, it can't be. The strategy is self-undermining since the principle or rule can't itself be classified in the same way.⁷ The principle is non-decidable, incoherent too. This was the deep lesson of the *Tractatus* (see chapter 2.2. + 2.7.).⁸ It means the attempt to make an a priori inventory of language-use also has to fail *even as an ideal*. To seek a way out by adding more principles or rules only makes things worse: It merely *increases* the indecision and incoherence.⁹ We could use relative distinctions obviously—maxims, rules of thumb. It's hard to see though how this doesn't mean the a priori stance has been rejected.

We could go for a weaker defense. Maybe a global cut between facts and values isn't intellectually respectable. What about separating epistemic and non-cognitive *values* instead? It only seems natural to say descriptions in the natural sciences aren't tainted by acculturation, being guided by epistemic values alone (for all practical purposes anyway). This in contrast to value judgments that are non-epistemic, where objective justification seems wholly out of place. So it might still be possible to have an "absolute" conception of nature and be a non-cognitivist or relativist vis-à-vis the socio-cultural order (Bernard Williams, for example, goes for this strategy).¹⁰

This won't really work either. Vocabulary, first: There's nothing about the words themselves that would allow us to mark them off from each other in an a priori way. There's nothing to the *bare look* of a word that might give us a fail-safe criterion, or a clear idea even, if we're dealing with an epistemic word or "merely" an evaluative one. As the later Wittgenstein points out we *understand* words, their meaning being linked to the way they're being used by us in our dealings with each other (*PI* §§ 7, 23, 43, 154, 199). Clearly the same word can be used in a variety of ways: Factual, evaluative, normative.¹¹ Though we may perfectly well speak of different language uses, we would be hard pressed to draw a hard-and-fast line between them. Appealing to criteria or rules is self-undermining for the reasons already laid out.

We could try a simple definitional approach. But these definitions couldn't do work as clear, self-deciding rules any longer so we can't reach a stage where they would replace our reliance upon valuing. By themselves, these definitions are totally empty.¹² We couldn't reasonably expect to use these definitions to fully say, much less decide in principle, how a word *is going* to be used. To want to use the definitions as laws for how a word *ought* to be used is to assume what's in question.

Take "beating children is wrong", for instance. This is a clear example of a value statement. Or if I say "my umbrella is in the closet", who would want to doubt I've stated a fact? But the look or sound of the words, or their position in a sentence, are neither necessary nor sufficient markers that would let us decide in principle between factual and evaluative uses. Nouns may be used both as subjects and objects. Some words may look or sound the same across a number of sentences (as the verb does in the two statements above). Even if they *were* to play systematically different grammatical or semantic roles, this wouldn't allow us to prejudge their factual and evaluative uses. So it seems only fair to say, as Putnam does, that fact- and value-statements don't have elements that we can factor in any univocal way—not even notionally.¹³

These are the easy cases. What if I now say "Caligula was a cruel emperor"? Here I've arguably made *both* a value judgment and stated a historical fact.¹⁴ That we're bound to go astray in trying to

naturalize language use is brought out most clearly in medial cases like these. Just try to state what the descriptive component of 'cruel' comes down to without either using the word itself or a synonym. One could use less tainted adjectives ("irratic", "capricious", "mentally unsound", and so on). This would hardly solve the problem since the factual is supposed to be different from the evaluative *in kind*, not in degree.¹⁵

Not even words we've come to regard as clear-cut cases of the normative can be withdrawn from circulation. "Ought", "right", and "must" are all action-guiding, but that doesn't mean this action has to be normative: "He knocked his head right through the door" (description), "this ought to do it!" (exclamation); "All things must end" (regret).¹⁶ These are perfectly good examples of non-normative uses. They may *also* be used in a normative way of course. And then we've made things easy by avoiding more difficult cases like substitution, irony, misunderstanding, and so on.¹⁷

Not that the look or sound or position of a word (or a phrase) is *never* relevant in getting at its meaning. Though enough has been said to show that language-use can't be reduced to meaning.¹⁸ We might go on. Wittgenstein's certainly right to say looks can be deceiving. Sometimes assimilating uses on the basis of looks or feels ineffective; other times it's positively confused (*PI* §§ 10, 11, 14).

What about a purely functionalist take? If it's somehow possible to instrumentalize language uses, then in theory we might still be able to

shield epistemic uses from the non-cognitive ones. We wouldn't even have to rely on natural languages—algorithms might do (this is the path taken by AI).¹⁹ Epistemic values have a role in pursuing right, objective—true—descriptions of the world. But we can't reasonably expect to get closer to a cognitive representation of either the world itself or language use apart from these values themselves. Besides, it's not as if we can run a computer simulation to see how often choosing the more coherent, simpler, beautiful, relevant (etc.) theory turns out to be true, without presupposing these very standards of justified empirical belief.²⁰ Even cognitive values require contextual, *intelligent* use.²¹

The non-cognitivist's talk of criteria, marks, tests doesn't justify disentangling factual or epistemic uses from the welter of human practices. There's no reason to think the dichotomy could be brought out consensually either. What's gained by saying language use is always decided, or that meaning is sufficiently seen, or that statements are only justified by "consensus"? These claims are too vague to be helpful. As methodological remarks, they beg the question. Like the exaggerated appeal to the look or aim of words, the stress on what "we" say and do (de facto agreement) contributes little toward an a priori separation between factual, evaluative, and normative language-use.²² Non-cognitivism is a dead end.

3.3. SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS REVISITED

It has become clear that in the conception I am defending there is no such thing as a 'foundation'. And at this point people become worried: are we not close to the view that there is no difference between 'justified' and 'justified by our lights' (relativism) or even 'justified by *my* lights' (a species of solipsism)? (RTH, p. 215)

It's only natural to be worried. Even if Putnam and Wittgenstein are right, one still has the sneaking suspicion relativism gets the last word. Even for the later Wittgenstein logic is basic, so he can't be accused of being a total relativist.²³ Still, undercut rational sufficiency for language use and it's hard to see how cultural relativism doesn't get the upper hand, indirectly and by one's silence at least (see chapter 2.2.). More specific arguments need be made against the relativist, if only to avoid the impression he's won by default.

Relativism in a natural first formulation goes something like this: "[E]very person (or, in a modern 'sociological' or 'cultural' formulation, every culture, or sometimes every 'discourse') has (its) own views, standards, presuppositions, and that truth (and also justification) are relative to *these*."²⁴ Glossed like this, relativism sounds rather naïve and confused. Not least because "X is true (or justified) relative to these views" is *itself* taken as something 'absolute'.²⁵ The literal relativist

contradicts himself. One might say the point of view that claims relativism is *positively false* is also allowed here (it's coherent too). Putnam's right that the *quaestio juris* can't be dealt with in this purely insular way.²⁶ Clearly, *some* form of objectivity must be assumed.

Talk of 'cultures' or 'points of view' really only makes sense when talk of other people and their beliefs, that is, when some idea of a *common* world is already in place.²⁷ Otherwise what sense can we possibly make of our talk of the standards of cultures being "different"—unique? A comparison between what's same and other is always involved here, which makes sense only if we've already assumed the possibility of crossing between the two (transitivity). Commonsense realism about my own view or those of my cultural peer-group coupled with anti-realism about everything else doesn't make much sense (Rorty is famous for taking this line). So if I were to claim, say, that talk of other people is just 'marks and noises' that help *me* 'cope' then my talk is sheer fantasy even by my own standards. *Some* force to our ordinary talk of the objective and the real has to be acknowledged.²⁸

Imagine an anthropologist or historian trying to describe a different culture or age, taking seriously the relativist's strictures. Sheer particularism only commits you to a radical version of the incommensurability thesis. What are you trying to describe? How could we even begin to translate the language of a different age or culture, let alone past stages of our own? Telling us in a grave tone of voice that a

Trobriander Islander, an Aristotle, a Medieval Christian, or a Galileo had “incommensurable” notions to ours *and then* going on to describe in great detail what these are, is incoherent.²⁹ It’s simply a fact of life that we’re able to interpret the beliefs, desires, and utterances of others so that they at least make *some* kind of sense.³⁰

Why stop with mere logical or semantic arguments? Consider the wider implications of Wittgenstein’s Private Language Argument (*PI* §§ 243-308).³¹ Taken in the right way this argument is an excellent indictment of relativism and solipsism in general. If someone says meaningful use of language’s purely a private affair, left to the discretion of each individual mind, or person, or peer group, or society, or culture then we might want to point out how a distinction between *being* right and *thinking* one is right no longer makes sense here. If the cultural relativist were right the difference between justifying, asserting, thinking, and *making noises* would collapse. How could we, *ex hypothesi*, ever be certain that *we ourselves* weren’t machines or plants instead of thinkers? For Putnam holding such a view would commit us to some form of mental suicide.³²

On a more superficial level of course, he would want to know if the relativist is trying to justify his position to himself only or to others also. If to others, he can’t refuse input without treating them as less than full interlocutors. Or is he only trying to convince himself? Why the need? Is he thinking out loud as it were? Talking to himself? Is that an

option that even makes sense? If the relativist wants to avoid this patent absurdity in his views he should acknowledge that meaning is *not wholly* up to him (his own peer group, and so on). Which means he's already given up a simple identification between *thinking* or *meaning* X and X *being* true or right. But that entails he's agreed others could at least *in principle* have the right to contest what he's saying, showing how he might be wrong.

