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The Emancipative Theory of Jürgen Habermas and Metaphysics

by
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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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Preface

George F. McLean

Philosophy, along with modern humanity as a whole, stands at a critical juncture. As the sense of the person emerges ever more strongly in contemporary consciousness, rationalist ideologies inherited from the last century appear increasingly to be not only insufficient, but destructive. Fascism was defeated militarily; communism has collapsed under the weight of the deadening inertia it imposed from the center. Correspondingly, the movement of freedom has spread on all levels, first internationally as nations were emancipated from colonialism, then nationally as prejudices against minorities were transformed into a new pluralism, and now at the center of the family as equality and participation are ever more valued.

Throughout this recent trajectory of human history philosophers have been at work. Some have looked historically to the past simply to discover resources of the human mind without relating them to the struggles of contemporary life. Others have simply reworked old rationalisms in incremental attempts to make them more rigorous or inclusive in the vain hope that they might work after all; defeated by recent events these philosophers are now in a state of considerable disarray.

Others, however, have attempted to learn creatively from past weaknesses and to open new paths for the progress of peoples. It is to these pioneers of the human spirit that others look in order to understand better the dynamics of the breadth of the human experience, to identify its dynamics and to interpret its direction. In recent decades, Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas have served richly in this role. Their works have reflected upon the various components of the contemporary intellectual scene from psychology and social theory to language and symbols. To follow the dynamics of their thought is to follow the search of contemporary society for new personal and communitary awareness.

The present work by Robert Badillo brings impressive new resources to this search for human emancipation and opens metaphysical dimensions which deepen and vastly enrich the human project of our times. By choosing Jürgen Habermas as his point of departure, the author enters swiftly and surely into the juncture between the social sciences and philosophical reflection. First, he situates the work of Habermas within the context of the contemporary effort to establish a mode of understanding which avoids both objectivism and relativism. The following three chapters analyze basic themes in the thought of Jürgen Habermas: first, the theory of interests in order to situate the search for emancipation as the dynamic center of the thrust toward human fulfillment; second, the theory of universal pragmatics as the foundational framework of Habermas' theory of communicative action in order to establish a methodology for emancipation in terms of the contemporary focus upon human interaction and communication; and finally, the theory of discourse ethics in its attempt to provide a framework for adjudicating proposed norms with a view toward uncovering latent hypostatizations. Together, these chapters state with unique clarity and force the present state of the anthropological search for personal and communitary realization in the dynamic interchange of contemporary life.

What is truly exceptional about this work, however, is that Dr. Badillo does not leave the issue *there*; his concerns are deeper still and their ramifications are all embracing. Where others would be satisfied to speak simply of communication and open discourse, this work does not stop at the form or structure of communication but asks about the goal toward which human life is directed. Beyond techniques of communication as something one does, he looks for the basis of

communication in what one is and how one is related to others. Fundamentally, this is the question of being, understood as personal identity, intercommunication with others and mutual concern.

To understand this the work takes the extra step of adding to the structure of communication issues of meaning and truth, and to the social process of emancipation issues of the nature of community and goodness. This has been the work of metaphysics in its long and recurring trajectory beginning with the ancient Greek tradition; the central concern of the present work is to show how this can develop in our day.

Dr. Badillo approaches these issues with care and competency. He investigates the work of Habermas in order to identify the precise points at which *it comes to*--without entering upon--metaphysical reflection, and how such deepening of thought would not be inimicable, but an important contribution, to the project Habermas has undertaken.

The author then turns to the development of an appropriate metaphysical methodology for the task at hand. The study identifies the rich metaphysical resources which can contribute to a search for human communication that will be truly emancipative of the person in community. One is the classical tradition as it evolves from Dr. Badillo's earlier work on Parmenides, through the classical Platonic and Aristotelian traditions.

Another resource is a rich sensibility to the Christian context of subsequent thought, with specific regard to its Trinitarian conception of divine life. Seen as the source and goal of human life, and hence as the key to its deepest nature, this has encouraged people to think spontaneously in terms of being as open, creative and communicative; of truth in terms of justice; and of life as the fruit, not of conflict and violence, but of communion and benevolence. Without recusing the demands of rigorous philosophical discourse, by taking hermeneutic account of the Christian horizon, Dr. Badillo directs attention to the distinctive insights which characterize that philosophical tradition with its eminently realist, metaphysical, and communicative dimensions. In the rationalist Eurocentric context of modern philosophy such hermeneutic sensibility to cultural contexts had long been passed over, and with it the awareness of the proper contributions to be made to and by philosophy in the various cultural regions East and West, North and South. This author's work is among the first to explore seriously and systemically the significance of this Christian context for the development of metaphysics.

It would be equally mistaken, however, to suppose that this metaphysical insight--or its theological derivative--could be worked out independently of the search for human fulfillment, i.e., for emancipation. It is here that Dr. Badillo takes his most dramatic step. To contribute to the development of metaphysics in our day, he positions himself equally between, on the one hand, Habermas' analysis of the present generalized thrust of humanity toward the dissolution of disequilibria through communication and emancipation and, on the other hand, the implication of a Christian culture for a sense of unity constituted in communication and concern. Like a tuning fork vibrating between these two powerful forces, the one human and the other divine, Dr. Badillo gives new voice to the deep meaning of being as *emancipative* and *communicative*.

Focusing upon the transcendental properties of being, he illustrates the progress which can be made in metaphysics when goodness is seen as proclaimed in the irrepressible human thrust for emancipation in a way that moves beyond a purely "enlightened" sense of self-interested justice to a creative and life-giving love and concern; when truth is seen as reflected in the human search for just and equal communication which echoes the ideal Trinitarian speech situation and is applied in practical questions through a nonformalist conception of ethical discourse; and when unity is seen as active in the human search to build community after the dialogical-communitary image of the Trinity rather than the monological, solitary intelligence "the *solus ipse*" of traditional

metaphysics. Such a metaphysics is not limited to the model of the conservation of material energy and is without the impediment of self-seeking interest; it echoes instead a cultural tradition marked by self-sacrifice in empathetic service to others.

In doing this Robert Badillo has opened the way for an emancipation theory enriched by an awareness of the origin and goal, and hence the deepest nature, of human life. In so doing he shows how metaphysics can progress in our day.

It is no exaggeration then to say that this work marks a new beginning for philosophy. It integrates at once both what has been learned and passed down from the past (tradition or *tradita*) and the ongoing search for emancipation, both social theory and metaphysics, both the human and the divine. It is an example of what metaphysics can be when it transforms Aristotle's "life divine" into creative love and learns in its human image from the universal contemporary search for authentic emancipation.

Introduction

Robert P. Badillo

Habermas' argument exhibits some striking parallels with the one that Socrates develops in the *Phaedrus* just as Habermas' line of argument leads him to recognize the reciprocal relation between ideal speech ... and an ideal form of life, so the primary practical problem for Socrates becomes one of constructing or reconstructing a polis in which such ideal speech can be realized.

Richard J. Bernstein, *Restructuring*, 1976

Though Jürgen Habermas does not develop the metaphysical themes latent in his own work, in articulating a model of communicating subjects for the exercise of the human emancipatory potential, he opens a space within the context of contemporary discourse which points toward the further reaches of his own philosophical compass, i.e., toward metaphysical reflection, in a manner that mutually enriches both Habermas' proposals and traditional metaphysical notions. This study will accordingly argue that Habermas' philosophy of emancipation may be viewed as a new optic for elaborating the notion of being as *esse*. Conversely, it will also indicate the manner in which metaphysics may be viewed as providing Habermas' emancipative/communicative model with an existentialist context that serves to mitigate the formalism with which his own model is affected.^[1]^[1]

This proposed analysis of the relationship between Habermas' philosophy of emancipation and classical metaphysics will consider a number of philosophically significant issues. For one, it will attempt to deal critically with the issue of the limits of philosophical formalism as instantiated in Habermas' emancipatory/ communicative model. This study will also treat the issue of the distinction of the physical sciences from the human sciences within a non-reductionist, i.e., non-physicalist framework. Such a clarification is fundamental to this study's attempt to indicate the sense in which the notion of *esse* comes to be enriched when viewed from the perspective of Habermas' communicative proposal. Still another issue centers on the conception of transcendent ground that may be derived when considering the notion of being as *unum* from Habermas' dialogical paradigm versus the traditional monological framework. In addition to considering these issues, this study provides an introductory exposition of Habermas' major theories, viz., cognitive interests, universal pragmatics and discourse ethics, and reviews the fundamental features of the classical model of existential metaphysics.

This said, the first chapter endeavors to provide the needed context within the topology of the postmodernist view of Reason for situating Habermas' alternative, theoretical proposal and for further clarifying the intended contribution of this study. The second chapter examines the master lines of Habermas' theory of cognitive interests with a view toward distinguishing the various sciences in function of their object, method and constitutive "interest," an examination which provides the requisite setting for arguing in favor of the primacy of the emancipatory interest that emerges as a distinctive property of communicating subjects. This involves addressing the manner in which both the technical interest of the empirical-analytic sciences and the practical interest of the historical-hermeneutic sciences may be understood as proceeding in function of the emancipatory interest of the critical sciences. The next two chapters concentrate on articulating the communicative dimension of community beings. Accordingly, the third chapter develops the master lines of Habermas' theory of universal pragmatics as representing his methodological

framework for emancipatory critique. However, this chapter restricts itself to a consideration of the question of the adequacy of Habermas' discourse theory of truth insofar as a logic of theoretical discourse is concerned. The fourth chapter then reviews Habermas' discourse ethics with the aim of considering the question of the adequacy of his principle of universalization insofar as a logic of practical discourse is concerned. Once the significant elements of Habermas' philosophy of emancipation have been critically considered, the fifth chapter pursues the sense in which Habermas' contribution points beyond itself, viz., toward metaphysical reflection in a manner having crucial consequences for both the traditional notion of *esse* and for Habermas' own communicative model. This will be followed by closing remarks which will bring this study to a conclusion.

The division of chapters is thus as follows: (I) The Objectivist/Relativist Dichotomy: The Habermasian Alternative; (II) The Theory of Cognitive Interests: Primacy of the Emancipatory Interest; (III) The Theory of Universal Pragmatics: The Methodological Framework; (IV) The Limits of Discourse Ethics: A Model of Communicating Subjects; and (V) Habermas' Philosophy of Emancipation and Metaphysics. [\[ii\]](#)[ii]

Chapter I

The Objectivist/Relativist Dichotomy: The Habermasian Alternative

In a major work, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*,^{[i][i]} Richard J. Bernstein examines in a characteristically lucid manner the vital direction of mainstream contemporary philosophy, which he sees, on the one hand, as consisting in a *move from* the fallibility of the so-called "myth of the given," characteristic of objectivism, and from the paradoxes of the so-called "myth of the framework," characteristic of relativism,^{[ii][ii]} on the other, *toward* "the practical task of furthering the type of solidarity, participation, and mutual recognition that is founded in dialogical communities."^{[iii][iii]} In a word Bernstein's work reflects an attempt to analyze a *new* understanding of rationality that is emerging in what has been labeled "post-epistemological philosophy," a species of "post-modernist thought," which turns from a preoccupation with securing ultimate foundations for knowledge toward a consideration of practical questions of a moral, social and political sort.

The importance of Bernstein's analysis consists in putting its "finger on the vital pulse of contemporary intellectual life"^{[iv][iv]} by raising the question of whether there are any theoretical universals, practical norms, and/or evaluative standards which the human mind may apprehend beyond purely local contexts? Indeed, Bernstein's criticism of the classic dichotomy between objectivism and relativism and of his proposed alternative represents, philosophically speaking, a dominant orientation of the current philosophical consciousness and, as such, offers an excellent context from which to situate the work of Jürgen Habermas. What follows, then, is (A) a reconstruction of Bernstein's argument, including his practical proposal with respect to the stated dichotomy. From this context (B) the philosophy of emancipation, specifically the theory of communicative action, of Jürgen Habermas^{[v][v]} will be introduced as a theoretical alternative to Bernstein's position. This will provide a framework for clarifying (C) the projected contribution of this study.

Bernstein's Practical Alternative

Bernstein's argument proceeds in three phases: (1) a clarification both of the terms of the dichotomy and of the vital existential concern that lies at the root of Cartesian foundationalism; (2) a pro-posed dissolution of the objectivist/relativist dichotomy by means of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics as a successor-discipline to modern foundationalist epistemology, beginning with the recovery of the hermeneutical dimension in the natural and social sciences; and (3) Bernstein's proposed correction of certain limitations of philosophical hermeneutics by means of *praxis*, a mode of practical rationality signified by the *beyond* in the expression "beyond objectivism and relativism."

The first phase of Bernstein's analysis consists in an elucidation of the terms of the dichotomy. With respect to the first term, he states,

By "objectivism," [or the "myth of the given"] I mean the basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness or rightness. . . . Objectivism is closely related to foundationalism and the search for an Archimedean point. The objectivist maintains that unless we ground

philosophy, knowledge, or language in a rigorous manner we cannot avoid radical skepticism.[\[vi\]](#)[\[vi\]](#)

"Objectivism," as Bernstein uses it here, covers both the traditional notion of "objectivism," viz., "the claim that there is a world of objective reality that exists independently of us and that has a determinate nature that we can know";[\[vii\]](#)[\[vii\]](#) and the modern notion of "foundationalism," viz., "the conviction that the philosopher's quest is to search for an Archimedean point upon which we can ground our knowledge."[\[viii\]](#)[\[viii\]](#)

This objectivist orientation, then, encompasses the dominant Western philosophical traditions both classical, including the metaphysical realism represented by Platonism and Aristotelianism; and modern, including the epistemological foundationalism represented by continental rationalism, British empiricism, German transcendentalism/idealism, logical positivism, analytic philosophy, and phenomenology. The dichotomy then is no longer between a version of realism and/or one or another version of foundationalism, say between Aristotelianism and logical positivism, but, rather, between any objectivist position, following Bernstein's usage, that claims--with some degree of certainty--to comprehend what-is *sub ratione aeternitatus* and relativism itself.[\[ix\]](#)[\[ix\]](#)

With respect to the second term, Bernstein clarifies,

In its strongest form, relativism [or the "myth of the framework"] is the basic conviction that when we turn to the examination of those concepts that philosophers have taken to be the most fundamental--whether it is the concept of rationality, truth, reality, right, the good, or norms--we are forced to recognize that in the final analysis all such concepts must be understood as relative to a specific conceptual scheme, theoretical framework, paradigm, form of life, a society, or culture. Since the relativist believes that there is (or can be) a nonreducible plurality of such conceptual schemes, he or she challenges the claim that these concepts can have a determinate and univocal significance.[\[x\]](#)[\[x\]](#)

Before moving to a dissolution of the perennial dichotomy, Bernstein acknowledges that the dichotomy is itself grounded and animated, particularly as formulated in modernity, by the Cartesian quest for ultimate foundations. Far from consisting in a trivial pursuit, it underscores a vital existential concern expressed in a radical "Either/ Or": "*Either* there is some support for our being, a fixed foundation for our knowledge, *or* we cannot escape the forces of darkness that envelop us with madness, with intellectual and moral chaos."[\[xi\]](#)[\[xi\]](#) However, given the critique of this dichotomy by philosophical hermeneutics, Bernstein argues against its viability, contending that: "We need to *exorcize* the Cartesian Anxiety and liberate ourselves from its seductive appeal."[\[xii\]](#)[\[xii\]](#)

The second phase of the argument turns to certain developments in the philosophies of science and of the social sciences, both of which raise, though independently, serious questions concerning the efficacy of the rationality model inherent in Cartesian foundationalism, while recovering a hermeneutical understanding of these sciences that, purportedly, render a more accurate description of the actual practice of natural and social scientists.[\[xiii\]](#)[\[xiii\]](#) In this respect Bernstein examines studies in the philosophy of science by authors such as Thomas Kuhn[\[xiv\]](#)[\[xiv\]](#) in order to show how his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*[\[xv\]](#)[\[xv\]](#) may be read as a work that implicitly makes use of hermeneutic themes. They are employed in order to understand the nature

of the *rationality* that unfolds *de facto* in the disputes between proponents of rival paradigms when normal science undergoes a revolutionary crisis leading to the adoption of a new paradigm.[xvi][xvi] The point here is that against the foundationalist claims of positivism or logical empiricism the resolution of rival paradigm theories cannot be derived by an appeal to a *single* canonical framework of deductive logic or proof, nor by an appeal to observation, verification, confirmation, or falsification. The nature of scientific inquiry, as it is actually practiced, argues against the view that the appropriation of a new paradigm follows from the application of fixed, a priori, logical or evidential criteria that can be invoked in order to adjudicate between rival paradigms. Actual practice argues, instead, for the view that the appropriation of a novel paradigm involves, on the part of the inquirer, a "gestalt" experience, i.e., a "conversion" experience wherein one comes to see the world differently. It is crucial, however, to emphasize that though Kuhn here is arguing against fixed objectivist positions, he is equally against irrationalism in scientific inquiry; his intent is to show a more open, flexible, and historically oriented understanding of scientific inquiry as a rational activity.[xvii][xvii] He is not suggesting that there is no scientific progress but that "we need to transform both our understanding of scientific inquiry and our concept of rationality." [xviii][xviii]

With respect to the philosophy of the social sciences, there has been a break with the view that the *only* scientific procedure productive of true knowledge is that pursued by natural science, such that if the social sciences intend to be scientific, they must conform to the methodological canons of natural science. Together with this liberation from the strictures of scientism, social philosophers have sought the best way to understand non-Western, alien cultures.[xix][xix] Peter Winch, in *The Idea of a Social Science*,[xx][xx] maintains that social life is a form of rule following activity with its own internal rationality such that it would be mistaken to project *one* evaluative standard, say a Western one, when examining the practices, customs, rituals, myths and beliefs of a non-Western culture.[xxi][xxi] Though, initially Winch may appear to be simply questioning the validity of Western rationality as it is typically practiced, his concern is deeper. Indeed, at the core of Winch's investigations is the problem of "the best way to understand and interpret different cultures and societies so that we can learn from them." [xxii][xxii] Winch thus pursues a mode of practical rationality, a form of wisdom, whereby social scientists may come to grasp the signification of alien practices and institutions in a manner that sensitizes them to the usefulness and/or pointlessness of Western practices, norms and institutions.[xxiii][xxiii]

Three crucial similarities, then, obtain between Kuhn and Winch: (a) their common repudiation of overarching metalanguages whose function consist in imposing worldviews instead of being open to them; (b) their contention that the lack of an overarching conceptual scheme does not entail the view that no comparison may be made between different conceptual schemes, frameworks, paradigms, forms of life; and (c) their common concern in articulating a non-foundationalist mode of rationality that, respecting pluralism and not terminating in relativism, would be best suited to the task of initiating, sustaining and perpetuating open dialogue in view of broadening horizons when encountering different conceptual schemes, paradigms or forms of life. Bernstein understands the philosophical or ontological hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer as developed in his *Truth and Method*[xxiv][xxiv] as most closely reflecting the mode of post-Cartesian rationality emerging in the philosophy of science and the philosophy of the social sciences, as evident in the work of authors such as Kuhn and Winch. Ontological hermeneutics here is understood to consist in three internally related moments: understanding (*subtilitas intelligendi*), interpretation (*subtilitas explicandi*), and application (*subtilitas applicandi*).

[xxv][xxv] The first two elements serve as a critique of the Cartesian dichotomy. The third element more clearly develops the mode of post-Cartesian rationality in question.

With respect to the critique of Cartesian rationality, Gadamer views the Cartesian antithesis between objectivism and relativism as an ontological distortion of the signification of *Dasein* as "being-in-the-world." [xxvi][xxvi] The radical nature of Cartesian subjectivity effects an artificial split between the integration that naturally occurs between the self from its dynamic interaction with objects. Gadamer sees this as an ontological misunderstanding of the nature of being-in-the-world and as responsible for the notion of a Cartesian transhistorical rationality, including: (a) its emphasis on bracketing prejudice/judgment so as to achieve pure self-transparency, (b) its claim that human error depends solely on the misuse of the cognitive/volitional faculties, (c) its stress on following predetermined rules and method so as to increase knowledge, and (d) its claim that reason alone justifies knowledge claims (while skeptically regarding avowals based on an appeal to the senses or on former opinions, prejudices, tradition and authority).

Employing the hermeneutical elements of understanding and interpretation, Gadamer counters that reason is historically situated such that one is undeniably possessed, as it were, as a condition of human finitude, by language and tradition before these are possessed by one. Yet what is distinctive in Gadamer is that the historical and fallible character of reason does not entail relativism; much the contrary, he argues that it is precisely by means of one's language and traditions that the hermeneutical insight--understanding, interpretation, application--is realized. Accordingly, against the Cartesian notion of a self rooted in radical subjectivity, Gadamer argues that the notion of *play*, "the clue to ontological explanation," [xxvii][xxvii] represents the crucial interplay, the to- and fro movement, a type of participation, a dynamic interaction between subjects and objects, where the players are not so much the subjects of the play but, rather, are themselves absorbed and drawn by the dynamics of the play wherein hermeneutical understanding is achieved. [xxviii][xxviii] Gadamer characterizes this dynamic interaction that *draws* and *absorbs* as the "law of the subject matter," meaning that it is in the very nature of a topic about which one reflects or discusses to provide, in a manner of speaking, guidance. [xxix][xxix] Secondly, against the notion of bracketing, Gadamer denies that one can or should suspend one's *prejudices*, [xxx][xxx] given that the *happening of understanding* [xxxi][xxxi] occurs precisely by means of the experience of dialogical encounter. In such engagements the participants play off one another, risking and testing their prejudices, whether personal or as derived from institutions of authority and tradition, [xxxii][xxxii] against the "things themselves," i.e., that about which they intend to come to an understanding. By such reciprocal testing, what is initially alien has the effect of making claims on the participants such that resultant from the interaction between prejudices against the "things themselves" one comes to distinguish those interpretations that are *enabling*, i.e., justified, from those that are blind, i.e., unjustified. [xxxiii][xxxiii] Thirdly, against the notion of self-transparency, Gadamer denies that there is some meaning in itself that can be separated from our prejudices such that "'understanding must be conceived as part of the process of the coming into being of meaning'. Meaning is always *coming into being* through the 'happening' of understanding." [xxxiv][xxxiv] Fourthly, against the Cartesian stress on method, Gadamer rather emphasizes the "to and fro," the constant movement toward self-consciousness, given that the process of understanding constitutes the fundamental motion of being-in-the-world; though final closure is never achieved, nothing is in principle beyond the scope of understanding. [xxxv][xxxv]

The notion of application, the third hermeneutical element, is crucially significant given that the manner in which Gadamer understands this term provides the key for Bernstein's clarification of the nature of the emerging post-Cartesian mode of rationality. By means of the notion of

application, Gadamer connects his ontological hermeneutics with the classical tradition of practical philosophy, particularly as developed by Aristotle in his notion of *praxis* and *phronésis*. Understanding is a form of *phronésis*,^[xxxvi][xxxvi] i.e., a form of practical wisdom, consisting in a mode of reasoning involving a distinctive mediation between the universal and the particular, where the mediation is not achieved by the application of a fixed set of rules or method. Said another way, *phronésis* is an intellectual virtue generative of ethical knowledge in which the universal and the particular are co-determined. The crucial point for Gadamer is that the choice and the deliberation characteristic of *phronésis* is not merely limited to ethical discourse. In fact, this mode of rationality obtains *in all forms of reasoning* concerned with deciding between variable situations and differing opinions--as occurs when confronted with differing paradigms or forms of life--where no one algorithm or set of rules may be invoked as final arbitrator. The adjudication of such cases requires the mode of thought characteristic of *phronésis*--practical rationality, judgment, wisdom--consisting in the ability to render an interpretation and specification of universals that are appropriate to the particular situation. In this sense the rationality characteristic of theory-choice between differing paradigms and the evaluation of differing forms of life may be conceived in terms of a judgmental activity, wherein reasons may be proffered in support, but never as decisive proof, of one or another interpretation. Typically, for instance, in the natural sciences, the determination between conflicting paradigms emerges as a result of further scientific inquiry, where greater support accumulates in favor of one of the conceptual schemes.

A related theme that arises from Gadamer's analysis of *phronésis*, as it relates to the hermeneutical element of application concerns itself with the manner in which understanding itself constitutes the *praxis* of a moral agent.^[xxxvii][xxxvii] This means that "the happening of understanding" for the human person *qua* ethical agent is not merely a matter of theoretical interest, given that one must regularly apply universal ethical knowledge to the concrete situations of one's life. To the extent that Gadamer views understanding as signifying the primordial mode of the being of *Dasein*, understanding becomes integral to the very being of the person insofar as it is capable of transforming what one is in the process of becoming. By means of the hermeneutical attitude of openness, the human person is in position to undergo the experience of understanding wherein one tests and either validates or invalidates previously held prejudices, confirming and appropriating insights that in turn--and this is the crucial point here--can serve as decisive factors in determining one's ethical outlook. The effect of having undergone the event of adjusting and enlarging one's own horizons would ideally favor responsible ethical action and foster greater human solidarity. Indeed, Gadamer's attempt to recover the older tradition of practical philosophy is prompted as an all-important correction of what many view as the most profound problem of the modern world, viz., the deformation of the notion of *praxis* so that it comes to signify the application of science to technical tasks in such a manner as to obviate the realm of moral deliberation, decision and responsibility.^[xxxviii][xxxviii]

This said, Bernstein notes two significant shortcomings directed against both the theoretical and the practical dimension of Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics.^[xxxix][xxxix] With respect to the more theoretical aspect, Gadamer incorporates features of the Hegelian and Heideggerian notion of truth, not as correspondence (*adequatio intellectus et rei*), but rather as that which emerges in a process of unconcealment in the dialogical encounter with tradition, in which prejudgments are distinguished as justified or unjustified. To the extent that the reasons that are advanced in support of one's interpretations are always fallible and anticipatory, the Gadamerian notion of truth comes to signify that which can be argumentatively validated by a community of interpreters.^[xl][xl] Yet, if the emphasis on the validation of claims involves putting forth

convincing arguments and reasons, the question then becomes what criterion informs one's judgment so as to serve as the basis for distinguishing between what interpretations are warranted or unwarranted, valid or invalid, in a living tradition. [\[xli\]](#)[\[xli\]](#) Bernstein takes issue with Gadamer on this point and argues that a crucial weakness in his position consists in his lack of a form of argumentation that would serve to indicate what counts as good versus inadequate reasons insofar as the validation of truth claims is concerned. With respect to the more practical aspect, Bernstein contends that, though Gadamer maintains that the great danger for contemporary society lies in the deformation of *praxis*, he provides no "detailed understanding of how power as domination (*Herrschaft*) . . . operates in the modern world"; he develops no "systematic analysis of the social structure and causes of the deformation of *praxis*." [\[xlii\]](#)[\[xlii\]](#)

Notwithstanding these limitations, in the third and final phase of his argument, Bernstein underscores the profound ramifications of Gadamer's hermeneutical comprehension of understanding as the primordial mode of the being of *Dasein*. Firstly, he critiques both the ahistoric notion of reason, which animates the objectivist claim, and the notion of radical incommensurability between conceptual schemes, which animates the relativist claim. Instead he argues for a conception of reason that, while historic and fallible, is capable of undergoing the "happening of understanding." [\[xliii\]](#)[\[xliii\]](#) Indeed Gadamer elaborates a mode of rationality that clarifies the process of weighing and mediating between alternative conceptual schemes so as to promote communication and comparative analyses among adherents of alien horizons, paradigms, forms of life, that, although finite, changing and --possibly--incommensurate, are, nonetheless accessible, open and public. This mode of thought endeavors to develop the linguistic and experiential resources that better enable one to comprehend alien phenomena so as to understand and learn from the limitations and prejudices of one's own conceptual schemes without imposing distortive preconceptions.

Secondly, Bernstein stresses the centrality of understanding in Gadamer's position that argues for a view which is not to be conceived as merely expressing an occurrence of theoretical interest or import, but, rather, as that which shapes and modifies the moral-practical dimension of dialogical beings. Based on this notion of hermeneutical understanding, Bernstein develops his own thesis, contending that the principal task of philosophy becomes one of promoting and nurturing the type of community in which *phronésis* can be practiced in the exercise of human freedom. [\[xliv\]](#)[\[xliv\]](#) This is to say that if the truth of hermeneutics is pluralism, not relativism, and that if the occurrence of the experience of understanding, i.e., the fusion of horizons, advances the existence of solidarity within and among dialogical communities, then, Bernstein maintains, the most pressing task becomes a practical one: the *praxis* and *phronésis* involved in initiating, supporting, and promoting such communities. [\[xlv\]](#)[\[xlv\]](#)

The last paragraph of Bernstein's work concludes,

We can no longer share Marx's theoretical certainty or revolutionary self-confidence. There is no guarantee, there is no necessity, no "logic of history" that must inevitably lead to dialogical communities that embrace all of humanity and in which reciprocal judgment, practical discourse, and rational persuasion flourish. If anything, we have or should have learned how much the contemporary world conspires against it and undermines it. And yet it is still a *telos*, a *telos* deeply rooted in our human project. As Marx cautions us, it is not sufficient to try to come up with some new variations of arguments that will show, once and for all, what is wrong with objectivism and relativism, or even to open up a way of thinking that

can move us beyond objectivism and relativism; such a movement gains "reality and power" only if we dedicate ourselves to the practical task of furthering the type of solidarity, participation, and mutual recognition that is founded in dialogical communities.[\[xlvi\]](#)[\[xlvi\]](#)

The essence of Bernstein's own position is eloquently, if not passionately, expressed in this passage from which three themes emerge: (a) the limitations of philosophical proposals that ignore the historic character of reason and purport to articulate and impose conceptual schemes that stifle what ought to be the ongoing process of understanding; (b) the contemporary realization that dialogical communities where "reciprocal judgment, practical discourse, and rational persuasion flourish" are not the product of extra-human forces working in history; and (c) a plea to "dedicate ourselves to the practical task of furthering the type of solidarity, participation, and mutual recognition that is founded in dialogical communities."

This review of Bernstein's work has rendered more explicit the direction of contemporary philosophy. It will be the aim of the ensuing section to articulate Habermas' distinct alternative with respect to the objectivist/relativist dichotomy.

Habermas' Theoretical Alternative

Jürgen Habermas agrees concerning the objectivist/relativist dichotomy.

These are the philosophical answers to the *unavoidable* experience of modernity; when they are sharpened into the opposition between relativism and absolutism, an unmediated confrontation emerges between pure historicism and pure transcendentalism. At that point the failures of both positions become clear: the one side carries the burden of self-referential, pragmatic contradictions and paradoxes that violate our need for consistency; the other side is burdened with a foundationalism that conflicts with our consciousness of the fallibility of human knowledge. No one who gives this situation much thought would want to be left in this bind.[\[xlvii\]](#)[\[xlvii\]](#)

Not wanting to identify himself with either side of the dichotomy, Habermas does not view his own philosophical contributions as terminating in either a transcendental foundationalism or a contradictory historicism. Moreover, his choice of the terms "absolutism," "pure transcendentalism," and "foundationalism" are particularly indicative of his opposition to that foundationalist form of objectivism rooted in the *a priorism* of the Cartesian-Lockean-Kantian legacy, which so pervades modern philosophy.[\[xlviii\]](#)[\[xlviii\]](#) Like Bernstein, he views his own proposals as moving *beyond* objectivism and relativism.

The question then becomes one of clarifying their respective positions so as to determine in each case what the *beyond* of the dichotomy is supposed to signify, i.e., where does "beyond objectivism and relativism" lead. Accordingly, it will be the object of this section (1) to distinguish Habermas' position by contrasting his theoretical alternative to Bernstein's practical one; (2) to present the master lines of Habermas' theoretical alternative, i.e., his proposal for the transformation of philosophy in terms of reconstructive science and its role within his trichotomic scheme of science (this should serve to clarify Habermas' position with respect to classical realism and modern foundationalism, specifically, Kantian transcendentalism); and (3) to articulate the criticism directed against Habermas as the context for moving to the third and last section of this chapter, viz., the proposed contribution of this study.

With respect to the moral-practical vision Bernstein espouses, Habermas eminently agrees with the need to further dialogical communities; indeed, it may well be said that the *ratio finalis* of

Habermas' scholarly edifice consists in the defense, development and promulgation of such humane communities guided, as it were, by the dictates of an intersubjective, dialogical form of *phronésis*.^[xlix][xlix] Habermas and Bernstein, however, part company insofar as their respective positions on the possibility of rendering a *practical/pragmatic* versus *theoretical* explanation for the happening of understanding is concerned, i.e., of determining what specifically is involved in a dialogical encounter among speaking and acting subjects in which the happening of understanding transpires. For Bernstein, following Gadamer, the historic character of being and therefore of reason undermines the possibility of developing universalist claims of a theoretical sort when grounding what is involved in the rationality of understanding. Although the hermeneutic approach views favorably dialogical exchange between representatives of different horizons, it regards with distrust theoretical explanations that purport to transcend local contexts. Thus, Bernstein relinquishes any claim to theoretical explanation and solely concedes the practical task--based on purely pragmatic reasons--for fostering ongoing conversation between and among a plurality of paradigms and forms of life.

Habermas, however, scrutinizes the question of what can possibly account for the fact that differing conceptual schemes can be compared and contrasted such that the experience of understanding may result in the critical appropriation of one's own local context, as Gadamer teaches and Bernstein underscores. Differing with Gadamer and Bernstein on this question, Habermas opposes the delimitation of meaningful discourse to the form of dialogic understanding typical of philosophical hermeneutics. Whereas hermeneutical explanation restricts itself to a consideration of the semantic relations of the "surface structure" connected to any given language, paradigm or form of life, Habermas proposes to uncover the "deep structure" that accounts for the happening of understanding in the dynamics of speech oriented to understanding.^[i][i] Indeed, in his philosophy of emancipation,^[ii][ii] specifically his theory of communicative action, Habermas maintains that what is involved in the rationality of the hermeneutics of understanding is indeed susceptible to *theoretical* explication.^[iii][iii] For if the understanding of historic being is always in function of one's limited socio-cultural horizon, then how can one possibly account for the happening of understanding among adherents within, between, or among any given horizon such that they may claim access to *objective* knowledge. Habermas argues that inherent to language--the medium of thought and speech--there are general structures and rules that account for the phenomena of understanding, and that these structures and rules admit of theoretical reconstruction.^[iiii][iiii]

Briefly put, Habermas' theory of communicative action, more specifically his theory of universal pragmatics,^[liv][liv] contends that communicative competence, i.e., speech oriented to reaching mutual understanding between dialogical partners, admits of rational reconstruction in universalistic terms. In this respect, communicative competence involves two proficiencies: (1) the ability to produce and understand grammatical sentences; and (2) the distinctive pragmatic ability to *embed* utterances in relation to certain realms of reality so as to generate interpersonal communicative relations. Realms of reality here refer to those distinctive regions which speech discloses, viz.: the external world of objects, the social-life world of shared norms, and the inner world of one's own experience. The crucial point here, according to Habermas, insofar as an analysis of the happening of understanding is concerned, is that the establishment and binding force of interpersonal relations of mutual understanding between dialogical partners consists precisely in the participant's ability to raise, recognize and redeem certain *validity claims* inherent in communicative speech acts, i.e., utterances oriented to achieving understanding. The validity claims--truth, rightness, authenticity --in turn, with the exception of the claim to comprehensibility,

are connected to the realms of reality about which one communicates. In other words, utterances about the external world of objects implicitly raise a claim to truth which may itself be true or false; the social-life world of shared norms implicitly raises a claim to rightness of actions and norms of actions which may be right or wrong; and utterances about the private world of one's inner experience implicitly raise a claim to sincerity of self-presentations which may be authentic or unauthentic.

The achievement of understanding then for Habermas depends not only on the ability of a dialogical participant to comprehend the uttered proposal of his partner, but also to grasp the implicit validity claims that accompany uttered speech acts. Before a critical, non-capricious appropriation, rejection or neutral suspension of an alien position can occur, a participant in dialogue needs to grasp the rationale, i.e., the reasons, purportedly supporting the validity claims inherent to the proposed language, paradigm or form of life. By grasping such claims a participant in dialogue stands in a position to accept or challenge the truth, rightness and/or authenticity of the proposal in question. When such challenges are issued with respect to the truth and the rightness claim, the dialogical participants enter a discursive mode of interaction--theoretical discourse and practical discourse respectively--with the aim of evaluating the cogency of the contested claim in terms of the possibility of rational consensus. Moreover, for the consensus to qualify as rational, the discourse--whether theoretical or practical--must proceed in accordance to the formal exigencies of communicative rationality, i.e., the ideal speech situation. The three formal norms of rational discourse must be met, viz.: (a) that the discourse must be opened to all participants capable of speech and action; (b) that each participant is allowed an equality of opportunities for assuming dialogue roles; and (c) that the consensus must be solely motivated by the *unforced* force of the better argument, exempt as far as is possible from conscious or unconscious, internal or external, accidental or systemic constraints. Emerging, then, from Habermas' logic of discourse, as expressed in the ideal speech situation, are universal norms of rational speech which operate in function of a necessary although implicit "minimal ethics." As Habermas indicates, "the truth of statements is linked in the last analysis to the intention of the good and true life."[\[lv\]](#)[\[lv\]](#)

This said, it is important to clarify that Habermas is not advancing a material criterion or a concrete proposal for evaluating the validity of the claims implicit in dialogical exchanges. He is rather proposing that certain discursive exigencies must be met in order that one may characterize the outcome of the evaluative process as rational and therefore as meriting universal assent. It is in this sense that Habermas wants to claim that the process of understanding can be reconstructed theoretically.[\[lvi\]](#)[\[lvi\]](#)

Given the claims of universal pragmatics, Habermas argues that Bernstein's own proposal amounts to an unwarranted restriction of philosophical discourse within the sphere of the practical. Yet notwithstanding this restriction, Habermas recognizes that Bernstein does remain within the perspective of a participant in the current philosophical debate beyond objectivism and relativism. Employing a quote from the work of Herbert Schnädelbach, Habermas indicates one reason for Bernstein's relinquishing of any claim to a theoretical solution in favor of a practical recommendation, viz., that "we ought to *act* under the presupposition of the unifying power of communicative reason."[\[lvii\]](#)[\[lvii\]](#) He sees this as deriving from his view: "that the difference between what we always claim for our rationality and what we are actually able to explicate as rational can in principle never be eliminated."[\[lviii\]](#)[\[lviii\]](#) The inability of Bernstein to bridge the gap between what can be claimed and what can be explicated leads him to appropriate Habermas' theory of communicative action, purportedly for its capacity to illuminate the happening of understanding, as a practical, but not as a theoretical, recommendation. Bernstein, according to

Habermas, "refuses to regard the procedural unity of rationality within the historical and cultural multiplicity of standards of rationality as a question that is accessible to *theoretical* treatment," and hence he refuses to absolutize "the perspective of the participant."[\[lix\]](#)[\[lix\]](#)

In order to clarify his view from Bernstein's by way of contrast, Habermas considers Richard Rorty's position as an attempt to absolutize "the perspective of the observer." In this respect Habermas argues that Rorty endeavors to dispense with the distinction between "valid and socially accepted views, between good arguments and those which are merely successful for a certain audience at a certain time."[\[lx\]](#)[\[lx\]](#) Within the context of his theory of communicative action, Habermas is willing "to see social practices of justification as more than just such practices,"[\[lxi\]](#)[\[lxi\]](#) i.e., as what is involved in the rational process of redeeming validity claims. In contrast, Rorty maintains that such practices are nothing more than contingent customs worked out in the course of history.

In this sense Habermas "suspects that behind Bernstein's argumentative strategy there lies an absolutizing of the perspective of the participant which is complementary to Rorty's absolutizing of the perspective of the observer."[\[lxii\]](#)[\[lxii\]](#) Though, Habermas opposes, in agreement with Bernstein and Rorty, ahistorical "metanarratives" in the sense of foundational "ultimate groundings," he nonetheless argues for the viability of his theory of communicative action as a *third path*. The following passage summarizes Habermas' alternate route.