The radical relativist (solipsist) refutes himself the moment he opens his mouth. The reason, of course, is he claims to have a monopoly on intelligent language use. This is confused, Putnam thinks. Ultimately though he would go further, pointing out the consistent cultural relativist is committed to a *disturbingly* absurd position. Not treating others as speakers is bad enough. What Putnam is taking Wittgenstein to be saying basically is that the cultural relativist couldn't even begin to treat herself as a speaker or thinker.³³

This kind of self-refutation cuts much deeper than mere "performative contradiction" (Habermas and Apel's favorite tactic). The problem with the universalist is he wants to make too much out of the failure of relativism, too fast. One suspects he wants this *reductio* to serve as a formal proof of his own position—proof by accusation as it were.³⁴ That's a non sequitur, involving the fallacy of deriving a positive from a negative. Just because something is patently false or incoherent

doesn't mean something *else* is valid, much less sound.³⁵ How much traction does mere logical or semantic refutations give us anyway? The universalist's reductive bent might quickly lead him to misrepresent the motives or concerns of the relativist too. The relativist is "communicatively incompetent" and that's that. A denial of universal norms or values means one *has* to be driven by self-interest—mere inclination. But is that the whole story?

Might not one respectable motive be that the relativist fears a very real and concrete alternative to her appeal to particularity, viz. ethnocentrism (cultural imperialism)?³⁶ The universalist's very quick to accuse others of this.³⁷ Yet if it's true ordinary language lacks the kind of a crystalline purity needed to get an a priori cut between global norms and insular values off the ground (3.2. over) might not ethnocentrism *just as well* follow from universalism? A more subtle form perhaps; but ethnocentrism nonetheless.³⁸

It appears the universalist and the cultural relativist might be more alike than they like to think. When it comes to value judgments they're both diehard non-cognitivists. Both deny value judgments have cognitive content, can be rationally justified: Be normative in other words. If the relativist's wish to see particularity as something essentially good is to come true, he would have to come up with a picture in which it's possible to *describe* other viewpoints objectively at least. Otherwise we couldn't describe the values or mores of other cultures without

passing judgment on them. This wholesale dichotomizing has already been found incoherent. The universalist's guilty of a related fallacy of division when she talks about universal norms as if they were self-contained, freestanding vis-à-vis value judgments.³⁹ This means the implied claim, about a third way between universalism and contextualism being impossible, is arguable too.⁴⁰

Non-cognitivism breaks down in all versions. Facts, values, and norms are always already entangled it looks like. That doesn't mean the *concerns* of the universalist or the relativist are invalidated. A measure of objectivity is indispensable to value judgments. There's nothing wrong with the universalist's instincts here. At the same time, there are good grounds for agreeing with the more sensible relativist when he feels there ought to be more to the value-set of other cultures or traditions than simply being subsumed and assimilated to our own. The key to working out a more differentiated view lies in owning up to this, showing how our value judgments might claim objective validity *and* be subject to acculturation at the same time.⁴¹

3.4. NORMATIVE EVALUATION IN LIGHT OF CONCEPTUAL PLURALISM

The solution is neither to give up on the very possibility of rational discussion nor to seek an Archimedean point, an “absolute conception” outside of all contexts and problematic situations, but... to investigate and discuss and try things out cooperatively, democratically, and above all *fallibilistically* (CFD, p. 45)

Putnam clearly thinks the case against non-cognitivism is an argument for his own evaluative view—normative evaluation. But since he’s bent on avoiding rational sufficiency, the indispensability argument he’s got in mind can’t be binding in an absolute way. A successful verdict against universalism and relativism isn’t the same as a fool-proof argument for his own brand of commonsense realism. The very idea should sound suspect to any self-respecting pragmatist anyway. The appeal to fallibility isn’t enough. He needs to go beyond formal or negative arguments, giving some further content and weight to his own stance. We’ve just begun doing this in the last section. Making a case for objective justification though requires something more. We need more concrete, *positive* arguments.⁴² Putnam offers two kinds basically:

(1) *What we actually do*: Whether we like it or not we do engage in normative evaluation. No philosophical redescription is conceivable here really. One sometimes gets the impression norms originated in Western culture, with Modernity, the Enlightenment, Bourgeois Capitalism or whatever. This is clearly wrong, Putnam thinks. Imperatives to abstain from cruelty and pride and hatred and oppression aren't trademarks of the West. One can find similar universalizing beliefs in ancient literature across the board (Zoroastrian, Egyptian, Hebrew, etc.).⁴³ "Traditional" societies don't just have "thick" ethical concepts; they also have "thin" ones, i.e. philosophical conceptions about how *everyone* should live ("good", "right", "just", "true", etc.).⁴⁴ What we like to refer to as the "religions" of traditional or archaic peoples, for example, worry about problems *they themselves* think transcend the culture-bound, as well as ones being more specific to them.⁴⁵ Believing there are universal human problems is simply part of what it means to be a person. Why shouldn't we say the concern for justice is human?

Incredible as it sounds, many philosophers, sociologists, and anthropologist have devoted their lives to denying even this ordinary intuition or fact. Wittgenstein has also been enlisted toward this end. He's often taken as saying there are no better or worse language-games. Since the criteria of rational assessability are entirely internal to our own form of life, or so it's argued, we have no real grounds for criticizing other life-forms or language games (and vice versa).⁴⁶

No one denies the motley of cultures, traditions, outlooks that the human being has given voice to throughout the world, in different ages. If anything Wittgenstein, Putnam claims, would criticize those who would approach these, “in a way that is supercilious and self-gratulatory; instead of seeing how different the “primitive” language games are from our own, we see them as simply inferior versions of our own.”⁴⁷ Isn’t this insight itself of normative weight? Just because deep or reasonable differences make us have misgivings about the reality or force of philosophical “super-games” (universalism) that doesn’t mean we’re forced to make the equally absurd claim that language games are wholly insular (relativism). For Wittgenstein, as is well known, language is essentially *open-ended* (*PI* §§ 18, 23).

It might be objected that even if the middle way (normative evaluation) isn’t precluded in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, it’s never actually stated there. Quite the contrary, doesn’t Wittgenstein say we *cannot* have rational conviction in the face of conflict?

Suppose we met people who did not regard [being guided in one’s actions by physics] ... as a telling reason [*Grund*]. Instead... they consult an oracle. (And for that reason we consider them primitive.) Is it wrong [*Falsch*] for them to consult an oracle and be guided by it? –If we call this “wrong” aren’t we merely using our language as a base [*ausgehen*] to *combat* [*bekämpfen*] theirs? (OC § 609, translation modified)

And are we right [*recht*] or wrong to combat it? Of course there are all sorts of slogans [*Schlagworten*] which will be used to support our proceedings (OC § 610)

When two principles [*Prinzipie*] really do meet which cannot be reconciled [*aussöhnen*] with one another, then each man declare the other a fool and a heretic (OC § 611)

I said I would 'combat' the other man, but wouldn't I give him *reasons* [*Gründe*]? Certainly; but how far do they go? At the end of reasons comes *persuasion* [*Überredung*]. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives.) (OC § 612)

These remarks, Putnam says, have often been cited in order to enlist Wittgenstein in the relativist cause.⁴⁸ This, again, would be rash. Go back and read the passages again. He doesn't say we *never* ought to combat another culture: He for one would want to reserve the right to combat the other man.⁴⁹ He's even been known to offer *explicit criticisms* of primitive beliefs—ordeals by fire, for instance, he describes as an "absurd" way of reaching a verdict.⁵⁰ He doesn't say, either, that giving reasons for one's own convictions is *always* futile. Unlike the universalist, he's convinced a simple insistence on rational sufficiency won't work. That's also why he ends on a cautious note, hinting that reasoning will have to come to an end at *some* point.⁵¹

Some would no doubt find all this too facile or lenient, complaining it lets Wittgenstein off the hook. Isn't he denying normative reasoning can take place between two conflicting language-games or forms of life here? Hasn't he already reduced talk of necessary and sufficient reasons to incoherence? Doesn't he say elsewhere too (OC § 559) that language-games are neither rational (*vernünftig*) nor irrational (*unvernünftig*)—they're there just like our life? How is *this* a defense of normative inquiry?

But just because language-games aren't *based* on reasons, doesn't mean they can *never* be reasonable or unreasonable. On our showing of the Private Language Argument, a skeptical construal of language-games or forms of life is self-refuting. We can and do reason within and by means of language.⁵² Realistically though, these only go so far. If Wittgenstein is saying anything in the passages above, it's just how *difficult* normative exchange can be. What he wants to do is take a clear and honest look at where we are, avoiding the God's-Eye View.⁵³ But that, as Putnam rightly points out, hardly constitutes irresponsible or insouciant posturing.

(2) *How it's possible to do it.* Much of the perceived difficulty with making normative claims across language-games or forms of life is connected with differentiation- and translation-problems.

Differentiation (a): To say that other people, traditions or cultures do or could make a distinction between the “thin” (universal) and the “thick” (particular) isn’t helpful as such. We need more flesh on the bones. Putnam gives the following examples. That Homeric society operated with “thin” ethical concepts is reasonable, starting with *Khrê* (meaning “it’s right, proper, customary”; “one must, one ought to”). To claim the use of this word was restricted to class-bound obligations is for him pure fabulation.⁵⁴ Is it likely that an aristocrat couldn’t express the thought that *anyone*, including a commoner, “ought to” defend his home or feed his children? As for Nahuatl (the Aztec language), it would be surprising if it too didn’t have “thin” as well as “thick” concepts.⁵⁵ Remember, the insistence on the need to *dichotomize* the normative and the evaluative isn’t only needless; it’s ill-judged. All that we need to do is establish the likelihood of other cultures making concrete, universalistic claims.

Take another example. The medieval samurai may not have availed himself of “our” Western “thin” ethical concepts. So he wasn’t a Kantian. Does that mean he was unacquainted with abstract vocabulary suitable for making universalistic claims? When a Zen Buddhist maintains one way of life leads to *satori* and another to pain, why shouldn’t he be making a claim with universal reach? Isn’t that the whole point of Buddhism?⁵⁶ When Confucius tells us how we should treat our family members, our superiors, and subordinates isn’t it fair to use the

words “should” and “ought” in explaining his thought in English “even if, God forbid, the uses of these words in English do not exactly line up with their uses in Chinese”?⁵⁷ Examples could be multiplied if further backing were needed to stress the fact that transitive, normative claims are more than likely in languages, traditions, or cultures other than our own. A relative, *problematical* distinction is all we need.

Translation (b): The incommensurability thesis failed to stand up to scrutiny. To want to bar our access to the thin ethical concepts of other culture or conceptual schemes on grounds of total uninterpretability is bankrupt.⁵⁸ We don’t need to plead synonymy either to secure a transitive notion of the normative. It doesn’t even have to be based on actual conceptual alignment. The fact that a concept doesn’t belong to some language doesn’t prove that statements in our language containing a specific concept can’t be entailed by statements in the other language: “I have one pear in each hand”, for instance, entails “I have an even prime number of pears in my hands”, whether or not the concepts “even” and “prime” belong to the language in which the first statement was made”.⁵⁹ Nothing prevents normative evaluation from taking place between conceptual schemes. The only requirement is that different words could play *similar* semantic or pragmatic roles.

3.5. RULES? ATTITUDES?

The idea that “value judgments are subjective” is a piece of philosophy that has gradually come to be accepted by many people as if it were common sense... [That value judgments... are completely outside the sphere of reason... rested on untenable arguments and on over-inflated dichotomies. And these untenable arguments had... important “real world” consequences in the 20th century (CFD, p. 1)

One way of characterizing Modern political and social thought that makes a lot of sense is to say it splits into those who, all other things being equal, prefer to stress the need for the recognition and cultivation of the proper *mindset* or *attitudes* (“perfectionists”) and those who think politics ought primarily to be governed by *rules*, *principles*, and *procedures* (“legalists”).⁶⁰ This has also meant construing normative inquiry in very different ways. Where the former has a bias towards forms of normative exchange other than the argumentative, the legalist camp tends to reduce it to criterial reasoning. Interestingly, *both* rely almost exclusively on representational devices, the only difference between them seems to be the form these take.⁶¹ It’s kind of hard to tell because a proper philosophical discussion of the sources and limits of (re)presentational semantics is often missing. The basic rightness of rules or attitudes as representational devices is just assumed or the discussion is mainly polemical or indirect, leaving the reader with only

vague hints as to how a self-critical statement might actually look like. That way important problems and potentials are overlooked.⁶²

I want to present a case for why Putnam, based on his non-reductive reading of Wittgenstein, would find both these strains in Modern political philosophy too extreme. Any believer in normative evaluation *should* be green-eyed about a wholesale separation or priority between attitudes and rules anyway. One very obvious reason is language philosophical and concerns the inherent limitations of the criterialist conception (see also C1-C5, chapter 2.2., and 3.2. over). Since dichotomous schemes are incoherent, there's no formal way to justify a sweeping cut or overweight between attitudes and rules. This spells trouble for (re)presentationalism as a whole. We can't just assume *that* representational devices are adequate, or seek to show how one type is preferable to another, and just leave it at that. Some language philosophical argumentation is needed.

Ironically, the later Wittgenstein has been invoked on all sides in this debate too. He did talk about regularity, rules, principles and attitudes after all (*PI* §§ 31, 207, 208, 242, 243 *at passim*). This would seem to suggest that to look for some kind of *preference-ordering* among these notions in his later work isn't a complete waste of time. It might still be possible to invoke Wittgenstein for the cause of either perfectionism or legalism. Three responses are reasonable at this point:

Wittgenstein, it's true, wasn't too keen on criterial reasoning. That being said, it might be possible to claim he thought that the regularity (*Regelmässigkeit*) we *do* observe in human behavior exhausts the meaning of agreement or consensus (*Einstimmung*) and so of normative inquiry too (= regularism).⁶³ Since behavior is no longer made equivalent to criterial rationality here, we don't have to say we're always able to tell whether, or how exactly, regularity and agreement line up. That doesn't mean that *if* and *when* they do match up, localized patterned behavior isn't somehow responsible.⁶⁴

The second response places the accent on rules. To say rules can't be universal principles isn't the same as denying they might provide conflict resolution with a reasoned ground of justification, that is, *within* a specific language-game or form of life (= regulism).⁶⁵

The third response might be thought the most reasonable: Human agreement, although perhaps not wholly separable from regularity and/or rules, is nevertheless *primarily* expressible by informal attitudes or mutual attunement (= "attitudinalism").

Once again, it's important to understand the wider context of Wittgenstein's own concern with rules and regularity. For Wittgenstein a rule, rather than coinciding with regularity, is actually a subspecies of it. And in the end, language-games are uncircumscribed by either:

Consider... the proceedings that we call 'games'. What is common (*gemeinsam*) to them all?—Don't say: "There *must* be something common, or they would not be called 'games'"—*but look and see*... Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and other appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost.—are they all 'amusing'? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning or losing, or competition (*Konkurrenz*) between players? ... Look at the parts played by skill (*Geschick*) and luck (*Gluck*)... [We] see a complicated network (*kompliziertes Netz*) of similarities overlapping (*übergreifen*) and crisscrossing: sometimes overall similarities (*Ähnlichkeiten*), sometimes similarities of detail (PI §66)

I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances" (*Familienähnlichkeiten*)... But if someone wished to say: "There is something common to all these constructions—namely the disjunction of all their commonalities (*Gemeinsamkeiten*)"—I should say: Now you are merely playing (*spielst du nur*) with words. One might as well say: "Something runs through the whole thread—namely the continuous overlapping of these fibres" (*ibid.* §67, translation slightly altered)

I *may* give the concept (*Begriff*)... rigid limits (*feste Grenzen*)... that is, use (*gebrauchen*) the word... for a rigidly limited concept, but I may also use it so that the scope of the concept is *not* closed by a frontier. And this is how we do use the word "game". For how is the concept of a game bounded (*abgeschlossen*)? What is and is not a game anyway? Can you posit (*angeben*) the limits? No. But you can *draw* (*ziehen*) one; for none

has so far been drawn. (But that never troubled you before when you used the word “game”.) “But then the use of the word is unregulated (*nicht geregelt*), the ‘game’ we play with it is unregulated”.—It is not everywhere circumscribed by rules (*nicht überall von Regeln begrenzt*); but no more are there any rules for how high one throws a ball in tennis, or how hard; yet tennis is a game for all that and has rules too (*ibid.* §68)

How should we explain to someone what a game is? I imagine that we should describe *games* to him, and we might add: “This *and similar things* are called ‘games’”. And do we know any more about it ourselves? ... To repeat, we can draw a boundary—for a special purpose (*besondern Zweck*). Does it take that to make the concept usable (*brauchbar*)? Not at all! (*ibid.* §69)

These paragraphs follow as a sort of conclusion after a long rethinking of the view of language he defended in the *Tractatus* (see chapter 2.5.). Wittgenstein has just spoken of the great question (*die Grosse Frage*) that follows from all these considerations, viz. whether or not there’s a common denominator to all language use (*ibid.* §65). The lines cited here is Wittgenstein’s attempt to explain or give his own answer to this question, viz. that there isn’t one.

That’s the quick answer. As a purely *formal* answer it’s too thin of course. To oppose the request for an underlying essence with a simple “no” is to be guilty of playing with words (cf. § 67, *supra*). It would be much more helpful to look and see if, and to what extent, language use

is capable of the kind of limiting the essentialist wants. Wittgenstein's wager: When we do this we'll discover language-games are just too complex and open-ended for this to happen. The similarities and differences aren't that clear-cut, so they can't be managed within the bounds of a specific language-game or a set of them even. It's at this point he raises the more practical question: Does the absence of essence mean language is totally unregulated? His appeal to the game of tennis is a simple but effective way of showing how the insistence on total regulation is misplaced. But just because language-games don't *always* and *everywhere* show regularity, or are bounded by rules, that doesn't mean these notions are *never* appropriate or usable. Again, the right idea of what Wittgenstein is up to: He's committed to a genuinely *non-reductive* view of language-games.

When Wittgenstein later goes on to speak of human agreement (*Übereinstimmung*) as an agreement in judgments or reactions (PI §§ 241-2), he's resisting both the regulist and regularist models of human practice. We say and do a lot of things—significant things—without the benefit of pre-defined patterning or specifiable rules. A *rough* agreement in informal judgments is what makes our words and deeds have a common point and purpose. It's this mutual attunement, to use a Cavellian phrase, that also allows us to redirect and reshape our activity, projecting old concepts into *new* situations.⁶⁶

This is where it's tempting to conclude the later Wittgenstein was a perfectionist ("attitudinalist"). Our informal attitudes seem give us the groundwork we're looking for it, while being flexible enough too to accommodate novelty or innovation. Our informal agreement with each is something we can lean on to give us assurance we have something to go on when our reasons, rules, or social regularities run out. These attitudes have normative import because they guide conceptual change in a free yet less-than-arbitrary way. It's in this whirl of life that the normative takes shape.⁶⁷

I don't quite see how Cavell, or McDowell for that matter, can infer even a moderate informalism from the insufficiency of these other schemes. Formally speaking, as I said, it's a fallacy to derive a positive from a negative. Criterial reasoning *sometimes*—often—comes up short. Does that mean social regularity or rule-based reasoning is *essentially* bankrupt? *Less* relevant in a normative context than attitudes or mutual attunements? Wittgenstein, at least, has given us no reason to think this is the case. To deny this would be like saying just because we can throw the ball as high or as hard as we want in tennis, the game is *essentially* unregulated or that throwing the ball in this way is *more important* than whatever else might be going on in the game!