I don't see why one could not, at least in a preliminary way, explore a *third path*, which I have embarked upon with my "theory of communicative action." In this approach, philosophy surrenders its claim to be the sole representative in matters of rationality and enters into a nonexclusive division of labor with the reconstructive sciences. It has the aim of clarifying the presuppositions of the rationality of processes of reaching understanding, which may be presumed to be universal because they are unavoidable. Then philosophy shares with the sciences a fallibilistic consciousness, in that its strong universalistic suppositions require confirmation in an interplay with empirical theories of competence. This revisionary self-understanding of the role of philosophy marks a break with the aspirations of first philosophy (*Ursprungsphilosophie*) in any form, even that of the theory of knowledge but it does not mean that philosophy abandons its role as the guardian of rationality. With its self-imposed modesty of method, a philosophy starting from formal pragmatics preserves the possibility of speaking of rationality in the singular.[\[lxiii\]](#)[\[lxiii\]](#)

In view of his response to Bernstein, what permits Habermas, on the one hand, to argue for an abandonment of first philosophy, while maintaining, on the other, a universalist claim in favor of philosophy's role as "guardian of rationality." Habermas' justification lies in two claims. (a) In the absence of metanarratives philosophy be conceived, indeed be transformed, into a *reconstructive science* such that its universalistic pronouncements be subject to standards of empirical confirmation as occurs in the nomological sciences. (b) The aim and content of such a reconstructive science consist in providing the nomological sciences concerned with validating truth claims about the external world of objects, and the critical sciences concerned with validating rightness claims of the social-life world, with an elucidation of "the rationality of processes of reaching understanding" involved in the discursive redemption of validity claims, i.e., the normative, albeit formal, conditions of rationality.[\[lxiv\]](#)[\[lxiv\]](#)

This has led one critic of Habermas to comment: ". . . surely you have moved toward a sort of neo-Kantian view which your earlier work was specifically concerned to avoid . . . or are you even flirting with some version of realism?"[\[lxv\]](#)[\[lxv\]](#) In response to this incisive question there follows a clarification of Habermas' proposed transformation of philosophy as reconstructive science and its relation to nomological and critical science.

The object of the reconstructive sciences, as particularly human sciences, consists in elucidating the universal conditions and rules, i.e., the species competencies, implicit in the realm of symbolic reality (the linguistic, psychological, social, and moral realms). In this respect they are concerned with accounting for the pretheoretical competence of subjects engaging in a variety of linguistic/pragmatic, cognitive, psychological and ethical achievements. The aim of reconstructive science consists in specifying the pretheoretical structures, rules, criteria, and schemata. Though not necessarily conscious to the speaking and acting individual, they explain one's capacity to employ during a lifetime inherent linguistic, cognitive and volitional capabilities without being able to articulate the structures, processes and rules involved in these accomplishments. [lxvi][lxvi] Such an articulation is the business of the reconstructive sciences. [lxvii][lxvii]

For Habermas the distinctive feature of reconstructive approaches consists in their aim to overcome the empirical/transcendental dichotomy. The data employed in the formulation of reconstructive hypothesis are derived from the actual performances and introspective reports of concrete subjects following, for instance, "maeutic" procedures of questioning for eliciting information. By disavowing any connection with the claims and procedures of transcendental philosophy, Habermas relinquishes the strong a priorism of the Kantian transcendental deduction. Rational reconstruction, rather than insist on a dichotomy between transcendental and empirical analysis, relies on a posteriori knowledge. Indeed Habermas acknowledges the phylogenetic/ontogenetic development of universal structures and recognizes the structural interconnection of experience and action. [lxviii][lxviii] In discussing reconstructive hypotheses,

Proposals for reconstruction are hypotheses that stand open to the testing and revision usual for rational reconstructions. To this extent I do not share the Kantian *a priorism*. The intuitive, non-reconstructed knowledge has no *theoretical* certainty, even for the communicative actors themselves-- my original formulation does not suggest this reading--but rather that kind of everyday certainty that is characteristic of background knowledge in the life-world, and even more so of the background knowledge that is constitutive of this world. [lxix][lxix]

Now, the critical sciences differ from the reconstructive in that these sciences are not concerned with the elucidation of theoretical reconstructions, but rather with the practical aim of unmasking interest-oriented perspectives. It is in this sense that psychoanalysis purports to unmask internal constraints in the form of self-deceptions, while critical theory concerns itself with exposing external constraints involving direct or indirect strategic manipulation/force. [lxx][lxx]

The nomological and reconstructive sciences differ in that the object of the former consists in the realm not of symbolic social reality but rather in the realm of external objects. Yet what is of interest here is that whereas Habermas is willing to maintain an essentialist claim for the reconstructive sciences to the extent that they are successful in articulating deep structure competencies underlying surface structure production, [lxxi][lxxi] he opts for a pragmatic theory of experience when it comes to understanding the claims of the nomological sciences. With respect to the objectivity of experience, he disavows either a strictly realist, instrumentalist, or relativist interpretation:

the *objectivity* of experience could only be a sufficient condition of *truth*--and this is true of even the most elementary empirical statements--if we did *not* have to understand theoretical progress as a critical development of theory languages which

interpret the prescientific object domain more and more 'adequately'. The 'adequacy' of a theory language is a function of the truth of those theorems (theoretical statements) that can be formulated in that language. If we did not redeem these truth claims through argumentative reasoning, relying instead on verification through experience alone, then theoretical progress would have to be conceived as the product of *new* experience, and could not be conceived as reinterpretation of the *same* experience. It is therefore more plausible to assume that the objectivity of experience guarantees not the *truth* of a corresponding statement, but the *identity* of experience in the various statements interpreting that experience. [lxxii][lxxii]

Though Habermas is not espousing then a realist interpretation of scientific theory, he does recognize "theoretical progress as a critical development of theory languages which interpret the prescientific object domain more and more 'adequately'."

Now of the trichotomic scheme of science that Habermas acknowledges, the reconstructive sciences, specifically his own universal pragmatics, have a pivotal position with respect to the nomological and the critical ones. Habermas' analysis of speech oriented to understanding amounts to a reconstruction of what is involved in communicative rationality. Such an analysis brings to the fore the crucial notion that the binding force of communicative speech which accounts for the establishment of interpersonal relations between and among speakers derives from the validity claims inherent to speech-act proposals. When breakdowns in communication occur in function of challenges that are raised against the truth or rightness claim, the logic of pragmatics provides nomological and critical science with the formal norms for conducting a rational evaluation of problematicized validity claims. In this respect the truth claim of a nomological proposal is treated within the logic of theoretical discourse, and the rightness claim of a normative proposal is considered within the logic of practical discourse. Both theoretical and practical discourse share a common core of rationality insofar as the warranted assertability of a truth or normative claim stems from a consensus motivated solely by the force of the better argument. It is crucial that this be in accordance with the formal exigencies of the ideal speech situation, which requires: (a) that the discourse be opened to all participants capable of speech and action, (b) that all participants have an equal opportunity to engage in the discourse, and (c) that the discussion proceed free from accidental or systemic constraints. Indeed, herein lies the significance of Habermas' reconstructive efforts insofar as the intended aim of his philosophy of emancipation is concerned, viz., to serve as a critical instrument for theoretical and practical discourse in a manner which promotes individual and communal emancipation from hypostatizations in the form of ideology, prejudice, duplicity. [lxxiii][lxxiii]

Habermas' attempt to recast philosophical discourse within the frame of reconstructive approaches has not been without its critics. [lxxiv][lxxiv] The typical critique underscores Habermas' lack of concrete empirical studies in support of his theory, which claims a posteriori endorsement. Thomas McCarthy, though generally sympathetic to Habermas' work, states,

As even a cursory reading of Habermas' writings on universal pragmatics makes evident, the construction of the hypotheses he advances therein does not make use of [the appropriate nomological] procedures. In fact, they seem to rely very heavily on just the 'reflection on his own speech intuitions', analysis of fundamental concepts (e.g. 'understanding', 'truth', 'discourse', 'rationality'), and critical

appropriation of relevant literature that is so characteristic of 'philosophical' in contrast to 'empirical' modes of thought.[\[lxxv\]](#)[\[lxxv\]](#)

Even though Habermas can put forth an initial response in defense of "speech intuitions" as the product of reflection on one's accumulated experience, he is quite willing to acknowledge that indeed his proposals are not to be understood as expressing a final statement and as such are subject to the kind of evaluative analysis proper for determining the soundness of his reconstructive efforts.[\[lxxvi\]](#)[\[lxxvi\]](#)

It is important to see that rational reconstructions, like all other types of knowledge, have only a hypothetical status. They may very well start from a false sample of intuitions; they may obscure and distort the right intuitions; and they may, even more often, overgeneralize particular cases. They are in need of further corroboration. What I accept as an antifoundationalist criticism of all strong a priori and transcendentalist claims does not, however, block attempts to put rational reconstructions of supposedly basic competencies on trial and to test them indirectly by employing them as input in empirical theories.[\[lxxvii\]](#)[\[lxxvii\]](#)

Specifically, two approaches can be employed in such reconstructive validations: (a) heuristically, they can be evaluated in order to determine how well related theories and interpretations cohere under its conceptual purview; and (b) indirectly, they can be analyzed to see the extent to which they can be corroborated by empirical evidence.[\[lxxviii\]](#)[\[lxxviii\]](#)

Although Habermas' reconstructive efforts *prima facie* appear cogent and promising insofar as empirical corroboration is concerned, the next and last section will introduce an alternative reading of Habermas' proposal that will emphasize the more metaphysical themes implicit in his work.

The Metaphysical Alternative

Given his claim to universality in the face of the contemporary postmodernist critique of reason, Habermas' philosophy of emancipation offers a unique opportunity for a metacritical examination concerning the question of what his position contributes to an understanding of metaphysics. A consideration follows in three parts: (1) an analysis of Habermas' basic philosophical insight by means of a critique of Bernstein's pragmatism; (2) a statement that supports the view that Habermas' proposal may serve to amplify the notion of being as *esse* as understood within the framework of metaphysics, including a discussion of the relevance for this study of the Heideggerian emphasis on the human subject as *alocus* for the disclosure of Being; and (3) a clarification of the remaining chapters of this study.

Bernstein, who does not share Habermas' theoretical optimism, nonetheless, suggests an alternate "pragmatic" reading of Habermas' work:

I suggested that there is an alternative reading of Habermas when I referred to his pragmatic voice and his interpretative dialectics. . . . The reading of Habermas that I want to bring out and endorse . . . underscores . . . a perspective that sees his project as really one of interpretive or hermeneutical dialectics which seeks to command our assent "by the overall plausibility of the interpretation that [it gives]." Whether we focus on Habermas' early discussions of the relation of theory and *praxis*, his elucidation of the three primary cognitive interests, his analysis of legitimacy and legitimation crises, or his more recent attempts to develop a theory

of communicative action and theory of social development, these investigations can be viewed as stages in the systematic articulation and defense of a "vision of mankind, our history and our prospects."[\[lxxix\]](#)[\[lxxix\]](#)

Why does Bernstein want to "bring out" and "endorse" this reading of Habermas. If it is, as he states, in virtue of the "overall plausibility" of Habermas' "vision"--a vision which includes "mankind," "our history," and "our prospects"--then one may ask what can possibly account for the plausibility of this fairly comprehensive view. To speak of "our history" and "our prospects" amounts to acknowledging not just any vision of mankind, but a manifestly profound one. Rather than speak about mankind in the abstract, it speaks of "*our*" history--i.e., "*our*" past--and "*our*" prospects--i.e., "*our*" future. What is it about this vision that can possibly account for these seemingly hyperbolic goals of Habermas?

If pragmatism, simply put, consists in the doctrine asserting that the meaning of an idea is contingent on its derived consequences when acted upon, such that ideas that make no difference are characterized as meaningless, then it strongly appears that Bernstein's endorsement of a pragmatic reading of Habermas' project can only be in function of the fact that such an appropriation would make a difference in one's understanding of "mankind," "our past" and "our prospects." But, again, what can account for the efficacy of Habermas' proposal so as to merit its endorsement? Certainly, Bernstein's appropriation of Habermas' project is in function of the purportedly *favorable* consequences that follow from its execution, viz., what it can contribute to the development and promulgation of communities animated by a dialogically derived *phronésis*. But cannot one argue that the salutary consequences that derive from Habermas' proposal stem not from some arbitrary or capricious decision to adopt this or that idea, but rather from the *de facto* efficacy which such a conception engenders. If so, it cannot--and this is the crucial point--be viewed in separation, in this case, from what is constitutive of the character of communicating subjects.

Certainly Bernstein recognizes that Habermas views his communicative proposal as something more than an interesting recommendation:

For Habermas . . . the principle of unconstrained dialogue and communication is not an arbitrary ideal or norm that we "choose"; it is *grounded in the very character of our linguistic intersubjectivity*.[\[lxxx\]](#)[\[lxxx\]](#)

But is not the expression here "grounded in the very character of" the same as saying "that the principle of unconstrained dialogue and communication" is rooted in the very *nature* of human intersubjectivity? Indeed such a formulation invokes the maxim *agere sequitur esse*, that is, *the being of a thing manifests itself in its operations or acting*. In this respect the potentially favorable consequences that may be expected from an appropriation of Habermas' vision can only be derived from its being in accordance to the nature of what it means to be human and not in spite of such a nature. This is precisely the line of reasoning that Bernstein's pragmatic appropriation of Habermas leaves undeveloped.

Though, Habermas' own contributions are indeed directed toward a more scientific, i.e., reconstructive, understanding of human nature vis à vis his theory of communicative action, there is still an alternative reading that this study would like to suggest. In this respect, his comment on the relationship between critical social theory and his early theory of knowledge is instructive:

My view today is that the attempt to ground critical social theory by way of the *theory of knowledge*, while it did not lead astray, was indeed a roundabout way. [lxxxix][lxxxix]

From an earlier attempt then to *ground* critical theory from the view of epistemology, viz., his theory of cognitive interests, Habermas has since redirected his efforts within the context of reconstructive methodology in an endeavor to ground critical theory by way of language, specifically his theory of communicative action. Yet, if, as the maxim indicates, the *being of a thing* manifests itself in its operations or acting, it would appear that to the extent that both the act of knowing and the act of communicating are operations of human beings, then to that same extent such actions and operations serve to *manifest* the being or nature of what it means to be human. In other words, such species competencies as knowing and communicating can be viewed not only as operations to be considered in and of themselves, but rather as manifesting essential properties and specific dimensions of the very character of communicating subjects. This alternate reading of Habermas' *opus* that would attempt to view his philosophy of emancipation not on the basis of epistemology or of language, but in virtue of the very nature of what it means to be a communicating subject that remains undeveloped. If the evolution of Habermas' own thought has taken him from an epistemological to a linguistic turn, the suggestion here is for a metaphysical turn. [lxxxii][lxxxii] In this case the task becomes that of determining what philosophical model would be appropriate for the task of investigating the metaphysical themes latent in Habermas' philosophy of emancipation. The present study suggests that Habermas' cardinal insights may be understood as a new optic for amplifying the notion of *esse*, and, conversely, that metaphysics may be understood as providing an existential context serving to mitigate the formalism with which Habermas' own proposal is affected.

An initial approach for developing the emancipative dimension of contemporary discourse can be accomplished by "drawing upon our heritage in the manner suggested by Martin Heidegger," Gadamer's mentor. [lxxxiii][lxxxiii] Although, Heidegger's metaphysical program differs in important respects from the classical Greek conception, particularly as developed in the long Aristotelian tradition of metaphysics, [lxxxiv][lxxxiv] the emphasis which he places on the human subject as a *locus* for understanding the Being of *Dasein* can serve as a basic orientation for sensitizing one to the metaphysical import that may be derived from a consideration of specifically human attributes. This sensitivity promises to be significant when deriving the metaphysical implications that Habermas' emancipatory/communicative model contributes to metaphysics.

This is to say that for Heidegger the question of being can be pursued best by means of a fundamental ontology in the form of an existential analytic of the human subject's Being-in-the-world. [lxxxv][lxxxv]

Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it. But in that case, this is a constitutive state of *Dasein's* Being--a relationship which itself is one of Being. And this means further that there is some way in which *Dasein* understands itself in its Being, and that to some degree it does so explicitly. It is peculiar to this entity that with and through its Beings, this Being is disclosed to it. *Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being.* *Dasein* is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological. [lxxxvi][lxxxvi]

From this it follows: (a) that the uniqueness of the human subject consists in that it is the being for whom the meaning of Being is an issue; [lxxxvii][lxxxvii] (b) that for the human subject this concern with Being reflects a constitutive, i.e., natural state; [lxxxviii][lxxxviii] and (c) that the human subject as conscious is in a unique position to reflect upon its own emergence into Being.

Indeed this last item provides the reason for Heidegger's position that philosophy "takes its departure from the hermeneutic of *Dasein*, which, as an analytic of *existence*, has made fast the guiding-line for all philosophical inquiry at the point where it *arises* and to which it *returns*." [lxxxix][lxxxix]

The Heideggerian fundamental ontology then is actually a concern with Being at the very point of its emergence and self-disclosure into time, i.e., at the root of the human subject as the conscious being. [xc][xc] Whereas traditional forms of metaphysics consider the question of Being from an abstract, ahistoric, extra-spatial context --whether one refers to the classical objectivist notion of being or the modern subjectivist notion of transcendental subject--Heidegger proceeds from a concrete historico-spatial context. Although Habermas' program differs in fundamental respects from that of Heidegger, he nonetheless understands his own proposal as deeply rooted in the natural history and the communitary constitution of the human species. Moreover, it should be added that whereas Heidegger's early writings placed almost exclusive emphasis on the historical emergence of the Being of the human subject, his later work concentrated not so much on the distinction between Being and beings, but upon *that* which historically opens up this distinction.

It should further be added that from the point of view of this study the fact that Habermas does not understand the move beyond objectivism and relativism to signify that the structure of communicative rationality may not be articulated within the context of reconstructive methodology, this study does not accept the assumption that one must somehow restrict human cognition within the *framework* of nomological, reconstructive, or interpretive methodology. It is in this respect, that, within the dialogical openness characterizing contemporary discourse, this study will suggest--without asserting absolutist claims of a Cartesian foundationalist sort--that Habermas' philosophy of emancipation and Thomistic metaphysics may be understood as mutually complementing their distinct aims.

Before considering the metaphysical question which animates this study, however, it will be necessary to develop the model of communicating subjects which may be derived from Habermas' philosophy of emancipation. In this respect, the next chapter proposes to examine Habermas' theory of cognitive interests as a context both for distinguishing a realm of communicating subjects from that of material objects in a manner that underscores the primacy of the emancipatory interest as signifying a distinctive property of communicative beings. Accordingly, the third chapter, by considering Habermas' theory of universal pragmatics as representing his methodological framework for emancipatory critique, will raise the question of the adequacy of his logic of a discourse theory of truth. The fourth chapter will consider Habermas' discourse ethics with the aim of considering the question of the adequacy of his principle of universalization insofar as a logic of practical discourse is concerned. Indeed, the third and fourth chapters concentrate on bringing out the communicative dimension of communitary beings. Once this critical appropriation of Habermas' proposals is completed, the fifth chapter will pursue the sense in which Habermas' contribution points beyond itself, viz., toward metaphysical reflection in a manner having significant consequences for both metaphysics and for Habermas' own philosophical proposal. The conclusion will attempt to bring into focus the various elements of this study.

Chapter II

The Theory of the Cognitive Interests: Primacy of the Emancipatory Interest

The significance of Habermas' theory of human or cognitive interests for this study consists in providing a framework for classifying the various sciences according to their object, method, and constitutive "interest" in function of which the human/social sciences may be distinguished from the physical/natural sciences, a distinction which, in turn, serves to distinguish communicating subjects from the non-human order of reality. Such a distinction is crucial given that it provides a framework for indicating the manner in which the emancipatory interest emerges as a distinctive property of communicating subjects in function of which the other two interests, the technical and the practical, ideally—though often counterfactually—proceed. Within this view the human subject is understood as endowed with a nature oriented via critical reflection toward a just form of life. With this end in view the present chapter will examine Habermas' cognitive interests as providing a basis for arguing in favor of a non-reductionistic, i.e., a non-physicalistic, conception of communicating subjects in terms of their emancipatory potential.

These considerations will be pursued (A) first by addressing potential issues that may be raised in relating Habermas' earlier and later works, particularly his *Knowledge and Human Interests*^{[i][i]} and *The Theory of Communicative Action*^{[ii][ii]} (B) by analyzing each of the three knowledge-constitutive interests in terms of their objects and methods; and (C) by considering the question of the domains of reality indicated by the knowledge-constitutive interests as well as the question of the objectivity of knowledge implied by them. This last section will end by arguing for the primacy of the emancipatory interest as a distinguishing feature of communicating subjects.

Preliminary Issues

The three potential issues that may be raised in function of this study's proposed interpretation of Habermas' works include: (1) the relationship between Habermas' *Knowledge and Human Interests* and *The Theory of Communicative Action*; (2) the quasi-transcendentalism of *Knowledge and Human Interests*; and (3) the plausibility of an metaphysical interpretation of Habermas' theory of cognitive interests (in *Knowledge and Human Interests*) in spite of Habermas' own objection to the traditional notion of ontology. This section will end with (4) a clarification of the relationship between knowledge and human interests.

With respect to the first issue, Habermas endeavors to secure a philosophy of emancipation by providing a ground for critical theory that, beyond the purely arbitrary and relativistic, consists in "a clarification and justification of its normative foundations."^{[iii][iii]} Corresponding to the two approaches which his investigations have taken in his attempt to provide such grounds, Habermas' work reflects, broadly speaking, two distinct, although fundamentally related, periods, each culminating in the publication of a major work; *Knowledge and Human Interests* represents the results of the first period, and *The Theory of Communicative Action* reflects those of the second. The crucial difference between the one and the other period consists in a move from the monological paradigm characteristic of the first work to the dialogical one representative of the second. More specifically, this is a move from epistemology, pursued within the quasi-transcendentalist framework of the philosophy of the subject (consciousness) as a ground for

critical theory, to language, pursued within the reconstructive framework of the philosophy of communication as the adequate conceptual scheme.^{[iv][iv]}

In no way, however, should the shift in paradigm, however, should in no way be construed as severing the essential continuity that informs the overall development of Habermas' thought from *Knowledge and Human Interests* to *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Indeed the theory of cognitive interests in function of the monological scheme is preserved, developed, and amplified in the second work under the dialogical scheme of instrumental and communicative action.^{[v][v]} The fundamental continuity between the two works then allows for the possibility of returning to the first work in order to underscore interpretive features that, though not so apparent, may contribute to an understanding of Habermas' later work.

With respect to the second issue, Habermas' "quasi"-transcendentalism, it is important to note that though Habermas does in fact move from the "quasi"-transcendentalist framework of *Knowledge and Human Interests* to the empirical framework of *The Theory of Communicative Action*. The "quasi" nature of Habermas' transcendentalism, insofar as the former work is concerned, consists precisely in that Habermas was already consciously endeavoring to move beyond the subjective a priorism of the modern transcendentalist model to the more objective a posteriorism of his communicative one. This is to say that at no time was Habermas operating within a purely transcendentalist mode. Indeed, Habermas conceives his own proposals in *Knowledge and Human Interests* as deeply rooted in the life structures, reproductive aims, and natural history of the human species, that is, in "the specific fundamental conditions of the possible reproduction and self-constitution."^{[vi][vi]} In this respect, Habermas is operating in *Knowledge and Human Interests* within the parameters of a mitigated transcendentalism that moves toward a historical and developmental—and hence an a posteriori—analysis of the human subject.^{[vii][vii]}

Further, although Habermas raises the Kantian question concerning the conditions of the possibility of knowledge in general, he does so within the context of critical theory, such that the question, critically modified, itself becomes one concerning the conditions of the possibility of emancipation from internal and external communicative constraints.^{[viii][viii]} The key word here, "conditions," as used by Habermas, refers to that which "is based in the natural history of the human species, in the history of a nature."^{[ix][ix]} Hence, "in so far as [the conditions] proceed from the history of nature, their status cannot be grasped any longer in the rigid opposition of transcendental constitution and constituted empirical world."^{[x][x]} Hence, the theory of cognitive interests should be understood in function of the empirical-historical context which informs Habermas' formulation.

With respect to the third issue, it is crucial to indicate how such an investigation can be made in spite of Habermas' own reservations to a certain form of ontology that he explicitly repudiates in his seminal Frankfurt Inaugural Address of 1965,^{[xi][xi]} a work which can be said to have expressed the master lines of what was later to be published in *Knowledge and Human Interests*. In this work Habermas wanted to argue against the "objectivist illusion" of Western ontology prevalent in both classical philosophy and modern positivism that, notwithstanding differences, "are committed to a theoretical attitude that frees those who take it from dogmatic association with the natural interests of life and their irritating influence; and both share the cosmological intention of describing the universe theoretically in its lawlike order, just as it is."^{[xii][xii]}

The classical form of this ontological objectivism severs the connection between Being and time, i.e., between man, for instance, and his concrete, historical context. Habermas states,

In philosophical language, *theoria* was transferred to contemplation of the cosmos. In this form, theory already presupposed the demarcation between Being and time that is the foundation of ontology. This separation is first found in the poem of Parmenides and returns in Plato's *Timaeus*. It reserves to *logos* a realm of Being purged of inconstancy and uncertainty and leaves *doxa* the realm of the mutable and perishable. [\[xiii\]](#)[xiii]

The scientific form of this objectivism purports “that the world appears objectively as a universe of facts whose lawlike connection can be grasped descriptively.” [\[xiv\]](#)[xiv] Thus, Habermas wants to hold that “as long as philosophy remains caught in ontology, it is subject to an objectivism that disguises the connection of its knowledge with the human interest in autonomy and responsibility (*Mündigkeit*).” [\[xv\]](#)[xv]

From these passages, it is clear that, as early as the Inaugural Address, Habermas, in line with the contemporary sensitivity, as articulated in the first chapter, argues against an ontology that disengages Being and time in favor of a mode of knowing that understands the subject matter of knowledge precisely in terms of its unfolding or manifestation in time. History, specifically human history, is the context or horizon in which knowledge is articulated. Habermas’ rejection of ontology then does not appear to reject Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, whose two constitutive categories consist precisely in the relations that obtain between “being” and “time,” i.e., being understood precisely in terms of its emergence into time. There does not seem to be, in principle, then a basic impediment to an interpretation of Habermas’ work in function of such a fundamental ontology of the human person, although, Heidegger’s later investigations were directed beyond these initial horizons. Moreover, it may be argued also that classical metaphysics takes its point of departure knowledge from the actual experience of an external realm of objects, such that its central aim is never comprehended as divorced from a concern with the reality of the actually existing. Conversely, not to share Habermas’ delimitation of knowledge within the sphere of the natural and the social, but to consider these levels of reality as contingent existentially on a higher order of reality does not imply a repudiation of the basic insight animating Habermas’ theory of cognitive interests.

Notwithstanding, Habermas’ position against a purely objectivist view of knowledge can serve as a way to introduce his theory of cognitive interests. He maintains that all knowledge, including that attributed to the natural sciences, is rooted in a vital anthropological interest structure directed toward the basic orientations of human life, viz., the “specific fundamental conditions of the possible reproduction and self-constitution of the human species.” [\[xvi\]](#)[xvi] In this sense the enterprise of knowledge is guided by cognitive interests that are, in turn, integral to the natural and socio-cultural well-being of the human species. [\[xvii\]](#)[xvii]

The title of *Knowledge and Human Interests* makes plain the relationship Habermas asserts, viz.: that cognitive processes are embedded in and reflect life structures such that knowledge is a by-product of interests grounded in the natural history of the human subject and in the socio-cultural evolution of the human species. It is in this sense that, for Habermas, knowledge is not value-neutral but, rather, that the values and concerns constitutive of our knowledge are in function of vital pursuits, “the socio-cultural form of life” [\[xviii\]](#)[xviii] that promotes the well-being of the species. Cognitive processes, then, express our interest in preserving life through knowledge and action. This is to say that “knowledge-constitutive interests mediate the natural history of the human species with the logic of its self-formative process.” [\[xix\]](#)[xix]

It should, however, be stressed here that the interests that guide an investigator in the acquisition of knowledge should not be construed as involving a naturalistic reduction, i.e., as merely favoring the species' physical adaptation to an external environment. Rather, as they encompass the species' inherent interest not only to reproduce itself materially but also to develop itself socially with a view toward achieving individual and communal emancipation.^[xx]^[xx]

Neither does Habermas intend with this view to promote an historical relativization of knowledge that relinquishes all claim to objectivity. His point is that what is called knowledge refers to those warranted assertions which have been derived by the knowing subject in function of the manner in which the species, to which the knowing subject belongs as a member, is related to the various domains of reality that promote the vital well-being of this species.^[xxi]^[xxi] Indeed, hermeneutically speaking, it is precisely what is known to work that is transmitted via tradition from one generation to the next, such that what is handed down by any cultural legacy would have to reflect an essential relation, regardless of degree, to the various interests that favor its “reproduction and self-constitution.” In this respect the continual shaping of a culture—and therefore of its knowledge claims—may be viewed as a dynamic response, however imperfect, to the exigencies of the varied interests that in time emerge as vital. To this extent, then, cognitive interests should not be understood as compromising objectivity, since their function is to determine the aspect under which reality is apprehended. Habermas puts it in these terms:

These interests of knowledge are of significance neither for the psychology nor for the sociology of knowledge, nor for the critique of ideology in any narrower sense; for they are invariant. . . . [These influences should not be construed as] regulators of cognition which have to be eliminated for the sake of the objectivity of knowledge; instead they themselves determine the aspect under which reality can be objectified and can thus be made accessible to experience to begin with. They are the conditions which are necessary in order that subjects capable of speech and action may have experience which can lay claim to objectivity.^[xxii]^[xxii]

Habermas' point is that prior to the objectifications of science there are three categories or processes of inquiry “for which a specific connection between logical-methodological rules and knowledge-constitutive interests can be demonstrated.”^[xxiii]^[xxiii] Accordingly, (a) the motive animating the empirical-analytic sciences involves a *technical* interest in acquiring mastery over nature, (b) that of the historical-hermeneutic sciences consists in a *practical* interest in intersubjective communication, and (c) that of the critically oriented sciences entails an *emancipatory* interest from internal and external constraints. “Orientation toward technical control, toward mutual understanding in the conduct of life, and toward emancipation from seemingly ‘natural’ constraint establish the specific viewpoints from which we can apprehend reality in any way whatsoever.”^[xxiv]^[xxiv] David Held states,

The end point of this analysis—of the mode in which reality is disclosed, constituted and acted upon—is a trichotomous model of the human species' *interests* (anthropologically rooted strategies for interpreting life experience'), *media* (means of social organization) and *sciences*. The interests are the technical, the practical and the emancipatory. These unfold in three media, work (instrumental action), interaction (language) and power (asymmetrical relations of constraint and dependency) and give rise to the conditions for the possibility of three sciences, the empirical-analytic, the historical-hermeneutic and the critical.^[xxv]^[xxv]

Further, Habermas wants to argue, this connection between cognitive interests and cognitive disciplines—the critically-interested dimension of human reason—is made manifest via the faculty or power of *self-reflection*. The aim of this cognitive faculty consists in critically dissolving the objectivistic understanding of the sciences so as to expose the knowledge-constitutive interests that lie at the root of such processes of inquiry. Beyond displaying reason as interested, critical cognition, in Habermas’ philosophy of emancipation, serves the role of examining, modifying and/or superseding the fixed structures that at any given time may restrictively entangle one in order to view the interests from which such strictures originate. In this sense critical-reflection, as understood by Habermas, plays a liberating function whose significance cannot be sufficiently accentuated. Indeed, self-reflection in Habermas refers to a pivotal power by which society may guide itself in accordance to *vital* versus *vested* interests. Habermas’ claim is that through the power of self-reflection, the human subject/ community becomes transparent to itself in a manner which promotes the dissolution of previously unrecognized or veiled forms of internal or external deception. Habermas states,

In self-reflection, knowledge for the sake of knowledge comes to coincide with the interest in autonomy and responsibility (*Mündigkeit*). For the pursuit of reflection knows itself as a movement of emancipation. Reason is at the same time subject to the interest in reason. [\[xxvi\]](#)[xxvi]

This said, the aim of the ensuing sections will be to argue that the cognitive interests, viz., the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory, do not merely refer and coincide with three processes of inquiry, viz., the empirical-analytic, the historical-hermeneutic, and the critical sciences respectively, but that these interests and disciplines themselves refer to two domains of reality, viz. that of material objects and that of communicating subjects; and further, that the technical and the practical interest are best served when these proceed in function of the emancipatory interest. The third interest unfolds the dynamic tendency toward which the human subject/community is itself oriented as it emerges into time, constituting in this fashion a proper attribute of communicating subjects. [\[xxvii\]](#)[xxvii]

Habermas’ Theory of Cognitive Interests

This section will provide a more detailed examination of each of the three knowledge-constitutive interests as found in *Knowledge and Human Interests*: (1) the technical/instrumental interest of the empirical-analytic sciences, (2) the practical/ethical interest of the historical-hermeneutic sciences, and (3) the emancipatory/communicative interest of the critical sciences.

The Technical Interest of the Empirical-Analytic Sciences

Although the second and third interest are of particular relevance insofar as the stated intention of this study is concerned, the technical interest is nonetheless significant for three reasons: (a) it establishes the ground for uncovering the practical and emancipatory interests as necessary in view of certain limitations inherent to the methodological framework of the technical interest; (b) it provides a basis, as will be shown when considering the emancipatory interest, for relating and distinguishing the natural sciences from the human sciences in a manner that safeguards the

integrity of each domain of inquiry; and (c) it confirms the point that Habermas' analysis is conducted within the parameters of the "reproduction and self-constitution of the human species" that "arise from the actual structures of human life."

In the preceding section, Habermas' position—that knowledge is rooted in interests from the lifeworld in contradistinction to the objectivist claim—was merely stated. Yet in order to render his theory of cognitive interests more defensible, especially in light of the proposed metaphysical interpretation of this study, the following will attempt to derive the first interest, i.e., the technical interest, by briefly tracing Habermas' own derivation of this interest. This involves an analysis of the demise of eighteenth and nineteenth century epistemology with the subsequent rise of scientism, specifically positivism, and his critique of its delimitation of knowledge. This extends epistemological reflection in a manner leading to the introduction of the technical interest.[\[xxviii\]](#)[\[xxviii\]](#)

In Part One of *Knowledge and Human Interests*[\[xxix\]](#)[\[xxix\]](#) Habermas engages in an examination of the "dissolution of epistemology, which has left the philosophy of science in its place."[\[xxx\]](#)[\[xxx\]](#) He finds that though Kant understood science as one category of knowledge, his critics took issue with his framework of theoretical, practical, and critical reason, the status of the categories and forms of intuition, and his concept of the constitution of the subject.[\[xxxi\]](#)[\[xxxi\]](#) Hegel, who argued that Kant failed to elucidate the manner in which the conditions of knowledge are themselves derived within his epistemology,[\[xxxii\]](#)[\[xxxii\]](#) moved to encompass the whole of knowledge, in contradistinction to Kant's ahistorical epistemic subject, in function of his historically unfolding philosophy of Absolute Spirit. In this way Hegel severed the distinction between philosophy and science that Kant sought to preserve. Indeed, it was precisely Hegel's characterization of philosophy as rigorous science that was to be discredited by "the actual fact of scientific progress, as bare fiction."[\[xxxiii\]](#)[\[xxxiii\]](#) By identifying philosophy with science, its integrity as a distinct realm of knowledge was undermined. Marx, who endeavored to materialize Hegel's idealism, argued for the inclusion of philosophy, which he understood in terms of social science—the economic laws of motion—under the rubric of natural science.[\[xxxiv\]](#)[\[xxxiv\]](#) Thus, notwithstanding their different conceptions of the term, beginning with Hegel and followed by Marx, epistemology, came to be identified with science, an identification soundly refuted by the radical positivist critique of the limits of "authentic" knowledge.[\[xxxv\]](#)[\[xxxv\]](#)

Habermas' project to revive epistemology in the 1960's meant that he could not merely trace the record of its demise but, rather, had to take on the more difficult task of responding to the positivist view of epistemology as an unauthentic domain of knowing. This he accomplished in Part Two of *Knowledge and Human Interests* where he challenges the "objectivist illusion" at the core of the positivist interpretation of philosophy as strictly limited to questions of logic and methodology in an attempt to uncover the role of the subject in the production of knowledge. This involves Habermas in an analysis of "the prehistory of modern positivism,"[\[xxxvi\]](#)[\[xxxvi\]](#) i.e., with an examination of the work of Comte, Mach and Peirce. With respect to Comte, suffice it to say that his classic conception of positivism was tied to a history of philosophy soon to be obviated by a strictly scientific interpretation of science.[\[xxxvii\]](#)[\[xxxvii\]](#)

The philosophy of science as represented by Mach serves to underscore what Habermas takes to be the crucial flaw of early phenomenalist positivism, viz., the positivist circle. Mach attempted to ground the unity of science in phenomena as the immediate objects of sense experience. This is to say that science "encourages the objectivist assumption that scientific information apprehends reality descriptively,"[\[xxxviii\]](#)[\[xxxviii\]](#) understood as a report and correlation of facts, i.e., those collections or sets of perceptions secured in experiencing sensible objects. Habermas counters that

this mode of operation is guilty of circular thinking in that while positing an ontology of facts founded on irreducibly subjective, individual reports, it unreflectively attempts to claim objective, intersubjective validity for the same. It is as if one were saying that the ground of science is private and subjective facts and then in the same breath acknowledge that one knows that private and subjective facts are the ground of science because that is how science understands them. Habermas questions “How . . . *prior* to all science, can the doctrine of elements make statements about the object domain of science as such, if we only obtain information about this domain *through* science.”[\[xxxix\]](#)[\[xxxix\]](#) Said another way, the ambiguity of the status of facts consists in that while they are understood as irreducibly subjective, they must also be conceived as established intersubjectively given the demands of objectivity in science. But how can science establish the intersubjectivity of facts when it is defined strictly as consisting in a purely methodological procedure for correlating facts? Since Mach's view of science is without the resources for understanding science, Habermas concludes that science remains without an adequate self-understanding.[\[xl\]](#)[\[xl\]](#)

Neither is Habermas convinced by Carnap's attempt to resolve Mach's circularity by introducing a physicalist ontology, i.e., by positing a realm of physical objects that are intersubjectively accessible—in contradistinction to the subjectivity of the flux of immediate sense experience—as a means to establish the objectivity of science. Indeed, Habermas would counter that the positivist position of whatever variety is open to objections. As Held succinctly puts it, “In trying to establish a single framework for knowledge, positivists must either presuppose as unproblematic the availability of an intersubjectively constituted language, or assume, as Karl-Otto Apel expresses it, a position of ‘methodical solipsism’. This amounts to ‘the tacit assumption that *objective* knowledge should be possible without *intersubjective* understanding by communication being presupposed’.”[\[xli\]](#)[\[xli\]](#)

Since science limits itself to purely methodological procedures for describing and correlating facts, it is without the means for explicating and justifying the nature of ordinary language, practices and conventions, and intersubjective consensus that while presupposed as a condition of scientific objectivity cannot be accounted for within the strictures of the monologic—versus dialogical—framework constitutive of scientific discourse. The communication of investigators dictates the use of language not restricted to technical control over objectified natural processes; indeed, the communicative action which emerges in function of the specific mode of symbolic interaction that transpires between societal subjects who reciprocally know and recognize each other as communicating subjects, involves a system of reference that cannot be reduced to the framework of instrumental action.[\[xlii\]](#)[\[xlii\]](#) The non-reductionistic character of the communication presents Habermas with the single most potent contention for arguing that there is another realm of discourse that attempts to satisfy the need to understand systematically the realm of ordinary language and intersubjective agreement which precedes and is presupposed by scientific investigation. Science as a practiced discipline is unintelligible within the realm of discourse concerned with technical control over objectified natural processes. For it is precisely the *meta*-scientific or theoretical domain of discourse—the logic of scientific procedure—concerned with the formulation of implicit/explicit conventions and rules concerning definitions, theoretical frameworks, and procedural conventions, that needs to be explicated as the *sine qua non* of science as a *practiced* versus a *theoretical* discipline. Indeed Habermas sees the derivation of scientific theories as a by-product of the metatheoretical logic that informs them.[\[xliii\]](#)[\[xliii\]](#) The language contingent on the process of scientific inquiry, i.e., arising out of instrumental action, is brought about within the parameters of a monologic framework between the investigator and

the object domain relevant to his field of inquiry. Nevertheless, the communication constitutive of the interaction between investigators themselves cannot be reduced to that constitutive of scientific rationality, but “passes into the realm of a . . . *pre- and meta-scientific rationality* of intersubjective discourse mediated by *explication of concepts* and interpretation of intentions.”^[xliv]^[xliv] The inadequacy of the methodological procedures appropriate for understanding objectified processes of nature when it comes to understanding communicative interaction with its own set of methodological procedures provides Habermas with a basis for arguing for an extension of knowledge so as to include reflection on the logic of science itself and its relation to action.^[xlv]^[xlv]

Habermas is thus “in agreement with the spirit of C. S. Peirce's project—to uncover the connections between knowledge, inquiry and action, and to reveal thereby science's foundations in human beings' practical activity.”^[xlvi]^[xlvi] To say that the crucial difference between Peirce and early positivism consists in that he did not share their objectivist attitude signifies that instead of comprehending the aim of methodology as an elucidation of the logical structure of scientific theories, he understood its goal as, rather, consisting in a clarification of the logic of the procedure by means of which scientific theories are developed.^[xlvii]^[xlvii] Peirce indicated that one needs to examine *science as an activity*, i.e., in terms of the linguistically established operations and conventions, that are proposed by practicing scientists for the attainment of predetermined ends.^[xlviii]^[xlviii] Such a metatheoretical reflection on science as a practiced discipline shows that it operates in function of the conceptual scheme of instrumental action, i.e., action aimed at “control of the external conditions for existence.”^[xlix]^[xlix] In this respect Peirce's three forms of inference— deduction, induction, abduction—for the logic of inquiry may be viewed as constituting a procedure that generates intersubjectively recognized beliefs.^[l]^[l] The import of this view consists in disclosing that the knowledge derived from the empirical-analytic sciences is framed within the parameters of purposive-rational, feedback-monitored action,^[li]^[li] i.e., “*technically exploitable* knowledge.”^[lii]^[lii] The execution of operations reflect feedback controls that insure precision and intersubjective reliability.^[liii]^[liii]

Habermas thereby comprehends the theoretical logic characteristic of science as evidencing the structure of the hypothetico-deductive form and therefore as concerned with the production of a knowledge that renders predictions—given certain initial conditions—possible.^[liv]^[liv] He wants to argue against a view that understands theory as proceeding in a vacuum independent of the investigators responsible for shaping research programs in a manner generative of the type of knowing identified with science. Habermas wants to underscore the role played by the subject in determining the practices and activities to be employed in the production of knowledge, i.e., activities such as controlled observation, experimentation, various procedural applications, operations of measurement.^[lv]^[lv] An observation, for instance, is theory-laden to the extent that it is conducted within the parameters of a particular theoretical framework, attempts to answer a given query, satisfies a specific interest, or resolves a certain problem. Accordingly, the language of science expresses “the success or failure of operations.”^[lvi]^[lvi] The realm of objects is understood in function of these activities in terms of their susceptibility to technical manipulation.^[lvii]^[lvii] This Habermas understands as happening precisely as it should given that prior to all theorizing scientific research programs are conceived, designed and executed so as to generate this type of knowledge.^[lviii]^[lviii] It is in this sense that Habermas proposes that “. . . with the structure of propositions (restricted prognoses concerning observable behaviour) and with the type of conditions of validation (imitation of the control of the results of action . . .) a methodical decision has been taken in advance on the technical utility of information. . . . Similarly the

range of possible experience is prejudiced, precisely the range to which hypotheses refer and upon which they can founder.”[\[lix\]](#)[\[lix\]](#)

To the extent then that science proceeds in this manner it merits Habermas’ point “. . . that theories of empirical sciences disclose reality subject to the constitutive interest in the possible securing and expansion, through information, of feed-back monitored action. This is the cognitive interest in technical control over objectified processes.”[\[lx\]](#)[\[lx\]](#)In this view, empirical-analytical knowledge does not merely consist in a formal appropriation of empirical objects such as moving bodies and events susceptible to manipulation, but is rather the product of concrete, social activity. When such knowledge is analyzed according to its practices and operations which emerge as the precondition to the generation of a theory, Habermas claims there is a distinct interest in technical mastery over nature that animates the scientific enterprise. The empirical-analytic sciences far from being normatively-neutral are framed within the canons of hypothetico-deductive methodology in favor of advancing scientific theories whose function consist in securing instrumental control of natural processes as may be empirically tested in reproducible conditions. The value expressed by the technical interest of the empirical-analytic sciences is derived “from the invariant relation of the human species to its natural environment”[\[lxi\]](#)[\[lxi\]](#) such that labor processes are the “perpetual natural necessity of human life.”[\[lxii\]](#)[\[lxii\]](#)It is this value informing the production and articulation of scientific theory, grounded in the organization of the human person *qua* biological organism,[\[lxiii\]](#)[\[lxiii\]](#) that remains undetected by positivists due to the “objectivist illusion” of their epistemic scheme.

For Peirce the intersubjective basis of scientific views could be comprehended within the purview of instrumental action. However, once Habermas disengages the technical interest by noting how it guides the pretheoretical activities of practicing scientists, he argues that the methodology for understanding this metatheoretical dimension of science concerned with human interaction and language is beyond the methodological scope of instrumental action. Whereas instrumental action aims at the control of external conditions, communicative action aims at reaching intersubjective understanding and agreement. Said another way, whereas instrumental action concerns itself with understanding the interaction of a subject with an object, communicative action concerns itself with understanding the interaction of a subject with an object that as a subject is capable of intersubjective relations. Given then the limitations proper to the framework of instrumental action, Habermas proposes the need to move beyond this framework to a consideration of that which is proper to communicative action, viz., the practical interest of the historical-hermeneutic sciences and the emancipatory interest of the critical sciences. Indeed, communicative action will emerge as the more inclusive and indispensable context for understanding instrumental action.

The Practical Interest of the Historical-Hermeneutic Sciences

In Habermas’ view the technically useful information derived from empirical-analytic science is itself the product of ordinary language and social activity, i.e., of the linguistic expressions and the methodological operations used to objectify reality under the behavioral system of instrumental action. Yet neither social activity nor ordinary language, including linguistic expressions, actions, and experiential gestures can be understood by or become the object of nomological science, for such activities constitute a distinct object domain and imply their own value. Thus, Habermas moves from instrumental to communicative action, particularly that dimension of communicative action pertaining to hermeneutics, given that this science has as its object the nature of ordinary

language and human interaction, i.e., speaking and acting subjects, persons, utterances, texts, etc.[lxiv][lxiv] To clarify the practical interest of communicative action will require showing Habermas' critique of Dilthey and Gadamer.[lxv][lxv]

In distinguishing the cognitive goal and the objective framework of hermeneutic science, Habermas draws upon the work of Dilthey. Indistinguishing the human sciences—*Geisteswissenschaften*—from the natural sciences—*Naturwissenschaften*—Dilthey manages to articulate the distinct goals animating each of these domains of inquiry. In this respect the natural sciences treat the questions “why?” and “how?” and thus are concerned with *explanation*; the human sciences consider the “what?” question and are thereby concerned with understanding (*Verstehen*), as in “What is this object?” or “What is this item of behavior?”[lxvi][lxvi] Whereas the natural sciences aim at explaining a knowledge suitable for the manipulation of objectified processes, the hermeneutic sciences aim at understanding human beings and their consciousness as both articulated and fashioned in symbolic systems of communication. The hermeneutic sciences are not therefore concerned with manipulation of an external realm of objects but, rather, with understanding the nature of symbolic communicative reality, i.e., intersubjective meanings and interactions.

Dilthey clarifies the objective framework of the hermeneutic sciences by arguing that the process of achieving understanding consists in one's capacity to reconstruct intentional or symbolic objects, i.e., through the establishment of intersubjective understanding.[lxvii][lxvii] Specifically, Dilthey proposed that the object of hermeneutic science consists in the “community of life unities,” which involves the fusion of two dimensions: the diachronic one referring to life histories of individuals over time, and the synchronic one referring to the communicative meanings intersubjectively shared.[lxviii][lxviii] The components of such “life unities” include the more individual dimension as consisting in personal identity and the self-formative process, and the more communal dimension as consisting in dialogue relations and reciprocal recognition. According to this schemata individuals act and develop over time in relation to other individuals forming their lifeworld, such that members of a common sociolinguistic community depend for their communal existence on an effective and reliable intersubjective system of understanding. Habermas puts it in these terms: “I understand myself only in the ‘sphere of what is common’ in which I simultaneously understand the other in his objectifications. For our two experiences of life are articulated in the same language, which for us has intersubjectively binding validity.”[lxix][lxix]

However, in his critical assessment, Habermas takes issue with Dilthey's formulation of the object of hermeneutic science on the grounds that it does not take sufficient account of the connection between hermeneutics and social-cultural practice. Whereas Dilthey conceived practical activity as somehow compromising the objective rigor of hermeneutics as a science, Habermas understands practical activity as the very prerequisite for knowledge. He accuses Dilthey of maintaining an objectivism which fails to see the role of practical experience in the articulation of knowledge.[lxx][lxx] In a crucial passage, Habermas clarifies the “action-orienting” function of hermeneutic understanding:

In its very structure hermeneutic understanding is designed to guarantee, within cultural traditions, the possible action-orienting self-understanding of individuals and groups as well as reciprocal understanding between different individuals and groups. It makes possible the form of unconstrained consensus and the type of open intersubjectivity on which communicative action depends.[lxxi][lxxi]

When such “unconstrained consensus” and “open intersubjectivity” fail, a “condition of survival is disturbed.”

It bans the danger of communication breakdown in both dimensions: the vertical one of one's own individual life history and the collective tradition to which one belongs, and the horizontal one of mediating between the traditions of different individuals, groups and cultures. When these communication flows break off and the intersubjectivity of mutual understanding is either rigidified or falls apart, a condition of survival is disturbed, one that is as elementary as the complementary condition of the success of instrumental action: namely the possibility of unconstrained agreement and non-violent recognition. Because this is the presupposition of practice, *we call the knowledge-constitutive interest of the cultural sciences “practical.”* [lxxii][lxxii]

Habermas views Dilthey's proposal as emphasizing the objectivistic dimension of understanding at the cost of the practical. [lxxiii][lxxiii] Yet for Habermas an examination of language makes manifest “the empirical context of indirectly communicated life experience.” [lxxiv][lxxiv] Ordinary language is not only intimately connected to practice; indeed it may be understood as part of a “stream of life,” i.e., of various interconnected layers of meanings and experiences. When scrutinized by hermeneutic science this discloses an interest which does not merely involve an abstract comprehension or interpretation of texts—persons, cultures or traditions. Rather, it aims at “*practically effective knowledge,*” [lxxv][lxxv] i.e., at “the possibility of creating and maintaining successful mutual interaction between two or more individuals.” [lxxvi][lxxvi]

For Habermas *practical interest* expresses a deep-seated value in favor of open lines of communication while avoiding breakdowns that may threaten “the action-orienting understanding” of individuals and groups. Hence the disruption of forms of life may be curtailed via agreement upon meanings between dialogical partners engaged in communication, i.e., via the mediation of meaningful, practically successful discourse. In the following passage, Habermas clarifies the manner in which understanding functions within nomological and hermeneutic science.

The function of understanding in the conduct of life is analogous to that demonstrated by Peirce for empirical-analytic inquiry. Both categories of investigations are embedded in systems of actions. Both are set off by disturbances of routinized intercourse whether with nature or with other persons. Both aim at the elimination of doubt and the re-establishment of unproblematic modes of behavior. The emergence of a problematic situation results from disappointed expectations. But in one case the criterion of disappointment is the failure of a feedback-controlled purposive-rational action, while in the other it is the disturbance of a consensus, that is the non-agreement of reciprocal expectations between at least two acting subjects. The first aims at replacing rules of behavior that have failed in reality with tested technical rules, whereas the second aims at interpreting expressions of life that cannot be understood and that block the mutuality of behavioral expectations. Experiment refines the everyday pragmatic controls of rules of instrumental action to a methodical form of corroboration, whereas hermeneutics is the scientific form of the interpretive activities of everyday life. [lxxvii][lxxvii]

As rooted in a system of interactions mediated by ordinary language, the hermeneutic sciences are rooted in life structures that exhibit a practical interest in examining, maintaining, furthering and restoring intersubjective and non-violent recognition among interacting groups and/or subjects. The practical interest involves a sort of wisdom not satisfied by nomological science. This is to say that “The cultural disciplines did not develop out of the crafts and other professions

in which technical knowledge is required but rather out of the professionalized realms of action that require practical wisdom.”^[lxxviii]^[lxxviii]

Notwithstanding, Habermas maintains that though hermeneutic science has a vital function to play in promoting social intersubjectivity, it still is limited to questions of logical consistency, paraphrasing or translating the unclear meaning of a symbolically structured reality. Such a framework according to Habermas cannot determine the possible truth content or ideological distortion of a given text. It is not sufficient, in this sense, to understand with all fidelity the meaning and structure of communicative exchanges, practices and institutions; beyond the level of understanding, a critical appropriation of such texts is required. Habermas takes issue with Gadamer on exactly this point, viz., that his own philosophical hermeneutics is without a critical instrument for assessing the truth or deceptive falsity of texts.^[lxxix]^[lxxix] Gadamer holds the historicity of human understanding in function of a given history, customs, traditions, etc., is such that there can be no genuinely critical resolution to questions of truth; truth has a temporal character. Notwithstanding, the truth content of a text, Habermas counters, needs to be examined so as to determine whether it is the product of genuine consensus or of coercion disguised as authentic dialogue. “ Language is *also* a medium for domination and social power; it serves to legitimate relations of organized force. In so far as the legitimations do not articulate the power relations whose institutionalization they make possible, in so far as these relations manifest themselves in the legitimations, language is *also* ideological.”^[lxxx]^[lxxx] On this basis that Habermas argues that beyond the practical interest in hermeneutic science for comprehending texts, a “depth” or critical hermeneutics is needed that endeavors to understand history while uncovering its possible ideological distortions.^[lxxxi]^[lxxxi] This is precisely the role of the critical sciences in function of the emancipatory interest as the following section will show.

The Emancipatory Interest of the Critical Sciences

The approach followed in the introduction of the technical and practical interests consisted in uncovering these by considering the sciences to which they give expression. For the third interest, the emancipatory interest, however, it will be more appropriate to begin by first clarifying the nature of the interest in terms of which the question of the sciences to which it gives expression can be addressed. Two fundamental aims will be pursued: the nature of the emancipatory interest when considered in function of the limitations inherent to hermeneutic science, and the relation between the emancipatory interest and the critical sciences. The latter aim will involve analyzing the interpretive framework employed by Freud in developing his model of psychoanalysis in the light of Habermas’ critical appropriation of this model in understanding critical theory.

With respect to the first aim, the concern in maintaining intersubjective communication demands a form of inquiry dedicated to the task of fostering communicative understanding and preventing breakdowns which can threaten the interpersonal reciprocity on which civil society is founded. Yet, the elucidation of the meaning of a text as proposed or required for internalization by members comprising a common tradition may represent nothing more than the expression of distortive ideology. This insight bespeaks another dimension proper to the human being which is capable of penetrating communicative distortions so as to uncover and dissolve what is not an expression of dialogical authenticity. The emancipatory interest surfaces then as an expression of this concern with disengaging the communicative message from as yet unacknowledged hypostatizations. Christopher Broniak explains,

Emancipation, according to Habermas, is essentially the activity of understanding, the finding/forging of connections at the dialogical level of experience. To be blunt, emancipation *is* communicative action, living both actively and reactively, critically and creatively, thinking as well as feeling. Understanding is an encompassing cognitive mode, where intellectual assent and willful consent share equally valuable roles in the process of intersubjective acceptance in the medium of language. [lxxxii][lxxxii]

Moreover, the ground of this interest is in the power of the faculty of human reason to detect, oppose and eradicate whatever does not favor the well-being of the social unit taken as a whole or in terms of its constitutive members. Habermas maintains that by means of the employment of reason in the activity of self-reflection—understood in terms of critical cognition—one attains liberating self-knowledge, i.e., the capacity to decode and purge itself from whatever curtails the attainment of purported ends. For Habermas, “Self-reflection brings to consciousness those determinates of a self-formative process of cultivation and self-formation (*Bildung*) which ideologically determine a contemporary practice and conception of the world. . . . [It] leads to insight due to the fact that what has previously been unconscious is made conscious in a manner rich in consequences: analytic insights intervene in life.” [lxxxiii][lxxxiii]

The power of this mode of understanding consists in the human subject singularly and/or collectively being in a position to author history, at least that part of history that is a product of human will and consciousness. Habermas does not conceive the human community as the hopeless prey of uncontrollable forces; on the contrary, in virtue of the rational and volitional capacity, Habermas views human beings as possessing the power to reflect upon and, to some extent, determine collectively their own destiny. The knowledge derived by understanding via self-reflection has the efficacy of bringing about the autonomy of action from as of yet unacknowledged constraints. [lxxxiv][lxxxiv] It is in this sense that “In self-reflection, knowledge for the sake of knowledge comes to coincide with the interest in autonomy and responsibility (*Mündigkeit*). For the pursuit of reflection knows itself as a movement of emancipation. Reason is at the same time subject to the interest in reason. We can say that it obeys an *emancipatory cognitive interest*, which aims at the pursuit of reflection.” [lxxxv][lxxxv]

Further, Habermas points out that the crucial difference between the emancipatory interest and the technical and the practical ones consists in that the former is immediately realized in the act of self-reflection wherein one becomes cognizant of interest-oriented perspectives and in this act of cognition disassociated from the same. In the case of the technical and the practical interest an act of cognition may not necessarily terminate in the attainment of the object apprehended, given that an act of knowledge is only mediately related to its employment. Indeed, Habermas takes the position that it is through the emancipatory interest that one becomes aware of the connection between knowledge and interests via reflection and the formative process of the species. [lxxxvi][lxxxvi]

Additionally, Habermas argues that the emancipatory interest is derived from technical and practical interests in that it is concerned with both intersubjective coordination of the lifeworld and technical control of external objects.

Compared with the technical and practical interests in knowledge, which are both grounded in deeply-rooted . . . structures of action and experience—i.e. the constituent elements of social systems—the *emancipatory interest in knowledge* has a derivative status. It guarantees the connection between theoretical knowledge and an “object domain” of practical life which comes into existence as a result of systematically distorted communication and thinly legitimized repression.

The type of action and experience corresponding to this object domain is, therefore, also derivative.[\[lxxxvii\]](#)[\[lxxxvii\]](#)

The emancipatory interest functions within social life to the extent that hypostatizations require—via reflection—critical dissolution.[\[lxxxviii\]](#)[\[lxxxviii\]](#)

Habermas, accordingly, understands the emancipatory interest as the constitutive interest of the critically-oriented sciences whose object domain consists precisely in actions and utterances that are defective or distortive. The aim of these sciences involves subjecting the technical and practical interests in terms “of what a society intends for itself as the *good life*.”[\[lxxxix\]](#)[\[lxxxix\]](#)For Habermas the critical sciences, such as psychoanalysis, and critical social theory and disciplines engaged in systematic reflection, such as philosophy, endeavor to advance the process of “. . . methodical self-reflection and to dissolve the barriers to the self-conscious development of life. An adequate understanding of all social practices, including scientific inquiry, depends ultimately on these sciences; for by disclosing deformations of communication they attempt to restore to men and women a true awareness of their position in history.”[\[xc\]](#)[\[xc\]](#)

With a view toward clarifying the relationship between the emancipatory interest and the critical sciences, Habermas moves toward an examination of Freud's model of psychoanalysis as the prototypical methodology for the critically-oriented sciences. From the view of the present study the concern is not with Freud's *theoretical* interpretations of the nature of psychoanalysis but with his *methodological* framework, which Habermas understands as representing “the only tangible example of a science incorporating methodical self-reflection.”[\[xci\]](#)[\[xci\]](#)Habermas develops the logic and theoretical structure of critical theory as a reflective science by analyzing the interpretive framework developed by Freud. This incorporates both the interest of nomological science in generating laws and theories capable of accounting for phenomena—in this case pathologies—and the interest of interpretive science in recovering the signification of a particular meaning, an action or non-verbal expression. Habermas thus understands Freudian psychoanalysis as a “depth hermeneutics” “that cannot be confined to the procedures of philology but rather *unites linguistic analysis with the psychological investigation of causal connections*.”[\[xcii\]](#)[\[xcii\]](#)The principal task of emancipatory critique is neither explaining material processes nor purely determining the meaning of a text, but, rather, one of facilitating the process of critical reflection. This is better understood by reviewing Habermas' appropriation of the framework of psychoanalysis, which he understands as consisting in three distinct yet interrelated levels: metapsychology, general interpretation, and the reconstruction of individual life histories. For Habermas at the time of writing *Knowledge and Human Interests*, these levels reflected a suggestive interpretive framework for critical theory.

He understands the first level, metapsychology, as referring to the “basic categories of the new discipline, the conceptual constructions, the assumptions about the functional structures of the psychic apparatus and about mechanisms of both the genesis of symptoms and the dissolution of pathological compulsions.”[\[xciii\]](#)[\[xciii\]](#)These categories are derived by reflection on what is involved in the communicative exchanges between an analyst and an analysand. It is at this level that the general theory of neurosis, the connection between language aberrations and behavioral pathology, the model of ego-id-superego, and the theory of instincts are explicated. For Habermas it is within the context of this framework that the categories of the science can be understood. Insofar as critical theory is concerned, he understands this level as corresponding to his own work in developing a general theory of cognitive interests and of communicative action.[\[xciv\]](#)[\[xciv\]](#)

Metapsychology, the second level of general interpretation, provides “the methodological framework in which empirically substantive interpretations of self-formative process can be

developed,”[\[xcv\]](#)[\[xcv\]](#) given that behavioral pathologies result from lived experiences in the process of maturation. Interpretations serve the function of theories and are themselves generated in terms of clinical experiences accumulated over time. These interpretations, in turn, are expected to demonstrate their validity as in the case of nomological theories by virtue of their capacity to make successful predictions. The psychoanalytical narrative of a growing child has the function of considering general configurations of interaction between parent and child, development of motivational syndromes, and learning mechanisms. Insofar as critical theory is concerned, this level refers to Habermas’ “theoretically generalized history,” which he now refers to as the theory of social evolution.

The third and final level refers to the reconstruction of individual life histories with the intent of effecting the therapeutic remediation of the behavioral anomalies. This stage by making sense of the piecemeal information obtained in a clinical session endeavors in terms of the general interpretive framework to derive a global view of the patient's life. Such reconstructions amount to hypotheses open to verification in the manner proper to psychoanalysis: if the reconstruction has been successfully executed the patient should upon learning it experience a liberation from repressed structures.[\[xcvi\]](#)[\[xcvi\]](#) Thus, if the reconstruction is adequate, the analyses and by reflectively following the analyst's portrayal of his life achieves the crucial emancipatory insight.[\[xcvii\]](#)[\[xcvii\]](#) This consists in those causal sequences of his life history responsible for a sort of an acquired nature. Success here means that a patient's life is no longer afflicted by deception as subsequently demonstrated in his actions and reactions.[\[xcviii\]](#)[\[xcviii\]](#) For Habermas, insofar as critical theory is concerned, this level refers to the therapeutic phase which involves the reconstruction of the life history of a given society in order to uncover and dissolve the dogmatism, prejudice and error embedded in its communicative structures.

The employment, however, of the psychoanalytic method within the domain of social science presents serious difficulties.[\[xcix\]](#)[\[xcix\]](#) Gadamer, for one, questions the viability of applying the model of psychoanalysis to the sphere of critical social theory:

. . . the patient's suffering and desire to be cured provide the basis for the therapeutic efforts of the doctor who, relying on his authority and not without pressure, attempts to uncover repressed motivations; implied in this relationship is a voluntary subordination of one to the other. In social life, by contrast, reciprocal resistance between opponents is the common practice of all participants.[\[c\]](#)[\[c\]](#)

Held makes a similar comment, “In what ways can a dialogue between individuals become a model for the analysis of relations between classes and groups?”[\[ci\]](#)[\[ci\]](#) Indeed, it may well be said that the inapplicability of the methodology of psychoanalysis to social reality led Habermas to develop his theory of universal pragmatics with the hope of providing critical theory with an instrument for social reflection.[\[cii\]](#)[\[cii\]](#)

It should be noted that Habermas criticizes Freud's classification of psychoanalysis as a natural science since its attempt to effect a naturalistic reduction fails to appreciate the significance of critical-reflection as, say, understood within the context of communicative action.[\[ciii\]](#)[\[ciii\]](#) Moreover, Habermas’ critique of Freud parallels the one directed against Marx, who by understanding emancipation in terms of instrumental action failed to take account of the intersubjective character of social roles and its norms of communicative action. Though increased production may serve to eradicate external need, yet communicative action attends to the eradication of hypostatizations grounded in the realm of symbolically structured reality.[\[civ\]](#)[\[civ\]](#) Indeed, for

Habermas the basic inadequacy of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School may also be traced to its insufficient grasp of the significance of reflection insofar as emancipatory critique is concerned .

The Primacy of the Emancipatory Interest

Before arguing for the primacy of emancipatory interests and their centrality insofar as the metaphysical question is concerned, it will be necessary to consider a number of intermediary questions. This section will concern three such issues affecting Habermas' theory of cognitive interests, viz.: (1) the distinct domains of reality which are indicated by the cognitive interests, (2) the objectivity of knowledge in light of its connection to cognitive interests, and (3) the primacy of emancipatory interests with respect to technical and practical interests.

On the first issue, one might challenge an assumption of Habermas which has not been sufficiently treated by his critics, viz., the status of the domains or realms of reality disclosed by the cognitive interests. In this respect Held comments, "It should be borne in mind that [Habermas] is not describing an ontologically distinct sphere of objects. Rather he is attempting to delineate another viewpoint from which reality is disclosed."[\[cv\]](#)[\[cv\]](#) Habermas is certainly justified in maintaining the epistemological position that the cognitive interests consider the same reality from a certain "viewpoint" such that there can be other possible viewpoints from which the *same* reality may be considered. Nevertheless, what the cognitive interests disclose is not merely a *single* reality considered from different orientations, but different kinds of reality, each considered from a viewpoint that appears proper in virtue of its being that kind of reality.

Accordingly, Rick Roderick's articulation of Habermas' epistemological bias merits careful consideration:

Habermas' distinction is an epistemological one concerning not different `worlds', but different orientations to one `world'. From one perspective, we encounter objects in motion, events and other processes capable of being causally explained; from the other, we encounter communicating subjects, speech and action capable of being understood.[\[cvi\]](#)[\[cvi\]](#)

To say in the same breath that Habermas is concerned not with "different `worlds'" but with "different orientations to one `world'" appears to seriously conflict with what ensues. On the one hand, *there are* "objects in motion, events and other processes capable of being causally explained," while, on the other, *there are* "communicating subjects, speech and action capable of being understood." It appears that the word `world' is intended here to signify the realm in which both objects and subjects are present. True, the class of "objects in motion" is inclusive of all reality insofar as it is capable of motion such that communicating subjects *qua* material beings participate in such reality *qua* quantifiable. Nevertheless, the reverse is certainly not the case; i.e., that the class of "communicating subjects" is inclusive only of that reality insofar as it is endowed with an ability for "speech and action capable of being understood." What is merely an object capable of motion and not a subject capable of communication cannot fall under the rubric of communicating subjects.

Although these two classes may be considered as consisting in distinct *viewpoints* from an epistemological point of view, from the point of view of the reality to which they refer, it appears that the distinctiveness of the two points of view is grounded in distinct—albeit related—orders of

reality to which each refers. On the one hand, an order of material objects known in function of the hypothetico-deductive methodology of the empirical-analytic sciences and susceptible to instrumental action. On the other hand, an order of communicating subjects known in function of the method of the historical-hermeneutic sciences and capable of communicative action. [\[cvii\]](#)[\[cvii\]](#)

Insofar as this study is concerned, attributes such as consciousness, critical reflection and autonomy render communicating subjects distinct from material objects without the possibility of the former being derived from the latter. Indeed, the nature of material objects, lacking consciousness, critical reflection and autonomy, consists in their subjugation when interpreted in function of the technical interest to invariant physical laws. Communicating subjects, in contrast, are not fixed when interpreted in function of the emancipatory interest to invariant symbolic schemata. The emancipatory dimension of critical reflection is clearly recognized by Habermas:

Self-reflection is at once intuition and emancipation, comprehension and liberation from dogmatic dependence. The dogmatism that reason undoes both analytically and practically is false consciousness: error and unfree existence in particular. [\[cviii\]](#)[\[cviii\]](#)

Reflection empowers communicating subjects with the possibility of identifying conceptual, psychological, cultural, social, or political hypostatizations that may arise from “error and unfree existence.” It is in this sense that communicating subjects are not, *sensu stricto*, subject to an inevitable destiny; rather, they can effect the course of history with will and consciousness.

A second issue concerns the determination of the extent to which the theory of knowledge interests affects the objectivity of cognitive pronouncements. This question is crucial for distinguishing the realm of material object from that of communicating subject.

With respect to the technical interest which fosters knowledge susceptible to instrumental action, it should be stressed that Habermas’ point is not that the realm of matter is an unknowable thing-in-itself. Rather, the realm of matter comes to be known within the framework of instrumental action, a knowledge that is nonetheless always open to further elucidation. As Henning Ottmann indicates,

Technical interest confronts a ‘factual’, ‘external’ nature which places constraints on our inquiry and ‘resists’ false interpretations. Referring, for instance, to Peirce’s example of the ‘hardness of diamonds’, Habermas states that a diamond has to be regarded as ‘hard’ not only as it is constituted as an object of technical control but also as it is in itself ‘capable of entering the behavioral system of instrumental action’. By ‘disclosing’ natural objects within the interest in control, the technical interest brings to light at the same time what the objects are ‘in themselves’. ‘Nature-in-itself’ is revealed within the technical interest. [\[cix\]](#)[\[cix\]](#)

If one were to object that this position amounts to the “familiar circle of applying to nature-in-itself categories that properly have a meaning only in relation to appearances,” [\[cx\]](#)[\[cx\]](#) Habermas, who does not specifically consider this issue, might, according to McCarthy, respond,

From one point of view, the power of things to affect our senses is a relation constituted within the realm of objective nature, that is, subject to the causal categories of empirical-analytic science. From the point of view of the process of

inquiry, however, “the affecting power of things . . . is nothing other than the constraint of reality which motivates us to revise false statements and generate new ones.” In this transcendental perspective, nature-in-itself does not refer to unknowable but causally effective things-in-themselves; it refers instead to that moment of knowable nature designated by the terms *independence*, *externality*, *facticity*, and the like.[\[cxi\]](#)[\[cxi\]](#)

Habermas, of course, is not espousing a naive realism when it comes to certifying the truth or falsity of scientific statements,[\[cxii\]](#)[\[cxii\]](#) given that the question of truth can only be determined by means of a process of discursive argumentation that meets certain formal condition.[\[cxiii\]](#)[\[cxiii\]](#) Technical interest, however, does not represent a view of reality which somehow compromises or vitiates objectivity; rather, it determines the aspect under which reality is to be apprehended, apart from any other number of possible orientations in which it may be comprehended.[\[cxiv\]](#)[\[cxiv\]](#) Moreover, what the technical interest underscores is a view of the empirical-analytic sciences that rejects the notion of science as a purely value-neutral endeavor.

Insofar as the objectivity of the knowledge pertaining to the realm of communicating subjects is concerned, i.e., the knowledge derived from the hermeneutic and critical sciences, it is necessary to state the subsequent clarification that Habermas’ original formulation of self-reflection underwent as developed in *Knowledge and Human Interests*. Karl-Otto Apel accordingly pointed out that the concept of self-reflection as Habermas employs it in *Knowledge and Human Interests* failed to distinguish two distinct senses. On the one hand, transcendental self-reflection as signifying the more Kantian sense of reflection on the general conditions of the possibility of knowledge, understanding and action. On the other hand, critical self-reflection as signifying the more Hegelian sense of reflection with an orientation toward personal or communal emancipation from unconscious constraints that inhibit the self-formative process.[\[cxv\]](#)[\[cxv\]](#) Habermas admits,

It occurred to me only after completing the book that the traditional use of the term ‘reflexion’ which goes back to German Idealism, covers (and confuses) two things: on the one hand, it denotes the reflexion upon the conditions of potential abilities of a knowing, speaking and acting subject as such; on the other hand, it denotes the reflexion upon unconsciously produced constraints to which a determinate subject (or a determinate group of subjects, or a determinate species subject) succumbs in its process of self-formation.[\[cxvi\]](#)[\[cxvi\]](#)

In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas was clearly employing both senses of self-reflection without clearly distinguishing between them. The theory of cognitive interests is the product of reflection in the first of the two senses noted above, i.e., reflection on the conditions of the various sciences. His discussion on the emancipatory interest reflects the second sense of self-reflection, i.e., ascritical reflection aimed at the dissolution of “unconsciously produced constraints.”

In later work[\[cxvii\]](#)[\[cxvii\]](#) just prior to the theory of communicative action, Habermas introduces the distinction between self-reflection as an elucidation of intuitive know-how understood as rational reconstructions, and self-reflection as a critique from internal or external constraints understood as self-criticism.[\[cxviii\]](#)[\[cxviii\]](#) The realization and formulation of this distinction is most significant for it is on this basis that Habermas acknowledges that while critical

self-reflection remains historically situated, rational reconstructions are not bound to local contexts. McCarthy notes this.

Critique remains bound to “the system of action and experience” in a way that reconstruction does not. Since it embraces the particulars of a self-formative process and aims at transforming the specific determinants of an ideologically distorted practice and world view, it is historically situated reflection. By contrast, reconstructions of the universal conditions of speech and action are not context bound in this way. They represent the “purest” form of theoretical knowledge, for they issue neither from a technical interest in control of objectified processes nor from a practical interest in securing action-oriented mutual understanding nor directly from an interest in emancipation. Rather they are “first generated within a reflexive attitude,” that is, from a concern to render explicit what is always implicitly presupposed. [cxix][cxix]

The import of viewing rational reconstructions as a pure form of knowledge independent of the frameworks of the theory of cognitive interests, however objective these may be, is that it represents, for Habermas, the ground for arguing that there is a form of knowledge that is independent of local contexts. This means that communicating subjects can articulate the normative-theoretical basis for critical reflection, such that the foundations of critique depend on such a reconstruction: “the conditions of why linguistic communication is at all possible has to be the theoretical basis for explaining systematically distorted communication and deviant processes of socialization.” [cxx][cxx] Thus, according to Habermas, the objective basis of the sciences of communicating subjects is grounded in the reconstruction of linguistic communication. Moreover, the pronouncements of reconstructive analysis are viewed as proposals subject to empirical verification in a manner appropriate to the subject matter of a reconstructive science. Yet this clarification of the objective status of one of the senses of self-reflection, viz., reconstruction, still leaves unanswered the question of the objective status of the other sense of self-reflection, viz., critical reflection.

Critical reflection when considered from the point of view of its aim, viz., emancipation from dogmatic and ideological disequilibria, suffers from an ambiguity given that Habermas refers to the emancipatory interest as derivative from the technical and practical interest. As will be recalled,

Compared with the technical and practical interests in knowledge, which are both grounded in deeply rooted . . . structures of action and experience—i.e., in the constituent elements of social systems—the *emancipatory interest in knowledge* has a derivative status. It guarantees the connection between theoretical knowledge and an ‘objective domain’ of practical life which comes into existence as a result of systematically distorted communication and thinly legitimated repression. [cxxi][cxxi]

Explained in these terms, Habermas understands labor and interaction in function of the technical and practical interests as invariant “constituent elements of social systems.” This means that social systems are dependent on both the mastery of nature and the achievement of understanding in ordinary language. The emancipatory interest to the extent that it directs itself toward the dissolution of distorted forms of communication is understood as “derivative,” i.e., dependent on cases affected by such distortions. Thus, initially, it may appear that critical reflection, as the medium for the realization of the experience of emancipation, is also relegated to a second-class status.

The derivative status of the emancipatory interest should not however be interpreted as compromising the central importance of critical reflection given that in another sense the emancipatory interest is itself an invariant, constitutive element with regards to the human interest in autonomy and responsibility (*Mündigkeit*). It is

... “posited” in the very structure of human communication; ... “reason also means the will to reason.” But although this telos itself is invariant, the actual pursuit of emancipation through critical self-reflection develops only in connection with historically variable conditions of work and interaction.[\[cxxii\]](#)[\[cxxii\]](#)

For Habermas the will to reason is understood in an enlightened sense as signifying the will to reason free from dogmatic and ideological influences. The actual employment of critical reflection may be required only to remedy systematically distorted communication, though it resides as a *telos* in the structure of human communication. Since emancipatory discourse presupposes the emancipatory interest operative to thwart forms of prejudice and error, the primacy of the emancipatory interest emerges as a *correction* of that which may be obtained by the other two interests. In the case of communicating subjects, then, the question is limited not to whether their material needs and cultural relations are being satisfied, but to *whether these dimensions of human life are being fulfilled justly*.

In sum, this chapter has followed the development of Habermas’ theory of cognitive interests so as to indicate the sense in which the emancipatory interest comes to express a constitutive *telos* of the human being whose emergence into time is toward a state of freedom devoid of all forms of disequilibria. Yet, it is precisely this *process* toward authentic versus unauthentic freedom that needs greater elucidation, for that would serve to articulate the practical dimension of the enterprise of justice. The inapplicability of the psychoanalytic method for social critique has led Habermas to the development of his theory of universal pragmatics, as the methodological framework within which critical theory purportedly attains the needed resources to reflect critically upon its own historical past and its present situation in pursuit of those possibilities that are congruent with its interest in freedom. This study now turns to an examination of Habermas’ theory of universal pragmatics.

Chapter III

The Theory of Universal Pragmatics: The Methodological Framework

In the last chapter the primacy of the emancipatory interest emerged within Habermas' theory of cognitive interests as indicative of a human tendency toward the attainment of a mode of freedom conceived as independence from hypostatized disequilibria and union with a form of life in function of justice. Given that Habermas' theory of cognitive interests failed to furnish an adequate method or procedure by which such distortions can be therapeutically examined, the present chapter will present his theory of language or universal pragmatics as representing, within his theory of communicative action, the methodological framework aimed at effecting the dissolution of constraints rooted in language. Such an analysis will serve to elucidate the distinctive communicative dimension of the human person/community made accessible by Habermas' proposal.

Habermas' theory of language consists in an ambitious program to provide normative foundations for the human sciences within the framework of reconstructive methodology. In this respect, universal pragmatics purports to articulate the universal infrastructure which accounts for speech and action and thereby provide the human sciences with a unifying framework for a critical apprehension of symbolically structured reality. Such a goal entails resolving the "is/ought," "fact/value" dichotomy rooted in Kantian transcendentalism;^{[i][i]} as Held puts it, "Habermas seeks to defend the claim that truth and virtue, facts and values, theory and practice are inseparable."^{[ii][ii]} Whereas universal pragmatics is concerned with elucidating the formal conditions of rational discourse, critical theory is concerned with appropriating this scheme in a theory of society explicitly dedicated to a form of human life free from all forms of prejudice, self-deception and error. For these are unconsciously appropriated in the self-formative process of an individual or a group and significantly thwart the emancipatory potential of the persons and groups so affected. By means of a "rational reconstruction of universal competencies," Habermas develops a critical instrument, the ideal speech situation, for detecting the manner in which language can serve as a source and perpetrator of unconscious constraints. For Habermas, the human subject must approximate this form of rationality and justice indicated by the ideal speech situation as a condition for the actualization of emancipatory interests. "The truth of statements is linked in the last analysis to the intention of the good and true life."^{[iii][iii]}

Since the ideal speech situation serves as the instrument for emancipatory critique, the question of the nature and adequacy of Habermas' proposal will concern this and the following chapters. This chapter will limit itself to considering the adequacy of the formal conditions of the ideal speech situation as these refer to a logic of theoretical discourse. Such a discussion is crucial for deepening the distinctions that mark the realm of material objects from the human/ social realm of communicating subjects. The question of the adequacy of the ideal speech situation as it refers to a logic of practical discourse will then be the focus of the following chapter. The present aims will be pursued (A) by presenting a reconstruction of consensual speech, (B) by articulating his discourse theory of truth, and (C) by considering how Habermas' notion of truth functions within the context of a pragmatic logic of theoretical discourse in function of the conditions of the ideal speech situation.