Cavell and McDowell seem strangely hostile or indifferent to seeing the normative as agonistic, linked with public exchange and with rule-following. There can be no doubt they look to the later Wittgenstein to

fund their claims.⁶⁸ But, again, we need to go to the relevant passages and look at what Wittgenstein actually says or does there. Language *is* compared to a game (cf. PI §§66ff., *supra*). But even if he uses metaphors and analogies, does that mean they must be simple ones? “Must” he be committed *either* to a simple conflation between non-competitive and competitive games *or* to a systematic disjunction between them? Isn’t the whole point of his talk about complex networks of similarities and differences overlapping and crisscrossing, within and across language-games and forms of life, that he wants to avoid all such reductive, weighted schemes?

Putnam himself isn’t too explicit in his criticisms of Cavell or McDowell. His take is still opposed to theirs, being also more in line with the later Wittgenstein’s views. Earlier on, he seems to have been as unsure of Wittgenstein as of Cavell’s interpretation of him.⁶⁹ What he now says fits well, I think, with some of the criticisms of informalism by people like Stroud and Blackburn.⁷⁰ The disagreement, as I see it, is if the bell clear preference for recognitional over cognitive relations in Cavell and McDowell is warranted (= (I1), if it has any real basis in the text of the later Wittgenstein (= (I2) and, finally, if it implies a denial of the universal reach of normative claims (= (I3)).⁷¹ The easy answer is this preference isn’t warranted since it’s not supported by anything Wittgenstein actually says or holds. A deeper problem with Cavell’s and McDowell’s informalism: It’s critically and normatively deficient.

Ad (I1-2) That Wittgenstein's opposed to a systematic weighting between recognitional and cognitive relations is clear from the complex analogy he posits between language-games, family-resemblances, and forms of life. If there aren't any sharp boundaries between these notions, or between competitive and non-competitive games, a simple cut or weighting is precluded. What about the talk of human agreement? Couldn't we say this gives us the right to claim Wittgenstein thinks we have more to go on when our reasons and rules give out? While this isn't wrong-headed per se, more needs to be said. Does "more to go on" mean these informal judgments give us a kind of traction different in kind from our reasons or rules? If so, is that because these attitudes are more immune to error, subversion, criticism somehow?

I don't think a close reading of Wittgenstein authorizes any of these claims.⁷² Agreement (*Übereinstimmung*) isn't more identifiable with mutual attunement (*Einstimmung*) in the sense of attitudes for Wittgenstein than gamers are. Putnam too, or so I would argue, finds this kind of weighting unfortunate.⁷³ For him the talk of mutual attunements, rather than serving as some kind of normative bedrock in our dealings, is meant only to give us *some* sense of what's going on.⁷⁴

Far from being inherently suspect, our rules and criteria are often quite appropriate in our dealings with each other. They enhance our

communicative fluency as it were, playing an unmistakable role in our lives.⁷⁵ It follows it would be fatal to bar reasoning based on criteria or rules from playing any significant role in normative inquiry, if only because it would make us misconstrue normative issues.⁷⁶ A low attitude towards rules is bad because it easily lets the exception become the rule.

Take torture. It may be a stretch to claim the proposition “torture is wrong” is a rule in the sense of being an exceptionless, self-authenticating principle. Still, does that mean we’re forced to acquiesce in an informalist ethics where everything is okay as long as one is “sensitive” or has the right mindset? Isn’t it meaningless to speak of exceptions as if they’re not hedged? What would we say of someone who refuses to consider the idea of tricking the terrorist rather than torturing him; or of using sodium pentothal rather than torture to find out where a bomb is going to go off before many innocent lives are lost? Or of a person who isn’t even scrupulous about whether we need to be *sure* if the person is a terrorist and there’s a bomb that’s going to go off? Even the judgment that a situation is a hopeless dilemma ought to be responsibly hedged by rules. But to think about hedging exceptions is precisely to think in terms of rules.⁷⁷

One gets the impression from reading Cavell and McDowell that attitudes are natively different from rules or procedures. That would be wrong. Attitudes in the sense of values or mutual attunements aren’t

primarily private or personal. I don't *own* an attitude, not in a way essentially different from rules or procedures anyway. Attitudes are on the whole as social and political oriented—public—as rules or procedures. Recognitional relations are as subject to conflict, error, subversion as cognitive relations are.⁷⁸ So they aren't more authentic—real somehow. Besides, rules and principles aren't that clear-cut to begin with. They might be said to be as revisable and capable of change over time as informal attitudes are.⁷⁹ I believe the only sensible lesson one can draw from Putnam's critical reading of the latter Wittgenstein is that formalism vs. informalism is a false dichotomy.

Ad (I3). The commonsense realist is committed to the view that says human interaction can't be reduced to a least common denominator. There's no general rule—or attunement—that could be absolutely binding or have clear overweight in case of conflict. This is one reason why we should be skeptical of both the legalist and perfectionist models. The second is more positive. Unlike both these schemes, Putnam's entitled to a *interactive* view of rules and attitudes. Given the complex analogy between language, reason, and agreement, this can't be confined to a specific game or life-form either.

This is where the results from section 4 come in handy. They help us explain in more positive terms why this kind of complexity is actually enabling, giving us more flexibility and traction. The seeming

lack of definition or clear weighting between attitudes and rules doesn't mean, first of all, that language-games are inherently irrational—mere forms of persuasion. As we've seen, language-games are more than capable of being reasonable or unreasonable (cf. "*what we actually do*"). If we keep in mind they also allow us to differentiate, translate, and entail norms (cf. "*how it's possible to do it*"), there's nothing paralyzing about the entanglement between rules and attitudes. Quite the opposite, Putnam and Wittgenstein give us tools to think about normative exchange on a much larger scale and with more depth and plasticity. There's less a tendency to plead immunity from criticism on this kind of robust fallibilism, so there's more room too for reasonable disagreement. Inquiry is risky and conflict resolution is hard enough as it is without us limiting our choices beforehand by drawing on just one normative resource of our everyday language.⁸⁰

3.6. BEING ONE IN MANY WAYS

I shall be defending what one might call *pragmatic pluralism*, the recognition that it is no accident that in everyday language we employ many different kinds of discourses, discourses subject to different standards and possessing different sorts of applications, with different logical and grammatical features—different “language games” in Wittgenstein’s sense—no accident because it is an illusion that there could be just one sort of language game which could be sufficient for the description of all of reality! (EWO, pp. 21-2)

What would it mean to give a general framing of normative inquiry beyond this point? What we’ve managed to do so far is to set out why there are no real stumbling-blocks to sorting out conflicts over values or norms. I use the disjunctive because values and norms can’t be dichotomized in the old ways. *Perhaps we could minimally agree to call “norms” whatever values are meant to have a wider appeal, i.e. so-called “thin” ethical concepts or values with normative entailments.*⁸¹ *Normative inquiry, we might say, takes place in language and implies some form of triangulation between norms, values, and facts.* Attitudes and rules are heavily involved in this process. Maybe some attitudes or rules turn out on a closer look to be more normative in orientation than others. In some cases they may even be wholly identified with specific norms or values. Even so, there’s no foreseeable way this sorting process can be wholly avoided.

Some would no doubt find this lack of finality disturbing: If there's no generalized way to speak of norms and of reasoned settlement then it's hard to see how one can't speak of rational conviction in the face of conflict. If foretelling how our rules or attitudes will behave remains forever elusive, the philosopher's talk of normative inquiry is useless—where's the fulcrum? We *must* resort to weightings and dichotomies, if only to escape the impression we favor nothing, having no real convictions of our own.

This charge isn't totally unfair, though I would argue invoking prior conviction has its own drawbacks. If we can't posit a sharp dichotomy between ethics and morality, or between morality and law; if, in other words, a global division between societal values (= the "good") and questions of political justice (= the "right") isn't tenable a real confrontation with those who hold differing views *is* unavoidable. To make matters worse, disputed claims will need to be dealt with on a case to case basis. We simply can't assume our liberal scheme is the only one intelligible, cogent or equitable and then calmly go on to show how every other scheme "must" be seriously flawed, incompetent, nonsensical. The workability of a scheme ought be tied to how well it deals with hard cases. These stipulations are only reasonable given our argued conviction a priori schemes are uncalled for, and that "theory" and "praxis" are intertwined. You would think talking about the normative in general terms was hard enough already. It gets worse!

We've learned that normative exchange implies using all the resources of human intelligence. Intelligent inquiry, we could argue, also obeys the critical maxims of Dewey, what Habermasians call 'discourse ethics'. The point is not to block the path of inquiry by preventing the posing of questions and objections, obstructing the formulation of hypotheses and *criticism* of these in turn. This would mean avoiding the relations of hierarchy and dependence. The stress would be upon *experimentation* where possible, and *observation* and *close analysis* of observation where this is not viable.⁸² These are helpful hints, genuine features of normative inquiry. But what's the cash value?

There can be no doubt that by appealing to these and kindred standards we can *often* tell which views are irresponsibly defended. Anyone who has seen real fundamentalists at work, Putnam says, knows the difference between stressing observation and discussion and the repressive and suppressive way of conducting "discussion" characteristic of authoritarian or tyrannical regimes.⁸³ While these criteria allow us to single out the usual suspects (dictatorial regimes, oligarchs, armed prophets, terrorists, etc.), that doesn't mean *our own* liberal convictions have been validated. What we would like to think: If reasoned resolution is hard to achieve with remote cultures like the Aztec, or with Nazis or religious fundamentalists, it gets much easier once the conflict is brought closer to home. Even this, Putnam thinks, may be a little too sanguine.