Reconstruction of Consensual Speech

Universal pragmatics, as a reconstructive science, investigates the “universal and unavoidable presuppositions” that are operative in the successful employment of speech acts oriented to achieving mutual understanding. Theoretical linguistics abstracts from the pragmatic context of language so as to limit its sphere of consideration to sentential analysis and the generative ability of the speaker. Universal pragmatics, in contrast, is concerned precisely with the structures and processes from which linguistics abstracts. The move from a consideration of *langue* to that of *parole*,^{[iv][iv]} as carried out in the work of Habermas, purports to lay bare the foundations of speech oriented to reaching understanding. In this sense that universal pragmatics:

. . . thematizes the elementary units of speech (utterances) in an attitude similar to that in which linguistics does the units of language (sentences). The goal of reconstructive language analysis is an explicit description of the rules that a competent speaker must master in order to form grammatical sentences and to utter them in an acceptable way It is . . . assumed that communicative competence has just a universal core as linguistic competence. A general theory of speech actions would thus describe exactly that fundamental system of rules that adult subjects master to the extent that they can fulfill *the conditions for a happy employment of sentences in utterances*, no matter to which individual languages the sentences may belong and in which accidental contexts the utterances may be embedded.^{[v][v]}

Universal pragmatics then involves explicating what accounts for the ability of a speaker to bring about an interpersonal engagement with a hearer, such that “the hearer can rely on him.”^{[vi][vi]} The crucial point for Habermas is that the theory of speech acts, whose material object is a concern of universal pragmatics, cannot be viewed as a purely linguistic enterprise in abstraction from the pragmatic dimension present in every speech performance oriented to understanding. Indeed, the plausibility of Habermas’ reconstructive effort is directed toward an explication of all that is involved in the deceptively simple, double-structure of the speech act. The ensuing section will briefly articulate the master lines of his analysis, including: (1) the dialogical versus monological paradigm constitutive of speech; (2) the double-structure of the speech act; (3) the performative component, including the relation between a typology of speech acts based on performative verbs and the various “realms of reality” to which they refer; (4) the validity claims and the ground of successful engagement; and (5) the distinction between levels of communicative interaction.^{[vii][vii]}

An obvious feature of speech-act theory is that the first noticeable characteristic of universal pragmatics is its shift from the monological paradigm present in *Knowledge and Human Interests* to a dialogical one. The root presupposition in such a theory is that language is not an autonomous being in and of itself, but, rather, a high-order faculty specific to *homo sapiens*. Accordingly, this reconstructive science^{[viii][viii]} does not initiate its investigations within the chambers of an utterly isolated *cogito* that ultimately doubts, strictly speaking, not only the veracity of its private, inner impressions,^{[ix][ix]} but also the fact of its very existence as an integrated knowing and acting self. Universal pragmatics repudiates this view of knowledge and explicitly recognizes the existence of selves other than one's own. This point needs to be emphasized, for it represents one critical feature in which universal pragmatics differs from such

other reconstructive sciences as theoretical linguistics that conduct their investigation in *abstraction* from the dialogical context in which speech transpires; their concentration is upon the generative ability of a speaker understood within the closed-context of a monological framework. [x][x] The essential notion operative in universal pragmatics, in contrast, is that there are no speech acts without dialogical participants; that is, speech is not possible without, at the very least, a speaker and a hearer engaged in the process of communication. Once the emphasis on dialogical participants as the source of speech act employment and deployment, it becomes necessary to examine the speech act itself and show its relationship to the issue of truth.

The typical speech act reveals a characteristic double-structure: a performative component followed by a propositional one. [xi][xi] The surface structure of explicit speech acts in the standard form can be analyzed according to the following paradigm:

[Performative Component]/[Propositional Component]

The form of any speech act could thus be specified as follows:

“[I (hereby) *performative verb* to you]/[that *S is P.*]”

The expressed form of the performative component is as follows: “I (hereby) *performative verb* to you.” The personal pronouns, “I” and “you,” serve to indicate the level of intersubjectivity in which speech acts are exchanged; the adverb “hereby” in parenthesis serves to indicate that the speech act originates from a speaker, and that it indeed consists in a certain proposal that is expressed to a hearer; lastly, the performative verb serves to indicate the illocutionary force, i.e., the specific interpersonal relation in which the speaker wishes to engage another dialogue participant. The form, in turn, of the propositional component is as follows: “that *S is P.*” The noun clause functions here as the direct object of the performative verb and, as such, refers to the level of predication, which mediates the experiences and states of affairs about which the speaker/hearer want to come to an understanding. [xii][xii] The double-structure then serves to indicate the point that dialogue participants communicate at two levels:

- (1) the *level of intersubjectivity* on which speaker and hearer, through illocutionary acts, establish the relations that permit them to come to an understanding with one another, and
- (2) the *level of propositional content* which is communicated. [xiii][xiii]

For Habermas *communicative speech acts*, in contradistinction to *strategic speech acts*, [xiv][xiv] are oriented to reaching understanding [xv][xv] wherein the relation intended by a speaker and signaled by a performative verb is established. An inventory of all possible performative verbs indicates, moreover, that these may be classified into four broad categories: (a) the communicatives, (b) the constatives, (c) the regulatives, and (d) the avowals. [xvi][xvi] Communicatives (say, ask, etc.), referring to the first type of speech act, are language-immanent insofar as they are directed to the very process of communication, i.e., concern themselves with the intelligibility of an utterance. The other three categories refer to extralinguistic “domains of reality”: constative speech acts are about “the” world of external nature (asserting, describing, narrating, etc.); regulative speech acts are about “our” world of society (commands, requests, and warnings, etc.); and avowal speech acts are about one’s “own” world of internal nature (to reveal, expose, pretend, etc.). [xvii][xvii] Thus, in addition to the speaker/hearer presupposed in speech,

the successful employment and deployment of speech acts involves having mastered three distinct yet related extralinguistic, coordinate systems, viz.: that of “the” world, “our” shared lifeworld, and one’s “own” world. In the case of speech acts involving the private inner-world of someone other than oneself, the ability to exchange such speech acts derives from the empathetic familiarity between members of a species. This enables one to attain an empathetic understanding with others given the common experiences and circumstances to which members of the same species are subject.

However, the distinctive contribution of universal pragmatics as a reconstructive science rests in examining the nature of the ground, i.e., the sufficient conditions that account for the achievement of the interpersonal engagement intended by the speaker. The crucial business of universal pragmatics—in contradistinction to other fields of inquiry concerned with language—consists in accounting for this third component that is implicitly or explicitly present in non-strategic speech acts oriented to understanding. Indeed, the speaker by means of his utterance *is making a proposal* to a hearer, who can either accept, reject or question that which the expressed statement signifies. Whether the utterance be an assertion (constative speech act), a command (regulative speech act), or a personal intention or state of being (avowal speech act), in each case the speaker—by presenting his utterance to the hearer, by the very act of vocalizing his proposal, i.e., his utterance—is telling the hearer: (1) that he has grounds or reasons for holding and hence for stating his utterance, and (2) that what he is expressing is indeed what he sincerely considers to be the case. The hearer, in turn, is not a mere mechanical recorder of sounds but is in a position to agree fully, partially, or not at all with the speaker’s proposal. [\[xviii\]](#)[xviii] If he does agree, the interpersonal engagement sought by the speaker is established; if he does not, the relationship does not come to pass.

For Habermas the hearer’s confidence in or reliance on the seriousness of the speaker’s proposal as signaled by the achievement of the engagement intended by the speaker need not be construed in function of the speaker’s ability to influence the hearer by the mere power of suggestion. Neither does it have to be the result of mindless whim on the part of the hearer. [\[xix\]](#)[xix] Indeed, the dialogical engagement which may or may not result once a proposal is made public derives its binding force from the supposed satisfaction on the part of the speaker of certain, rational validity claims that, according to Habermas, are raised with every utterance aimed at reaching interpersonal understanding. Habermas puts it in these terms:

With their illocutionary acts, speaker and hearer raise validity claims and demand they be recognized. But this recognition need not follow irrationally, since the validity claims have a cognitive character and can be checked. I would like, therefore, to defend the following thesis: *In the final analysis, the speaker can illocutionarily influence the hearer and vice versa, because the speech-act-typical commitments are connected with cognitively testable validity claims*—that is, because the reciprocal bonds have a rational basis. The engaged speaker normally connects the specific sense in which he would like to take up an interpersonal relation with a thematically stressed validity claim and thereby chooses a specific mode of communication. [\[xx\]](#)[xx]

The importance of Habermas’ emphasis on “cognitively testable validity claims,” insofar as his philosophy of emancipation is concerned, cannot be stressed enough. If he is correct, then

hypostatizations in the form of acts, products, utterances, texts, practices and institutions may be made the object of emancipatory critique.

The validity claims raised in speech remain largely implicit and unthematized from the point of view of those engaged in ordinary, everyday, pragmatic exchanges. But Habermas claims that an analysis of utterances employed with a view toward reaching understanding indicate that four universal claims are simultaneously raised *each and every time* an utterance is made. Of the four claims, three—the claim to truth, rightness, and sincerity—deal directly with the aforementioned extralinguistic “worlds” and the fourth—the claim to comprehensibility—concerns itself with language itself.[\[xxi\]](#)[\[xxi\]](#)

The speaker must choose a *comprehensible* expression so that speaker and hearer can *understand* one another. The speaker must have the intention of communicating a true propositional content (or a propositional content, the existential presuppositions of which are satisfied) so that the hearer can *share the knowledge* of the speaker. The speaker must want to express his intentions *truthfully* so that the hearer can *believe* the utterance of the speaker (can trust him). Finally, the speaker must choose an utterance that is *right* so that the hearer can accept the utterance and speaker and hearer can agree with one another in the utterance with respect to a recognized normative background.[\[xxii\]](#)[\[xxii\]](#)

Hence, comprehensibility is concerned with the intelligibility of speech insofar as a speaker can only pretend to enter into a dialogical relationship with another if he is in fact communicating sequences of signs that satisfy the minimal phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic requirements so as to render what he says significant. If this does not occur obviously no dialogue can be sustained, for no hearer can entertain holding a dialogue with one who merely babbles incomprehensible *non-sense*. If it is the case, however, that a speaker is simply not expressing himself with sufficient clarity, it is incumbent upon the hearer, before he can seriously entertain the speaker's proposal, to ask for greater elucidation on behalf of the motion. If the speaker cannot provide a sufficient level of transparency, the intended engagement is left in a state of suspension. This validity claim demands, in short, that speech concern itself first and foremost with transmitting sense.[\[xxiii\]](#)[\[xxiii\]](#)

The claim to truth, in turn, situates the utterance in relation to external reality, i.e., “the” world of objects and events about which one can make true or false statements. The claim to rightness, however, situates the utterance in relation to the normative reality of society, i.e., “our” social lifeworld of shared values and norms, roles and rules that an act can “fit” or “misfit” and that may be regarded as either right—legitimate and justifiable—or wrong. Finally, the claim to truthfulness or sincerity situates the utterance in relation to inner reality, i.e., one's “own” world of intentional experiences that can be expressed sincerely or insincerely. Each of these claims admits of an “either/or” such that: the truth claim is either true or false; the normative claim is either right or wrong; and the truthfulness claim is either sincere or insincere.[\[xxiv\]](#)[\[xxiv\]](#)

A speech act, then, involving all four validity claims, can be offered only as a “proposal” in hopes of fostering the desired engagement. If a hearer is in principle satisfied that all four validity claims have been met or can be met, then he considers that the utterance is comprehensible, true, right, and a reflection of what the speaker sincerely takes to be the case. If, on the other hand, the hearer feels that one of these critical claims has not been satisfied, that, for example, the speaker is not saying the truth, or that what he is saying violates established norms, or that he is insincere about what he is saying, the possibility exists that the hearer will demand reassurances from the speaker. If the speaker cannot provide these the hearer will not attend to his words. Thus communication oriented to understanding involves claims which the hearer can call into question

and which can be validated only by further evidences or assurances on the part of the speaker. If he succeeds in meeting the objections of the hearer, he will do so only because the hearer purportedly considers these to be rationally compelling. The supposition is that those engaged in dialogue know what they are doing and why they are doing it, that they intentionally maintain the beliefs and pursue the ends that they do, and that they are capable of backing them with reasons. Although, McCarthy indicates, this “supposition of responsibility . . . is counterfactual, it is of fundamental significance for the structure of human relations that we proceed as if it were the case: ‘on this unavoidable fiction rests the humanity of intercourse among men who are still men.’”[\[xxv\]](#)[\[xxv\]](#)

Validity claims, moreover, can now be viewed as representing the four dimensions in which communication can undergo disturbances or fail to achieve an intended illocutionary relation. According to Habermas there are three possible levels of communicative exchange into which a speaker/hearer can enter in function of the relative success achieved in the intended engagement of the speaker is concerned, viz.: (a) consensus- interaction and (b) discourse. The first of these refers to that level of communication where there has already been achieved a common, uncritical definition of the norms, social practices, and belief systems of everyday life. There is, in this sense, a background consensus derived from the reciprocal raising and mutual recognition of the four validity claims. While speech proceeds without violating this shared and unproblematic framework, the engagement intended by the speaker is achieved.

But as soon as one or more of the validity claims are questioned, the speaker is challenged by the hearer, still within the context of consensus-interaction, to vindicate a validity claim which he considers not to have been sufficiently supported. Thus, if the hearer questions the comprehensibility of what the speaker is saying, the speaker is expected to provide the needed clarity by means of “explication, elucidation, paraphrase, translation, semantic stipulation.”[\[xxvi\]](#)[\[xxvi\]](#) If the hearer questions the speaker's intentions or his sincerity by accusing the speaker of “lying, deceiving, misleading, pretending,” the intended engagement can only be reestablished if the speaker is able to present the hearer with the requisite assurances, as would be indicated by the speaker's “consistency of action, readiness to draw, accept, and act on consequences, willingness to assume implied responsibilities and obligations” that follow from the speaker's proposed utterance. If, however, the hearer challenges the truth of the propositional contents of one's expression, it is incumbent on the speaker to satisfy the hearer's objections by “pointing to relevant experiences, supplying information, citing recognized authorities.” In cases where the hearer challenges the speaker's right to perform speech acts, i.e., by questioning the speaker's competence, authority or status in a certain area, or by accusing the speaker of violating accepted norms, recognized values, or established relational patterns, the speaker can only meet these objections by appealing to “recognized norms, accepted values, established authorities.”

For Habermas the claims of comprehensibility and truthfulness can be vindicated only within the second level of communication, viz., the interactive. In the case of comprehensibility, either the speaker can provide the needed clarity or not.[\[xxvii\]](#)[\[xxvii\]](#) In the case of the truthfulness associated with the speaker's intentions in uttering the speech acts, either he can provide the needed reassurances as can be tested by consistent subsequent action or he cannot.[\[xxviii\]](#)[\[xxviii\]](#) Insofar as these two validity claims are concerned, either the speaker can meet the hearer's challenges at the interactive level of communication or the speaker fails to achieve the intended engagement with the hearer.

If, however, the claims to truth and rightness cannot be satisfactorily vindicated at the level of consensus-interaction, i.e., if the hearer challenges the truth or rightness claim in so fundamental

a way, then the only recourse available to dialogical participants is to enter the second level of communicative interaction, viz., the discursive one, with a view toward determining whether the problematic truth or rightness claim can or cannot be vindicated.^[xxix] Discourse then thematizes the naively assumed background consensus by critically evaluating the rationality or irrationality underpinning the questioned norms, values, ideologies, and belief systems. The goal of discourse consists in the achievement of agreement via rational consensus, which is conceived by Habermas as possible insofar as he proposes formal criteria of rationality for distinguishing between a true and false consensus. It is at this level—discourse—that the question of what constitutes *truth* for Habermas becomes crucial, given the normative claim for theory (the truth claim) and action (the rightness claim) that Habermas proposes.

It should be clear that universal pragmatics does not consist in a mere consideration of the grammaticality of utterances as may constitute the subject matter of theoretical linguistics, nor is it a purely empirical investigation into concrete utterances as conducted in psycholinguistics or sociolinguistics. For Habermas it is a reconstructive science that endeavors to articulate the “universal and unavoidable presuppositions” that make possible speech acts oriented to understanding. These presuppositions, in turn, should not be understood as the product of an a priori, monological contemplation of what is involved in dialogue but, rather, as the result obtained from a consideration of what transpires in actual speech engagements between and among dialogical participants.

By way of summary, an inventory of these conditions follows:

(a) that speech involves an analysis of language as *parole* that explicitly incorporates a dialogical—versus monological—paradigm, involving more than one competent speaker;

(b) that the capacity to embed sentences in appropriate speech acts indicates mastery of the four types of speech acts;

(c) that the capacity to employ these speech acts indicates that the dialogical participants are in relation to three distinct yet coordinate worlds: “the” world, the “shared” world, and one’s “own” inner world;

(d) that the bringing about of an interpersonal engagement involves reciprocally raising and mutually recognizing four validity claims: comprehensibility, truth, rightness, and sincerity;

(e) that a challenge to any of the four validity claims jeopardizes the achievement of the intended engagement and forces the speaker to provide the requisite evidence which differs in accordance to the type of claim needing vindication.

Indeed, from the foregoing analysis of consensual speech, Habermas’ endeavors to provide a significant instrument for probing speech-act proposals. If language can be the locus for interest-oriented distortions, Habermas’ aim consists in providing a framework in which the proposals inherent in speech acts may be subject to critical review. Yet to speak of analyzing or examining communicative proposals with a view toward critically assessing their validity implies that a criterion of truth is available to the examiners by means of which they can distinguish between those proposals meriting assent from those that do not. Toward a consideration of Habermas’ discourse theory of truth this study now turns.

The Discourse Theory of Truth

Whereas at the level of consensual speech, the exchange of speech acts transpires within a naively-assumed background, the participants in discourse are concerned rather with proposing arguments for the justification of the truth or rightness claim, that implicit in their assertion, has been challenged. Hence once an objection is advanced that so fundamentally challenges the truth or rightness claim of a pragmatic assertion, the assertion then becomes a hypothetical object of discourse, i.e., an assertion that fails to produce the intended illocutionary relation. Discourse pertains to the framework in which and the process under which the participants conduct their examination of the problematized claim with the sole aim of determining—on the basis of argumentation alone—whether the claim merits vindication, modification or rejection. Yet the issue that becomes particularly important in such a discursive process refers to the question of *truth*.[\[xxx\]](#)[\[xxx\]](#) This section will specifically (1) endeavor to clarify what the Habermasian discourse theory of truth[\[xxx\]](#)[\[xxx\]](#) means within the context of a pragmatics of assertions in light of the Habermasian argument for the inseparability of the criteria of truth from the criteria for the warranted assertion of truth claims; (2) review Habermas' constitution theory of objects and his rationale for dismissing both (a) perceptual theories and (b) correspondence theories as criteria of truth; and (3) critically consider three objections which are typically made against Habermas' discourse theory of truth.[\[xxxii\]](#)[\[xxxii\]](#)

Habermas' characterization of his notion of truth is provided in the following passage:

I may ascribe a predicate to an object if and only if every other person who *could* enter into a dialogue with me *would* ascribe the same predicate to the same object. In order to distinguish true from false statements, I make reference to the judgment of others—in fact to the judgment of all others with whom I could ever hold a dialogue (among whom I counterfactually include all the dialogue partners I could find if my life history were coextensive with the history of mankind). The condition of the truth of statements is the potential agreement of all others.[\[xxxiii\]](#)[\[xxxiii\]](#)

The statement, “The condition of truth is the potential agreement of all others,” indicates the critical insight for a proper understanding of the Habermasian notion of truth. A succinct summary of what is involved here can be enumerated in four points:

- (a) The predication “true” and “false” may be said of statements and not of sentences or speech episodes (i.e. utterances).
- (b) Truth is a validity claim signifying that the *assertion* of the statement is justified.
- (c) The assertion of a statement is justified if and only if that statement would command a rational consensus among all who could enter into a discussion with the speaker.
- (d) A rational consensus is an agreement among all potential participants argumentatively derived under the conditions of the ideal speech situation.

An examination of the first three statements follows.[\[xxxiv\]](#)[\[xxxiv\]](#)

Habermas agrees with Austin and Strawson in their repudiation of semantic theories of truth for predicating truth and falsity to sentences versus statements or assertions. However, Habermas disagrees with Austin's view that truth and falsity should be predicated of utterances, i.e., concrete

“historic events” or “speech episodes.” On this point Habermas sides with Strawson's contention that such predication belongs properly to statements understood as that which is asserted in constative speech acts.^[xxxv]^[xxxv] However, Habermas goes further in noting that the propositional component of an assertion derives its force from the very act of being asserted, i.e., by means of the expressed or unexpressed performative component operative in constative speech acts. Truth viewed pragmatically then refers not only to the proposition but also to the act whereby it is proposed as true in the first place. By “declaring” a proposition “to be true,” for Habermas, one is engaged in the act of raising a validity claim for the alleged truth of a statement, which, as such, is susceptible to challenge. But “the meaning of truth as implied in the pragmatics of assertions”^[xxxvi]^[xxxvi] is still in need of further elucidation.

This can be derived from a consideration of Habermas' constitution theory of objects, wherein he delineates his position insofar as the relationship between language and the world of objects is concerned. His constitution theory develops both as a correction to the positions characteristic of naive realists, on the one hand, and those characteristic of dogmatic conceptualists/ nominalists, on the other. Indeed, as a result of various impediments affecting both the process of experiencing and the act of reporting descriptions of what is experienced, that which is experienced, conceptualized, and expressed in language never represents an incorrigible articulation of precisely *that which is* in some extramental/linguistic sense. As a result of various impediments influencing both the process of experiencing and the act of uttering descriptions, what is experienced is affected by (a) limitations from the point of view of the object known, including such external factors as the perspective and distance from which and the medium through which an object is perceived; (b) limitations from the point of view of the knowing subject, including such internal factors as the soundness of the sense organs undergoing an experience, psychological integrity and linguistic capability in reporting an experience; and (c) limitations resulting from the adequacy of the language used as a medium for reporting an experience. What is experienced, conceptualized, and expressed in language never represents an incorrigible articulation of precisely *that which is* in some extramental/linguistic sense. For Habermas, then, concepts and words are not the *pure* conceptual or lexical counterparts (i.e., corresponding representations) of the universe of objects to which they refer. However, neither are concepts and words purely a function of transcendental categories or of subjective impressions that stand in relation to the universe of objects to which they refer. Habermas rejects the notion that the subject of experience is a transcendental ego equipped, as it were, with a certain prism—the categories of understanding and the forms of intuition—from which to view and understand reality. Instead, he argues that the constitution of a world of objects of possible experience is the product of a “systematic interplay of sense reception, action and linguistic representation.”

Object domains represent systems of fundamental concepts in which possible experiences must be capable of being organized and formulated as opinions. In the case of the organization of experiences with objects, we can view the fundamental concepts as cognitive schemata; in the case of the formulation of opinions about objects of experience, we can view them as semantic categories. The connection between these two levels of experience and of language is apparently established through action, that is through instrumental or through communicative action.^[xxxvii]^[xxxvii]

Accordingly, Habermas' rejection of either a realist or transcendentalist frame for understanding concepts is grounded in a sophisticated view of language. If concepts are purely and simply abstracted from the world of objects, then humanity, as properly consisting of members of a common species, should be able to generate a host of *common* concepts for viewing and

describing the world regardless of space, time, culture or age. Since this is not the case, Habermas rejects the error of arguing for a simplistic correspondence between experience and concepts. But what is equally interesting is that he does not feel that this view subjects him to linguistic relativism. Very much to the contrary, Habermas wants to argue that the languages that mediate one or another view of that which is experienced may be tested—and hence rejected or accepted—in terms of their capacity to vindicate argumentatively their constative speech-act proposals, in accordance with the canons of Western rationality. Indeed, for Habermas, the testing of the truth claims raised in argumentation provides a ground for predicating “true,” “objective,” “valid” to that which manages to weather the rigors of discursive analysis.

Further, his concentration on language itself, as the locus for a precritical, defective, or inadequate rendition of reality, allows him to avoid the counter-intuitive view that the progress made in the theoretical languages consists in the “production of *new* experience” versus a “reinterpretation of the *same* experience.” In a telling passage worth citing again, Habermas indicates,

. . . the *objectivity* of experience could only be a sufficient condition of *truth* . . . if we did *not* have to understand theoretical progress as a critical development of theory languages which interpret the prescientific object domain more and more ‘adequately’. The ‘adequacy’ of a theory language is a function of the truth of those theorems (theoretical statements) that can be formulated in that language. If we did not redeem these truth claims through argumentative reasoning, relying instead on verification through experience alone, then theoretical progress would have to be conceived as the production of *new* experience, and could not be conceived as reinterpretation of the *same* experience. It is therefore more plausible to assume that the objectivity of experience guarantees not the *truth* of a corresponding statement, but the *identity* of experience in the various statements interpreting that experience. [\[xxxviii\]](#)[xxxviii]

Hence, by understanding truth as a validity claim which one raises by *asserting* the propositional content of a constative speech act, Habermas is in position to argue for the inseparability between the conditions under which statements are true and the conditions under which one is justified in claiming statements to be true. Habermas wants to hold that indeed there is no legitimate separation of the criteria for truth from the criteria for the discursive redemption of truth claims. He wants to argue that while these criteria may initially appear to be different, they are within the framework of pragmatic assertions intimately connected and do not permit of separation. If one counters that one may know that “*p* is true” without being able to provide grounds for the assertion that “*p* is justified,” Habermas would respond by pointing out that it is precisely the business of those engaged in discourse to provide warrants, grounds, and justification in favor of the argumentative vindication of their truth claims. If at the level of discursive interaction, one is unable to provide the requisite warrants, then one's assertion is without rational force; that is, it does not merit the recognition of the other participants in the dialogue. [\[xxxix\]](#)[xxxix]

Notwithstanding, there are two positions which Habermas must contend with if his own view on the inseparability between the criteria for truth and for warranted assertability is to emerge as representing more than just another justificatory proposal, viz.: the position that argues for

experiences of certainty, and the one that argues for some form of the correspondence theory of truth.

For those who argue for experiences of certainty, the claim is that although it may not be possible for one to provide grounds so as to secure intersubjective agreement for a truth claim, one may be justified in holding that an experience, say *p*, is nonetheless true, supposedly at least for the one having the experience. Habermas' strictures with respect to the intersubjective testability of truth claims rules out this line of reasoning. He states,

Validity claims are distinguished from experiences of certainty by virtue of their intersubjectivity; one cannot meaningfully assert that a statement is true only for a certain individual. . . . By contrast, the certainty of perception, the paradigm for certainties generally, always holds only for the perceiving subject and for no one else. Of course several subjects can share the certainty that they have a certain perception; but in that case they must say so, i.e. make the same assertion. I register a validity claim as something intersubjectively testable; a certainty I can utter as something subjective, even though it might give occasion to place dissonant validity claims in question. I *make* a validity claim; I *have* a certainty. [xli][xl]

One reason for Habermas' rejection of experiences of certainty as the locus for the predication of truth and falsity is that to the extent that "ordinary," everyday experiences of certainty always occur to a subject, they have an irreducible element of particularity that characterizes them. The external and internal variables that may affect the objective reception of the object(s) experienced—however slight—which affect the objectivity of experience are compounded by the fact that the language in which the experience is expressed or uttered may also prove completely, somewhat or just plain inadequate as a medium for articulating the ordinary experience which the subject wishes to communicate. However, for Habermas, although it is true that an experience is a subjective occurrence, this is not to say that the subject undergoing the experience is circumscribed within an utterly solipsistic frame. Quite to the contrary, Habermas is quite prepared to recognize that:

. . . in the case of elementary empirical propositions such as 'this ball is red' a close affinity exists between the objectivity of experience and the truth of a proposition as expressed in a corresponding statement. Perhaps it is possible to say that the (discursively verifiable) fact that the ball is red can be 'grounded' in corresponding experiences in handling the red ball (where the experience can claim objectivity); or else we could say, conversely, that the objective experience I have had of the red ball 'shows' the fact that the ball is red. [xlii][xli]

Thus Habermas, though not espousing a realist position, is certainly not espousing an empiricist or transcendentalist position either. He is rather admitting that with certain elementary empirical statements the relation between the uttered statement and the alleged experience corresponding to it may be such that one may proceed to vindicate the claim by pointing out that the ball indeed presents itself as red. [xlii][xlii] Yet he does fall short of saying that this should be understood as indicating that there is no gap between sense certainty and warranted assertability. Rather he states, "Experience supports the truth claim of assertions But a truth claim can be made good only through argumentation. A claim founded in experience is by no means a grounded

claim.”[\[xliii\]](#)[\[xliii\]](#)Habermas insists, “By asserting a state of affairs, I precisely do not assert an experience . . . I can only draw upon structurally analogous experiences as data in an attempt to legitimate the truth claim embodied in my statement.”[\[xliv\]](#)[\[xliv\]](#)

Moreover, the experiencing subject's ability to embed and communicate his experiences in speech acts implies that he has the capacity to move from a private realm to a public one, governed by public—and not private—standards and rules. For Habermas, even the terms used in uttering speech acts are of a general nature, such that their significations are not exhausted by their being employed in describing particular experiences.[\[xlv\]](#)[\[xlv\]](#)

A second reason for rejecting experiences of certainty is that hypothetical assertions proposed within the framework of a theoretical language with the intent of discursively testing the truth of its propositional content may correspond to no experience of certainty at all. Instead, they may have been derived from the sagacity of the theoretician who proffers a conjectural proposition for serious consideration, i.e., for possible vindication. Hence, instead of predicating truth or falsity to claims of experiences of certainty, Habermas focuses on language itself and proposes that it undergo the rigorous process of argumentative vindication with the end in view of determining the extent to which the truth claim raised merits or does not merit rational consent.

Now, in addition to those who argue for experiences of certainty, proponents of correspondence theories of truth endeavor to uphold the separability of the criteria of truth from the criteria for warranted assertability. They argue that to say *p* is true is to say it “corresponds” to reality, regardless of whether or not one would be able to bring about the discursive redemption of the truth claim raised in the assertion *p* is true. Habermas counters that such positions “attempt to break out of the sphere of language.”[\[xlvi\]](#)[\[xlvi\]](#)What they fail to see is that *to say p* is true, if it is indeed the case that (or a fact that) *p*, is *to express* a predication and a denotation that are *both* expressed in language. The thing or event about which an assertion concerns itself expresses properties, features and relations, all of which are expressed *in* language. Notwithstanding, to counter possible misunderstanding, Habermas is not advocating a language-immanent conception of reality. Indeed, in successful speech acts the denotative component of the act refers to “things or happenings on the face of the globe,” i.e., to extralinguistic reality. When the governing conventions of the language employed in relaying the speech act are adhered to and the language is adequate or appropriate insofar as the object domain under consideration is concerned, then for Habermas both the predicative and denotative operations are rendered successful. But this is determined in critical discussion, and this is Habermas’ crucial point: insofar as something is *said* about this or that state of affairs, this is done using language as its medium. Habermas is not questioning the empirical basis of science or of everyday assertions, but he does want to insist that the vindication of the truth claim raised in a speech act can be achieved only within the context of discourse, wherein observation may be proposed in defense of the truth of a challenged claim.[\[xlvii\]](#)[\[xlvii\]](#) Outside of critical discussion, correspondence theories of truth can provide no criterion for distinguishing which statements correspond to reality from those that do not. Such theories have not been successful to date in coherently elucidating the “reality-in-itself” to which true statements are purported to correspond, nor have they been able to provide an account of the relation of “correspondence” that is said to obtain.[\[xlviii\]](#)[\[xlviii\]](#)

By arguing against both experiences of certainty and correspondence theories, Habermas wants to uphold his contention that the criteria for truth cannot be divorced from the criteria for warranted assertability, i.e., for the argumentative settlement of truth claims. “The question, Under what conditions is a statement true? is in the last analysis inseparable from the question, Under what conditions is the assertion of that statement justified?”[\[xlix\]](#)[\[xlix\]](#)From this follows

Habermas' dictum: "The idea of truth can be unpacked only in relation to the discursive redemption of validity claims."^[1] Now, since truth for Habermas refers to the claim which can be satisfied only within the context of discourse, his view of truth is in fact properly concerned with a logic of theoretical discourse, i.e. "an examination of the (pragmatic) conditions for the possibility of achieving rational consensus through argumentation."^[2]

Yet, before this study can turn to a consideration of such a logic, it will be necessary to consider three crucial objections which have been made against Habermas' notion of a discourse theory of truth. The first of these accuses Habermas of committing a "category mistake," i.e., of confusing the category of truth with the methods for arriving at true statements. Here Habermas must contend with the distinction between the meaning of "is true" when predicated of a statement and the meaning of "there is (or can be) a rational (i.e. argumentatively grounded) consensus to the effect that the statement is true." Habermas could answer such a challenge by indicating that when he defines the *meaning* of the claim to truth with statements such as "the promise of attaining a rational consensus,"^[3] or that "it belongs to the nature of validity claims that they can be made good, and that through which they can be made good constitutes their meaning,"^[4] he understands truth within the framework of a logic of pragmatics, i.e., of speech acts, and not within the frame of a logic of propositions.

The point is that Habermas is not concerned with the semantic meaning of a word—"truth"—but with the pragmatic meaning of an act—the *truth claim*—raised in favor of a proposition. Surely, Habermas does not conflate these distinct meanings. Insofar as the framework of discourse is concerned, the criterion of truth as understood in pragmatics is synonymous with rational consensus, i.e., the recognition that truth claims can be made good only by argumentative reasoning. Indeed Habermas understands the signification of a claim precisely in terms of the manner in which it may be discursively vindicated, i.e., made good. This would not pose a problem if one wanted to maintain a distinction between a pragmatic meaning of truth as signifying a formal procedure for achieving rational consensus with respect to a proposed claim from the meaning of truth as signifying what is materially meant in claiming that a statement is true. Thus Habermas does not appear guilty of a category mistake since he does not identify the meaning of truth as understood in the science of speech acts with what is meant in materially claiming that a statement is true.

Still another objection to Habermas' discourse theory of truth argues that in making rational consensus equivalent to pragmatic truth he fails to provide any criteria for distinguishing a truly rational consensus from a merely apparent rational agreement. Habermas' own theory of systematically distorted communication^[5] renders this objection particularly forceful. If "truth" is understood as a normative claim, then not just any consensual agreement can count as binding, since the agreement may represent nothing more than the expression of the collective caprice of the participants. The question then becomes: What criteria can be used to distinguish a "true" from a "false" consensus, i.e., upon what may one claim that "warranted assertability" has been reached? A related problem is the issue of whether or not the criteria used for distinguishing a "grounded" from an illusory consensus is not itself in need of discursive justification such that one terminates in a circle; if not, the issue becomes the question of whether one has not transcended the consensus framework in warranting the needed criteria.^[6] Habermas appears to dispel such a critique by viewing a rational consensus as signifying a "rationally motivated" agreement, i.e., one derived solely in terms of the "force of the better argument." This is based not on formal-logical properties but, rather, on formal properties of discourse as understood in pragmatics.

Lastly, a third and particularly forceful objection related to the question of criteria deals with the “evidential dimension” of his notion of truth. Taking the role of the “sympathetic” critic, Anthony Giddens puts it this way:

But you do not indicate—unless I have missed it—what criteria are to be used in assessing specific validity claims. How exactly would we show that the Zande are wrong to believe in poison oracles?

This sort of problem relates to a feeling of disquiet that I have about your theory of truth. Truth for you concerns the way in which statements about the object-world can be warranted. But what counts as the “evidence” that can warrant assertions? Since you say little about referential problems, we are left largely in the dark about this. There seems to be a definite need for further development of your ideas here. [\[lvi\]](#)[lvi]

John B. Thompson's version of this problem manages to bring out the tension between Habermas' repudiation of a first philosophy notwithstanding his normative proposals. The following passages merit close consideration given the precision with which Thompson articulates this fundamental problem in Habermas.

The thesis that truth is a discursively redeemable validity-claim does not adequately elucidate what may be called the ‘evidential dimension’ of the concept of truth. Habermas concurs with Strawson's view that a fact is what a true statement asserts; and both of these authors justly criticise Austin and others for conceiving of facts on the model of things. However, it seems implausible to maintain, as Habermas does, that an existing state of affairs is merely the content of a proposition which has survived discursive argumentation. [\[lvii\]](#)[lvii]

Yet Thompson recognizes that

There are moments when Habermas relaxes this uncomfortable legislation, conceding that ‘in the case of elementary empirical propositions such as “this ball is red” a close affinity exists between the objectivity of experience and the truth of a proposition as expressed in a corresponding statement’. Yet Habermas does not explain why this special condition should hold for ‘elementary empirical propositions’ alone, nor does he clarify wherein this ‘close affinity’ between experience and ‘corresponding statements’ consists. Similar obscurities arise in the characterization of the role of experimental data in the redemption of scientific claims to truth. Although Habermas contends that in stating a fact one is not asserting that some experience exists, he nevertheless allows that one can ‘draw upon structurally analogous experiences as data in an attempt to legitimate the truth claim embodied in [a] statement’. Once again, however, Habermas does not specify what kind of ‘structurally analogous experiences’ would be relevant here, nor how they could be ‘drawn upon’ to legitimate a truth claim. [\[lviii\]](#)[lviii]

In responding to Thompson's criticism Habermas emphasizes his distinction between “the *criteria* of truth” and “the *idea* of redeeming validity claims”:

The point of the discourse theory of truth is that it attempts to show why the question of what it means for the truth-conditions of ‘*p*’ to be satisfied can only be *answered* by explaining what it means to redeem or to ground with arguments

the claim that the truth-conditions for 'p' are satisfied. . . . Thus discourse—whose communicative presuppositions have been elucidated—is not a sufficiently operationalised procedure, adherence to which could be checked like the application of a criterion. The *criteria* of truth lie at a different level than the *idea* of redeeming validity-claims which is expounded in terms of the theory of discourse. Criteria change with standards of rationality and are subject in their turn to the dictate of argumentative justification. What can count in a given instance as a good reason is something that depends on standards about which it must be possible to argue. [ix][ix]

Habermas' response is twofold. On the one hand, he maintains, consistent with his constitution theory of objects, that he is not questioning the empirical ground of science or of everyday assertions. Rather, his point is that the *vindication* of a truth claim can be achieved only within the framework of discourse, at which time observation may be put forth in defense of a problematized claim. On the other hand, he points out that "The discourse theory of truth does not start with basic sentences; it chooses as paradigmatic cases statements that call for grounding even at first sight: hypothetically general and modal statements, counterfactual and negative statements, to which the human mind owes its progress." [x][x] Accordingly discursive interaction typically aims at settling not elementary empirical claims but rather those claims involving hypothetical assertions.

Limits of Theoretical Discourse and the Ideal Speech Situation

Now that the notion of truth has been rendered more explicit and has been shown to signify "warranted assertability," it is possible to consider the discursive framework in which problematic truth claims are argumentatively considered for possible vindication. This framework, as a result of the formal conditions which must be met for securing a warranted conclusion, is synonymous for Habermas with a "logic of theoretical discourse." It is precisely the logic of discourse that specifically considers procedures for validating both the truth of statements and the rightness of norms with a view toward critically detecting unconscious constraints rooted in language.

This section will consider the process and the structure of this pragmatic logic, the parts of which are: (1) the ideal speech situation, including (a) the participation thesis, (b) the symmetry thesis, and (c) the freedom of discussion thesis [xi][xi]; (2) the levels of discourse; (3) the structure of an argument; and (4) the adequacy of the discourse theory of truth. This section will limit itself to a consideration of the adequacy of the formal conditions of the ideal speech situation as these refer to Habermas' discourse theory of truth within a logic of theoretical discourse. The adequacy of such conditions for practical discourse will be addressed in the next chapter.

For the conclusion of a discourse to be viewed as expressing a rational consensus, i.e., as resulting solely on the basis of the better argument, Habermas argues that it must be constraint-free—a "dialogue without coercion." This means that it must fulfill the three formal conditions of the ideal speech situation:

[1] Each subject who is capable of speech and action is allowed to participate in discourses.

[2] Each is allowed to call into question any proposal.

Each is allowed to introduce any proposal into the discourse. Each is allowed to express his attitudes, wishes, and needs.

[3]No speaker ought to be hindered by compulsion— whether arising from inside the discourse or outside of it—from making use of the rights secured under [1 and 2].[\[lxii\]](#)[\[lxii\]](#)

The first condition, the participation thesis, opens up the discourse to any competent subject capable of speech and action, such that all potential voices may be heard and their viewpoints considered in discourse. The second condition, the symmetry thesis, proposes that all participants have an equal opportunity to apply speech acts, i.e., have the same chance to initiate and sustain dialogue through questions and answers, claims and counterclaims. Thus participants considering a problematized truth claim will be equally able to put forward, to call into question, to ground/refute statements, explanations, etc., without restricting the discussion. The condition of symmetry involves mutual understanding between the participants and requires that each be recognized as an autonomous and equal partner.

Since it is possible for the dialogue participants to have an equal opportunity to employ speech acts without necessarily attaining genuine argumentative justification for a truth claim, the third condition, the freedom of discussion thesis is concerned with freeing the discussion from external and internal constraints such that the conclusion can be viewed as proceeding from no motive other than a cooperative search for truth. External influences refer both to the use of direct force/domination to influence the participants to accept an ungrounded conclusion and to the use of indirect force by means of conscious, strategic manipulation. Internal influences refer to self-deception in the form of neurosis and/or ideologically-oriented perspectives.[\[lxiii\]](#)[\[lxiii\]](#)

The fulfillment then of the conditions constitutive of the ideal speech situation demands that dialogue partners have solely the interests of truth in mind, i.e., that they proceed from no motive other than that of the better argument. To the extent that the ideal speech situation demands that the participants treat each other as equals and subject themselves to the force of the better argument, Habermas' ideal speech situation may be understood as connected with an ideal form of life: the truth of statements is linked in the last analysis to the intention of the good and true life.

Now, once dialogical participants enter a discourse in order to consider a problematized validity claim, whether that of truth or correctness, the logic of discourse in conformity with the conditions of the ideal speech situation demands that the participants suspend all action constraints in order to “render inoperative all motives other than that of cooperative readiness to come to an understanding.”[\[lxiv\]](#)[\[lxiv\]](#)Involved here is a progressive radicalization of the levels of argumentation with the end in view of disengaging participants from the context of action and moving them into the context of reflection, a context that provides maximum freedom: (a) for raising questions concerning doubtful claims, (b) for evaluating critically explanations and justifications proffered in support of a claim, (c) for modifying a given conceptual framework, and (d) for reflecting on the nature of knowledge itself. For discourse to be genuine the possibility of traversing the various levels of argument must go unchallenged.

With respect then to a logic of theoretical discourse the various steps or levels of discourse/argumentation involve:

Step 1: Moving “from a problematized assertion representing an action to a statement in which a controversial validity claim is made about an object of discourse.”

Step 2: Evaluating the “theoretical explanation of the problematized assertion through the construction of an argument within a chosen linguistic system.”

Step 3: Modifying a metatheoretical transformation of “the initially chosen [linguistic] system or its replacement by an alternative.”

Step 4: Reflecting on the “boundary between theoretical and practical discourse” so as to consider the question of what is to count as knowledge. [lxv][lxv]

Accordingly, the structure of an argument within the context of a logic of pragmatics reflects the various elements which must obtain if one is to view the conclusion as genuinely the product of the better argument. Proceeding within such a logic, the argument varies in important respects from propositional or transcendental logics. The critical difference is its rejection that argumentation consists in a coherent sequence of propositions that may be formally derived one from the other. A pragmatic logic consists, rather, in a series of speech acts in which, interestingly enough, the movement from one pragmatic unit to the next “can neither be grounded entirely logically . . . nor can it be grounded empirically.” [lxvi][lxvi] The argument proceeds from the conclusion to a consideration of its backing.

The logical structure of discourse arguments insofar as theoretical discourse is concerned consists then in these elements: (a) the conclusion—[C]—referring to an assertion; (b) the controversial validity claim, in this case, the truth claim; (c) an explanation, i.e., what is required from an opponent; (4) data—[d]—referring to causes, motives; (e) the warrant—[W]—referring to laws, etc.; and (f) the backing—[B]—referring to relevant observations. Note that the latter three elements are proposed in defense of the conclusion. [lxvii][lxvii]

Habermas uses an example from Stephen Toulmin [lxviii][lxviii] to explain the structure of pragmatic arguments in the following way:

Conclusion: “Harry is a British subject.”

This conclusion is explained by the identification of a reason or a cause, viz:

Data: “Harry was born in Bermuda.”

Moreover, this explanation can be viewed as acceptable if it fulfills a key rule, e.g.:

Warrant: “A man born in Bermuda will generally be a British subject.”

The key rule, in turn, is made plausible by being grounded by further considerations such as:

Backing: “On account of the following statutes and other legal provisions . . .”

The pragmatic logic of discourse, then, concerns itself with those arguments in which the backing is a sufficient motivation to make the warrant acceptable, even though the relationship between the backing and the warrant is not deductive.

This said, Habermas’ conception of a pragmatic logic of theoretical discourse in function of his ideal speech situation for the adjudication of problematicized truth claims has not been without its critics. Richard Bernstein questions whether speech in fact aims toward consensus and whether it is practical to think that most persons have the necessary transparency to engage in discourse: “. . . we want to know whether the present form of society indicates that such an ideal can be approximated.” [lxix][lxix] Alvin Gouldner contends that the conditions for meeting the ideal speech situation are unrealistically high favoring “more competent speakers” such that it “generates a new system of stratification” hindering rather than fostering discourse. [lxx][lxx] Raymond Guess considers the achievement of “universal consensus under the ideal conditions” of the speech situation to represent “a recent invention held perhaps by a couple of professional philosophers in Germany and the United States.” [lxxi][lxxi] Still another critic, David Held, argues that

. . . the ideal speech situation itself is not a sufficient condition for a fully open discourse, nor, by extension, for the critical assessment of barriers to this type of

discourse in society. The conditions of the ideal speech situation fail to cover a range of phenomena, from the nature (content) of cultural traditions to the distribution of material resources, which are obviously important determinants of the possibility of discourse—and, more generally, of a rational, free and just society.[\[lxxii\]](#)[\[lxxii\]](#)

To this, Rick Roderick, like Thompson in the preceding section, adds that “it is not clear what constitutes a ‘better argument’ in terms of evidence and agreement with the facts.”[\[lxxiii\]](#)[\[lxxiii\]](#)

Although Habermas readily acknowledges that the ideal speech situation as an ideal is in the order of “anticipation”; he nonetheless argues for its importance as providing criteria for adjudicating discursive claims. He states,

the ideal speech situation is neither an empirical phenomenon nor simply a construct, but a reciprocal supposition unavoidable in discourse. This supposition can, but need not be, counterfactual; but even when counterfactual it is a fiction which is operatively effective in communication. I would therefore prefer to speak of an anticipation of an ideal speech situation. . . . This alone is the warrant which permits us to join to an actually attained consensus the claim of a rational consensus. At the same time it is a critical standard against which every actually realized consensus can be called into question and tested.[\[lxxiv\]](#)[\[lxxiv\]](#)

Insofar then as the applicability of the ideal speech situation is concerned within a logic of theoretical discourse, Habermas appears to be in safe ground given that scientific practice, for example, as it is pursued currently, views all *material* criteria in support of the evidential dimension of argument with a tentativeness that prudently militates against canonizing any paradigm of evidence as unsusceptible to further modification.

In defense of Habermas, his perspicacity consists precisely in his notion of the meaning of truth as “warranted assertability” or, more to the point, as the “unforced force of the better argument.” This notion of truth, in light of his critical understanding of language, cannot hold that what is asserted in statements is indeed a strict linguistic representation of what is extralinguistically so, given that there is no simplistic correspondence. Yet neither does this view commit him to the position that propositional statements as asserted in constative speech acts may not be vindicated rationally by conforming to the formal conditions of the ideal speech situation; a view which does not, however, oblige him to specify a *material* criterion of truth beforehand.[\[lxxv\]](#)[\[lxxv\]](#)

The growth of knowledge seems to side with Habermas. The question of the adequacy of the discursive validation insofar as scientific claims are concerned is a matter for the physical scientists to decide on the basis of the “unforced force of the better argument” in function of the ideal speech situation. The process by which one or another view is considered need not be the result of whim but of argumentative justification.[\[lxxvi\]](#)[\[lxxvi\]](#) It is as if Habermas were saying that one is typically able to recognize a better argument once it is articulated and to improve upon it once the horizons from which it was derived are augmented. Supposedly, such a broadening of horizons would be grounded in function of further evidence, a notion which Habermas is willing to recognize needs to be developed as regards his concept of truth.[\[lxxvii\]](#)[\[lxxvii\]](#) The very movement of reason seems to confirm Habermas’ refusal to settle for any *material* criterion of rationality as preclusively ultimate.

Yet it is equally important to note that *to the extent* that the “better argument” within the context of a logic of theoretical discourse is not understood as, strictly speaking, an incorrigible representation of what is extralinguistically so, then *to that extent* the purely formal criteria of discourse should be understood as possibly—versus necessarily—indicating truth. Moreover, to the extent that the purely formal criteria of the ideal speech situation are complemented by correspondence and consistency then to that extent rational consensus may be viewed as not proceeding solely from purely formal criteria. In saying this, there is a basis for proposing an important distinction:

. . . rational consensus cannot be the only or the fundamental criterion of truth, because in every judgment on the validity of a statement considerations of consistency and correspondence retain a decisive, yet unacknowledged, role. At most, consensus in the ideal speech situation could be a sign of the truth of a statement. [\[lxxviii\]](#)[\[lxxviii\]](#)

Given that a consensus may indeed only reflect the agreement between participants in discourse in light of the available evidential resources, its conclusion is always subject to revision, modification and possible rejection. Hence, it would indeed be more judicious to view Habermas’ formalistic notion of truth as indicating a “sign” rather than the “fundamental criterion” of truth. [\[lxxix\]](#)[\[lxxix\]](#)

Further, Habermas’ notion of truth is also in need of a more developed sense of the concept of *phronésis* in regard to the problem of paradigm-choice.

While Habermas has not yet addressed this issue in a satisfactory way, in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn has pointed out that the inter-theoretic decisions on validity (e.g. the choice of the Ptolemaic or Copernican view of astronomy) as opposed to intra-theoretic ones (e.g. the decision between two formulae for planetary motion), cannot be accounted for in terms of correspondence but have to be seen as the outcome of a struggle of paradigms for recognition which is fought and won through the formation of consensus within the community of scientists. [\[lxxx\]](#)[\[lxxx\]](#)

In sum, the aim of this chapter has been to review Habermas’ theory of universal pragmatics, including an examination of his discourse theory of truth in function of the ideal speech situation for discursively adjudicating claims within the context of theoretical discourse. While this chapter maintains the adequacy of such formal criteria when it comes to adjudicating truth claims in terms of a notion of truth as “warranted assertability.” It is sympathetic with the view that Habermas’ discourse theory of truth should be understood as a “sign” of rather than as the fundamental criterion of truth.

It will be the object of the next chapter, within the context of Habermas’ communicative or discourse ethics, to consider the adequacy of the same conditions in addressing claims in terms of a pragmatic logic of practical discourse. For Habermas, although the ideal speech situation is only approximated in speech, it represents a guide for the institutionalization of discourse with the aim of diagnosing and remedying systematically distorted communication. Habermas’ philosophy of emancipation is primarily directed toward the task of grounding “the presumption that the basic institutions of . . . society and . . . political decisions would meet with the unforced agreement of all those involved, if [those affected] could participate, as free and equal, in discursive will-formation.” [\[lxxxii\]](#)[\[lxxxii\]](#) The context has thus been set for considering the issue raised in chapter two,

viz., the question of the adequacy of Habermas' critical instrument for the adjudication of normative claims.

Chapter IV

The Limits of Discourse Ethics: A Model of Communicating Subjects

Before indicating the aims of the present chapter, the gist of the last two merit reassertion. In this respect, the second chapter presented the theory of cognitive interests as a view of knowledge as value-laden in function of vital dimensions of the human person/ community. The emancipatory interest emerged as manifesting a tendency of communicating subjects toward an ideal form of existence. Though typically counterfactual in real life nonetheless it surfaces as an orienting influence separated from all hypostatizations. Inasmuch as this human tendency is characteristically impeded from realization, the third chapter, while developing the theory of universal pragmatics as the proposed framework for the adjudication of problematicized truth and rightness claims, restricted itself to a consideration of the question of the adequacy of the ideal speech situation insofar as theoretical discourse is concerned. However, the question concerning the adequacy of the formal conditions of the ideal speech situation for practical discourse was postponed until the present chapter. The singular importance of answering this question consists in that Habermas understands his logic of practical discourse in function of the ideal speech situation as providing the proper instrument for critically reflecting on the normative claims upon which the legitimacy and conduct of life worlds is founded.

Accordingly, this chapter will concern itself with (A) an examination of the nature of Habermas' communicative or discourse ethics, (B) an analysis of discourse ethics as entailing a minimal model of communicating subjects; and (C) a critical discussion of the adequacy of communicative ethics in view of the cultural variability of needs interpretation and the notion of compromise in communicative ethics.

The Nature of Discourse Ethics

The object of this section is to analyze the nature of Habermas' discourse ethics with a view toward indicating in what sense it can be understood as providing a minimal model of communicating subjects. This will involve (1) clarifying the notion of discourse ethics as a formal versus material ethics, (2) comparing and contrasting Habermas' discourse ethics with Kant's monological ethics; (3) clarifying the nature of the principle of universalization and its role in a communicative ethics; and (4) indicating the procedural constraints fostered by discourse ethics in function of the principle of universalization, speech-act theory and the presuppositions of argumentation, i.e., the ideal speech situation, as a defense against moral skepticism and/or relativism.

Stephen K. White, in a significant publication,^[i] defines Habermas' practical "discourse," i.e., dialogical, "discursive," or "communicative" ethics, as

. . . a formalistic ethics "that consistently works out the independent logic [*Eigensinn*] of normative questions:" that is, "that works out the idea of justice." Such an ethics sharply distinguishes "*moral questions* which, under the aspect of universalization or *justice*, can in principle be decided rationally, from *evaluative questions* . . . which present themselves under their most general aspect as questions of the *good life*, and which are accessible to a rational discussion only within the horizon of a historically concrete life form or individual life history."^[ii]

In this respect, discourse ethics endeavors to justify actions in terms of valid norms and to warrant such norms in function of principles worthy of recognition.^[iii] This definition presents then the critical features of discourse ethics, viz.: (a) that such an ethics is deontological insofar as it conceives the rightness of regulative speech acts, i.e., of norms and commands, in a manner *analogous* with the truth of an assertoric statement;^[iv] (b) that it is cognitivist in that it "must answer the question of how to justify normative statements";^[v] (c) that it is formalist in that it employs "a principle of justification that tests the validity and invalidity of norms in terms of their universalizability";^[vi] and (d) that it is universalist in that such an ethics "alleges that this principle (or a similar) moral principle, far from reflecting the intuitions of a particular culture or epoch, is valid universally."^[vii] To understand such an ethics it is imperative that one be clear in what is involved in "working out the idea of justice."^[viii]

Insofar as Habermas proposes a formalistic conception of ethics, it merits comparison with the classic expression of formalistic ethics, viz., Kantian deontological ethics. First, Habermas opposes Kant's unbridgeable dichotomy between the noumenal and phenomenal realm, for Habermas' rational reconstructions involve a certain interplay between cognition and experience. Second, though both Kant's and Habermas' ethics are dedicated to the proposition that valid normative claims proceed from the application of a formal principle of fairness or impartiality, they differ with respect to its formulation and the manner of its applicability. Hence, where Kant's ethical principle, the "categorical imperative," involves a formal test pursued within a monological framework; for Habermas the principle of universalization involves a formal test pursued within a dialogical framework. Kant's normative maxims of action are derived from an autonomous will in abstraction from the moral relationships of communicating individuals, wherein a singular moral agent considers a possible act by inquiring as to whether it could be proposed as a universal law. Habermas' principle of universalization, however, argues that regulative norms cannot be settled monologically, but must be understood as the product of practical discourse. In this all subjects potentially affected by the proposed norm determine its fairness and impartiality for the satisfaction of needs and interests.^[ix] Another difference is that whereas Kantian ethics excludes all motives except rational will when considering the universal validity of a proposed norm, discourse ethics considers precisely the universality of particular desires, needs and inclinations which nonetheless can make a claim to normative legitimacy only insofar as they are capable of meeting the test of generalizability of interests as demanded by the principle of universalization.^[x]

Habermas articulates the principle of universalization in the following terms:

All affected can accept the consequences and the side effects its *general* observance can be anticipated to have for the satisfaction of *everyone's* interests (and these consequences are preferred to those of known alternative possibilities for regulation).^[xi]

Habermas often refers to this formal rule as a "bridging principle" insofar as it can be understood to serve the analogous function of a canon of induction that spans the gap in theoretical discourse between particular observations and general hypotheses.^[xii] In practical discourse the principle of universalization proposes to regulate argumentation "among the plurality of participants" while suggesting "the perspective of real-life argumentation"^[xiii] in a manner that categorically excludes as invalid those norms that fail to attain "the unqualified assent of all who are or might be affected by it."^[xiv] Accordingly, the principle of universalization

provides a certain guarantee that the norms that emerge as valid within the context of practical discourse will be only those that express a *general will*.[\[xv\]](#)[\[xv\]](#) As a bridging principle it endeavors to make consensus possible amid a pluralism of views. On the other hand, the principle needs to be understood as radically distinguishing evaluative from normative questions.

If we define practical issues as issues of the good life, which invariably deal with the totality of a particular form of life or the totality of an individual life history, then ethical formalism is incisive in the literal sense. The universalization principle acts like a knife that makes razor-sharp cuts between evaluative statements and strictly normative ones, between the good and the just.[\[xvi\]](#)[\[xvi\]](#)

In this sense, "Practical discourse is a procedure for testing the validity of hypothetical norms, not for producing justified norms"[\[xvii\]](#)[\[xvii\]](#) such that rational will-formation can be realized independently of dogmatic creeds and ultimate foundations.

Hans Albert, however, issues a serious objection against all attempts to provide justification for moral principles that claim universal validity. He argues that such moves involve the cognitivist in a Münchhausen trilemma, consisting of three equally unacceptable alternatives, viz.: (a) putting up with an infinite regress, (b) arbitrarily breaking off the chain of deduction, and (c) making a circular argument.[\[xviii\]](#)[\[xviii\]](#) Habermas' defense consists in arguing for a distinction between a deductive concept of justification wherein the relationship between deductive statements proceeds in function of logical inference and principles of universalization that serve to link the logical space in nondeductive relations. Habermas states,

The status of this trilemma, however, is problematic. It arises only if one presupposes a *semantic concept of justification* that is oriented to a deductive relationship between statements and based solely on the concept of logical inference. This deductive concept of justification is obviously too narrow for the exposition of the pragmatic relations between argumentative speech acts. Principles of induction and universalization are introduced as rules of argumentation for the sole purpose of bridging the logical gap in *nondeductive* relations. Accordingly, these bridging principles are not susceptible to deductive justification, which is the only form of justification allowed by the Münchhausen trilemma.[\[xix\]](#)[\[xix\]](#)

Habermas credits Karl-Otto Apel with developing a metacritique to fallibilism and a refutation to the challenge of the Münchhausen trilemma by reviving a transcendental mode of justification that supports a nondeductive basis of practical discourse. The *performative contradiction* is a crucial component of Apel's mode of argumentation, which "occurs when a constative speech act $R(p)$ rests on noncontingent presuppositions whose presuppositional content contradicts the asserted proposition p ."[\[xx\]](#)[\[xx\]](#) The effectiveness of this contradiction consists in its response to a consistent fallibilist who in his opposition to any attempt to ground moral principles makes use of any one or all three of the equally unacceptable alternatives of the Münchhausen trilemma. The performative contradiction counters that the opponent, indeed, assumes, at the very least, the validity of that minimal set of logical rules that are essential for establishing his argument as a refutation against the proponent's attempt to justify ethical principles. The contradiction then consists in that in the very act of engaging in argumentative, rational exchange the fallibilist commits himself to a minimal number of necessary rules of criticism that turn out to be incompatible with the principle of fallibilism. Habermas indicates:

The proponent asserts the universal validity of the principle of universalization. He is contradicted by an opponent relying on the Münchhausen trilemma. On the basis of this trilemma the opponent concludes that attempts to ground the universal validity of principles are meaningless. This the opponent calls the principle of fallibilism. But the opponent will have involved himself in a performative contradiction if the proponent can show that in making his argument, he has to make assumptions that are inevitable in *any* argument game aiming at critical examination and that the propositional content of those assumptions contradicts the principle of fallibilism.[\[xxi\]](#)[\[xxi\]](#)

The question, however, which may be raised for discourse ethics, indeed for any formalistic ethics, pertains to the sufficiency of its formal principle for the adjudication of norms whose application nonetheless aims at addressing particular circumstances. As a species of postconventional ethics, Habermas' discourse ethics purports to provide, notwithstanding its formalistic orientation, "a form of constrained indeterminateness"[\[xxii\]](#)[\[xxii\]](#) which endeavors to counter the charge that such an ethics is without substantial principles for the determination of just/right/proper versus unjust/wrong/improper human action in concrete situations. In support of the principle of universalization, Habermas develops the notion of constrained indeterminateness in terms of a twofold argument: the first stage concerns itself with drawing out the implications of the obligations of reciprocity found in speech acts; and the second stage concentrates on the formal conditions of discursive argumentation, i.e., the ideal speech situation. What follows consists in a consideration of each of these stages with the object of better assessing the nature of the constraints offered by Habermas in defense of the principle of universalization and in opposition to the charge of normative vacuity.

Habermas derives two ethical constraints or basic principles of morality from the structure of communicative action, i.e., from the immanent speech-act obligation of reciprocity. The first refers to the reciprocal obligation upon speakers to justify rationally, if challenged, the claims implicitly or explicitly raised in their speech-act interactions. The coordination of social behavior and convention may be understood as occurring within the background of mutually recognized norms and values, institutions, rules and conventions that are naively accepted and assumed in the sense that their appropriation does not usually result from empirical testing. Typically, the pragmatic relationship that the speaker intends to establish with another depends on whether the performative component meets or fails to meet the hearer's expectations. In the event that the speaker fails to meet such expectations, he can satisfy the challenge only by indicating relevant norms or by clarifying misunderstanding. Indeed, a fundamental feature of discourse action is that dialogical agents in interaction proceed on the basis of a mutual supposition of accountability. This means that what is proposed by a speaker to a hearer is what he authentically intends to communicate and that the speaker is prepared, if need be, to provide grounds for the problematicized claim. A speaker can therefore rationally motivate a hearer to accept an offer because it is expected that a speaker is prepared to redeem his claim if need be.

This obligation to provide justifications operates as an ethical constraint in the sense that it may be directed against all noncognitivist positions. These argue that one may opt to engage in strategic versus communicative forms of action in a manner that does not oblige those so inclined to provide rational grounds for their speech proposals. Habermas counters that the noncognitivist position as conceived by a skeptic, such as a first-person dictator and a systematic rider, incurs in

a performative contradiction. White articulates the nature of this contradiction in the passage that follows:

A contradiction occurs because the speech act in which he announces his refusal "rests on non-contingent (thus in given contexts unavoidable) presuppositions whose propositional content contradicts the propositional content of the speech act itself". . . . [The obligation to provide justification in discourse action] is one which every actor has "implicitly recognized," simply by virtue of having engaged in discourse action.[\[xxiii\]](#)[\[xxiii\]](#)

In this respect it is not possible for a noncognitivist to relinquish in communicative action with its concomitant obligation to provide grounds without "throwing his rationality radically into doubt."[\[xxiv\]](#)[\[xxiv\]](#)

A second constraint implied in speech acts consists in the reciprocity entailed between dialogical partners such that an agent who makes a normative proposal to another must not only be in a position to provide grounds for his offer but must also be ready and willing to extend its applicability so as to include himself. If the relationship between the speaker and hearer involves unequal roles, such as that of an employer and an employee, whatever norms the employer issues to his subordinate must be the same norms that the employer would be willing to apply to himself consistently if the roles between the two reversed. In this respect, the speech-act immanent obligation involves an implicit constraint for proponents of norms to act in accordance with the norms they advance or at least to be willing to act accordingly in the event that circumstances warrant such applicability. Thus, one who engages in discourse action must be prepared to provide justification for speech acts and, in the case of normative proposals, also be ready to apply reciprocally the norms proposed.

After considering the reciprocity constraints involved in speech acts, the question becomes how can one distinguish between the relative defensibility of a norm as more or less meriting discursive consent. In this respect the obligation to offer reasons for normative proposals leads to a consideration of the formal instrument in function of which norms are to undergo discursive scrutiny. Thus, the ideal speech situation, signifying the unavoidable, pragmatic conditions of argumentation, serves to indicate still another constraint operative in practical discourse. Indeed, Habermas understands the ideal speech situation as the normative core of the modern idea of argumentation which makes "moral insight possible."[\[xxv\]](#)[\[xxv\]](#) Given the importance of this notion, although it has already been considered in the last chapter,[\[xxvi\]](#)[\[xxvi\]](#) what follows is a restatement of the same with reference to the framework of practical discourse.

The participation thesis, the first condition, requires that any subject capable of speech and action be permitted to take part in discourses. The aim of this condition is that all potential voices be heard so as to establish an openness in which all viewpoints have an equal chance for being represented. Indeed, the thesis of open participation endeavors to view participants as equal dialogical partners. Ideally this would set aside, for instance, an individual's name and background when such considerations would deter discourse from anything other than the force of the better argument, i.e., the root notion of argumentative vindication.

The symmetry thesis, the second condition, requires that all dialogical participants have the same opportunity to initiate and sustain dialogue by proposing claims and counterclaims, asking questions and providing answers. Whereas the thesis of open participation incorporates all potential voices, the thesis of symmetry provides the participants with an equality of chances to

engage in discourse such that no one participant comes to overwhelm the discussion in favor of his proposal at the expense of other views.

Finally, the third condition, the freedom of discussion thesis, demands that discussion advance free from all external and internal influences such that the conclusion may be viewed as proceeding from no motive other than a cooperative search for truth. Hence, not only may all potential dialogue partners engage in discourse and have an equal right to apply speech-act motions, but they are additionally expected to participate in the process free from all known internal and external forces that may somehow vitiate the outcome of the discourse. The ideal here is that each participant in dialogue attempt to place himself in the other person's "shoes," and vice versa, for the moral insight and empathy that may thus be achieved in a collective pursuit of norms acceptable from all viewpoints. [xxvii][xxvii]

Thus as the participants enter discourse with the aim of determining the validity of a proposed or problematicized normative claim, they are according to the formal conditions of the ideal speech situation expected to "render inoperative all motives other than that of a cooperative readiness to come to an understanding." [xxviii][xxviii] This, in turn, involves the radicalization of the levels of argumentation which signifies separating oneself from the action context so as to shift into the context of reflection.

With respect to a logic of practical discourse the various steps or levels of discourse/argumentation are as follows:

Step 1: Involves moving from problematicized prescriptions and prohibitions representing an action to an affirmation in which a normative validity claim is made about an object of discourse.

Step 2: Consists in the practical justifications of the problematicized assertion through the assemblage of an argument.

Step 3: Involves a meta-ethical transformation or replacement of the linguistic system.

Step 4: Involves a critical evaluation of the theoretical justifications upon which these claims to normative rightness may be based, an evaluation that may warrant modifying a given normative framework. [xxix][xxix]

The structure of pragmatic arguments within a logic of practical discourse reflects the necessary elements that must be covered if one is to view the conclusion as genuinely expressing the better argument. The elements of this logic follow: (a) the conclusion--[C]--referring to a prescription/evaluation; (b) the controversial validity claim, in this case, the claim to normative rightness; (c) justifications for a norm, i.e., what is required from an opponent; (d) data--[D]--referring to the grounds, etc., in defense of the conclusion; (e) the warrant--[W]--referring to the norms, principles, etc.; and (f) the backing--[B]--referring to interpretations of needs, etc. [xxx][xxx]

With respect to practical discourse the steps are the same as those of theoretical discourse except that one moves from a problematicized prescription or prohibition to a critical consensus. The recommendations which result from practical discourse are put forth "in light of existing needs and available resources." [xxxi][xxxi] A crucial difference between the conclusion derived in practical versus theoretical discourse is that the proposed recommendations obtained through collective will-formation may reflect a divergence from the existing *status quo*, thus implying a change or transformation of practices and institutions. This is to say that ". . . the results of a practical discourse in which it is established that the validity claims of factually acknowledged norms cannot be redeemed, or that norms with argumentatively redeemable validity claims do not

exist in fact, bear a critical relation to reality (namely to the symbolic reality of society)." [xxxii][xxxii]

The logic of practical discourse then when articulated in greater detail specifies and distinguishes the nature of the formal principle of universalization from other formalist positions. [xxxiii][xxxiii] Habermas' ethical principle can be understood as incorporating the conditions of the ideal speech situation and the requirement for the generalizability of interests:

A. Whoever engages in argumentation must presuppose the validity of the discourse rules; and

B. that when that argumentation concerns normative claims--this is, ones about alternative orderings for the satisfaction of interests--the participants must, "on pain of performative contradiction," admit that universalization is the only rule under which norms will be taken by each to be legitimate. [xxxiv][xxxiv]

The importance of the first rule consists in that without such an agreement discourse would be open to a violation of one of the conditions/constraints of the ideal speech situation, which would, in turn, render unacceptable the alleged rationality of the consensus. The second rule expresses the generalizability of the common good wherein common interests are universalized. In this respect for Habermas justifiable norms are those that express "generalizable interests" in the sense that they satisfy the concerns of *each* participant in the argument. For Habermas "the function of just norms is to provide some legitimate ordering of the satisfaction of interests." [xxxv][xxxv] His response then to the question of how this norm which validates all other norms may itself be justified without circularity, i.e., in a nondecisionistic manner, is contained in the very structure of language: "the expectation of discursive redemption of normative validity claims is already contained in the structure of intersubjectivity and makes specially introduced maxims of universalization superfluous." [xxxvi][xxxvi]

Now, before concluding this section, there are two objections that Habermas' formalistic ethics needs to address: (a) the issue that such an ethics is devoid of content, and (b) the hermeneutic objection that the discourse-ethical procedure is biased. To the first objection Habermas responds that the content to be considered in practical discourse is proposed from the outside insofar as practical discourse does not consist in an instrument for generating justified norms. Rather, it consists in a procedure for testing the validity of norms that discourse participants are considering for adoption. Habermas elaborates,

Practical discourses are always related to the concrete point of departure of a disturbed normative agreement. These antecedent descriptions determine the topics that are up for discussion. This procedure then is not formal in the sense that it abstracts from the content. Quite the contrary, in its openness, practical discourse is dependent upon contingent content being fed into it from outside. In discourse this content is subjected to a process in which particular values are ultimately discarded as being not susceptible to consensus. [xxxvii][xxxvii]

The second objection argues that though the application of rules such as the universalization principle requires practical wisdom, the required prudence, insofar as it is prior to the rules of discourse and hence not subject to them, may represent nothing more than the local conventions of a given hermeneutical--i.e. a historically-situated--horizon. Habermas' responds that

The hermeneuticist's reflective insight, however, does not undercut the claim of the principle of discourse ethics to transcend all local conventions. No participant in

argumentation can escape this claim as long as he takes a *performative attitude*, confronts normative claims to validity seriously, and does not objectify norms as social facts, i.e., avoids reducing them to something that is simply found in the world The history of human rights in modern constitutional states offers a wealth of examples showing that once principles have been recognized, their application does not fluctuate wildly from one situation to the next but tends to have a *stable direction*.[\[xxxviii\]](#)[\[xxxviii\]](#)

After presenting the master lines of Habermas' discourse ethics, it will be possible to address the question of the minimal model of communicating subjects that his analysis yields.

A Model of Communicating Subjects

Before considering the question of the adequacy of Habermas' principle of universalization in function of the ideal speech situation, this section will consider the minimal model of the communicating subjects that can be developed from Habermas' philosophy of emancipation. Hence, it will (1) consider the relationship between the theory of cognitive interests and the theory of universal pragmatics, (2) clarify the concept of freedom as tending toward an ideal form of life, and (3) analyze the qualities of communicating subjects as may be derived from Habermas' ideal speech situation.

To begin, the theory of cognitive interests, as interpreted in this study, argues in favor of the emancipatory interest as commanding a position of primacy with respect to the technical and the practical interests, given that these are susceptible to its penetrating analysis and subsequent substantiation, modification or rejection. In this respect the emancipatory interest was understood as promoting a just versus unjust application of the vital functions which the other two interests serve. This is to say that in the case of the human subject the issue is not simply whether his material needs are being satisfied or whether his cultural relations are being coordinated, but whether these interests are being fulfilled *justly*. The struggle of peoples throughout history--today manifesting itself in dramatic ways in Eastern Europe and South Africa--impels one to judge Habermas' emancipatory interest as consisting in something more than a mere epistemological viewpoint. Whereas the theory of cognitive interests identified the emancipatory interest as ordained toward a state of freedom in function of justice, the transition to the third chapter proceeded in light of the need to develop Habermas' methodology in terms of which the notion of freedom may be realized.

Accordingly, the theory of universal pragmatics concentrated on the notion of communicative action, i.e., the human competence to coordinate action by means of ordinary language. From this standpoint language facilitates understanding by simultaneously relating the human subject to three "worlds" that constitute the three modes in which persons may come to an understanding with each other, viz.: the objective world of material objects, the social world of intersubjective relations, and the subjective world of inner nature. The importance of Habermas' proposal consists in that not language not only serves to relate and coordinate modes of relations with the three realms indicated, but it views valid agreement among subjects as proceeding in function of cognitively testable validity claims raised with every speech act. This means that social actors are empowered with the capacity to assess critically the rationality or irrationality of proposed speech acts so as to consider the question of their validity. Problematicized claims that fail to be vindicated in normal exchange may be subjected to the formal conditions of discourse. At this level truth

claims may emerge as warranted and normative claims may surface as justified. Indeed the ideal speech situation is intended to fulfill the function of a methodological instrument capable of challenging theoretical and normative propositions in an endeavor to determine whether or not they are based on anything other than ideological bias of one form or another. As Habermas states, "Just as theoretical criticism of misleading everyday experiences serves to correct beliefs and expectations, so moral criticism serves to alter modes of action or to correct the judgments we make of them."[\[xxxix\]](#)[\[xxxix\]](#)

The locus of freedom for Habermas consists then in the correction of "everyday experiences" and "modes of action" in function of the principle of unconstrained dialogue rooted in the very nature of human intersubjectivity. The principle of unconstrained dialogue--as reflected in the ideal speech situation--aims at the determination of warranted assertability in the case of truth claims and at the determination of justified assertability in the case of normative claims. The principle of unconstrained dialogue surfaces as a model of undistorted communication with which to identify and eradicate distorted modes of communication. Herein lies the connection between the theory of cognitive interests and the theory of universal pragmatics: the emancipatory interest of the critical sciences proceeds to effect the dissolution of hypostatized structures by means of the formal methodology grounded in human communication, i.e., by means of the principle of unconstrained dialogue.

In his more recent work Habermas tends to part with the notion that the principle of unconstrained dialogue portrays the "image" or the "anticipation" of an utopian society. Nonetheless, he holds on to the notion as an interpretive guide useful for pinpointing and redressing the social pathologies of modernity.[\[xli\]](#)[\[xli\]](#) In this respect, though the full realization of the ideal speech situation is yet to materialize, it appears that Habermas' concern is with the possibility that a greater approximation in the direction of unconstrained dialogue may emerge given certain practical arrangements. Indeed, Habermas acknowledges that in the course of social evolution "institutionalizations of partial discourses specific to certain domains signify innovative achievements." In the following passage Habermas provides some illustrative examples:

. . . first, the institutionalization of discourse in which the claims to validity of mythical and religious interpretations of the world could be systematically questioned and tested; as such we understand the beginnings of philosophy in Athens during the Classical period. Second, the institutionalization of discourse in which the claims to validity of technically exploitable profane knowledge transmitted in the domains of professional ethics could be systematically questioned and tested; as such we understand this as the beginnings of the modern experimental sciences, which certainly had their precursors in antiquity and at the end of the Middle Ages. And finally, the institutionalization of discourse in which the claims to validity involving practical questions and political decisions *were intended to be* continually questioned and tested; first in England during the seventeenth century, later on the Continent and in the United States, with precursors in the Italian cities of the Renaissance, a political public sphere came into being and in connection with this, representative forms of government--bourgeois democracy.[\[xli\]](#)[\[xli\]](#)

The institutionalization of a logic of practical discourse in function of the ideal speech situation, particularly, as it refers to civil governments commands the central thrust of Habermas'

theoretical edifice, whose realization he views as consisting not so much in a speculative but, rather, in a practical hypothesis. The institutionalization of such discourse represents a real potential of the human subject given its inherent communicative and moral nature.

An analysis of the concrete demands required of human subjects for the actualization of this potential lends insight into the model of communicating subjects that Habermas' philosophy of emancipation yields. In this respect the tendency toward the realization of freedom in function of the emancipatory interest is conceived as a community versus an individual affair. It is precisely the requirements involved in being a member of community that unfold Habermas' concept of the subject. Freedom for Habermas can thus be understood as the act by which the person passes into personhood, i.e., becomes a functioning and contributing member of an integrated social unit. To be free for Habermas does not signify a mere sophomoric absence of external obstacles or constraints to the satisfaction, fulfillment or enjoyment of just *any* desire.^[xlii] Rather, it signifies a material, moral and social state of internal independence to be a certain kind of person, i.e., one capable of participating in the realization of those projects that are congruent with the physical, psychological, social and moral *well-being* of individual persons and society as a whole. In this respect freedom may be distinguished from emancipatory interests. For though this interest expresses a vital orientation toward the achievement of freedom, such an object need not necessarily be attained given that the demands of freedom need not be satisfied.

Moreover, what is at the core of this view of freedom is a dynamic interplay between the individual that *qua* moral agent is capable of affecting the social unit to which he belongs and the social unit that *qua* collective moral agent is capable of affecting its individual members. Society is thereby both the product of its members and the collective agent that fashions them.^[xliii] The conception of freedom, understood in terms of the dynamic relation between individual agent and society, involves, for Habermas, a complementary dyad: the autonomy and responsibility of action. That is, freedom entails the obligation to act in a manner that promotes the *well-being* of the individuals and the social groups they comprise. The notions of autonomy and responsibility are mutually constitutive of the emancipatory interest grasped in the act of reflection.^[xliv] Indeed, the remarkable character of freedom is that it requires the achievement of a form of distanciation from both the technological machine and the cultural worldview so as to engage in its systematic critique. The human potential to transcend, as it were, its relation to the technical and cultural spheres of human life so as to engage in their review and assessment speaks of a uniquely liberating, critical, species-specific faculty. The connection then between autonomy and responsibility is such that it involves the cultivation of a way of life in accordance to discursively-determined values.^[xlv]

Moreover, from Habermas' statement of the twofold mission of a moral philosophy, certain moral qualities emerge as fundamental to his own ethical scheme.

Since moralities are tailored to suit the fragility of human beings individuated through socialization, they must always solve *two* tasks at *once*. They must emphasize the inviolability of the individual by postulating equal respect for the dignity of the individual. But they must also protect the web of intersubjective relations of mutual recognition by which these individuals survive as members of a community. To these two complementary aspects correspond the principles of justice and solidarity respectively. The first postulates equal respect and equal rights for the individual, whereas the second postulates empathy and concern for the well-being of one's neighbor. Justice in the modern sense of the term refers to the subjective freedom of inalienable individuality. Solidarity refers to the well-being of associated members of a community who intersubjectively share the same life world.^[xlvi]

For Habermas the two cardinal functions of a moral system is that it protect the individual and the community. With respect to the individual, Habermas employs the expression "the inviolability of the human person"; this is tantamount to considering the human person as an end and never as a means to an end. The individual is accorded the principle of justice which recognizes his integrity as a distinct human being worthy of respect. Here the principle of justice clearly does not merely signify a "legal order" or equity in terms of distribution of goods; indeed, some laws are legal and yet unjust and therefore susceptible to revision. The justice Habermas speaks of takes into account the total existential situation of the individual as expressed in his schemata of interests.