Some middle ground, certainly, could be found. When intelligently conducted on both sides in the ways laid out, a limited agreement might be reached. There's nothing that says normative conflicts are unsolvable in principle. Sometimes, though, all that can reasonably be achieved is each party pinpoints the reasons for their fundamental *disagreement*. The conflict between Libertarians and Social Democrats, for example, can be seen as a conflict, other things being equal, over the systematic application and weighting of the norms of freedom and equality.⁸⁴ So the parties agree to disagree. When disagreements are less fundamental, both sides may change their views to a greater or smaller extent. This partial adjustment might affect the attitudes one has, or the rules one operates with, as well as the relation between them. If no complete agreement is reached even here, half-way solutions may be found as being more or less acceptable to both parties.⁸⁵

Unfortunately, intelligent discussion of political issues like this is rare. If I were a Social Democrat, say, I wouldn't think it okay to say, all other things being equal, that we can agree to disagree about whether social justice outweighs property rights and just leave it at that. And I suspect the Libertarian would feel the same way. We could value certain intellectual values in each other: Open-mindedness, willingness to consider reasons and arguments, the capacity to accept good criticisms—communicative competence if you will. All the same, both would regard the other as strangely lacking in sensitivity and perception. To be

perfectly honest, Putnam says, there's in each of us "something akin to *contempt*", not *necessarily* for the other's mind nor for him as a person but for "a certain complex of emotions and judgments in the other".⁸⁶ Most people tend to avoid examining with any justice what these cognitive, emotive, and moral attitudes really come down to in their interaction with others.⁸⁷

So we see there's really no common ground, *apart from our actual, intelligent dealings with each other*, that we could possibly appeal to in order to force the issue. To imagine otherwise would be to pretend we're infallible. That the difference between what's mine and what isn't is fixed once and for all, not being in need of adjustment or renegotiation. By wanting to leap ahead and resolve this tension once and for all I merely turn myself into a mouth-piece of solipsism. Anyone familiar with the wider implications of the Private Language Argument (3.2. over) knows just how self-reducing such a stance would be. It amounts to a refusal of the idea of normative *exchange*. The pragmatic pluralist, by contrast, isn't interested in grounding or even in finding good substitutes for ordinary practices. Rather than falling prey to that old temptation, Putnam thinks we should work at clearing away whatever obstacle prevent citizens from making full use of the normative resources they *already* have. No method, no model, no object, no viewpoint can serve as a proxy for concrete inquiry.

A sympathetic reader might agree with all of this and still find this constructive sketch a bit vague. Isn't the denial of any a priori common ground just another way of saying there are no straight answers to be had about anything? How is *that* an argument in favor of the concrete? Show me *one* instance of normative warrant in the face of conflict and I'll be satisfied pragmatic pluralism is our best bet.⁸⁸ If not, the former accusations of incapacity for real commitment are justified.

Again, these aren't vain concerns. Anyone who finds Putnam's thoughts congenial would be wrong to reject them off-hand. They indicate some tensions that remain and some quite worrisome lacunae too. Is Putnam aware of this? Is he willing to own up to it, taking the necessary steps to close the gaps? I'd like to answer both questions in the affirmative, though I would add one caveat: We can't really afford to be sure beyond this point. To further drive the point home, I'll recast these doubts about the clear-spokenness of Putnam's pragmatic pluralism in a more politicized form.

Either you think all relevant conflicts might get resolved in the end or you don't. *Here* at least there's no third. True, Putnam's given us good theoretical and practical reasons for why a full or even a basic decidability of normative claims is and forever remains an elusive goal. He would, I think, even go as far as to question its desirability. A strong defense of pluralism, means embracing the virtues of tolerance and enrichment. That we shouldn't be overly dramatic about the need for

adjudication is a point well taken. Sometimes though the either-or *is* justified. *Either* the policy of the death penalty, say, or abortion or public financing of public elections is warranted and legitimately sanctioned *or* it isn't. You either have incisive grounds for saying progress happens through education or you don't. Either a specific action is justified or it isn't really. We might be wrong of course and later seek to revise or give up our beliefs, reasons, policies or decisions. But at *some* point a reasoned settlement or decision seems inevitable. What then?

The appeal to identity politics only goes so far. There's no getting around the fact that some actions, policies, or practices seriously try our tolerance and our wish to be "enriched". No matter how generous the society, and respectful its citizens, at some point the public use of coercive force is necessary. To refuse to admit this would constitute a failure to come to terms with the vagaries of human nature the real-world politics. Sometimes it *is* necessary to enforce compliance with certain attitudes or rules, or at least to make sure that some attitudes or rules are given more weight than others. The real question is *how* to decide which value or rule or attitude to adopt as the norm in these instances, *who* gets to do it, and for *which* purposes.

What decides, or ought to decide, public policy or social action in the face of conflicts over fundamentals? No political society can afford a high degree of indecision without a slide into violence. Who or what decides in the dispute between the Libertarian and the Social Democrat

over public funding of elections, say? Don't we *have* to speak of the one being right and the other wrong here? Either you press for public funding of elections because you're absolutely convinced a collusion between big money and public decision making makes a mockery of the very idea of popular sovereignty or you'll do everything in your power to prevent this because you think the belief in the freedom from any undue state-intervention outweighs any other consideration. Here we can't speak meaningfully of partial adjustments or temporary deals. Something more than mere personal conviction is needed to resolve this conflict. The majoritarian, at least, has a concrete suggestion as to how this and other normative conflicts might get resolved: By majority vote or opinion.⁸⁹

Liberal and social democratic thinkers have both come to find the majoritarian solution fishy. One reason that has been put forth again and again is that majorities might become corrupt, unaccountable.⁹⁰ This isn't a wholly unfair characterization, but it's hard to see how one can avoid a *de facto* reliance upon actual majorities. How is a constitution ratified? How is it amended? How is a policy or practice deemed constitutional or just? How are laws made? How are minority rights acknowledged and formalized? How are court verdicts reached? Correct procedure must be followed, issues deliberated in the right fora and decisions made, justified and judiciously examined—and reexamined. Sure. We don't necessarily have to be majoritarians to appreciate it's a

fact of political life that majorities are indispensable on *some* level. To concede that majoritarian mechanisms form an integral part of normative exchange obviates a great deal of unnecessary fudging in our philosophy and relieves some of the burden of indecision in a democratic society. Remember, we're fallibilists now so we don't have to agree a partial reliance upon majorities means acquiescing in brute facts.

A division of labor between the representative, or office-holder, and the ordinary citizen needn't be incompatible with a strong commitment to pragmatic pluralism either. Or for that matter to the idea of a participative democracy. A constitution can be more or less participatory, as can the process of legislation, decision making, and constitutional interpretation. Normative arguments can be brought to bear on all levels, including the bureaucratic infrastructure. The key is to ensure accountability on the part of the non-amateur, and not limit beforehand the scope for productive action on the part of the ordinary citizens. To co-opt a phrase from Kant: Action without inquiry is blind, inquiry without decision is empty. Sharing the risk of normative exchange between the professional and the amateur isn't precluded on the fallibilist picture. There's nothing that says a pragmatic pluralist can't accommodate these realities of political existence.

3.7. PUTNAM AND THE POLITICAL

[T]here is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents... There is also an artificial aristocracy, founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents... I think the best remedy is exactly that provided by all our constitutions, to leave to the citizens the free election and separation of the aristoi from the pseudo-aristoi... education would have raised the mass of people to the high ground of moral respectability necessary for their own safety, and to orderly government... (Thomas Jefferson, *Natural Aristocracy*, Letter to John Adams, pp. 266-69).⁹¹

And while saints are engaged in introspection, burly sinners run the world. But when self-hood is perceived to be an active process it is also seen that social modifications are the only means of the creation of changed personalities. Institutions are viewed in their educative effect:—with reference to the types of individuals they foster. The interest in individual moral improvement and the social interest in objective reform of economic and political conditions are identified. And inquiry into the meaning of social arrangements gets definite point and direction... The old-time separation between politics and morals is abolished at its roots (John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, SPP, 468)

It's only now, I believe, that we're in a position to fully appreciate Putnam's original thoughts on normative inquiry and to gauge their relevance in a more civic, democratic setting. Most thinkers today continue to think representation is the signal theme in political theory.⁹² The main contribution of someone like the later Rawls, say, lies in reviewing the relationship between active and non-professional citizens,

applying a robust model of normative reasoning to it. This focus on legitimating or justifying the existence and acts of the government to the governed is a legacy from Hobbes and Locke. On this liberal scheme, normative inquiry is tied to the ongoing project of redeeming representational democracy. Putnam's concerns are different, his true aspirations lying elsewhere. For him the decisiveness of normative inquiry hinges on the relationship between the *philosopher* and ordinary citizens, as well as on the latter's relations to each other. While this would make him more sympathetic to the strain of so-called developmental democracy for sure, his analysis cuts much deeper than that. What follows, I believe, is an unusually balanced view.⁹³

That he accepts a partial division of labor among the philosopher, the representative, and the common citizen is beyond doubt. Otherwise it would be hard to see the relevance of his thoughts on democracy, in particular his Jeffersonian and Deweyan stress on the need for public education. Also, the urgency with which these reflections are put forward means the field of productive action among ordinary citizens is in need of redress:

What he [i.e. Dewey] argued against is the view that the role of the ordinary citizens in a democracy should be confined to voting every so many years on the question of which group of experts to appoint. As his own primary contribution to bringing about a different sort of democracy, a "participatory", or

better a “deliberative” democracy, he focused his efforts on promoting what was then a new conception of education... In a deliberative democracy, learning how to think for oneself, to question, to criticize is fundamental. But thinking for oneself does not exclude—indeed it requires—learning when and where to seek expert knowledge (EWO, p. 105)

Note that a *pragmatic* division of labor between the expert or the professional and the ordinary citizen is in line with a stress on direct participation. Just like in the case of values and norms, a denial of absolute divisions doesn't mean *relative* differences are or need be opposed. Clarity on the possibility, scope, and potential pitfalls of normative inquiry in a socio-political setting is even more desirable though, especially if it helps us keep in mind the true meaning of democracy and so to foster and widen productive action. Far from lacking such focus and resolve, commonsense realism is above about clarifying the role of the ordinary citizen:

I am defending the natural realism or the commonsense realism of the man on the street. I do not think this is a philosophical position; it is rather a form of life. But since philosophers often criticize it, the *defense* and *clarification* of commonsense realism has become a philosophical task⁹⁴

This, I believe, is Putnam's original contribution to the contemporary debate. He's certainly not alone in stressing the need for more participation by ordinary citizens. There's a long line of so-called developmental or social democrats who've tried to do that, with Jefferson and Dewey being the two most prominent American exponents perhaps.⁹⁵ Rather, it's the way Putnam seeks to defend and clarify the role of ordinary citizens in a democratic polity that's new. What Putnam wishes to do is to frame a philosophy of language to criticize wrongful models, supporting a broader understanding of democratic politics.⁹⁶

What does commonsense realism mean in a more political context though? Before we can answer that question we first need to clear up some common misunderstandings. This again means loosening the grip of certain familiar pictures or philosophical ideas that stand in the way, blocking our access. Here, too, Wittgenstein is of great use:

[I am] doing what Wittgenstein did, showing that the so-called philosophical positions are *incoherent*, that they are not theories in the sense that there is a coherent picture here which *could* be right. The *destructive* test of philosophy, as I see it, is to show that exactly the most famous positions are illusions of positions, that these positions are so self-undermining that if they were true, we could not even think their truth (PAD, p. 130)

The last chapter detailed the shortcomings of philosophy invoking sufficiency of reason. I suggested there that representationalism in all its known variants is an indefensible position. But if a *theory* of representation can be neither coherent nor intelligible, then the representationalist paradigm has been decisively undercut in a more *practical* setting too. Not even Kant, who attempted an internalist solution to this problem, was able to save its philosophical respectability.⁹⁷ The reason for this ultimate failure only became clear in this chapter: Ordinary language simply can't be reduced to picturing facts or mirroring values or norms. There's no criterion that can establish an infallible, or even clear, division of labor between them⁹⁸ Add to this the complex and genuinely non-reductive relationship between normative attitudes and rules, and the failure of representationalism is complete.⁹⁹ In my opinion this is the real destructive test of Putnam's commonsense realism.

It's ironic that whereas central movements in mathematics, logic, and science in the last 200 years have made the epistemological version of representationalism seem all but obsolete, its grip on the world of politics has never been stronger. A wide consensus seems to exist that political representation is a given, productive action being better left to the few. This outlook on the relationship between normative inquiry and productive action is perfectly in line with the critique of democracy going back to the days of Plato, Thucydides, and Aristotle,

and with its modern reformulation by Hobbes.¹⁰⁰ The arguments seeking to discredit a more participatory view are too numerous and wide-ranging to deal with here. What they all assume: The ignominy, incompetence, *inconvenience* related to extending the scope of productive action to include ordinary citizens.¹⁰¹

The true originality of Putnam, as I see it, lies in him turning the tables on this whole tradition. He asks the representationalist to justify *her own* assumptions. If this can't be done representationalism is an illusory position in politics, not just in science. Not even this destructive test or clarification is neutral, void of real-life consequences. We might find the insight that a representationalist defense of democracy is incoherent liberating or depressing, all depending on our prior convictions or temperament. There's no reason to assume that such a discovery won't influence our subsequent behavior either. This capacity of conceptual investigation to impact on our beliefs and attitudes to politics needs to be acknowledged. For Putnam, we shouldn't stop there. Responsible philosophizing involves more than internal critique:

[P]hilosophy exposes the kind of nonsense that bewitches the intellect by reducing it to, or unmasking it as, plain nonsense... I see the later Wittgenstein as moving beyond this conception... Now, I do think that a great deal of nonsense has always accompanied philosophy, and that no one can spend a lifetime doing philosophy without *sometimes* falling into speaking nonsense. But I do not accept the... view that the unmasking of nonsense is the entire

business of philosophy of the philosopher (which is not to say that it isn't a necessary *part* of philosophy). What [this] ... view misses is the fact that philosophy does not spring up in a void. Great philosophical movements arise from reflection on life and on the place of humanity in the world. Again and again they have proposed ways of redirecting both individual both individual and social life. This activity... of putting forward and discussing what I call... moral images of the world... seems to me *the* indispensable task of philosophy. Philosophy certainly needs moments of technical argument, and it needs moments of exposing nonsense, but neither of these adds up to anything of lasting value in the absence of moral imagination.¹⁰²

Accepting the full force of commonsense realism means acknowledging there's no water-tight divide between the world of philosophy and that of politics or morality. This is a very real upshot of the failure of non-cognitivism. If there's really no God's Eye-view, no metaphysical dichotomies, then in an important sense clarification *is* action, critical reflection intervention and change. Many Wittgensteinians miss this deeper lesson of his later philosophy. Putnam's saying the sooner the philosopher owns up to his or her worldliness, the better. Taking more responsibility would also allow him or her to come up with positive suggestions for change, serving in an advisory capacity:

[T]he job of the philosopher is to suggest broad principles so that everyone, and not just intellectuals and policy makers, can think about them, discuss them, take them into account (PAD, p. 134)

Being explicit about one's own political commitments, giving up neutral posturing, is the first step towards bringing about a different and hopefully better sort of political society:

That our communities should be democracies follows... from the fact that only in a democracy does everyone have a chance to make his or her contribution to the discussion; and that they should be *social* democracies follows from the fact that the huge inequalities in wealth and power that we permit to exist effectively block the interests and complaints of the most oppressed from serious consideration, and thus prevent any serious attempt at [their] ... solution (EWO, p. 105)

These suggestions are hardly new. Again, it's important to keep an eye on the *quaestio juris*.¹⁰³ With what right do the liberal and social democrat speak? We've already hinted why a straightforward representationalist defense of liberal democracy won't work.¹⁰⁴ What about social democracy; what gives Putnam the right to speak the way he does? I'd like to sketch the following argument (CSR): Given the absence of God's Eye-Views (1); the incoherence of metaphysical dichotomies (2); and a normative commitment to politics as generating and embodying general will or interest (3), it would make more sense to embrace a strongly participatory or interactionist view (4).¹⁰⁵ Much more needs to be said, obviously, for commonsense realism to be fully worked out. But at least we've managed to frame a basic stance that isn't only arguable but also fair.

¹ For a more concise take, see my “Putnam and the Political”, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 37, 7 (2011), 743-57. The Wittgensteinian background isn't discussed there.

² A marking off of the similarities and differences between Putnam, Cavell, and Diamond was done in chapter 1. I'll revisit them throughout this chapter but this time laying the stress, if only for purposes of clarification and polemics, on the differences.

³ Putnam himself uses “normative appraisal” (*The Threefold Chord* (Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 59).

⁴ For methodological remarks of pragmatic pluralism, see chapter 1.2.

⁵ *Reason, Truth, and History* (Cambridge University Press, 1981)(hereafter RTH), p. 200.

⁶ See also McDowell, “Non-Cognitivism and Rule-following”, in *The New Wittgenstein*, A. Crary and R. Read (eds.) (Routledge, 2000), pp. 38ff. for an excellent exposé on non-cognitivism. I'm using the term in a slightly wider sense than McDowell, viz. to include *any* position that would make a global division between the evaluative and the non-evaluative, reserving full rational discussion or objective validity to the latter. On my reading, a Kantian dichotomy between values and norms is as metaphysical or non-cognitivist as the pre-Kantian dichotomy between facts and values. I believe I follow the basic drift of Putnam's argument here (cf. e.g. *The Collapse of the Fact/Value Dichotomy and Other Essays* (Harvard University Press, 2004)(hereafter CFD), p. 4; “For Ethics and Economics without the Dichotomies”, *Review of Political Economy*, 15, 3 (2003)(hereafter EWD), p. 405-6.) See also chapter. 4.5., *infra*.

⁷ Cf. CFD, p. 34; *Realism and Reason* (Cambridge University Press, 1983) (hereafter RAR), pp. 184-5; RTH, p. 106. I'll come back to how Putnam applies this lesson to rule-based reasoning.

⁸ My sense was that the deep lesson Putnam talks about (RAR, p. 185; RTH, p. 111) *can* be applied to *Tractatus*'s own notion of nonsense (*Unsinn*).

⁹ Or perhaps this is wrong. Perhaps the problem is qualitative rather than quantitative. Maybe it resembles the account a philosopher (Arne Næss) once gave of the problem of suffering in a public lecture. If you have a bathtub half-full

with water, say, with 35 degrees Celsius and you add the other half of the same temperature nothing has changed (qualitatively speaking). Suffering is suffering. It doesn't really matter how much or how little, how many or how few. It might be possible to claim that adding subsidiary principles doesn't have to increase the general level or instability. To which we could reply: Indecision is indecision; it does not matter how much or how little, how many or how few. We're still owed an explanation of how these can be upheld.

¹⁰ *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 111-2; 138-40.

¹¹ See also RTH, p. 205: "... we can use the statement 'X is considerate' for many purposes: to evaluate, to describe, to explain, to predict, and so on"; 209-10: "... while there is indeed a difference between the *describing use* of language and the *prescribing use* or the *commending use*, this difference in uses is not a simple function of *vocabulary*."

¹² EWD, pp. 407, 407, 410.

¹³ CFD, p. 57.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Renewing Philosophy* (Harvard University Press, 1992)(hereafter RP), pp. 86-7; *Pragmatism: An Open Question* (Blackwell, 1995)(hereafter POQ), p. 57.

¹⁶ See also RTH, p. 210.