Insofar as the community is concerned, Habermas understands the protection of "the web of intersubjective relations" as a fundamental feature of an ethics. The community is accorded the principle of solidarity which fosters a spirit of empathy and concern for others. It is interesting that Habermas speaks in this regard in terms of one's "neighbor." This term conveys the sense of community and responsibility that the individual members of a community should have for one another. It is a respect, concern, and empathy for one's neighbor with whom one shares intersubjectively the same lifeworld. [\[xlvii\]](#)[\[xlvii\]](#)

The ideal speech situation expresses a paradigmatic model. In each of its principles-- participation, symmetry, and generalizability--it is dedicated to recognizing, safeguarding and promoting the principles of justice and solidarity. The legitimate employment of the formal rules of discourse as it relates to practical issues purportedly tests the justifiability of norms in compliance and never in violation of the dignity of the individual and the integrity of the community. [\[xlviii\]](#)[\[xlviii\]](#) McCarthy indicates that "practical discourse [involves] moral agents trying to put themselves in each other's shoes." [\[xlix\]](#)[\[xlix\]](#) In attempting to identify with the roles of one's neighbor in conformity with the principles of justice and solidarity, the possibility of moral insight is realized. Habermas thereby indicates, ". . . practical discourse, or moral argumentation, serves as a warrant of insightful will formation, insuring that the interests of individuals are given their due without cutting the social bonds that intersubjectively tie them." [\[l\]](#)[\[l\]](#)

What results from this examination of Habermas' theoretical contributions is a minimal model of communicating subjects. Within Habermas' philosophy of emancipation, it appears in relation to three realms of reality: the material, the intersubjective and the subjective, of which the first two are cognitively and critically accessible. Insofar as the material realm is concerned, knowledge can be attained via the hypothetico-deductive methodology of nomological science. Theoretical progress in science is understood as consisting in the development of theory languages that endeavor to interpret the scientific object domain ever more adequately. Insofar as the social realm is concerned, knowledge of the justifiability of practical norms and institutions in function of Habermas' principle of universalization supposedly can be attained by approximating the conditions of the ideal speech situation. Indeed, the human person is understood as an eminently dialogical, personal and communitary being, which characteristics may be viewed as projected in paradigmatic fashion in the ideal speech situation. This is to say, according to Habermas, it is when the human person complies with the exigencies of his dialogical, personal and communitary nature that emancipation is approached. [\[li\]](#)[\[li\]](#) What remains is a consideration of the adequacy of Habermas' formalistic ethical model insofar as moral orientation is concerned.

Limits of Practical Discourse and the Principle of Universalization

This section will consider the adequacy of the formalism of Habermas' discourse ethics (1) by examining aspects of the abstract nature of the stated ethics, including the issue of compromise

within the context of discourse ethics; (2) by arguing for the inadequacy and decisionistic character of this ethics by contrasting assertoric and regulative speech acts; and (3) by raising the question as to whether there may not be an alternative reading of Habermas' model of the human subject/society in a manner which does not entail the materialism which Habermas proposes.

One of the functions of Habermas' principle of universalization consists in serving as a guide for determining which issues can and cannot be considered within the purview of a formalistic ethics.

Of the evaluative issues of the good life it [the principle of universalization] retains only issues of justice, which alone can be settled by rational argument. With its justification of (U), discourse ethics sets itself in opposition to the fundamental assumptions of *material ethics*. The latter is oriented to issues of happiness and tends to ontologically favor some particular type of ethical life or other.^{[lii][lii]}

As has been previously noted, practical discourse is not to be understood as a framework for generating justified norms or a "particular type of ethical life," but, instead as a procedure for testing the validity of norms or particular types of ethical life, proposed hypothetically for adoption. Indeed, Habermas clearly distinguishes "between the social fact that a norm is intersubjectively recognized and its worthiness to be recognized."^{[liii][liii]} Hence there may be socially accepted norms that upon scrutiny may not satisfy the demands for justifiability.^{[liv][liv]}

The standpoint of a participant in moral argumentation is one of distance from the "unproblematic cultural givens" deriving from the cognitive, moral or expressive content that shape one's lifeworld. Since cultural values are so inextricably intertwined with the totality of a particular form of life, it is not feasible for one engaged in discourse to accept unquestionably the domain of the culturally given.^{[lv][lv]} This is to say that

under the unrelenting moralizing gaze of the participant in discourse this totality has lost its quality of acceptance, and the normative power of the factual has weakened. Familiar institutions can be transformed into so many instances of problematic justice. Under this gaze the store of traditional norms has disintegrated into those norms that can be justified in terms of principles and those that operate only de facto.^{[lvi][lvi]}

Discourse ethics does not depend on content brought from the inside, as it were, but from content that is brought from the outside. The procedure of discourse ethics then is formal not in the sense that it abstracts from content but insofar as it limits itself to consider the "validity" rather than the "morality" of an existing or proposed norm of action.^{[lvii][lvii]}

But, as White explains, Habermas not only avoids making a "universalistic claim" in favor of a particular form of life, such that any given lifeworld is open to critical scrutiny, but he also leaves open the possibility of amending any norms that at one time may have been discursively tested as valid so as not to preclude the input that other voices within the same culture may propose at some future time.

Habermas is not presenting a claim about the needs and interests all would have in *the* good society, and which anyone could discover if he/she merely subjected himself/herself to the rules of discourse. Such a universalistic claim about the shape of the good society is always unwarranted, since it tries to settle once and for all what must be left open, if the requirement of reciprocity is to take into account voices which may not have been evident in any given discourse.^{[lviii][lviii]}

Moreover, Habermas not only relinquishes any claim to a substantive conception of needs or principles of justice within a given culture, he also maintains that the actual institution of practical discourse from one culture to another may yield different conceptions of "need interpretations." This amounts to a recognition of cultural variability wherein what one culture identifies as justified needs may not be what another culture may consider as needs. [lix][lix]

Further, there is no guarantee that entering discourse with the end in view of resolving a problematized or newly proposed norm will conclude in the vindication or justification of the issue under consideration. Habermas admits that

the discourse ethical way of reading the universalization principle does not rest--not even implicitly--on assumptions about the quantitative relation between general and particular interests. Particular interests are those that prove on the basis of discursive testing not to be susceptible of generalization and thus to require compromise. [lx][lx]

Though compromises can be put to task via the constraints of practical discourse, i.e., procedural equality, participation, non-deception and non-manipulation, they fail to provide "a precise formula or method for unambiguously separating legitimate from illegitimate compromise." [lxi][lxi]

White is quick to add that beyond a limited number of interests the determination of generalizable interests does not present itself as an altogether facile endeavor:

. . . when one tries to justify a normative claim, one is obligated to show that the interests underlying it are generalizable rather than merely particular. In some cases this demonstration and an ensuing agreement might come easily. For example, traffic rules and laws against murder can be seen as resting on generalizable interests in the safety and sanctity of persons. But of course most questions in ethics and politics are not so amenable to simple solution. . . . At this point, however, the only thing which it is necessary to emphasize is that the result of such discursive reflection on needs is not necessarily any consensus (much less any revelation about "genuine" human needs). [lxii][lxii]

These various aspects, indeed limitations, of discourse ethics provide a suitable context for considering the issue of the adequacy of the formalism of communicative ethics. On the one hand, Habermas postulates the possibility that a society consisting of free and equal constituents may attain a stage of transparent critical-reflection in which "mythological, cosmological, religious and ontological modes of thought have been superseded and 'rational will-formation' can be achieved, free of dogmas and 'ultimate groundings', through ideal mutual self-understanding." [lxiii][lxiii] On the other hand, it appears that discourse ethics fails to achieve much more than a "partial penetration of a thoroughgoing pluralism." [lxiv][lxiv]

This view is supported by Stephen Lukes who argues that in order for discourse ethics to avoid terminating in a decisionistic --versus cognitive--ethics, as Habermas claims, its principle of universalization has to meet three forms or stages of universalization. (1) The justifiability of practical norms directing and regulating human behavior can be determined without making any "essential reference to proper names or indexical terms." (2) The justifiability of practical norms can be subjected to a test of empathy, "namely putting oneself in the other person's or group's

place." (3) The justifiability of practical norms take into account "rival and alternative desires, tastes, preferences, ideals and values . . . seek[ing] maxims that will be acceptable from all viewpoints." [lxv][lxv] Lukes considers doubtful that those engaged in practical discourse will be capable of attaining the needed self-transparency for undistorted communication, meaning that the participants will continue to exhibit "prejudices, limitations of vision and imagination, deference to authority, fears, vanities, self-doubts, and so on." [lxvi][lxvi] Lukes is therefore inclined to conclude that Habermas' formalistic ethics fails to overcome decisionism.

I turn now to the question of whether Habermas justified his claim that his approach overcomes 'the limits of a decisionistic treatment of practical questions as soon as argumentation is expected to test the *generalizability* of interest'. I cannot see that it does so. For the principle of universalization, at all three stages I have discussed, requires, at each stage, a *decision* whether or not to let one's actions and choices be guided only by maxims and norms which pass the test in question. [lxvii][lxvii]

Yet it does not appear merely to be a question of whether or not those engaged in normative discourse will allow their "actions and choices" to be oriented "only by maxims and norms which pass the test in question." Though not explicitly considered by Lukes, the more poignant and fundamental issue considers the question: in function of what is practical discourse itself to proceed? This is to say that before the question of whether or not the dialogical participants will orient their decisions in terms of the formal principles of practical discourse, the question concerns *in function of what* are these principles themselves placed. The nature of this question will become clearer in what follows.

Now, this element of decisionism in Habermas' ethical program raises the question: Why is it that when dealing with the logic of theoretical discourse the formal criterion of discursive truth as warranted assertability appeared to be a sufficient condition for the resolution of truth claims, but that when dealing with the logic of practical discourse the formal criterion of rightness as the principle of universalization appears to be an insufficient condition for the resolution of normative claims? The answer appears to lay in a fundamental difference between constative and regulative statements. As Habermas indicates,

the two *discursively redeemable* claims to validity that are of particular interest to us, claims to propositional truth and claims to normative rightness, play their roles as coordinators of action in different ways. A number of asymmetries between them suggest that they occupy different "positions" in the communicative practice of everyday life. . . . The relation of speech acts to norms is not the same as the relation of speech acts to facts. [lxviii][lxviii]

The crucial difference between constative and regulative speech acts consists specifically in the different sorts of "evidence" that each presents within the context of their discursive frameworks. In this respect, in the case of problematicized constative speech acts, various kinds of support, including experiential contact with external reality, is put forth as evidence in justification of an alleged state of affairs, so that the empirical-analytic sciences have built into them a powerful, somewhat automatic corrective feature. Thus, whenever hypothetical assertions fail to explain the phenomena to which they are directed, they are themselves then subject to revision or rejection given their inadequacy in doing justice to the phenomena as known. In this sense, scientific conclusions, as Habermas envisions, should proceed only in function of the unforced force of the better argument. What is adopted via the discursive process of theoretical

discourse may, however, prove to be an inadequate rendition of what is taken to be necessary to satisfy the demands of a given state of affairs under consideration. In that case, further studies are proposed to render the explanation of the phenomena ever more in conformity with what is known of its various manifestations under any number of conditions. The nature of the sorts of confirmatory evidences demanded by scientific discourse serves as an "objective" form of continual correction in the case of nomological science.^[lxix]^[lxix]

Insofar as regulative speech acts are concerned there are, *sensu stricto*, no comparable "objective" constraints in support of one ethical norm versus another. As Habermas states, "While there is an unequivocal relation existing between existing states of affairs and true propositions about them, the 'existence' or social currency of norms says nothing about whether the norms are valid."^[lxx]^[lxx] This is not to say that for Habermas there is no relevant evidence at all with which to examine the justifiability of proposed norms; Habermas proposes that the relevant evidence for the justifiability of a norm is purportedly the consequences and side-effects of its application may have.

The backing that is required here is not (or is not merely that type of observational and experimental evidence used (inductively) to support hypothetical general laws. The relevant evidence is first and foremost the consequences and side-effects that the application of a proposed norm can be expected to have in regard to the satisfaction or nonsatisfaction of generally accepted needs and wants.^[lxxi]^[lxxi]

But can the "consequences and side-effects that the application of a proposed norm can be expected to have" serve as a *sufficient* condition for the justifiability of that norm? Surely there may be social practices that though they may appear to have no obvious adverse consequences and side-effects may still be of questionable ethical integrity. For instance, abortion, which is virtually practiced on demand in many economically advanced countries, may appear to have *prima facie* adverse consequences or side-effects. On the contrary, the disposal of unwanted offspring may appear to have enormous beneficial social consequences and side-effects. By means of a relatively simple clinical procedure, it removes the responsibility from the biological parents, their families and the state of having to nurture and cultivate the life and well-being of an immensely complex and demanding enterprise which invariably extracts untold dedication and unbounded sacrifice: a human life. Yet, it may be countered that from Habermas' principle of universalization one may derive the requisite principles of justice and solidarity such that these principles may appear to invalidate categorically any social practices such as abortion.

However, Habermas' unwavering commitment to a purely formalistic ethics rejects developing a minimal core of concrete moral principles that would safeguard the inalienable rights of the unborn. This opens the possibility that for any number of ulterior motives those persons participating in discourse may determine that the principles of justice and solidarity apply only to those human beings who have survived the maternal womb. The very nature of practical discourse wherein all potential participants have a right to partake in the process of testing proposed norms is such that it will invariably entail divisive debate on such fundamental issues as the rights of the unborn where the only outcome that can possibly be expected is one of compromise.^[lxxii]^[lxxii] Yet how does one compromise the right to life, whether of the born or of the unborn? It is not at all clear then that the formalism that permeates Habermas' discourse ethics with its notion of evidence in function of the consequences and side-effects of the application of proposed norms can serve as a sufficient condition for the testing of proposed norms of action.

Increasingly then the question becomes *in function of what* will the members of society come to determine the justificatory basis of proposed practices. For White, "At the core . . . of

communicative ethics is the image of *open* conversation, that is, a conversation in which one is obliged to listen to other voices." [lxxiii][lxxiii] Discourse ethics, it is argued, should be understood "not along the model of public fora or courts of appeal" but, rather "as the continuation of *ordinary moral conversations* in which we seek to come to terms with and appreciate the other's point of view." [lxxiv][lxxiv] Yet, it has also been argued that conversation itself needs to be constrained ". . . by the ordinary constraints of everyday life: the pressure of time, the structure of authority, the discipline of parties and movements, the patterns of socialization and education, the established forms of institutional life. Without any constraints at all, conversation would never produce even those conventional (and temporary) stops which we call decisions or verdicts." [lxxv][lxxv]

The dubiousness which affects the programmatic prospects of philosophical conversation as a means for adjudicating ethical norms has led "sympathetic critics" to view discourse ethics as indicating a mode of political versus purely ethical procedure.

Sympathetic critics of communicative ethics have persistently pointed out that this project formulates more a model of *political legitimacy* than one of *moral validity*. . . Although many agree that such a principle of rational consent is fundamental to the modern ideas of democratic legitimacy and justice, equally many contest that it can serve as a moral procedure that would be relevant in guiding individual action and judgment. [lxxvi][lxxvi]

Yet, even if such an ethics could be employed to test proposed or existing norms, it is still not at all clear in terms of what the participants of the discourse ultimately base their communicative proposals. One voice in the discussion, Joel Whitebook, would answer the question in these terms: ". . . we cannot defend the project of modernity--which must be defended--at the price of sacrificing the naturalistic tradition that runs through the young Marx and Freud to the early Frankfurt School. [lxxvii][lxxvii] Another voice in the discussion, this time Habermas', agrees with Whitebook on how to reply to this crucial question:

Over and over again, the necessary conditions for a "good life" are carelessly and arbitrarily violated. It is from this experience that the tradition of thought that unites Marx and Freud draws its inspiration. I am in full agreement with Whitebook in my desire not to give up *this* form of materialism. [lxxviii][lxxviii]

It is important to clarify that the materialism referred to here is best understood as it has been developed by Western--versus Orthodox--Marxists, as represented by the Frankfurt School. Within this tradition, materialism is not understood as affirming the ultimate reduction of all reality to the movement of elementary physical particles. It signifies an overt concern with the *concrete* material conditions of life in contradistinction to the purely notional, abstract and idealistic metaphysical speculations of, say, the Hegelian system. [lxxix][lxxix]

In the final, concluding sentence of his work dedicated to elaborating his ethical theory, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, Habermas--via Max Horkheimer--reaffirm--reaffirms this materialist perspective:

. . . philosophy cannot absolve anyone of moral responsibility. And that includes philosophers, for like everyone else, they face moral-practical issues of great complexity, and the first thing they might profitably do is to get a clearer view of the situation they find themselves in. The historical and social sciences can be of greater help in this endeavor than philosophy. On this note I want to end with a quote from Max Horkheimer from the year 1933: "What is needed to get beyond

the utopian character of Kant's idea of a perfect constitution of humankind, is a materialist theory of society." [lxxx][lxxx]

Has then the last word been articulated in favor of a materialist understanding of society as Whitebook confidently appears to propound?

The learning process of the species has progressed to the point (at least in the West) where mythical, religious, or even ontological justification of those norms is no longer acceptable. . . . Post conventional morality, according to its concept, has been purged of all elements of tradition, charisma, paternalism, etc., and rests on nothing, as it were, but the intersubjectively conceived principles of pure practical reason. [lxxxii][lxxxii]

Given the formalistic dimension of Habermas' discourse ethics, he ultimately places or at least suggests that society be understood in function of a materialist understanding of society. It is safe to assume that this self-understanding becomes, if not already embraced, then with the passing of time, the paradigm in function of which the consequences and side-effects of the application of proposed practices are ultimately to be interpreted. It appears that there would be a great possibility that within this worldview the "sanctity" of the person would suffer profound degradation; indeed, the protection of the life of the unborn in economically advanced--democratic--societies has already become a categorically deniable--versus inalienable--right. Currently, in the United States the issue of abortion appears to be determined in function of the party affiliation of the Supreme Court justices. In this respect, notwithstanding possible exceptions, if one has a predominately "conservative" Republican bench, abortion is understood as a violation of the First Amendment right to life; however, if one has a largely "liberal" Democratic bench, abortion is understood as compatible with the First Amendment right to life.

Given that ultimately Habermas appeals to a *certain* worldview in function of which society is to understand itself, it appears that he not only compromises the very formalism that his ethical program so adamantly, in principle, proposed. In addition, he also implies that the determination of moral norms demands moving beyond the formalism and into a certain understanding of human society from which one can make ethical determinations. [lxxxii][lxxxii] Ethical systems then that attempt to articulate practical norms in terms of formal principles and rules are subjected in discourse to the worldviews to which those engaged in the discursive process ultimately subscribe.

Thus, the issue of whether the reality of communicating subjects should be ultimately understood in materialistic terms does not admit of unequivocal demonstration. There exists then sufficient space for proposing and considering an alternative reading of Habermas' ethical proposal, one that does not entail arguing for a materialist self-understanding of human persons and the societies they constitute. This suggestion will be pursued within the context of the next chapter. It will attempt specifically to consider Habermas' overall emancipatory aims as informing in complementary fashion the existential metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas.

Chapter V

Habermas' Philosophy of Emancipation and Metaphysics

Thus far this study has concentrated on critically developing the various components of Habermas' philosophy of emancipation. Accordingly, the second chapter argued for the dignity of the human person as oriented toward the full realization of its constitutive nature in function of an emancipatory interest with autonomy and responsibility. The emancipatory interest emerged as setting in motion the human concern for articulating, promoting and appropriating a mode of existence in function of justice. The third chapter explicated Habermas' theory of universal pragmatics as properly representing the methodological framework wherein he specifies in function of the ideal speech situation the conditions of communication aimed at adjudicating truth claims pursued within the context of a logic of theoretical discourse. In examining Habermas' ethical proposal, viz., his discourse ethics, the crucial question, considered in the fourth chapter, centered on determining the adequacy of the purely formal conditions for adjudication of problematized normative claims with a view to the dissolution of hypostatized disequilibria. In considering this question, it became increasingly plain that the formalism of Habermas' principle of universalization ultimately terminates in an intra- and intercultural pluralism that effectively undermines its integrity as a moral rule. Moreover, Habermas' appropriation and commendation of a materialist interpretation of society would undoubtedly supplant the formalism which his ethical theory fosters with a worldview that would serve to orient practical judgment in one direction rather than another.

Chapters II-IV endeavored to examine Habermas' *opus* within the confines of his own horizons. The present chapter will venture to move beyond the parameters of Habermas' proposals in an effort to develop the latent metaphysical themes permeating his emancipatory/communicative model. It will review this from an optic which can be developed today with resources from the classical existential metaphysical tradition when catalyzed by the contemporary issue discussed in the foregoing chapters. Indeed, this chapter will endeavor to consider the mutually enriching, complementary nature of the Habermasian communicative model and the metaphysical model as mediated in terms of a philosophical appropriation of the Christian vision. This objective will be pursued in three sections. The first will strive (A) to clarify the intention animating Habermas' commendation of a materialist interpretation of society by noting certain parallelisms that relate this to Kant's move toward a teleological worldview. This will provide an occasion for arguing in hermeneutical fashion in favor of the Christian horizon/vision as a worldview that both equips philosophical reflection with critical resources that serve as a response to the postmodern challenge against metaphysical principles, and that furnishes a non-materialist context for Habermas' formalistic communicative model. In this sense, this chapter essentially consists in an examination of the two philosophical models operative in the Christian worldview. The second or middle section (B) will articulate a methodology for elevating proposed notions to metaphysical status such that they may be suitable for employment within the context of metaphysical discourse. Such methodological schemata will be applied to the fundamental categories of Habermas' model, viz., his notion of the emancipatory interest and communication in function of the ideal speech situation. Finally, the third section will endeavor (C) to indicate the sense in which the categories of Habermas' emancipatory/communicative proposal enrich the traditional transcendental properties of being in metaphysics, as well as the manner in which Habermas' proposal is itself enriched when understood from the metaphysical point of view.

The Christian Hermeneutical Horizon and the *Sensus Plenior* of Habermas' Philosophy of Emancipation

This section will examine in hermeneutic fashion the implications of the philosophical resources of the Christian horizon for metaphysical reflection. The aim will be to relate Habermas' communicative model with metaphysics. It will argue (1) that the relevance of Habermas' move to a materialist framework finds its parallel in Kant's move toward a teleological conception of the universe; (2) that the hermeneutical mode of philosophizing--rather than deductive/ rationalist or inductive/empiricist procedures--favors a philosophical appropriation of the Christian tradition; (3) that a hermeneutical appropriation of the Christian horizon provides philosophical reflection with the resources with which to mitigate the postmodernist challenge against metaphysical principles; and (4) that such resources derived from doing philosophy from a Christian perspective, in turn, provide Habermas' formalist model with a context that is realist (although non-materialist), metaphysical and communicative.

Habermas' acceptance of a materialist worldview may be understood as a consequence of his conception of reality as encompassing two distinct domains. On the one hand, there is the realm of physical nature, whose fundamental characteristic consists precisely in its subjection to invariant laws as studied by nomological science. On the other, there is the realm of human nature, whose principal feature consists precisely in its emancipatory potential as studied by the critical sciences. Faced with the problem of relating necessity and freedom, Habermas proposes a worldview in which the *concrete*--versus purely notional--exercise of freedom can take place within his communicative model of communicating subjects.

In this respect Habermas shares certain affinities with the situation in which Kant found himself at the end of his second critique and which led him to his third critique in function of which the first two were to be reread. This move to the third critique, i.e., to an aesthetic view of the world, has often been neglected in favor of an almost exclusivise reading of the first critique in function of the Cartesian rationalist influence (or bias). However, the first critique or *Critique of Pure Reason* was limited by a consideration of the question concerning the epistemic conditions of the physical sciences. This rejected intelligible objects or metaphysical notions which implied no potentiality or materiality. This ". . . rejection of metaphysics as a science was warmly greeted in empiricist, positivist and, then materialist circles as a dispensation from any search beyond the phenomenal, i.e., what is inherently spatio and/or temporal."[\[i\]](#)[\[i\]](#)

Yet, in contrast to the first critique's transcendental deduction of the categories of cognition by which the intelligibility of the phenomenal world could be secured, Kant's *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and his second critique, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, explicitly concerned a realm distinct from the purely physical, i.e., with the moral realm. In elucidating the constitutive elements of this distinct sphere of reality, Kant's analysis ". . . pushes forcefully beyond utilitarian goals, inner instincts and rational scientific relationships . . . None of these recognizes that which is distinctive of the human person, namely, one's freedom. To be moral an act must be based upon the will of the person; it must be autonomous, not heteronomous."[\[ii\]](#)[\[ii\]](#)

Once Kant had articulated the dimension of freedom rooted in practical reason in contradistinction to the necessity and universality of pure reason, "his entire *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* will be written to provide a context which will enable the previous two critiques to be read in a way that protects this notion of human freedom."[\[iii\]](#)[\[iii\]](#) This is to say that Kant rejected any strain of reductionism that would attempt to undermine human freedom in terms of a deterministic model. Indeed, Kant's repudiation of any reductionist tendencies leads him ". . . to affirm

and provide the justification for his affirmation of the teleological character of nature as the context of scientific necessity. . . . if science is to contribute to the exercise of human freedom, then that realm too must be directed toward a goal and hence be manifestive throughout of intent within which free human purpose can be integrated."[\[iv\]](#)[\[iv\]](#)

Notwithstanding Kant's inability to ascribe metaphysical reality to the teleological nature of reality in virtue of the critical limits which his epistemology imposes on human cognition, "we must proceed 'as if' it is so precisely because of the undeniable reality of human freedom in this ordered universe."[\[v\]](#)[\[v\]](#) For Kant, within the context of a teleological universe, aesthetic judgments register reflections concerning the degree of harmony or disharmony, of the level of beauty or ugliness. This has consequences for the concrete exercise of freedom as it endeavors to realize the universal realm of ends-in-themselves. In this respect, Habermas' proposal of a certain worldview can be understood as an attempt to move beyond a critical impasse between scientific necessity and human freedom which parallels Kant's turn in the direction of a teleological worldview.[\[vi\]](#)[\[vi\]](#)

Indeed, the tendency to reason in the light of a certain context has characterized the philosophical enterprise since antiquity, given that its varied conceptions have typically never proceeded by means of the operation of "pure reason" in separation from some orienting framework. Thus, "Russell developed certain of his philosophical views from insights disclosed by mathematics; Quine took experimental science as his paradigm; others have taken law or art or music or social interaction."[\[vii\]](#)[\[vii\]](#) Habermas, in his stead, employs the model of social communication understood within a materialist conception of society as his own orienting framework for doing philosophy. Yet, it would appear that within the contemporary philosophical thrust for openness, dialogue and conversation, proposals can be put forward as at the very least constituting recommendations worthy of consideration. The view here is that a move to focus on Habermas' contributions from an optic other than the one Habermas provides is indeed congruent with his own view of philosophy as "stand-in and interpreter" that "cannot and should not try to play the role of usher."[\[viii\]](#)[\[viii\]](#) Speaking of Kant, Habermas states,

In championing the idea of a cognition *before* cognition, Kantian philosophy sets up a domain between itself and the sciences, arrogating authority to itself. It wants to clarify the foundations of the sciences once and for all, defining the limits of what can and cannot be experienced. This is tantamount to an act of showing the sciences their proper place. I think philosophy cannot and should not try to play the role of usher.[\[ix\]](#)[\[ix\]](#)

The openness, then, implicit in Habermas' view of philosophy as "interpreter" provides a space for considering his proposals from an alternative perspective. The question, however, becomes one of determining in function of what worldview Habermas' communicative model should be considered. The suggestion of this study is that Habermas' philosophy of emancipation be examined within the horizon of the Christian worldview, i.e., one that "follows out lines of inquiry suggested by Christian experience."[\[x\]](#)[\[x\]](#) If the claim that all philosophy departs from some definite starting point, rooted in a prior understanding, is true of its historical contributions, then a Christian philosophy "is shaped in important ways by Christian faith, life and action."[\[xi\]](#)[\[xi\]](#) However, the incorporation of the Christian worldview should be understood here as safeguarding the distinction between philosophy and theological investigation. This means that insight may be derived from the resources of the Christian worldview for doing philosophy while that which is

appropriated philosophically must itself conform to the canons of reasoned evidence and argument.^[xii]^[xii] In short, a Christian philosophy as understood here is one that "seeks to appropriate by *rational and properly philosophical means* certain insights first disclosed by Christian revelation."^[xiii]^[xiii]

However, at this point an issue that needs to be addressed is what "properly philosophical means" or, more specifically, what philosophical methodology--from among a number of possibilities--is best suited for disclosing the philosophically-significant insights of Christian revelation. Three possible methodological candidates that may be considered include the deductive/rationalist, the inductive/ empiricist and the hermeneutical approaches to philosophizing. The inappropriateness of the deductive method stems from the fact that it invariably endeavors to apply self-evident axioms to definitions from which more *geometrico* propositions follow so as to establish a system of propositions whose fundamental characteristic consists precisely in the necessary relations that obtain from one proposition to the other. Such a procedure supposes a Spinozian-like conception of reality where God and nature are interchangeable (*Deus sive Natura*). Such a system acknowledges the existence of the one infinite substance, i.e., the primary axiom, from which all other possible attributes, i.e., the propositions, are derived by necessity. This not only denies the distinction between God and nature, but also reduces the notion of freedom to necessity, both of which are entirely foreign to the Christian worldview.

With respect to the inductive or, more specifically, the constructive methodology typical of positivist forms of empiricism, the strict delimitation of knowledge to the order of experience artificially circumscribes the intellect to an identification, arrangement and collection of individual sensible objects (matters of fact). As such, these can never be transcended, so that, at best, metaphysical notions are relegated exclusively to the extra-philosophical domain of faith. Such a reductive methodology excluding metaphysical discourse and reducing the human intellect to one more sense faculty is foreign also to the Christian worldview.

A third approach, i.e., the hermeneutical methodology, will be adopted in this study, given its emphasis in delving into a tradition, in this case the Christian tradition, for resources that may illuminate new challenges.

The reason for considering in hermeneutical fashion the Christian horizon as the context for interpreting Habermas' communicative proposal is better appreciated by probing the manner in which such a worldview may be understood as emancipatory when examined as a response to the deconstructionist critique against metaphysical principles. A consideration of the deconstructionist position consists not only in bringing out the emancipatory dimension of the Christian worldview, but also in indicating one contemporary approach which may be advanced in response to the acute challenge that deconstruction represents. Today the "post-modern condition" or the "mark of post-modernity" mounts a relentless criticism of the basic modes of rationality typical of the Western tradition and leads to a "loss of credibility in all metanarratives."^[xiv]^[xiv]

An important article, "From Anarchy to Principles: Deconstruction and the Resources of Christian Philosophy,"^[xv]^[xv] indicates the sense in which the Christian horizon is not subject to various critical themes emerging from the deconstructionist denunciation of "metanarratives." Kenneth L. Schmitz both presents a weakness in the deconstruction program when considered in light of the Christian worldview and brings out the emancipatory dimension rooted in this religious tradition. For Schmitz the postmodernist position consists specifically in a repudiation of the principles by which reason "has sought a better understanding of what is true and good."^[xvi]^[xvi] The bulk of the postmodernist critique is directed against the notion of *principle* (*principium* in Latin; *arché* in Greek) as the source of being, thought and action. Instead, deconstructionists

favor *anarchy*, understood in its more original meaning as signifying "to live, think and act *without principles*," rather than in its more modern sense as referring "primarily to violence and disrespect for the law."[\[xvii\]](#)[\[xvii\]](#) Schmitz advises against taking this challenge lightly: "It may be that, when reading Richard Rorty's latest sigh of despair, we are merely seeing yet another of the recurrent descents into skepticism that have come and gone at various periods in our intellectual history. And yet there are signs that there may be deeper movement afoot."[\[xviii\]](#)[\[xviii\]](#) Given the seriousness, comprehensiveness and uncompromising nature of the deconstructionist critique, a reconstruction of the master lines of Schmitz's analysis follows in two parts: (a) the nature of the deconstructionist critique of Western culture as advanced by Heidegger and Horkheimer-Adorno, and (b) a response to this critique from the viewpoint of the Christian horizon.

Schmitz employs an interpretive study on Heidegger by Reiner Schürmann[\[xix\]](#)[\[xix\]](#) as a focal point for the deconstructionist discussion concerning the notion of principles. According to Schürmann's study, Heidegger envisions Western culture as consisting in four *epochs*: the pre-metaphysical epoch, consisting of the age of Greek poets, dramatists, and early philosophers; the classical metaphysical epoch, spanning from Greek philosophy to contemporary scientific technology; and the post-metaphysical epoch, which emerges with Nietzsche. Indeed, the metaphysical epoch itself is further subdivided into four subcategories or *economies*, with each economy distinguished from the other in function of a single *principle* or foundational notion determining a fixed order or worldview. In this respect, the Greek economy or order revolves around the notion of essence or substance (*ousia*); the medieval order proceeds in function of the notion of God (*Theos, Deus, Gubernator mundi*); the modern order revolves around the notion of man (*humanism*); and the contemporary order proceeds in terms of the notion of scientific technology (*technik*).[\[xx\]](#)[\[xx\]](#) Of these four epochs the metaphysical one has for over two and a half millennia clearly dominated the intellectual formation and orientation of Western culture. It is this supremacy which has become the target of the deconstructionist critique.

The deconstructionist understand their own program as consisting in "comprehending and overcoming" such metaphysical reliance on principles. Here, in function of the categorical nature of its principles, metaphysics comes to be understood as a limiting framework that precludes rather than advances thought. Clearly, the term *metaphysics*, as used by Schürmann, does not only refer to its more technical use in Western philosophy as signifying the science of the real. It refers more broadly to an ordering of worldviews in terms of principles. It is precisely the viability of such conceptual orderings that postmodernists endeavor to deconstruct.

Metaphysics is the long-standing thought-construction which has been produced by means of principles; and it can be brought to truth only through the task of *deconstruction*, the task of comprehending and overcoming (*Verwindung*) the way in which principles has sealed our thought in upon itself and away from the true disclosure of being.[\[xxi\]](#)[\[xxi\]](#)

In this respect, for Heidegger, metaphysical principles nullify further thought by fostering a notion of origin as domination. In function of this all things within the cosmos are reduced to a uniform unity and in terms of which all thought and action are subject to the closure brought about by the origin.[\[xxii\]](#)[\[xxii\]](#) Heidegger understands the various senses of the term *principle*, as elaborated by Aristotle,[\[xxiii\]](#)[\[xxiii\]](#) as precisely signifying such a domineering, reductionistic and limiting notion of origin.[\[xxiv\]](#)[\[xxiv\]](#) As Schürmann argues, "Aristotle defines *arché* as that out of which something is or becomes or is known. The term therefore designates a source of being, becoming and knowledge beyond which it is useless to try to investigate: the source is ultimate in that it both begins and commands."[\[xxv\]](#)[\[xxv\]](#)

Thus, as Schmitz elaborates, the principles constitutive of each of the four metaphysical periods reflect three features characteristic of an epoch/economy, viz., closure, necessity and certitude.

For what marks each of these "epochs" or "economies" is that their order rests upon a *single* primary principle; and this foundation provides--for those who live, think and act in terms of its order--first, a selective determination of open possibilities, in a word: *closure*; secondly, stability or regularity, in a word: *necessity*; and thirdly, credibility through repetitive confirmation, in a word: *certitude*.[\[xxvi\]](#)[\[xxvi\]](#)

Accordingly, metaphysical principles generative of epochs (1) establish an order that fixes the relations between the entities comprising that order as well as the relations that such entities may have to the order itself; (2) furnish an explanation for the occurrence of phenomena; (3) provide a purposeful reason for action; and (4) ban "inappropriate action by pre-empting more radical choice."[\[xxvii\]](#)[\[xxvii\]](#)

Schmitz also introduces the work of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, [\[xxviii\]](#)[\[xxviii\]](#) representatives of the Frankfurt School, who, like Heidegger, notwithstanding different orientations, comprehend the history of Western thought in terms of a conception of origin understood as domination with its ensuing closure. In the case of Horkheimer and Adorno, however, they find this notion operative in the West's "technological determination to master nature."[\[xxix\]](#)[\[xxix\]](#) This mastery proceeds in function of instrumental reason, i.e., in terms of a means-end rationality limited in its employment via impersonal techniques to the inception and attainment of varied objectives, while itself remaining incapable of determining the good or *ratio finalis* of human existence. The end result of instrumental reason at the service of technological advancements is understood as involving a process of reification that leads to the dehumanization of the subject via greater calculability, bureaucratic efficiency, administrative and economic control. Hence, the technological machine becomes an exploitative mechanism subjecting the human person to dehumanizing relationships that negate authentic individuality.

Interestingly enough, Schmitz's response to the deconstructionist critique of metaphysical principles does not consist in a blanket defense of such principles. Instead he limits his response to indicating in what sense metaphysical principles in function of the Christian horizon are less susceptible to the postmodernist attack.[\[xxx\]](#)[\[xxx\]](#) He first questions whether the concept of principle as involving a notion of origin must be conceived as indicating domination or whether it may not be possible to retain a "conception of principle as that which establishes a certain arrangement of consequences, but deny that the arrangement must be one of domination."[\[xxxi\]](#)[\[xxxi\]](#) Speaking of Christian philosophers, Schmitz adds that they were concerned with the very being of things in a manner that raises the question

Why anything at all, why not rather nothing? This question arose out of a freshly charged wonder, prompted no doubt by the Christian disclosure of the generosity of a Creator who sent his only Son to redeem a fallen humanity. So that a Christian philosophy is prompted to look for the primary form of power (and the ultimate meaning and worth of the term) not in domination, but in caring presence.[\[xxxii\]](#)[\[xxxii\]](#)

This understanding of God as love permeates Christian scriptures as evidenced in the following passage where Christ states,

For this is how God loved the world:

he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish

but may have eternal life.
For God sent his Son into the world
not to judge the world,
but so that through him the world might be saved. [\[xxxiii\]](#)[xxxiii]

In another passage Christ--though God--does not cling to his own divinity, but surrenders all for love of humankind; he

Who, being in the form of God,
did not count equality with God
something to be grasped.
But he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
becoming as human beings are;
and being in every way like a human being,
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death, death on a cross. [\[xxxiv\]](#)[xxxiv]

Indeed within the Christian horizon, God as the all-encompassing first principle does not lord over his subjects as objects of domination, but rather elevates humanity to a state of filiation in which the human person is dignified with the title of "son":

God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the law, so that we could receive adoption as sons. As you are sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son crying, 'Abba, Father'; and so you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir, by God's own act. [\[xxxv\]](#)[xxxv]

This view of God as Father, Brother and Friend, who loves and empties himself in order to elevate humankind to a new state of filiation is precisely the conception of first principle that is understood within the Christian horizon and pursued, for instance, by Thomas Aquinas, who understands the creation, according to Schmitz, as a communication--a giving, a sharing--of being. [\[xxxvi\]](#)[xxxvi] The Christian conception of a first principle is not understood as a principle of domination whose aim is to subordinate its subjects for the sake of dehumanizing control or influence.

To the charge that metaphysical principles reduce all reality to a single unity, philosophy pursued within the Christian horizon, one may counter that, to the contrary, the first principle in referring to the Trinity is understood as a unity permeated with abundance. Schmitz argues,

The charge that a metaphysics of principles is a means of domination is strengthened by the reductionism of the many to a sheer, univocal unity. But, if the first principle is one, yet not hostile to inner distinction (as theologically and in respect of the Trinity, we speak of the distinct persons and their different processions and missions), then the charge of closure must be reopened for discussion. [\[xxxvii\]](#)[xxxvii]

Yet, within the Christian experience, not only is the first principle open to inner distinction, as Schmitz rightly suggests, it also incorporates humanity as part of its inner life, as powerfully expressed in the priestly prayer of Christ:

May they all be one,
just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you,
so that they also may be in us,
so that the world may believe it was you who sent me.
I have given them the glory you gave to me,
that they may be one as we are one.
With me in them and you in me,
that they be so perfected in unity . . . [\[xxxviii\]](#)[xxxviii]

Finally, where the deconstructionists claim that the first principle brings about closure insofar as future possibilities for thought and action is concerned, it should be noted that the *ad intra* constitution of the first principle within itself consists in a "plurification" of persons. Even in terms of its *ad extra* manifestation the "infinite abundance of the first principle will give more room for all possibilities within creation--even, it must be remarked, for the possibilities of evil." [\[xxxix\]](#)[xxxix] Indeed, within the Christian worldview, far from a first principle as limiting future possibilities, there is the promise that the believer will perform and even surpass the works of its founder, as Christ himself states,

In all truth I tell you,
whoever believes in me
will perform the same works as I do myself,
and will perform even greater works,
because I am going to the Father.
Whatever you ask for in my name I will do,
so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. [\[xl\]](#)[xl]

The philosophically relevant implications of the Christian perspective seems then to contrast the deconstructionist critique of first principles. How then would such a worldview open, sensitize and shape thinking and living in relation to Habermas' proposal. The answer to this question reflects the sense in which the Christian worldview may be understood as providing a *sensus plenior* to Habermas' own formalistic model.