¹⁷ For a discussion of indirection, see chapter 2.5. I believe, although I can't justify it at this point, that all these species of language use involve indecision on some level. Sometimes, for instance, it's hard deciding if someone is using words ironically. Or actively to misdirect or to deceive. Or if someone has understood something correctly, though their words by themselves give us no reason to think otherwise. And so on. It's even conceivable that the other isn't sure which is which, or is flatly wrong.

¹⁸ The later Wittgenstein didn't conflate meaning (*Bedeutung*) with use (*Gebrauch*). No meaning-as-use theory is put forth. What he actually says is: For a *large* class (*große Klasse*) of cases—though not for all (*wenn auch nicht für alle Fälle*)—in which we make use (*Benützen*) of the word "meaning" it can be defined or explained (*erklären*) thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language (*PI*

§43). See also RTH, pp. 3, 11, 18, 52, 138, 202, 205 in which the later Wittgenstein is credited for being the first to grasp the enormous significance of the point that the look, meaning, or “feel” of the name is neither necessary nor sufficient to establish its use.

¹⁹ This model of language and/or of mind as a reckoning machine dates back to the time of Hobbes (*Words and Life* (Harvard University Press, 1994)(hereafter WL), p. 391.

²⁰ CFD, p. 32.

²¹ WL 391-400. Even so-called embodied AI founders on context and relevance. See also Searle, “Can Computers Think?”, in *Analytic Philosophy*, A. P. Martinich & D. Sosa (eds.) (Blackwell, 2001), pp. 277-283, and Kelly and Dreyfus’s piece in *The New York Times* (<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/28/watson-still-cant-think/>).

²² Cf. “Pragmatism and Non-Scientific Knowledge”, in *Hilary Putnam: Pragmatism and Realism*, J. Conant & U. M. Zeglen (eds.) (Routledge, 2001)(hereafter PNK), p. 16; RTH, pp. 110-2, 215. Although Putnam seems to have identified the later Wittgenstein as a consensualist at the time of writing RTH, he’s rejected this view (see also chapter 1.1.). See also chapter 3.5., *infra*.

²³ Neither Wittgenstein nor Putnam would want to question all five claims or aspects of rational sufficiency (cf. (C1-5), chapter 2.2; see also 3.7., *infra*). The minimum requirement, I argued, is coherence (C3). For Wittgenstein, the principle of non-contradiction is far from arbitrary. Contradiction isn’t allowed in our simple language-games, for example. Its persistence is legitimate since it corresponds to a deep need (RFM, I, §74, pp. 64-5; part IV, §57, pp. 254-5).

²⁴ RTH, pp. 119-21. We saw Putnam distinguishes between relativism and solipsism. Here he seems to be saying there’s only a difference in degree between “I-relativism” (solipsism) and “we-relativism” (cultural relativism). He even says sometimes there’s talk about a linguistic form of relativism that makes truth and justification (and perhaps also logic) relative to any specific discourse (a relativism of language-games, in other words). I’ll explore these three forms now.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ PNK, p. 16.

²⁸ *Ibid.* See also chapter 2.2.

²⁹ RTH, p. 114.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³¹ The Private Language Argument proper begins at §258 in the *Philosophical Investigations* and runs for well over a 100 paragraphs. I'm less interested in the uses of this argument in an epistemological setting or in philosophy of mind. Enough ink has been spilled on the ramifications this has vis-à-vis the uniqueness or privacy of sensation, memory, meaning, etc. (For Putnam's stab at these aspects of the argument, highly related as they are to the similitude theory dealt with in chapter 1, see RTH, pp. 1ff. ("Brains in a Vat")(esp. pp. 3, 20-1) & also pp. 62, 66-71, 74.) What I find ultimately most rewarding about Putnam's gloss on this argument is he makes it tangential to questions of meaning in an communicative or normative way. It's this use that sanctions him to speak of the Private Language Argument as "an excellent argument against relativism in general" (*ibid.*, p. 122), extending it to include the solipsism of the we. This use of the Private Language Argument is, I believe, highly original (*ibid.*, p. 121).

³² RTH, p. 122.

³³ RTH, p. 124.

³⁴ For a full-length discussion, see chapter. 4.2.

³⁵ See also chapter 2.1., *supra*.

³⁶ See also RAR, pp. 238-40.

³⁷ Cf. EWD, pp. 407-8.

³⁸ Chapter 4.6., *infra*.

³⁹ More on this in the next chapter.

⁴⁰ This is Habermas objection to Putnam (see chapter 4.6. *infra*).

⁴¹ "Another, still more respectable appeal is to those who fear that the alternative to cultural relativism is cultural imperialism. But recognizing that our judgments claim objective validity and recognizing that they are shaped by a particular culture and by a particular problematic situation are not incompatible. And this is true of scientific questions as well as ethical ones" (CFD, p. 45).

⁴² See chapter 1.2.

⁴³ Cf. PNK, p. 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ RP, p. 170; POQ, pp. 32-3. See also chapter 1.1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ RP, p. 170.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 170, 172-3. Putnam is referring to OC §605.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* In other words, what Wittgenstein's trying to avoid is a metaphysical emphasis on criterial reasoning. Yet, what about the *cadence* of §610? Isn't there a note of distaste implied in the passage about calling one other a fool and a heretic in the face of conflicting views? (*ibid.*, pp. 172-3) One way to parse this, a very convincing way in my opinion, is to say Wittgenstein's trying to do two things at the same time. One is he wanted to disabuse us of our ethnocentric, narcissistic tendency to look down on widely divergent language games as simply stupid or ignorant forms of our own and so make us realize there are fewer language games than we think that we ought to combat. Wittgenstein, like Mendelssohn and Putnam, looks at plurality in an even more favorable light than this: As something enriching, or as something it would be misguided or dangerous to limit too much. The other thing he's trying to do is point out that when we *do* want to combat other views, no real headway is made by slogans alone (*ibid.*, p. 173).

⁵² RP, pp. 174-7.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 178-9.

⁵⁴ WL, p. 191.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 190-1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁶⁰ Cf. "Levinas and Judaism", in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, S. Critchley & R. Bernasconi (eds.) (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 58, n. 8. See also chapter 1.4., *supra*.

⁶¹ I take Cavell as paradigmatic for contemporary perfectionism. Despite his staunch opposition to legalism, he continues to think of politics mainly in terms of (re)presentational devices (see e.g. *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome: The Constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism* (University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. xxvi, xxx-xxxii, 1-2, 4, 9-11, 22, 24-25, 50-3, 112, 125). The style and vocabulary might be very different ('voice', 'representativeness', 'responsiveness', 'attitude', and so on). The basic import is essentially the same. He even seems to have kept the old 'transcendental pretense', going back to Rousseau and Kant, that if I only dig deep enough in myself I'll discover I can derive or represent human nature or the valid form of political society (see also Robert Solomon, *Continental Philosophy Since 1750: The Rise and Fall of the Self* (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 1-2). See also Putnam on Cavell note 75 *infra*.

⁶² I may be wrong in ascribing a representationalist stance to Cavell. Then again, he doesn't give us much to go on if we're looking for a critical treatment of representationalist semantics, or even a clear distancing act. Putnam is different I think. He follows the later Wittgenstein (and as I would argue the early Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard too) in questioning all versions of representationalism, as well as its underlying rationale (see also chapter 2 over). This makes the later Wittgenstein into one of the most powerful critics of Kant's transcendental pretense (see also Solomon (1998), pp. 146-51). More on this, *infra*.

⁶³ For the term, see Robert Brandom, *Making it Explicit* (Harvard University Press, 1994).

⁶⁴ See also Brandom's discussion of regularism (1994), pp. 26-30. He mainly has social regularity theories (John Haugeland, *et alii*) in mind which make the community of assessors incorrigible (*ibid.*, pp. 34, 36-7; 658, n. 44; 659, n. 47).

⁶⁵ See also Brandom for this term (1994), pp. 18-26. This is a very influential strain of Wittgenstein interpretation and includes people like Baker & Hacker, Kripke, Mulhall, Wright, *et alii*.

⁶⁶ "Rules, Attunement, and 'Applying Words to the World': The Struggle to

Understand Wittgenstein's Vision of Language", in *The Legacy of Wittgenstein: Pragmatism or Deconstruction?*, L. Nagl & C. Mouffe (eds.) (Frankfurt Am Main, 2001)(hereafter RAA), pp. 17-22. I think it's wrong to accuse either Putnam or the later Wittgenstein, as Christopher Norris does, of a pernicious and self-refuting form of moral relativism (*Hilary Putnam: Realism, Reason, and the Uses of Uncertainty*: (2002), pp. 71-2, 74, 77-9, 81, 83, 85-7, 89-91, 93, 96-100). Norris thinks of the later Putnam and Wittgenstein as beholden to a criterial, consensualist notion of normativity (= M1). Both explicitly *deny* such a notion is coherent. They have arguments too—The Private Language Argument to name one—to show why this is so. Norris believes neither thinker can fund a view of normativity or truth that transcend the normal or the status quo (= M2). Putnam has just shown us that normativity is irreducible to both. Norris can't claim ignorance either because RAA was published the year before his book on Putnam came out. But even if it had come out after, or if Norris didn't have access to it at the time he finished it, it's hard to see how he can *reasonably* construe either Putnam or the later Wittgenstein according to M1-M2. Even at the time of writing RTH, Putnam entertained doubts of taking the later Wittgenstein as a straightforward criterialist (pp. 108-13).

⁶⁷ This, I believe, is a fair picture of Cavell and McDowell. See n. 61 & 62 on Cavell above. For McDowell, see e.g. *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 50-73. 'Disposition', 'recognition', 'sensitivity', 'state', 'feeling', 'responsiveness', 'reaction', 'seeing' are all notions closely identified with virtue and morality for McDowell. These normative attitudes are systematically juxtaposed to reasons and rules that are seen as either wholly extrinsic to, or implicitly opposed to, or at least of secondary importance to the former. Again, the later Wittgenstein is invoked in support. This isn't to say that McDowell denies the relevance of normative evaluation. But the ideal is always the unfettered functioning of cultivated attitudes in an individual, and so a complete *absence* of different options, conflicts, or disagreements. This may work for some people most of the time or for most people at least some of the time, but I doubt if the perfectionism McDowell has in mind here is a workable model for the political which after all, minimally, ought to be about what works for most people most of the time. See also chapter 1.1.

⁶⁸ In an earlier work Cavell even says rule-guided reasoning has *nothing* to do with

morality (and I take it, with politics as well)(*The Claim of Reason*, new edition (Oxford University Press, 1999), chapter XI (“Rules and Reasons”), esp. pp. 298-9; 304; 307ff.

⁶⁹ See e.g. RTH, p. 110, n. 3.

⁷⁰ See Blackburn, “Reply: Rule-following and Moral Realism, in *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule*, S. H. Holtzman & C. M. Leich (eds.), (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 163-87 (on McDowell); Stroud, “Reasonable Claims: Cavell and the Tradition”, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 77, 11 (November, 1980), pp. 731-44. The following is a paraphrase and extrapolation of this kind of critique.

⁷¹ (I3) can be squared off against transitive normativity in the following way. Either it means attunements, or values, or norms might have a wider reach than a specific society or group (= TN1). Or the bare possibility is admitted to but it’s implied nevertheless there can no real or reasonable disagreement between different societies or groups holding the same attunements, or values, or norms if their correct status or application is in question (= TN2a). Or if they hold conflicting ones (= TN2b). I’m inclined to give Cavell and McDowell the most charitable reading. Let me make the following wager: I believe that a close reading of their works will show not only that they’re committed to TN1, but also that their positions are, *mutatis mutandis*, capable of accommodating reasonable disagreement that cuts across questions of status or application (contra TN2a). The real rub is TN2b. Blackburn and Stroud wobble between these three in their criticism. I’m only interested in their critiques insofar as far they impinge on this last.

⁷² See also 3.4. over.

⁷³ “Stanley Cavell... does more justice to the subtlety and originality of Wittgenstein than the “orthodox” view” (RAA, p, 9); “But I am troubled by his [Affeldt’s] concluding remark (23) that “if there is a ground of intelligibility, then I am that ground. But picturing ground as given, I may not be.” Perhaps Cavell too sounds at times as if he were saying that we, or each of us individually, were a “ground”; but the metaphor is too easily as accepting (and providing an answer) to the question “What is the foundation?””(ibid., p. 21)(see also chapter, *supra*). In a later work, and partly in response to Stroud’s criticisms of the *Claim to Reason*, Cavell avows that despite wanting to draw attention to a dimension that places “tremendous

burdens on personal relationships” he isn’t claiming a general solution that’ll allow us to avoid the threat of skepticism (1991), pp. 2, 35. See also Espen Hammer, *Stanley Cavell: Skepticism, Subjectivity, and the Ordinary* (Blackwell, 2002), pp. 57, 119-47. The real question, as I see it, is if Cavell or McDowell admits (TN2b) or give us any reasons or resources to grapple with it.

⁷⁴ RAA, pp. 17-22.

⁷⁵ We would, I think, look in vain for this kind of urging in either Cavell or McDowell.

⁷⁶ See *Realism with a Human Face* (Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 193-200.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 193-4.

⁷⁸ Rules can conflict? So can values. Or attitudes for that matter. Or rules *and* attitudes (cf. also *ibid.*, p. 193).

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*; WL, pp. 175-6; RTH, pp. x-xi; 67-8, 83-4.

⁸⁰ *Ethics without Ontology* (Harvard University Press, 2005)(hereafter EWO), p. 10; RAA, pp. 17-22.

⁸¹ Richard Bernstein makes a similar point when he says Putnam doesn’t make a *systematic* cut between “values” and “norms” (“The Pragmatic Turn: The Entanglement of Fact and Value, in *Hilary Putnam*, Ben-Menahem (ed.) (Cambridge University Press, 2005), n. 4, p. 264). This is by far the best treatment of Putnam’s views on normative reasoning I’ve come across. If my take ultimately is more laid-back than his (cf. esp. pp. 263-4), it’s because I think the philosopher, paradoxically, can’t avoid being a little “abstract” in order to be concrete (see *infra*). It’s the unconvincing nature of systematic distinctions, I believe, which makes it all but impossible for the philosopher to prejudge concrete matters in an a priori way. This inability prevents us from claiming absolute neutrality for our views. Interestingly, it’s this double inability, both of which are linked with Putnam’s denial of criterial rationality, that enables real contestability and criticizability across the board (see also *infra*).

⁸² PNK, pp. 21-2.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ RTH, p. 164.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-5.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁸⁸ Cf. Bernstein (2005), pp. 263-4.

⁸⁹ This is essentially Locke's approach (see chapter 2.3, *supra*).

⁹⁰ This is a fear that became pronounced after liberalism achieved victory over the old 'total powers' of the state (absolute monarchy). The worry was the rising power of the *demos*. Madison, de Tocqueville and J.S. Mill were all concerned about the new dangers to liberty posed by majority rule, especially how this could lead to collective action against certain strategic minorities (David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Stanford University Press, 1987), pp. 193-4). I believe this fear, and the stress on the need for adequate representation, can be traced back to Plato (see e.g. the virtue of wisdom as knowledge of the whole in *the Republic*).

⁹¹ I've taken this excerpt from the anthology *Social and Political Philosophy: Readings from Plato to Gandhi*, J. Somerville, & E. Santoni, E. (eds.) (Random House, Inc., 1963)(hereafter SPP).

⁹² Seeing political representation as a *sine qua non* is a legacy of Classical liberalism (cf. Held's model of 'protective democracy' (1987), pp. 36ff.). I've tried to make a case for representationalism as being a dominant trend of Modern social and political philosophy as a whole. Both legalist and perfectionist philosophers draw upon representational devices, either in the form of rules or of attitudes, as the prime means of thinking about and legitimating morally and politically relevant words and deeds (see e.g. section 3.5., *supra*)(cf. also Held (1987), chs. 5-9). Raymond Geuss, *Outside Ethics* (Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 11ff. even has a hard time seeing a real alternative to the liberalist vision of politics.

⁹³ 'Developmental democracy' is Held's term for a way of modeling democracy that stresses the indispensable role of ordinary citizens in deliberation and decision making and the minimal socio-economical preconditions for such a participation. The main point of such direct involvement is to grow and enhance individual capacities and functioning (1987), pp. 78, 102). Developmental democracy, it's to be noted, is different from 'direct democracy' which doesn't recognize any socio-economic or political division of labor as real or legitimate (*ibid.*, pp. 136-7). The

social or developmental democrat differs from both the liberal or protective democrat and the socialist or the communist. She opposes both a principal division of labor as well as the denial of any legitimate division, favoring relative and renegotiable distinctions instead. This kind of fallibilism, and the high degree of conceptual revision it allows for, doesn't cohere well with ready-made philosophical schemes. So it isn't really a model at all, I would claim.

⁹⁴ "Philosophy should not be just an Academic Discipline: A Dialogue with Hilary Putnam" (hereafter PAD), *Common Knowledge*, 11, 1 (2005), p. 129).

⁹⁵ Cf. Held (1987), chs. 3 & 4.

⁹⁶ Cf. CFD, p. 64.

⁹⁷ For the failure of Classical Representationalism, see chapter chapter 2.3 over. For Kant's rescue-attempt, see chapter 2.4. For the exposure of Kant's internalist version of representationalism as incoherent, see 2.5. For a summary discussion of representationalism as incoherent, see ch. 2.7.

⁹⁸ See section 3.3. above.

⁹⁹ See section 3.5. above.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. n. 311-3, *supra*.

¹⁰¹ See also Held (1987), ch. 1, pp. 28ff. The focus on normative evaluation as embracing *more* than representational devices is original with the developmental and direct democratic strain. One looks in vain for a proper *philosophical justification* of this view. (We noted in the last chapter that the secondary literature ignores Kant's seminal attempt to question and justify representationalism (chapter 2.4. over). One way of putting it: Putnam's offers a destructive test of representationalism as a whole, giving positive language philosophical support to a different kind of thinking.

¹⁰² "Reply to Conant", *Philosophical Topics*, 20, 1 (1992), 376-7.

¹⁰³ Held (1987) offers an excellent survey of the different ways of modeling democracy from Athens onward. I find it strange though, given the high conceptual and theoretical awareness he shows, that the question of a proper philosophical justification of the different democratic models is virtually absent. *Is* representation possible? If so, *how* can we show and justify this possibility? Formal-deductively? Conceptually? Semantically? Pragmatically? Not at all? These questions are never

raised by Held. This makes him miss out not only on Kant's seminal contributions to representational democracy (see chapter 2.4. *supra*), but also bypass how a non-representational view is also in need of proper justification.

¹⁰⁴ This doesn't exclude a non-representationalist defense of course. I'll return to this option in chapter 5.

¹⁰⁵ Few philosophers or political theorists would deny the reality of politics. Or say it's about the generation and embodiment of particular or vested interest at the expense of general interest (what ought to hold for most people, most of the time). The real battle is over the extent and shape of active citizenship, as well as the philosophical justification of it. Here a relative cut between restrictive and liberal views is helpful. This is a distinction that cuts across representationalism and non-representationalism, legalism and perfectionism, liberalism and its critics alike. A perfectionist needn't be committed to a liberal view of active citizenship just because he opposes the legalist's preference for formal procedures or rules for instance. Similarly, one legalist may operate with a more restrictive view than another. Also, one restrictive view might be less justified than another on philosophical grounds. We've argued that, on the whole, a more restrictive view lacks philosophical credentials. I can't see that anyone has achieved this either before or after Putnam.