One distinct contribution that may be derived hermeneutically from a consideration of the Christian worldview is its eminently realist outlook. It views the foundation of the universe, the human person, its past, present and future, as inexorably related to a God who not only is origin and destiny of all that is, but for love of humanity enters, with his Divinity, human history in order to effect a dramatic redemption. Such a realist orientation provides Habermas' formalistic notion of ethical discourse with a framework, a transcendent ground for human life, diametrically different from a materialist one.

A second contribution that may be derived from a Christian worldview consists in that it does not merely insist on the *reality* of God as Trinity, the universe and the transcendent dimension of the human person, including the latter's redemption in function of a historical intervention of a divine person. It also endeavors to give its body of beliefs metaphysical articulation. Indeed the

Christian worldview embodies an eminently metaphysical outlook that dynamically moves beyond a purely physical and even anthropological understanding in the direction of a metaphysical penetration of reality. Said another way, Christian reflection endeavors to move beyond the contraries consisting in this or that form to a notion of life experienced or possessed more fully in function of its transcendent nature. For Aquinas, accordingly, the *ratio finalis* of humanity individually and as mystical body consists not in imaging physical movement, i.e., in realizing this or that motion or change; nor in pursuing anthropological accomplishments, i.e., in achieving this or that theoretical or practical, artistic, or technical perfection; but, rather, in imaging divine being itself, i.e., in conforming one's life at the level of one's ontological constitution in accordance to the revelation--the *emancipatory communication*--of the Christian Trinity. In this respect, the Christian horizon moves beyond the strictures of Habermas' emancipatory ethical/political discourse to metaphysical discourse as representing the speculative completion of thought and action.

In addition to its realist and metaphysical orientation, a third contribution stemming from the Christian worldview is its thoroughgoing communicative dimension. The Christian worldview is in function of a God conceived within and outside its own divinity as communication *par excellence*. Indeed the Christian understanding of God as consisting in the undivided unity of a trinity of persons possesses *ad intra* a communicative character that stems from the very relational exigencies of the processions that each divine person has with respect to the other. The Father communicates his paternity to the Son, the Son communicates his filiation to the Father, the Father and the Son communicate their relation to the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit communicates his love to the Father and the Son. This communicative makeup of the divinity is reflected in its *ad extra* operations such that all reality, particularly as manifested in the case of the human person, is in some sense to a lesser or greater degree communicative. Indeed, the central claim of the Christian message is that the Son, the *Logos*, the Verb, of the Father became man and dwelt among men in order to *communicate* and thereby share the Trinitarian life with humankind. Accordingly, the Christian understanding of communication purports to extend profoundly the dialogical character of Habermas' communicative model such that such a discourse is no longer limited to individual persons but is comprehended as a discourse open to the testament of the divine *Logos*.

Now, although the view of this study is that the Christian horizon does present a context for anchoring Habermas' formalistic model, yet when one turns to a more philosophical appropriation of the Christian horizon, it is clear that being as *emancipative* and *communicative* remains an entirely undeveloped notion. In view of the endeavor to provide a philosophical framework for Christian revelation, the object of the next section will be to consider the manner in which the Habermasian proposal may be incorporated within a metaphysical context, particularly as it relates to the theory of the transcendental properties of being. This will be accomplished by articulating a method for critically examining philosophical notions in terms of his existential metaphysics.

Application of the Methodology of Metaphysics to Habermasian Categories

The aim of the foregoing section was to consider the manner in which the Christian horizon, hermeneutically understood, provides a pointed response to the deconstructionist critique of *principle* by arguing that this notion is not comprehended in Christianity as signifying domination, reductionism and closure toward future possibilities, but rather as involving life-giving generosity, plurality within unity, and openness toward future prospects. The importance of considering the notion of principle within the Christian horizon consisted not only in providing

an occasion for stating the eminently communicative dimension of this religious tradition, but also for suggesting that such a worldview represents a *sensus plenior* of Habermas' communicative model. It was further suggested that although the communicative dimension of reality is explicitly celebrated within the Christian context, if one turns to the metaphysical system of Thomas Aquinas, which endeavors to provide Christianity with a philosophical justification, there does not appear to be an equally developed sense of being as *emancipative* and *communicative*. This middle section will attempt to answer the question of whether the Habermasian contribution may represent a further development of the notion of being as *esse* (as existing) in terms of his communicative model. Said another way, the aim here will be to determine whether one may view Habermas' emancipatory/communicative model as not merely expressing a certain view of human nature within the purview of a philosophical anthropology, but rather as indicating an understanding of the human person that may signify a clarification and extension of the notion of *esse*. This will involve (1) a propaedeutic explication of basic metaphysical themes, including (a) the epistemological basis for metaphysical knowledge, (b) the metaphysical/intellectual method proper to metaphysics, (c) a clarification of the subject of metaphysics, (d) a discussion of "conceivable being," and (e) the role of analogical predication within this framework. This will be followed (2) by an articulation of the criteria of transcendentality, i.e., the metaphysical basis for ascertaining which notions may or may not be metaphysically predicated as properties of *esse*,^[xli] including an illustration of the criteria using fundamental metaphysical predicates. Once this is accomplished, the final section will end (3) by applying the criteria of transcendentality to two central Habermasian categories: the emancipatory interest and communication in function of the ideal speech situation.

Basic Metaphysical Themes

The basis, number and scope of the philosophical sciences, including metaphysics and its method, can be understood in function of the relation of the various cognitive capabilities of the knowing subject with their proper objects. Accordingly, the division of the sciences is grounded in terms of two distinct acts of the mind, the first of which--simple apprehension--is responsible for two modes or degrees of knowledge and the second--negative (existential) judgment of separation--for a third degree in light of which the epistemic subject apprehends reality.^[xlii] Classically, scientific knowledge begins in the experience of the concrete sensible singular, a division of the sciences, their cognitive acts and proper objects, can be ascertained in terms of their respective degree of independence from sensible matter and change. The first degree/mode of simple apprehension--abstraction of the whole--provides natural philosophy with its subject matter, i.e., the apprehension of common sensible matter from particular sensible matter, expressed in terms of generic concepts and universals, denoting the *what*, the essence or nature of a material body. Natural philosophy thus expresses a concern with attaining universal and necessary knowledge of the nature of a particular thing. The second degree/mode of simple apprehension--abstraction of a form--provides mathematics with its subject matter, i.e., the apprehension of common intelligible matter, expressed in terms of generic concepts and universals, denoting purely formal objects such as number and spatial configurations, their structure and measurement.

However, in the case of the second act of the mind, the object of metaphysics is derived not by a process of simple apprehension but in accordance to the negative judgment of separation, wherein the mind determines that sensible beings may be considered not merely in terms of their

matter and motion but in function of their act of existence. Given that the transcendentals ultimately represent deeper insights into the act of to be, i.e., into the notion of being as *esse*, and that the aim of the present section revolves around the question of whether Habermas' emancipatory/communicative model might not itself represent a further insight into the act of existence as *emancipative* and *communicative*, it is crucial that the intellectual method from which the notion of being as *esse* is derived be carefully examined.

Of the two stages of this method for ascertaining the subject of metaphysics, the first concentrates on "the role of judgments of implicitation as materially prior to the negative judgment of separation."[\[xliii\]](#)[\[xliii\]](#)In the first act of the mind, a conceptualization of a thing is grasped, i.e., what a thing is, such as in the case of the concepts 'horse' and 'unicorn'. In regard to the second act, the mind is no longer intent merely on knowing the essence/nature of a thing, but with the distinct judgment concerning whether the thing itself exists, so as to conclude "The horse is" but "The unicorn is not." The insight here is that to know what something is is not the same as knowing whether it is. It is then from this initial judgment directed toward the determination of the question of the existence of sensible things that the mind, as it were, experiences a multiplicity of particular concrete existential judgments such as "John is," "Mary is," "The nightingale is," "The rose is," "The lake is," "The sun is," "John is not Mary," "The rose is not the nightingale," "The sun is not the ocean," . . . From the explicit particularity and singularity of such judgments the mind gradually moves toward a realization of their existential implicitations in a more common judgment, i.e., the judgment of implicitation: *something is*, wherein 'something' is not understood as referring to an abstract universal but to a particular with an indefinite reference to singulars.[\[xliv\]](#)[\[xliv\]](#) Notwithstanding its proximity to the genuine metaphysical judgment of existence, the common judgment remains circumscribed within the realm of sensible things and thereby has not yet attained the Thomistic metaphysical notion of being as *esse*.[\[xlv\]](#)[\[xlv\]](#)

In the second stage, the negative judgment of separation signifies that beyond the judgment of implicitation, noted above, the mind "negates that to be is necessarily linked with matter and motion, the truth that to be is not necessarily to be this-or-that, that to be is not limited of itself but by a principle of limitation ([essence as] the potential existence)."[\[xlvi\]](#)[\[xlvi\]](#) Here the mind attains a comprehension that there is an intelligible separation from the question of what the essence of a sensible thing is and the question of what it means for something to be.[\[xlvii\]](#)[\[xlvii\]](#) Herein lies the crucial distinction between the particular sciences and metaphysics. The former are concerned with knowing in terms of the formal and intelligible nature of the part of reality to which they are directed--the nature of the existence of which is merely assumed and never itself investigated. The science of metaphysics, in contrast, is concerned not with an analysis of this or that existent but, rather, with things from the formal perspective of their act of to be.[\[xlviii\]](#)[\[xlviii\]](#)

Indeed, a clarification of the notion of being as *esse* expressed in and by this judgment makes explicit the viewpoint proper to metaphysics. This is to say that metaphysics considers being in function of its act of to be, such that in the formula being as *esse*, the term 'being' represents any and all actually existing entities and the term '*esse*' designates the formality in function of which the actually existing entities are to be considered, viz., that of their *existence*.[\[xlix\]](#)[\[xlix\]](#) The *esse* here is strictly understood as denoting solely the *act* of to be derived from the negative judgment of separation, wherein an act of intellection recognizes the distinction between what a sensible entity is and its act of to be. The notion of *esse* as comprehended here then is restricted by the particular natures in which it is received, i.e., existents receive or participate in the act of to be to the degree allowed by their natures. *Esse* as the subject of metaphysics ultimately rests upon the

concrete existential judgments from which one approaches the metaphysical judgment properly speaking.^[i]

Further, the intellectual intuition achieved in and by this judgment presents a view of being as signifying a *notion* rather than a univocal concept, universal or idea. This involves the distinction between the act of reasoning proper of the particular sciences that proceed from a consideration of the many to a simple cognition of them, and the act of intellection proper to metaphysics which, in pondering the signification of *esse* understands the whole multitude in terms of their act of to be.^[ii] Univocal terms as generic concepts are consequently predicated of diverse things according to a same intention. Maintaining the widest extension it admits the least comprehension insofar as the inferiors potentially included under their purview are concerned. For instance, the univocal term, "animal" is said both of horse and cow and signifies in each case the same intention, viz., an animated sensible substance.^[iii] However, the notion of *esse* is not a univocal term since its intention is not predicated of its inferiors in the same way but, rather, in an analogical way. It expresses similarities and differences admitting internal adjustment for both the widest possible extension--since it can be said of all things--and the fullest implicit comprehension--since any real being exists not potentially but actually. The notion of *esse* then is not an idea and it cannot be derived from the analysis of an idea; rather it denotes an *act*. Moreover, ". . . although *esse* is the most formal among all things, nevertheless it is also the most communicable, although it is not communicated to its inferiors and superiors in the same way."^[iii] Indeed, the act of to be, *esse*, possesses in and of itself all possible perfections, since as distinct from matter and motion, it does not in and of itself express any relation to potency and is thereby limited only in sensible things by the specific nature in which it is found, a nature, that participates to a greater or lesser degree in the plenitude of existence.

It must be said that this which I call *esse* is the most perfect of all things . . . this which I call *esse* is the actualizing of all acts and on account of this it is the perfection of all perfections.^[iv]

Hence, unlike univocal terms whose intentional unity is perfectly one, the notion of *esse* admits only of a proportional, relative, analogical unity, in which its inferiors are included actually although implicitly. In this sense, the notion of *esse* as an analogical term possess what may be described as a *confused* character given that differences in degree of predication in function of the nature in which it is received are not made explicit.

At this juncture it is crucial to point out that the notion of *esse* "can be termed 'transcendental' not only because it is non-univocal but because it leaves the way open for man to investigate the area of the conceivable which is beyond his immediate experience."^[v] This is to say that the subject of metaphysics is clearly the notion of being as *esse* grasped in the negative judgment of separation and predicated analogously of limited being. At the point in which the mind understands the act of to be as separated from matter and motion and as thus not implying any limitation, there emerges an additional intuition concerning the possibility of a unique being in whom *esse* is predicated in an unlimited way, i.e., a being whose essence connotes no potency (matter or motion) and is synonymous with its unrestricted possession of existence as *Ipsium Esse Subsistens*, the *Self-Existing Being*.^[vi] The rationale here is that although the act of to be is initially found within the context of the concrete finite/limited singulars, not implying of itself limitation, it is nonetheless understood as endowing as much actual existence as a given nature in function of its principle of potency is capable of receiving. If the *esse* of an entity suggests no limitation then

. . . such a notion of being effected in a positive way by and in the metaphysical judgment of existence does leave the way open both to the conceivability of a being unlimited by any potential existence and to an increase (by way of addition to knowledge) of understanding, which increase is effectively expressed by the transcendentals.[\[lvii\]](#)[\[lvii\]](#)

Yet, before considering how this notion of being "leaves the way open . . . to an increase of understanding" via the transcendentals, there remains the task of clarifying, in light of the foregoing treatment of the conceivability of Unlimited Being, that mode of analogous predication that would be proper of limited beings and Unlimited Being. In other words, if, in addition to the subject of metaphysics--initially understood as referring to the *esse* of limited beings-- there now appears not only the feasibility but also the relevance and appropriateness of acknowledging Unlimited Being, then the question becomes one of determining the nature of the analogous predication suitable for such an extension of being. Two modes of metaphysical predication will be considered, viz.: the analogy of proper proportionality and the analogy of intrinsic attribution.

The analogy of proper proportionality consists in a recognition that though beings are diverse in kind and number, they nonetheless all *participate* in the perfections of existence. That is, each essence is related to its own act of existing in a manner proportionately similar to that of another essence to its act of existence. The formula here is expressed as existence : essence :: existence : essence. For example: Michael's essence is to Michael's existence as Patricia's essence is to Patricia's existence as the moon's essence is to the moon's existence. Further, although two distinct beings may not exist in the same way, they nonetheless *both* participate in the excellence of existence in a manner congruent with their nature. For some critics, however, the fact that the analogy of proper proportionality expresses a distinction between essence and existence renders it a form of metaphysical predication proper only of limited being in which such a distinction is found, but inappropriate for Unlimited Being in which no such distinction is to be found.[\[lviii\]](#)[\[lviii\]](#) This is to say that

(1) the analogy of proper proportionality is a comparison of real intrinsic relations from the standpoint of similarity in the sense that something (to be) in the being is shared, which sharing admits of a greater-or-less degree (on the basis of the essence, the potential existence, a principle of limitation, bespeaking more-or-less) and is a comparison of relations that are really distinct; (2) but it is conceivable that there can be a being whose essence is its act of to be, i.e., where there is no intrinsic really distinct relation; (3) *if* such is the *formal* nature of the analogy of proper proportionality it will not enable the metaphysician to arrive at the most proper object of metaphysics: God, and it will not provide the rational justification for a natural theology because it will be unable to declare how this conceivable being is similar to beings of a relative character. Therefore while the analogy of proper proportionality suffices in the range of finite being, it is not the only metaphysical analogy.[\[lix\]](#)[\[lix\]](#)

A second mode of predication that does propose to express the notion of the unity of being in its diversity while encompassing the entire range of being, i.e., limited beings and Unlimited Being, is the analogy of intrinsic attribution. This analogy is founded in the inability of limited being as composed of the act of be and a finite nature to serve as a sufficient explanation for its

own existence. Since Unlimited Being emerges as the unique being whose essence implies no relation to potency, then such a being would be capable of serving as a sufficient explanation for its own existence as well as that of all limited beings. The relation between Unlimited Being as the source of existence and limited being as that to which existence is communicated is that of cause and effect: the relation of cause, i.e., Unlimited Being as primary analogate, and effect, i.e., limited beings as secondary analogates. To say that limited beings share in existence or have being by attribution is to say that they have been given existence by Unlimited Being as their cause. Though limited beings intrinsically possess *esse*, the degree of this attribution is not univocal but in accordance to the existent's nature. The analogy of intrinsic attribution means that whatever *metaphysical* notions are said of limited beings as effects are said of Unlimited Being as cause and as exemplar of such a predicate. The need for the analogy of intrinsic attribution may also be understood as representing an overt attempt to safeguard the science from a type of agnosticism with respect to the claim that one cannot have knowledge of Unlimited Being and thereby protect being from a deficient understanding of its full range and transcendental. [lx][lx] Hence,

. . . in accordance with the *Summa Theologiae*, I, 13, 5 and 6, it would seem that Thomas Aquinas himself pointed to the respective role of an analogy of intrinsic attribution which (1) is based not upon being as a relation but upon the consequences of the relation, the consequences of the relative character of being: the causal relation (effect to cause) and (2) which stresses the comparison of things not in terms of *forms* of existence (analogy of extrinsic attribution) but in terms of *existence* itself, since the analogon (being, *esse*) actually exists in (intrinsic) all the analogates though in different degrees and even without any degree whatsoever; and which (3) helps the metaphysician to find out in what this being in which essence and existence are not really distinct is like the beings of his immediate experience. [lxi][lxi]

Criteria of Transcendentality

Now that the essential themes of metaphysics have been rendered more explicit, this study will now consider the criteria of transcendentality, [lxii][lxii] as the test that may be employed in determining which terms may be predicated of being as *esse*. "The role of the transcendentals as predicates of this judgment" [lxiii][lxiii] is derived from the density of signification of *esse* insofar as it cannot be expressed adequately by any one term. Further scrutiny is thereby needed in order to explicate the intelligible values and implications of the predicates of *esse*, "each of which 'is the being itself apprehended under a particular aspect'." [lxiv][lxiv] Transcendentals reflect predicates of a metaphysical judgment in which the subject of the same is *esse* while the predicate *names* represent further penetrations into the character of the act of to be. Thus the transcendentals, one, true, and good, follow from the act of to be as immediate implications of the notion of *esse* (*unum, verum, bonum sequitur esse*); they do not add to *esse* but serve to increase our comprehension of the act of to be. [lxv][lxv]

This said, the criteria of transcendentality require that proposed transcendental notions give affirmative responses to two crucial questions:

- (1) Is this notion "speculable": metaphysical or analogical being such, as Thomas Aquinas says, that it "does not depend upon matter for its to be, because it can exist without matter or never exist in matter at all [*In de Trinitate*, V, 1 c]; in other words: it is not essential to this notion that it be limited to the beings of man's immediate experience' it could be predicated of other beings [*In de Trinitate*, V, 4 c].
- (2) Is this notion *fully* transcendental, i.e., predicable analogically of both Infinite and finite being. [\[lxvi\]](#)[\[lxvi\]](#)

The first aspect of the criterion concerns the question of whether the proposed notion is analogical; here the intellectual method can be utilized: "in arriving at and evaluating other notions, notions that of themselves do not imply limitation to matter and motion, notions that are higher than a generic concept, notions that are *fundamentally* analogical, notions which 'simply transcend' the generic order, notions that are *simply* transcendental [such as] 'substance', 'power', 'act'. . ." [\[lxvii\]](#)[\[lxvii\]](#) The negative judgment of separation serves then to indicate those notions that can exist apart from or that never have existed in matter. The second criterion, however, demands not only that the proposed notion be analogical but that it may be predicated analogously of both limited beings and Unlimited Being.

The second criteria demands that metaphysical notions be predicated of both limited beings and Unlimited Being. This can be done by considering the problem of convertibility, i.e., whether transcendental predicates have to be analogously said of each and every being without exception. If a proposed predicate meets both aspects of the criteria stated above, viz., that it be analogical and predicable of both limited and Unlimited Being, then it merits recognition as a transcendental property. This means that although all genuinely transcendental predicates must be said of Unlimited Being as their source, there may nonetheless be transcendental predicates that may be said of each and every limited being insofar as it participates in the act of to be and other predicates that may be said solely of *some*--not all--limited being. "If a notion could be predicated analogously of Infinite-Unlimited Being and *some* limited beings, the notion would be *adequately* transcendental." [\[lxviii\]](#)[\[lxviii\]](#) This is the basis for the distinction of absolute from relative transcendentals. The former, which include transcendentals such as one, true, good, are wholly convertible with the notion of being as *esse*. [\[lxix\]](#)[\[lxix\]](#) The latter, which include such transcendentals as intellect, will, and justice, are not convertible with the whole range of being and may be predicated only of beings capable of cognition, i.e., intelligent being. [\[lxx\]](#)[\[lxx\]](#)

Now although the foregoing resolves the question of the extensionality of transcendental predicates, a parallel clarification of the nature of the intentionality of such predicates is needed. The issue here is one of rendering more explicit the character of the intention that is predicated according to an analogy of intrinsic attribution with the distinct end in view of averting the charge of anthropomorphism. This is accomplished via the intellectual method "by which the *res significata* of some thing is seen to be distinguished from the *modus significando*. [\[lxxi\]](#)[\[lxxi\]](#) The *res significata* is another way of saying that which is signified by a genuinely transcendental predicate, i.e., a notion that not implying any relation to potency, is such that it designates a perfection absolutely and simply. Given that only such intentional significations may be affirmed of Unlimited Being, the predicates refer to those that would especially be said according to an analogy of intrinsic attribution, wherein the perfections are said on the basis of a relation of likeness between limited beings as effects and Unlimited Being as cause. Accordingly, what is called wisdom or goodness in limited intellectual beings preexists in Unlimited Being in an eminent way.

Such names are predicated analogously of God and creatures (by an analogy of intrinsic attribution) because they are said on the basis of the relation of the creature to God as effect is related to the cause, in which cause all the perfections of things exist *excellenter*.[\[lxxii\]](#)[\[lxxii\]](#)

The *modus significando*, on the other hand, refers to the mode of signifying predicates which transpires within the context of non-metaphysical predication, i.e., an eminently univocal mode of predicating as would occur before the significance of metaphysical analogy, especially intrinsic attribution, is countenanced. Non-analogical predicates univocally predicated of limited being would be entirely unsuitable for metaphysical predication of limited beings and Unlimited Being.[\[lxxiii\]](#)[\[lxxiii\]](#)

God has in Himself all the perfections of creatures and whatever is predicated of Him is predicated *per essentiam* while it is predicated of the creature *per participationem*. The creature is like its creator in so far as it has some perfection; it is creatively thought by Him, but still represents him deficiently [*Summa Theologiae*, I, 13, 2 c]. Whatever name is said of God, e.g., good, wise, etc., the meaning is not: God is the cause of goodness or wisdom, or: God is not evil or unwise, but: what is called goodness or wisdom in creatures, pre-exists in God but according to a *modum excellens, altiores ominentem*.[\[lxxiv\]](#)[\[lxxiv\]](#)

The two-fold criteria of transcendentalism will now be applied to certain proposed notions in order to determine whether they are both analogous and predicable of limited beings and Unlimited Being. With respect to the predicate of *substance (substantia)*, it appears that according to the *modus significando* "man's actual experience is limited to substances as modes of finite existence" yet this "does not mean that it may not also be a transcendent aspect of being."[\[lxxv\]](#)[\[lxxv\]](#) Indeed, if one views the term from a predicamental sense, then substance understood as one of the ten Aristotelian categories would be comprehended as signifying a "support of accidents," a notion that as such can only be predicated of finite modes of existence.[\[lxxvi\]](#)[\[lxxvi\]](#) However, such a restriction of the term is not warranted if one instead considers the term as signifying that to which *esse* is due in itself and not in another or, similarly, as "not to be in another and [not to be] of this particular kind," i.e., limited, such that "on account of a diverse mode of predicating, substance is not said of God and creatures univocally but analogically."[\[lxxvii\]](#)[\[lxxvii\]](#) What Aquinas is suggesting here is a view of substance that amounts to an alternate way of looking at undivided being, i.e., the transcendental *unum*. If substance can be understood via the negative judgment of separation as synonymous with *esse* insofar as it of itself does not imply any relation to potency, and if the notion once grasped can be predicated by an analogy of intrinsic attribution to both limited beings and Unlimited Being, then the notion meets the requirements of transcendentalism with an absolute extension.[\[lxxviii\]](#)[\[lxxviii\]](#)

It is noteworthy to indicate here that in the example of substance it is possible to see the manner in which a notion initially understood within the purview of an anthropomorphism, more specifically from the standpoint of a philosophical anthropology, may disengage itself as understood in metaphysics via the intellectual method from all connotation of finitude so as to serve as an analogous term which may be predicated of both limited beings and Unlimited Being. This said, a few other proposed notions will be briefly reviewed as further illustrations of this method.

A second notion, *understanding (intellectus)* refers to the ability of mind to know being as intelligible, i.e., *esse* is knowable. With respect to the *modus significando* of this term, it implies a knowledge of limited forms; however, within the context of metaphysics, the mind possesses access to *esse*, the *res significata* of which suggests no imperfection such that Unlimited Being knows all things in terms of his own unlimited form.[\[lxxix\]](#)[\[lxxix\]](#) Hence, the intellect does not of

itself imply any limitation and with relative extension may be predicated analogously of limited intelligent beings and Unlimited Being. [lxxx][lxxx] A third notion, *will (voluntas)* follows from the cognitive integrity of intelligent natures insofar as these are able not only to know *esse* but also to decide what is fitting or non-fitting in accordance with those purposes that are constitutive of their nature. Though in terms of the *modus significando* limited intelligent beings may not always will what is fitting, such a defect should not be confused with the *res significata* of what is understood by the notion itself, given that in the case of Unlimited Being his nature is perfectly in accordance and hence never at variance with his act of to be. [lxxxii][lxxxii] Thus, the will with relative extension may be predicated analogously of limited intelligent beings and Unlimited Being. [lxxxii][lxxxii] A fourth notion, *free will (liberum arbitrium)*, related to the transcendental property of will, recognizes that intelligent natures to the extent that they are intellectual and may thus know and will their end must be free to so act. Although in terms of the *modus significando*, a rational agent may choose an end not in the order of *esse*, i.e., evil, such that finite free agents present themselves in a state of relative attachment with respect to their natural ends, it is perfectly conceivable with respect to the *res significata* that Unlimited Being be entirely in union with its own nature *aliter*. [lxxxiii][lxxxiii] Accordingly, free will with relative extension may also be predicated analogously of limited intelligent beings and Unlimited Being. A fifth notion, *justice (iustitia)* refers to an act of will that imparts to each existent its due in accordance to its nature and ordered place in reality. Whereas the *modus significando* of this term as known within the context of limited intelligent beings implies an imperfect exercise of this attribute, the *res significata* of the term implies no such deficiency, given that the act of recognizing the good of each existent as perfected in terms of its end is indeed realized in Unlimited Being. [lxxxiv][lxxxiv] Consequently, justice with relative extension may be predicated analogously of limited intelligent beings and Unlimited Being. [lxxxv][lxxxv]

Indeed,

This criterion of transcendentalism which has been formulated ultimately in terms of the intellectual method proper to metaphysics is able to provide the metaphysician with the means by which he may ascertain whether or not notions or names other than the one, the true, the good and the beautiful are transcendentals. [lxxxvi][lxxxvi]

Such an application of these criteria will constitute the aim of the final part of this middle section insofar as two central notions in Habermas' philosophy of emancipation are concerned, viz., his notion of the emancipatory interest and of communication in function of the ideal speech situation.

Metaphysical Appropriation of Habermasian Categories

The question of the transcendentalism of the emancipatory interest is best approached by recalling the manner in which it emerges within the context of Habermas' theory of cognitive interests, given that this developmental approach provides a basis for claiming that the emancipatory interest, like the other transcendentals, implies no materiality. The significance of Habermas' analysis of the empirical-analytic sciences consists in disclosing that, contrary to commonly held views, these sciences do not represent a purely formal, value-neutral enterprise, but, rather, operate in function of a technical interest, i.e., in terms of a value, in securing technical

mastery over nature.^[xxxvii] Prior, then, to scientific theorizing, there exists a pretheoretical/metatheoretical realm of discourse which constitutes the linguistic framework which *orients* the course of scientific investigations in one direction rather than another. The precondition, then, to the generation of a theory involves the linguistic consensus expressed in practices and operations of a community of researchers, who are responsible for deciding the *specific* conceptual framework in terms of which a *given* query is to be investigated and in which empirical observations are to be conducted.^[xxxviii] Once Habermas manages to disengage the technical interest animating nomological science, he argues that the methodology for understanding this metatheoretical dimension of scientific practice concerned with human interaction and language cannot be framed within the strictures of empirical-analytic science. The reason is that "*communicative action* is a system that cannot be reduced to the framework of *instrumental action*,"^[xxxix] given that whereas the latter is concerned with control of external conditions in terms of causally determined relations, the former is directed toward communication in terms of reaching intersubjective understanding.

Habermas, at this point, moves to the historical-hermeneutic sciences whose object consists in elucidating the symbolically structured reality of the social world. Yet, Habermas argues, the hermeneutical aim in understanding texts (persons, cultures, traditions), like that of nomological science, does not consist in a purely value-neutral endeavor, but discloses a practical interest in creating, maintaining and promoting effective communication on which human relations depend. This said, hermeneutics, as Habermas further points out, cannot claim a role other than that of clarifying texts by translating/paraphrasing unclear meaning or determining logical consistency, etc. As such, hermeneutics is unable to distinguish between what characterizes genuine consensus from ideological distortion. At this juncture, Habermas argues for a "depth" or critical hermeneutics.

This capacity to uncover hypostatized disequilibria embedded in communicative structures exhibits an impressive human tendency to live "both actively and reactively, critically and creatively,"^[xc] i.e., in terms of an emancipatory interest that endeavors "to restore to men and women a true awareness of their position in history?"^[xci] The role of this emancipatory tendency consists in animating critical cognition in its capacity to unveil the "the dogmatic character of both a world view and a form of life,"^[xcii] i.e., to determine "when theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed."^[xciii] The aim of the emancipatory interest via critical reflection then is the attainment of a state of inner/social transparency as expressed in the words of the Delphic maxim imparted to Socrates: "*The truth will make you free.*"

The point of this summary review of Habermas' theory of cognitive interests consists in that his analysis provides a basis for a fundamental and real distinction between an order of material objects that as known in function of the hypothetico-deductive methodology of the empirical-analytic sciences are governed by invariant physical laws, and a realm of communicating subjects whose *distinguishing characteristic* consists precisely in their not being fixed to invariant symbolic schemata when interpreted in function of the emancipatory interest. Indeed the emancipatory interest, in function of consciousness, critical reflection and critical autonomy, emerges as a correction of that which may be obtained by the other two interests working independently of this third unifying interest, concerned not so much with whether needs are being met but, rather, with the more critical question of whether these are being met justly.

Indeed, for Habermas, the thrust of the emancipatory interest toward a form of life in function of justice resides as a constitutive *telos* in the structure of human communication. This *telos* is brought out more clearly if compared with the relative transcendental properties noted above, viz., intellect, will and free will. Whereas the intellect *knows* being as *esse*, the will *decides* what is fitting and non-fitting in accordance to nature, and free will, in contradistinction to intellect which knows and will that decides, refers to the ability to *act* in accordance to nature, the emancipatory interest relates to these as the very *teleonomic* thrust that present in intelligent, i.e., communicating beings, propels the volitional faculty as aided by the cognitive one in the direction of the actuation of a form of life in function of justice. Although the *modus significando* of the emancipatory interest as the vital thrust of being is understood within the purview of philosophical anthropology or social philosophy in terms of a continuous "developmental and formative process," [xciv][xciv] as manifested within the context of limited communicating beings in which it is imperfectly realized, the notion of itself, related to cognition and volition, implies no such limitation. What the emancipatory interest signifies in accordance to its *res significata* is the dynamic thrust of *esse* toward the integration and realization of what is in accordance to nature; the plenitude of this actuation is found in Unlimited Being, whose nature is precisely the unmitigated consummation of the just life. Thus, the predicate being as *emancipative* with relative extension may be predicated analogously of limited intelligent beings and Unlimited Being.

Now, in applying the criteria to a second Habermasian notion, it should be recalled that the centrality of Habermas' theory of communication in function of the ideal speech situation was developed in the process of accounting for a speaker's ability to bring about an interpersonal engagement with a hearer such that "the hearer can rely on him." [xcv][xcv] The sufficient condition capable of accounting for the binding force of such communicative engagements was grounded in the notion of rational validity claims (comprehensibility, truth, rightness, sincerity) that although typically implicit are raised and mutually recognized in speech acts (communicatives, constatives, regulatives, avowals, respectively). Yet, as was seen in the third and fourth chapters, the inability to vindicate either the truth or rightness claim within the framework of interactive exchange required moving into the level of discourse where participants suspend all action constraints in order to thematize and thereby question norms, values, ideologies, belief systems naively-assumed in everyday speech engagements. [xcvi][xcvi] Moreover, for the conclusion of the discourse to represent genuine rational consensus it must be constraint-free, i.e., based on no other motive other than the unforced force of the better argument. Genuine discourse entails for Habermas the satisfaction of the ideal speech situation, which consists in meeting three criteria: open participation, symmetrical opportunity to apply speech acts, and freedom from all internal and external constraints that would in any way steer the conclusion from the goal of the *unforced* force of the better argument. Yet, if the formal conditions of the ideal speech situation serve as a North Star orienting the vindication of discursive argumentation, in what may one ask are these conditions based? The answer to this question will provide the basis for resolving the question concerning the transcendentality of Habermas' notion of communication in function of the ideal speech situation.

The centrality and the difficulty of situating the notion of the ideal speech situation within Habermas' theory of communication is indicated by Thompson in the following passage, where he presents a fairly impressive inventory of possible "referents" for the ideal speech situation:

It is not an existing concept in the Hegelian sense, for no historical society completely fulfills the conditions of rational discourse. Similarly, the ideal speech situation is not a regulative

principle in the Kantian sense, for it is necessarily anticipated in every act of linguistic communication. 'The ideal speech situation is', Habermas submits, 'neither an empirical phenomena nor merely a construct, but rather an unavoidable reciprocal presupposition of discourse.'[\[xcvii\]](#)[\[xcvii\]](#)

According to Thompson the ideal speech situation does not meet the requirements of a Kantian regulative idea given that such ideas of reason serve to regulate thought and action, whereas the ideal speech situation is "anticipated in every act of linguistic communication," i.e., that speech oriented to understanding serves as the basic mode of communicative action from which others, such as strategic action, are derived. Nor is the ideal speech situation a Hegelian concept given that there is no existing society that embodies the ideal form of life connected with the fulfillment of the formal conditions of discourse. But, neither can the ideal speech situation be identified with a mental construction inferred from experience, an empirical phenomena nor any arbitrary scheme. And what does it mean, then, to say that the ideal speech situation consists in an unavoidable presupposition of discourse?

McCarthy provides an answer in the following passage:

. . . the conditions for ideal discourse are connected with conditions for an ideal form of life; the notion of "pure" discourse (and thus the notion of rational consensus and thus the notion of truth) cannot be conceived apart from the conditions of "pure" communicative interaction. In this sense, the requirements of the ideal speech situation, in which discourse can lead to genuine consensus, include communication-theoretic conceptualizations of the traditional ideas of freedom and justice: "the truth of statements is linked in the last analysis to the intention of the good and true life."[\[xcviii\]](#)[\[xcviii\]](#)

But what does it mean to say that rational consensus and the notion of truth depend on "pure communicative interaction," understood as unlimited discourse conducted free from distorting influences whether in the form of open domination, conscious strategic behavior or self-deception? Pure communicative exchange is a form of interaction that requires freedom for the actors to engage in discourse and justice so that their engagement will proceed humanely. In other words, the requirement for participation in pure communicative interaction as stipulated by the ideal speech situation is a mode of being in accordance to the good and true life.

Now, although the "ideal" realization of this form of life as understood *modus significando* is usually and typically counterfactual, nonetheless it is supposed in the very act of entering into discourse with the hope of reaching rational consensus, such that a violation of any of the formal elements of discourse radically throws the rationality of the consensus into doubt.[\[xcix\]](#)[\[xcix\]](#) Moreover, if the ideal speech situation functions as a guidance model, in a somewhat Platonic sense, of undistorted communication in terms of which claims to truth and rightness are adjudicated, and if it does not appear to be either a Kantian idea, Hegelian concept, a mental construct, or an empirical phenomena, and yet it demands a certain form of *ideal* life in order that its application may proceed genuinely, it might be useful to consider the communicative model as consisting not in an uninstantiated formalism but as actually realized in Unlimited Being. The *res significata* of communication understood in terms of the ideal speech situation evokes the very paradigm of undistorted consciousness and as such implies no materiality, although it is only imperfectly realized in human discourse. Thus, the notion of ideal communication, i.e., being as *communicative* with relative extension may also be predicated analogously of intelligent limited existents and Unlimited Being.

Relations Between the Absolute Transcendentals, Emancipatory Interest and Ideal Communication

This final section will endeavor to explicate the complementary relations that may be developed between Habermas' emancipatory/ communicative model and existential metaphysics. This task will be accomplished in three parts: (1) a statement of the three absolute transcendental properties of being as *esse*, viz., unity, truth, and goodness; (2) the integration of the property of goodness with the Habermasian notion of being as emancipative, and the property of truth with the Habermasian notion of being as communicative; and (3) a consideration of the problem that arises when comparing the transcendental property of unity in terms of the classical monological framework and Habermas' dialogical framework. This will be followed by some comments on the Christian horizon in terms of which this integration needs to be understood.

The Absolute Transcendentals

According to the classical position on the transcendentals, once the subject of metaphysics is intellectually grasped via the negative judgment of separation, the term--being as *esse*--does not of itself either explicate or eliminate the modes of perfection contained therein, which may be understood as the properties that immediately flow from the subject. The transcendentals that reflect these modes of perfection are not the product of either apriori/deductive or aposteriori/inductive procedures; i.e., they are neither deduced nor induced from, but, rather, reflect further intuitions, i.e., immediate insights, into the character of being as *esse*, where the intellect recognizes that essence, as signifying the nature of a thing, is distinct from the act of to be through which a given nature enjoys, as it were, existential integrity. With this realization are added *other* immediate intuitions, such that the truth and goodness of being is not its essence properly speaking, since this implies limitation, i.e., potential existence, but specifically refers to the act of existence from which other intuitions follow "common to all being."[\[c\]](#)[\[c\]](#)Such absolute predicates conserve the same metaphysical formality characteristic of being as *esse* insofar as the non-generic signification of their intention may only be predicated analogously of all limited beings and Unlimited Being. Further, the transcendentals are not to be comprehended as constituting really distinct elements constitutive of the act of to be but, instead, as logically distinct notional properties that afford an opportunity for deepening one's comprehension of *esse*. Each succeeding transcendental, however, is understood as including the meaning of the one which precedes it while making explicit something additional, such that the property *verum* includes a comprehension of *unum* and that of *bonum* includes the signification of both *unum* and *verum*. This said, what follows will delineate the nature of these predicates in terms of "the intimate connection between the intellectual intuition of being, the transcendentals, and the first principles."[\[ci\]](#)[\[ci\]](#)

For Aquinas, once the disengagement of the subject of metaphysics--being as *esse*--is achieved from any connotation of materiality or motion in terms of an explicit subject/predicate formulation where the intrinsic nature of the subject "being" is made manifest by the verb "is," the first insight that such a formulation yields is that being "is-one," *est-unum*, where this first absolute transcendental predicate is understood as consisting in a greater explicitation of *esse*. The term "one" here refers to the existential indivisibility of an existent such that *every being, to the extent that it exists, is one or undivided*,[\[cii\]](#)[\[cii\]](#) meaning that every being is distinct from every other being,[\[ciii\]](#)[\[ciii\]](#) or, similarly, "a being is an essence exercising the act of to be."[\[civ\]](#)[\[civ\]](#)The

predicate *unum*, then, signifies that the actualization of an essence as representing potential existence by the act of to be confers distinctive existential integrity to that entity such that it may be understood as existentially whole, i.e., undivided, and existentially distinct, i.e., unique from any other existent. Further, to say that *unum* as a transcendental predicate of being is convertible with *esse*--what is, is one, what is one is--is not to add a really distinct element to *esse*, but, rather to articulate a formulation whose *ratio*, as a minor distinction of reason, adds to a comprehension of *esse* as indicating a denial of division.[\[cv\]](#)[\[cv\]](#) Indeed, for Aquinas the employment of the predicate *unum* as independent of matter and motion should not be understood as referring to number given that such a reference only has meaning within the framework of sensible beings.[\[cvi\]](#)[\[cvi\]](#) With reference to its opposite, multitude, the predicate should be understood as contained in the definition of multitude as consisting in a collection of unities, though not vice-versa. Moreover, the formulation *every being, to the extent that it exists, is one or undivided* expresses an analogous relationship predicated of limited existents in accordance to the degree of its participation in *esse*, and of Unlimited Being, as *maxima unitas*, in a limitless way.[\[cvii\]](#)[\[cvii\]](#) From here: "it is apparent that the to be of each and everything consists in indivision. And whence it is that each and every thing guards its own unity as it guards its own to be."[\[cviii\]](#)[\[cviii\]](#)

The foregoing considerations concerning the transcendental property *unum* provide, for Aquinas, the basis for the principle of identity--being is--understood as the principle of metaphysical wholeness or existential integrity.[\[cix\]](#)[\[cix\]](#) To say that the oneness of being follows its act of to be is

an expressed admission that each existent which is essentially one reveals itself as uniquely individual, as what it is in its unique character of metaphysical identity, and, because it has one substantial act of to be forever distinct from all else, so that many can never be one in reality (a multitude of singulars, of ones) but only in an analogical notion, by a "one" that is proportional, predicated analogously of each and every being.[\[cx\]](#)[\[cx\]](#)

This principle maybe formulated in terms of the principle of non-contradiction, the first law of thought: non-being is not, where non-contradiction is understood as depending on the principle of identity in the sense that one must first know that being is what it is before it can be differentiated with what is not.

In the case of the second absolute transcendental predicate, the predicate term "is-true," *est-verum*, as a more lucid explication of *esse*, indicates that *every being, to the extent that it exists, is true*.[\[cxi\]](#)[\[cxi\]](#) Whereas the predicate *unum* refers to the relation of the notion of being itself in reference to the existential integrity of *esse*, the predicate *verum* refers to the intellect's ability to know and represent being intentionally, an ability understood as exhibiting the intelligible character of being as *esse*. Truth in a primary sense refers to the notion that all limited beings to the extent that these depend on another for their existence must conform to the representation that Unlimited Being has of these as their source in its intellect,[\[cxii\]](#)[\[cxii\]](#) as well as to "the possibility of conformity of being with the human intellect provided that the latter has first conformed itself to being."[\[cxiii\]](#)[\[cxiii\]](#) Truth, in a secondary sense, refers to logical truth or the human intellect's ability to represent the truth of reality as it is in terms of a relation of adequation between being and intellect, where a judgment is understood as truthful because a limited thinking being becomes, intentionally, the object known. The emphasis, however, lies in that the predicate *verum* refers to a property of being: "Things are denominated as true . . . by the truth which is *in the thing*

itself (which is nothing other than beingness adequated to an intellect or adequating an intellect to itself) as from an inherent form.[cxiv][cxiv]

Further, to say that *verum* as a transcendental predicate of being is convertible with *esse*--what is, is true, what is true is--is, as in the case of *unum*, is not to add to *esse*, but to articulate a formulation whose *ratio* adds to a comprehension of *esse* as indicating "the habitude of adequation to the human or divine intellect." [cxv][cxv] By contrast, whereas *verum* refers to a predicate convertible with being as *esse*, falsity lacks metaphysical status and may only be said as the opposite of logical truth, i.e., as a declaration of non-adequation where the intellect incorrectly judges by saying that what is is not or that what is not is. [cxvi][cxvi] Moreover, the formulation *every being, to the extent that it exists, is true* expresses an analogous relationship predicated of limited existents in accordance to the degree of its participation in *esse*, and of Unlimited Being, as *maxima veritas*, in a limitless way. [cxvii][cxvii]

From the transcendental predicate *verum* two additional principles follow: the principle of intelligibility and that of efficient causality. The principle of intelligibility expresses the view that reality as known metaphysically is not refractory to intellect but capable of being comprehended: every being, to the extent that it exists, is true or intelligible, conformed to unlimited intellect or capable of being represented to the human intellect in which no being is wholly incomprehensible. [cxviii][cxviii] The principle of efficient causality, as a corollary of the intelligibility of being, expresses the view that participated beings must be efficiently caused. This is to say that the intellect in comprehending the character of limited finite beings in function of their participation in *esse* immediately intuits that such participation may only be explained by an Unlimited Being, that, as ultimate source of intelligibility, confers such existence to what is understood as contingent.

With respect to the third absolute transcendental, the predicate term "is-good," *est-bonum*, as a further explicitation of *esse*, indicates that *every being, to the extent that it exists, is good*. In a metaphysical sense the predicate *bonum* expresses a judgment concerning the excellence of *esse* understood as the actuality or the perfection of being: [cxix][cxix] "Whence just as it is impossible that there be some being which does not have a to be, so it is necessary that every being be good from this that it has a to be. . ." [cxx][cxx] In another sense, whereas *verum* as the intelligible nature of being as *esse* denotes that participated being must be caused, *bonum* indicates that such a generation as an act of Unlimited Being can only be fully intelligible if understood as directed toward the fulfillment of a preconceived end such that limited being has a natural appetency toward the attainment of the good which represents the realization of its nature. Unlimited Being as the plenitude of existence does not have an end other than the limitless exercise of its *esse*, [cxxi][cxxi] while constituting itself as the *Summum Bonum* of limited being, i.e., as the final reason of the dynamism of active yet finite being. Limited beings are good, then, by relation to their participation in *esse* and their natural tendency toward the realization of their natures. "When the finite changing being is studied metaphysically, it is viewed as ultimately perfected by all its actions and motions and in all its circumstances, all of which are directed to the to be in some way." [cxxii][cxxii]

Further, to say that *bonum* as a transcendental predicate of being is convertible with *esse*--what is, is good, what is good is--as in the case of *unum* and *verum*, does not add to *esse*, but articulates a formulation whose *ratio* adds to a comprehension of *esse* as indicating the tendential inclination present in being whereby it desires its own perfection. [cxxiii][cxxiii] "The good implies the relation to end: i.e., the perfection of the being to the degree that it exists, and "all things by seeking their own perfections, seeks God himself, insofar as the perfections of all

things are certain likenesses of the divine to be." [cxxiv][cxxiv]By contrast, whereas *bonum* refers to a predicate convertible with being as *esse*, evil lacks metaphysical status since it is neither a form nor a nature and may only be understood in negative terms as an absence of what is good, as a privation of what is due existence in a being; in moral terms it indicates both the absence of a good in accordance to the existent's nature and the presence of a good--an apparent good-- not in accordance to nature. [cxxv][cxxv] Moreover, the formulation *every being, to the extent that it exists, is good, acts on account of an end* expresses an analogous relationship predicated of limited existents in accordance to the degree of its participation in *esse*, and Unlimited Being, as *Summum Bonum*, in a limitless way.

From the transcendental predicate *bonum* the principle of finality emerges as an extension of the principle of intelligibility wherein the intellect in grasping the goodness of existent's participation in the act of to be further penetrates that such participation in *esse* may only be comprehended on account of a preconceived end, such that "Every being is a love of its perfection." [cxxvi][cxxvi]It is precisely this *love* that "removes the indifference on the part of being in act, so that all actions may be intelligible." [cxxvii][cxxvii]In this respect, according to Aquinas, the authentic aim of limited beings cannot only be known in terms of their natural tendencies and inclinations but also by reference to the will and providence of Unlimited Being understood as a personal God. In the case of the human subject the highest good/end, corresponding to its most profound and deepest longings, does not merely consist in a philosophical contemplation of reality but in the beatific vision of God.

Now that the absolute transcendentals have been considered, the segment that follows will endeavor to integrate these transcendentals with Habermas' relative transcendentals, i.e., the transcendental property of goodness with the notion of being as emancipative and the transcendental property of truth with the notion of being as communicative.

The Absolute Transcendentals and the Habermasian Relative Transcendentals

This study would like to suggest that the relationship that obtains when considering the absolute transcendental property of goodness and Habermas' relative transcendental property of emancipation consists in that whereas the former, as understood particularly in reference to limited beings, articulates the universal metaphysical property whereby all limited beings are good as a result of both their participation in the act of *esse* and their tendential inclination toward the fulfillment of that which realizes their nature, the latter may be understood as expressing that mode of goodness as it refers specifically to intellectual beings. This is to say that Habermas' notion of an emancipatory interest within the context of metaphysics encompasses the expression of the tendential notion of goodness understood as the *teleonomic thrust* present in intellectual beings on behalf of the fulfillment of the *ratio essendi* that is proper to their nature. Such an emancipatory thrust, predicated analogously, would further be understood as absolutely realized in the case of Unlimited Being and as relatively realized in the case of limited intellectual beings. In this respect the emancipatory dimension of intellectual being is such that although it is synonymous with the absolute transcendental property of goodness as tendency, nonetheless it is characterized as relative in the sense that it refers solely to that distinctive mode of teleonomic drive proper to or restricted to intellectual being.

This provides an additional basis for clarifying the relationship between the emancipatory property and the other relative transcendentals treated in the second section of this chapter. Accordingly, whereas the relative properties of intellect, will and free will were treated as referring

to various modes of intellectual being, the emancipatory predicate was considered as expressing their overall teleonomic unification and orientation on behalf of the actualization of the entity's nature. The signification of this perfective tendency then is synonymous with that mode of goodness appropriate to intellectual being such that by means of the notion of being as emancipative the notion of goodness as it specifically refers to intellectual being is notably clarified and amplified.

Indeed, the cardinal import of Habermas' theory of the cognitive interests, as understood in this study, consists not only in providing a basis for distinguishing the realm of material objects from that of communicating subjects, but also in indicating the nature of the relationship which should obtain between the human subject in function of its emancipative potential and the realms of material objects and social lifeworld. What this means is that although the human subject *qua* material body is related to the order of material objects in function of a technical interest in mastery of nature, this interest is itself understood in function of a practical interest that communicating subjects have in coordinating their linguistically structured lifeworld, which, in turn, is understood in function of an emancipatory interest that communicating subjects have in uncovering hypostatizations embedded in communicative structures. Hence, the Habermasian emancipatory interest clarifies the teleonomic orientation of intellectual being as consisting, on the one hand, in a conscious movement away from all forms of individual or social pathology that inhibit the realization of intellectual being, and, on the other, in a dynamic drive toward the actualization of a form of life in function of justice.

The primacy of the emancipatory interest, as regards the technical and practical interest, then emerges as a concern with living life more fully. In the case of the technical interest, whereas this interest evokes a concern with mastery over natural processes, the emancipatory interest surfaces as a concern with procuring that such mastery proceeds within the parameters of a critical comprehension of the interdependence that exists between the material environment and the human community. George F. McLean indicates, when considering the notion of goodness from a somewhat different context, that the human subject, though a part of nature "rather than being subject thereto as a mere producer or consumer, one is a creative and transforming center, responsible for the protection and promotion of nature."[\[cxxviii\]](#)[\[cxxviii\]](#)In this respect, the emancipatory interest fosters a conception of the material world that emphasizes "more reverence or respectfulness,"[\[cxxix\]](#)[\[cxxix\]](#) i.e., the development of attitudes and institutions aimed at correcting practices responsible for various patterns of local and global conditions adversely affecting the balance of nature in the form of environmental pollution, species extinction, destruction of the ozone layer, including abuses such as the improper disposal of hazardous waste materials.

In the case of the practical interest, whereas this interest evokes a concern with elucidating and coordinating the communicative structures of the social lifeworld, the emancipatory interest emerges as a concern with whether such linguistic structures "express ideologically frozen relations of dependence." Again, McLean points out the person "is by nature social and a part of society; but rather than being subject thereto as an object he is its creative center. . .[\[cxxx\]](#)[\[cxxx\]](#)" The greater "reverence and respectfulness" fostered at this level by the emancipatory interest would manifest itself then in a profound regard for the dignity of the human person/community expressing itself in all manner of effort to relieve human suffering and to promote a more humane lifeworld by dealing with issues of poverty, health, homelessness, drug addiction, abortion, peace concerns, including eradication of armaments of mass destruction.

Conversely, however, the notion of being as emancipative is itself deeply enriched when considered in light of the classical metaphysical model which views the very existence of limited being as an expression of the goodness of Unlimited Being. The importance of this assertion cannot be sufficiently stressed for it essentially represents a move beyond Habermas' restriction of reality to the realms of material objects and that of communicating subjects in the direction of a conception of reality which openly acknowledges the foundational relevance of Transcendent Being. No longer is the emancipatory interest limited, once considered from the optic of metaphysics, to securing an "enlightened" sense of justice, be it economic, political and/or cultural; but, rather, it expresses a concern with an ontological form of justice in securing that end which is congruent with intellectual being. Indeed, the *ratio finalis* of intellectual being in function of the creative agency of Unlimited Being consists in the apprehension of the beatific vision. This is to say that whereas Habermas' emancipatory interest serves to specify the tendential character of the property of goodness as it refers to intellectual being, existential metaphysics serves to clarify notably the very end toward which the emancipatory thrust is ultimately directed, viz., the direct participation on behalf of intellectual being in the divine life of the *Summum Bonum*. It should therefore be clear that once the suggestion is made to extend Habermas' philosophical compass so as to include Transcendent Being such an admission profoundly transforms, i.e., recasts dramatically, the signification of Habermas' contribution.

However, one issue that directly relates to the question of goodness as a transcendental property of being is the reality of evil. In Aquinas's metaphysical model the presence of evil may be understood as corresponding in Habermas' communicative model to the presence of hypostatized disequilibria. As privations of the transcendental good, the avoidance, identification and correction of all that interferes with the promotion of the dignity of the human subject/community necessitates a critical instrument which endeavors to foster the conscious promotion of all that is in accord with the nature of intellectual being while deliberately rectifying whatever is found to be not in accord with such a nature. Such an instrument and other implications of this transcendental interpretation of Habermas' notion of emancipation will be progressively clarified in the following consideration of being as truth and as communicative.

This study would further like to suggest that the relationship that obtains when considering the absolute transcendental property of truth and Habermas' relative property of communication consists in that whereas the former, as understood particularly in reference to limited beings, articulates the universal metaphysical property whereby all limited beings are true, as a result of both their participation in the act of *esse* and their intelligible nature, the latter may be understood as specifying the constitutive openness of intellectual being toward truth in function of the ideal speech situation. This is to say that while the unique relationship of intellectual being insofar as reality is concerned consists precisely in its ability to render what-is intelligible, the notion of being as communicative, derived from Habermas' dialogical model and as understood in this study, specifies that intellectual being via discursive exchanges in function of the ideal speech situation stands as a source for the potential *disclosure* of knowable reality. The root insight here moves beyond an understanding of truth as objective fact and, rather, accentuates the notion of truth as living intelligence, as open, expressive and creative, i.e., as the dynamic focal point by which knowledge comes to consciousness. Further, such a constitutive aperture of intellectual being in relation to truth would be understood as absolutely realized in the case of Unlimited Being and only in a relative sense in the case of limited intellectual beings.

The manner in which the notion of being as communicative enhances the notion of truth may be better grasped by considering Habermas' notion of ideal communication as the incisive criterion

for engaging in discourse with a view toward adjudicating problematicized truth and normative claims. In the case of normative claims, Habermas contends that for such adjudication to represent nothing other than the unforced force of the better argument it must have been conducted within the context of a logic of practical discourse modelled on or in function of the formal conditions of the ideal speech situation. The importance of this proposal consists in signifying the *posture* that the participants in the discourse must assume if the outcome of their exchange is to merit rational assent, which is another way of indicating that the conditions of the ideal speech situation demand that discourse proceed constraint-free. For the dialogical participants to assume or, at least, to approximate this "ideal" posture furnishes the context wherein human intelligence emerges as living and creative "by conceiving new possibilities, planning new structures, and working out new paths for mankind. . ." [cxxxix][cxxxix] Such "new possibilities," "new structures," and "new paths," congruent with the exigencies of the ideal speech situation, would neither be understood as an uncritical, static expression of tradition for tradition sake nor as the aggressive expression of novelty for novelty sake, but, instead, as a responsible exercise of critical cognition aimed at advancing those judgments that categorically safeguard the personal/communal dignity of the human subject.

This said, it must be added, however, that just as it was found necessary when relating Habermas' emancipatory interest with the notion of goodness to understand the notion of emancipation in broader terms, i.e., in function of the constitutive end of intelligent being--the *Summum Bonum*--it will likewise be imperative to understand Habermas' communicative model in terms of the proposal of existential metaphysics. The most poignant emendation that the notion of truth--in function of the concept of natural appetency of being as good--offers Habermas' conception of practical discourse is directed toward supplanting his ethical formalism insofar as the adjudication of questions of normative rightness is concerned with the principles of natural law that follow once the very being of reality, particularly that of the human subject, is understood in terms of Transcendent Being as its source and end. This is to say that the personal direction of one's life or the social ordination of law and policy by legislators, regardless of organizational affiliation, must be conducted in accordance to the dictates of general constants of moral reasoning, whose foundational principle consists in an overt mandate in favor of the actualization of those natural ends that are in accordance to human nature and thereby expressive of the common good and against whatever proposals conflict with this end. The natural ends congruent with the nature of the human subject may be articulated in primary precepts of reason (*praecepta communissima*) that, recognizing the worth and dignity of persons and society, include a concern for (a) the preservation of human life, (b) the propagation of the human species, (c) the promotion of harmonious social relations, and (d) the pursuit of truth. The first precept refers to all those activities that advance the physical and mental integrity and well-being of each individual; the second treats the basis of family life as involving the propagation and education of offspring; the third concerns the establishment of an ordered society in a manner that promotes the peaceful co-existence its members; and lastly, the fourth recognizes a human duty which aims at shunning ignorance. [cxxxix][cxxxix] From these self-evident foundational principles, other precepts that need to be observed are rendered obvious in reflection; these precepts constitute the second table of the Decalogue, i.e., to honor parents, those in authority and civil law and to obey these as long as they pose no conflict with other moral precepts; to respect the life, integrity and reputation of others which, among other things, prohibits the taking of innocent life as in the case of murder, abortion, euthanasia, and the degradation of human life via, for example, substance abuse and illicit sexual activity; and to respect the property of others.

However, the social/cultural/political implementation, specification or determination of these normative principles of ethical practice are not evident to reason and need to be laid down by human law.^[cxxxiii] For instance, though nature obligates all to contribute to public accord, it is the wisdom of legislators that determines the manner, circumstances and conditions under which such harmony is to be realized. In the case of setting a false fire alarm, though such an act clearly endangers public safety, the imposition of a certain fine or a certain length of imprisonment is a determination of the law that is not articulated by nature. One ethicist has commented that "natural law theory is a framework for understanding morality rather than a method for making moral judgments."^[cxxxiv] In other words, as understood in this study, though natural law provides knowledge of certain general principles, it does not furnish particular decisions relating to individual cases. This is where Habermas' notion of practical discourse may be understood as providing a framework for rendering such specifications of the primary precepts as necessitated by the varying conditions and circumstances of social life. Indeed, for Aquinas, given that limited being, i.e., the entire community of the universe, is governed by Divine Reason,^[cxxxv] practical discourse can be comprehended only as a dialogical framework in which the human subject endeavors to grasp and creatively apply those norms that signify a progressive discovery, articulation and amplification of all that accords with--and is never in violation of--the dignity of the human person/community as articulated by the precepts of moral reasoning.

Unity, the Traditional Monological Framework and Habermas' Dialogical Framework

At this point it will be necessary to relate the absolute transcendental property of unity with Habermas' dialogical model. This relationship, unlike in the case of goodness and truth, will be developed by first indicating what may be taken as Aquinas's contribution in light of what has been said of truth and goodness and then by considering the problem that arises when treating unity in light of Habermas' dialogical paradigm.

The property of unity may be approached as expressing the dynamic integration of the properties of truth and goodness within the context of intelligent existents. Unity here entails the exercise of the act of to be in a manner that ever approaches a form of life modelled on truth and goodness; moreover, this form of life is made available to intelligent being via discourse when one proceeds in conformity to the elementary precepts of practical reasoning. Moreover, unity, insofar as finite beings are concerned, needs to be comprehended in light of Unlimited Being, who represents as the source and end of finite existents their maximum expression of unity. Since "all limited beings are made to be by the same unique Transcendent Being," then all finite existents are "foundationally related to Him and to manifestations of His being."^[cxxxvi] Indeed, it is Transcendent Being that, as the plenitude of goodness, truth and unity, that bestows the experience of human emancipation as a gift.

The transcendent is the key to real liberation: it frees the human spirit from limitation to the restricted field of one's own slow, halting and even partial creative activity; it grounds one's reality in the Absolute; it certifies one's right to be respected; and it evokes the creative power of one's heart.^[cxxxvii]

The Christian experience, as the horizon in terms of which Aquinas authored his metaphysics, notably amplifies and enriches this metaphysical understanding of the Absolute such that whatever is said of reality "must honor and express the sacredness of beings."^[cxxxviii] Privations

of the good in the form of hatred and prejudice that do not express the "sacredness" of reality need to become the object of emancipatory critique in function of justice.

This said, when considering the nature of Unlimited or Transcendent Being in terms of the traditional notion of unity as developed in classical metaphysics in function of the Aristotelian notion of *Substantia Separata*, what emerges is a Being whose nature, as understood within the divine life itself, implies no communicative dimension, and, as such, is comprehended in purely monological terms. In the case of the traditional model, an understanding of transcendent ground has been strictly derived by rejecting various forms of potentiality found in finite beings *qua* material, such that the conception or available knowledge of transcendent ground largely is conceived in terms of what results from negating, on the one hand, material predicates such as time, place, change, divisibility, while, affirming, on the other, properties such as omnipotence, omniscience. Within such a conception of Transcendent Being, the dialogical attributes as reflected in the human person *qua* communicative are undeveloped. This is not to say that the various predicates derived traditionally from a negation of materiality and potentiality are not important in deriving a proper conception of Transcendent Being, but that a restriction to such a procedure provides a wholly insufficient notion of Transcendent Being, a notion that does not take account of its dialogical nature.

The importance of Habermas' eminently dialogical paradigm consists in that it may be interpreted as providing the notion of Transcendent Being with the needed communicative dimension. For sure, the significance of Habermas' contribution for metaphysical reflection consists in that his model of ideal discourse points toward an actually-existing transcendent ground that realizes the critical parameters of ideal discourse. Indeed, Habermas' model of ideal communication exacts a transcendent ground, as interpreted in this study, that is *existential, personal, dialogical, communitary, complementary*, and, at the very least, *binary*, i.e., consisting of two communicating subjects in perfect realization of the conditions of the ideal speech situation.

The communicative dimension of intelligent being has the virtue of bringing to the fore the dialogical and communitary dimension of Transcendent Being in a manner that renders metaphysics more amenable with the Christian notion of God as a Trinity of Persons. Although the Trinity is attaining increasing relevance in contemporary philosophical reflection, Schmitz, for one, recognizes that the significance of the Trinity has not been sufficiently "cultivated in philosophy to the degree that it needs to be done."

Anyone who has followed the Fathers and the Councils . . . realizes with what great difficulty a new and richer sense of unity had to be forged to retain the unity and simplicity of God, while enriching that unity and simplicity with a 'plurification' that arose from the very abundance of the divine life. Now, that disclosure into the inherent 'sociality' of the divine life has not yet been cultivated in philosophy to the degree that it needs to be done.[\[cxxxix\]](#)[\[cxxxix\]](#)

For Schmitz the human community reflects the "unity" and "diversity" of the Trinity:

As Christians, . . ., we are led to consider the Godhead as the diversity of infinite persons in the most perfect unity of being, thought, and love. This theological capital--the supreme harmony of unity and diversity, of identity and difference--is of philosophical interest insofar as we find intimations of that unity and diversity in human fellowship.[\[cxl\]](#)[\[cxl\]](#)

It is the philosophical relevance of this "theological capital" that Habermas' emancipatory/communicative model helps to bring to the fore. It may well be that Habermas' proposal represents for classical metaphysics a new optic from which to view Transcendent Being less in terms of First Mover, Uncaused Cause, Necessary Existence, Unlimited Cause, and more in terms of predicates such as *personal, dialogical, communitary, communicative, emancipative, and complementary*. Indeed, the Trinity as the paradigm of unconstrained discourse emerges then as the *exemplar of metaphysical emancipation*, the ultimate foundation of the human quest for perfect liberty, truth and justice.

Conclusion

In retrospect, this study has been concerned with assessing the varied investigations of Jürgen Habermas in favor of a philosophy of emancipation with the end in view of developing its latent metaphysical themes. Habermas, as interpreted in this study, in attempting to articulate a framework for the concrete exercise of the human emancipatory potential opens a space which points beyond the further reaches of his own philosophical compass in the direction of metaphysical reflection, in a manner that notably amplifies and enriches traditional metaphysical notions, specifically the notion of being as *esse*.

With this aim in view the first chapter endeavored to situate Habermas' own proposals within the topology of the postmodern landscape located in that region characterized by Bernstein as *beyond* objectivism and relativism. Here Habermas' contribution emerged as neither espousing an objectivist/foundationalist position nor as renouncing philosophy's "aim of clarifying the presuppositions of rationality of processes of reaching understanding" within the context of reconstructive methodology. Such a clarification purports to provide a critical framework for adjudicating theoretical and normative claims so as to distinguish between the true from the false, the just from the unjust. Once the parameters of Habermas' investigations were sufficiently articulated, this study proposed to consider what his project may signify, specifically his notion of an emancipatory interest and communication in function of the ideal situation, when considered in terms of the classical model of existential metaphysics.

The second chapter traced the rationale informing Habermas' theory of cognitive interests with the object of showing the manner in which the emancipatory interest emerges as a distinctive property of the human person. This task afforded an opportunity for considering Habermas' critique of positivism and his argument in favor of an extension of knowledge so as to include both the natural *and* the human sciences, while identifying their distinctive object, methodology and constitutive interest. In this respect the nomological sciences were understood as securing via the hypothetico-deductive methodology an ever-increasing mastery of nature in function of a technical interest rooted in the physiological-biological dimension of the human organism. The human sciences were understood as advancing via hermeneutical analysis human communication in function of a practical interest rooted in the social dimension of the human person, i.e., an interest in the coordination of human activity via communicative processes. Further, the critical sciences were understood as remediating via critical reflection forms of hypostatized disequilibria in function of an emancipatory interest rooted in the nature of the human person.

Yet, given that the theory of cognitive interests limited itself with a description of the constitutive interests and the sciences to which they give rise, Habermas developed a model of undistorted consciousness/communication in his theory of universal pragmatics as the methodological framework for effecting the dissolution of interest-oriented perspectives. The third chapter examined this theory in terms of a reconstruction of consensual and discursive speech, while limiting itself to an analysis of the question of the adequacy of Habermas' discourse theory of truth in terms of the conditions of the ideal speech situation within the context of a logic of theoretical discourse. Though this study viewed as adequate Habermas' theory of truth as it relates to the adjudication of truth claims, it was the application of this formal scheme to normative questions that was of primary concern.

Accordingly the fourth chapter proceeded to first articulate the master lines of Habermas' discourse ethics and then to address the question concerning the adequacy of his principle of

universalization in function of the formal conditions of the ideal speech situation within the context of a logic of practical discourse. Insofar as normative claims are concerned, it was maintained that the purely formal nature of Habermas' principle of universalization presents itself as an inadequate instrument for testing the validity of existing or proposed norms given that such a principle is better understood as a framework for mediating compromises amid variable interpretations than as a guide for moral/ethical orientation. Moreover, Habermas' appeal for a materialistic conception of society led to considering whether there might not be an alternate reading of his proposals capable of incorporating the insights of his proposal while avoiding the formalism of his ethical theory and his choice of worldview.

The fifth chapter attempted to understand Habermas' overall project as a concern with the concrete exercise of human freedom in a manner analogous to Kant's intentions who also sought to articulate a framework within the context of his third critique wherein the necessity/universality of theoretical reason could be harmonized with the freedom/autonomy of practical reason. This movement toward a unified conception of cognition in function of a certain worldview provided an occasion for proposing that a hermeneutical appropriation of the Christian horizon furnished the resources for equipping Habermas' formalistic model with a context that is realist, metaphysical and communicative, i.e., communicative in a sense broader than that envisioned by Habermas' own philosophical proposal.

From here it was discovered that although the communicative dimension of reality is explicitly celebrated within the Christian worldview, an equally developed sense of *communicative* reality was found wanting if one refers to the existential metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas, a system which endeavors to provide Christianity with a philosophical basis. The move was then made to consider whether Habermas' philosophy of emancipation may not represent a new optic for considering the notion of *esse*. In this respect, following the criteria of transcendentality, it was determined that the Habermasian notions of emancipatory interest and communication in function of the ideal speech situation could indeed be elevated as metaphysical versus purely anthropological notions given that they imply no materiality and may thereby be predicated analogously of Unlimited Being and limited intelligent beings.

The last section of this chapter concerned itself with explicating the complementary relations between Habermas' emancipatory/communicative model and Aquinas's existential metaphysics. This was accomplished by integrating the transcendental property of goodness with the Habermasian notion of emancipation and the property of truth with other Habermasian notion of ideal communication. This led to a consideration of the problem that arises when comparing the transcendental property of unity in function of Aquinas's monological framework and Habermas' dialogical framework. Within this perspective it was suggested that Habermas' model of communication in terms of the ideal speech situation provided critical parameters for determining the conception of transcendent ground that metaphysical reflection should embrace, i.e., a notion of Transcendent Being as *personal, dialogical, communitary, communicative, emancipative* and *complementary*. Such a communicative divinity was further understood as better representing the Christian notion of Trinity than the traditional monological notion as found in classical metaphysics. Finally, it was indicated that the Trinity as the paradigm of unconstrained discourse constitutes the ultimate source and end of the human quest for perfect liberty, truth and justice.

Notes

Notes to Introduction

1. The aim of the present study to develop the complementary dimensions between the philosophies of Habermas and Aquinas was formulated only after completing a doctoral dissertation on Habermas, *A Critical Inquiry into Habermas' Philosophy of Emancipation: Toward an Ontology of the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: The American University, 1990). The dissertation concentrated on developing the view that Habermas' communicative model provided a novel *entry* into a non-traditional conception of metaphysics as it specifically related toward the development of an ontology proper of the human person, as well as critical parameters for determining the very conception of transcendental ground that such reflection should embrace in light of his communicative model.

2. The topic proposed here represents an original contribution to Habermasian scholarship; currently there are no studies available that attempt to make explicit the metaphysical themes toward which his philosophy of emancipation points. Studies marginally relevant to the dissertation topic consider Habermas' contribution from a predominantly religious versus metaphysical/ontological perspective. Thus Rudolf J. Siebert, in *The Critical Theory of Religion, The Frankfurt School: From Universal Pragmatics to Political Theology* (Berlin: Mouton Publisher, 1985), challenges Habermas' thesis that traditional mythical and religious worldviews have become obsolete. Helmut Peukert, in *Science, Action, and Fundamental Theology: Toward a Theology of Communicative Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), endeavors to derive concepts from Habermas' communicative theory, understood as a new reconstructive discipline, in order to ground the "rational core" of theology in terms of a theory of the pragmatics of religious speech.

Notes to Chapter I

1. Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); henceforth *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*. For two critical reviews of this work, see Robert Hanna, *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (September 1984): 109-12; and Christopher W. Gowans, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 25 (June 1985): 207-11; see also Saguiv A. Hadari, *Ethics* 95 (October 1984): 164-65.

2. Bernstein's choice of words is precise; the dichotomy, he argues, is not between, say, objectivism and subjectivism or between relativism and absolutism given that, in the case of the former, there are subjectivists that are also objectivists (e.g. Kant, Husserl) and, in the latter case, the sense of fallibility which characterizes the contemporary mood strongly mitigates against professing claims to *absolute* knowledge in any field. Cf. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 11-13.

3. *Ibid.*, 231.

4. Fred R. Dallmayr, Notre Dame University, *ibid.*, backcover. Indeed, Bernstein's book, in the words of Hanna, is "an able defense of post-epistemological philosophy, and presents what seems to be its strongest case" (112, see n. 1 above).

5. See n. 49 below.

6. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 8. This definition exhibits the four basic claims of objectivism: (1) that there are neutral, overarching conceptual schemes; (2) that these schemes are universal insofar as they transcend space and that they are ahistorical in the sense that they transcend time; (3) that such schemes may be articulated for the standard philosophical disciplines including logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics; and (4) that one or more of these schemes are envisioned as a safeguard against the radical skepticism of the relativists, who the objectivists criticize as self-referentially and pragmatically inconsistent.

7. *Ibid.*, 9.

8. *Ibid.*, 16. A related and much neglected issue is the relationship between cognition and volition in the "creation" and development of a philosophy. What is at stake is of crucial importance, as Harold A. Durfee elucidates, when commenting on recent American philosophy: "It raises in all seriousness the question as to the relationship of the self to the philosophical position which one maintains, whereas modern concern with objectivity has seriously neglected any such analysis. The dialogue challenges *the major* self-interpretation of the discipline since the Greeks and thus calls in question the fundamental proposals of most major classic Western philosophers. It raises the crucial question as to the centrality of the role of reason in philosophical interpretation, and thereby the place of the irrational *in philosophy itself*, leading to a dialogue between rationalism and voluntarism. . . . At stake therefore, is a grand dialogue regarding the philosophical self-interpretation of philosophy as a purely rational endeavor" ("Freedom and Cognition in Recent American Philosophy," *Tulane Studies in Philosophy* 35 [1987]: 43-44). For other studies on this question accentuating the voluntaristic point of view over the cognitive, see Durfee, *Foundational Reflections: Studies in Contemporary Philosophy* (Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff, 1987).

9. Influenced by the later Wittgenstein/Heidegger/Dewey, Richard Rorty articulated this now familiar view in his subtle critique of professional "objectivist" philosophy in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979). For an excellent critical review of this work, see Richard J. Bernstein's "Philosophy in the Conversation of Mankind," *Review of Metaphysics* 33 (1980): 745-76.

10. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 12-13. This definition exhibits the four basic claims of relativism: (1) that there is no privileged access to unconditional verities; (2) that all conceptual schemes are relative to a given place and time; (3) that there are no metalanguages for critically evaluating and adjudicating competing schemes; and (4) that all conceptual schemes should be challenged as a safeguard against the dogmatism of the objectivists.

11. *Ibid.*, 18.

12. *Ibid.*, 19.

13. The work of the later Wittgenstein exerted notable influence in these developments, particularly his view against the purported pretenses of overarching frameworks. His analysis of language in the *Philosophical Investigations*--as consisting in a tool, a convention, a social practice, a language game, a form of life which serves the needs of a given language community--expresses a conception of language that repudiates recommending any *one* language game as somehow superior to any other: "Language is an instrument. Its concepts are instruments" (*Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe [New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1958], sec. 569). This view of language as a functional apparatus consisting of terms and rules adopted to serve pragmatic or perceived needs mitigates against elevating any one language game to the status of a metalanguage. Words do not represent symbolic signs for fixed metaphysical essences or epistemological foundations or unconditional scientific or social verities derived by

this or that method; they represent, rather, signs whose meanings have been stipulated conventionally in order to fulfill the aims of a given verbal community. What is of interest here is that Bernstein would appear not to interpret Wittgenstein as espousing a blatant form of skepticism but rather as a central voice committed to the deconstruction of the Cartesian language game so as to lay the groundwork for greater flexibility and dialogue among the proponents of conflicting views. The work in speech-act theory of J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), has also contributed to the emergence and influence of the dialogical model so central to post-Cartesian thought. It is precisely the nature of the rationality that animates this dialogical openness which Bernstein endeavors to articulate in *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*.

14. Besides the work of Thomas Kuhn that follows below, the move beyond the objectivist/relativist framework of the Cartesian dichotomy is evidenced in other notable authors in the philosophy of science, viz.: Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (London: NLB, 1975); and Imre Lakatos, "History of Science and Its Rational Reconstructions," and "Replies to Critics," both in *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science* of the Philosophy of Science Association 1970, eds. Roger C. Buck and Robert S. Cohen, n. 8 (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1971). Karl R. Popper, though harder to place as a result of his objectivistic tendencies, nonetheless recognizes that scientific hypotheses and theories should be open to serious criticism; see *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*, 4th ed. rev. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972) and "The Rationality of Scientific Revolutions," in *Problems of Scientific Revolutions*, ed. Rom Harré (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975). Though never explicitly treated by Bernstein, the work of W. V. O. Quine and Wilfrid Sellars has also contributed to this post-empiricist philosophy of science.

15. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd. enl. ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970).

16. In a later work, Kuhn explicitly recognizes the importance of hermeneutics: "In my own case, for example, even the term 'hermeneutic', . . . was no part of my vocabulary as recently as five years ago. Increasingly, I suspect that anyone who believes that history may have deep philosophical import will have to learn to bridge the longstanding divide between the Continental and English language philosophical traditions" (*Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change* [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1977], xv; as quoted in Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 31).

17. Bernstein clarifies the "internal dialectic" that has led to the development of what is coming to be called the "post-empiricist philosophy and history of science," a term coined by Mary Hesse in her article, "In Defence of Objectivity," reprinted in her *Revolution and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science* (Brighton, England: Harvester Press, 1980), 167-86. He states, "In the philosophy of the natural sciences, this development has been characterized as having begun with an obsession with the meaning and reference of single terms (logically proper names and ostensive definitions), moved to the search for a rigorous criterion for discriminating empirically meaningful sentences or propositions, shifted to the evaluation of competing conceptual schemes, and finally turned to the realization that science must be understood as a historically dynamic process in which there are conflicting and competing paradigm theories, research programs, and research traditions" (*Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 171). Three basic tenets of this post-Cartesian philosophy of science follow: (1) a move away from proposing rigid "pious generalities" that attempt to state permanent methods of scientific inquiry in favor of examining actual historical practices and standards that have been "hammered out" in the course of scientific inquiry; (2) a

move beyond objectivism (the "myth of the given" and relativism (the "myth of the framework") that while recognizing the "self-corrective nature of scientific inquiry" equally recognizes the rationality of the enterprise in the sense that reasons can be advanced to show "why a research program won over its rival"; and (3) a greater sensitivity to "the role of choice, deliberation, conflicting variable opinions, and the judgmental quality of rationality" in the practice of scientific inquiry. Cf. *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 71-79.

18. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 23. Kuhn's position highlights the inadequacy of traditional views concerning the nature of scientific rationality: "As I have said before, . . . , I do not for a moment believe that science is an intrinsically irrational enterprise. What I have perhaps not made sufficiently clear, however, is that I take that assertion not as a matter of fact, but rather of principle. Scientific behavior, taken as a whole, is the best example we have of rationality. Our view of what is to be rational depends in significant ways, though of course not exclusively, on what we take to be the essential aspects of scientific behavior. That is not to say that any scientist behaves rationally at all times, or even that many behave rationally very much of the time. What it does assert is that, if history or any other empirical discipline leads us to believe that the development of science depends essentially on behavior that we have previously thought to be irrational, then we should conclude not that science is irrational but that our notion of rationality needs adjustment here and there" ("Notes on Lakatos," *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science* of the Philosophy of Science Association 1970, eds. Roger C. Buck and Robert S. Cohen, n. 8 [Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel, 1971], 143-44). See also Kuhn's *Essential Tension: Selected Studies in the Scientific Tradition and Change*. Yet this is not to say that Kuhn does not recognize the progress of scientific inquiry as a problem-solving enterprise: "Though science surely grows in depth, it may not grow in breadth as well. If it does so, that breadth is not in the scope of any single specialty alone. Yet despite these and other losses to the individual communities the nature of such [scientific] communities provides a virtual guarantee that both the list of problems solved by science and the precision of individual problem-solutions will grow and grow. At least, the nature of the communities provides such a guarantee if there is any way at all in which it can be provided" (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 170).

19. It is crucial to note here the parallel problem experienced by natural and social philosophers: Both are attempting to understand, so as to learn from what is initially different, alien, foreign; in the case of the natural scientist, between distinct conceptual schemes, theoretical frameworks, paradigms; and, in the case of the social scientist, between distinct forms of life, cultures, societies.

20. Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958).

21. Clifford Geertz states, "In all three societies I have studied intensively, Javanese, Balinese, and Moroccan, I have been concerned among other things, with attempting to determine how the people who live there define themselves as persons, what enters into the idea they have (but, as I say, only half-realize they have) of what a self, Javanese, Balinese or Moroccan style, is. And in each case, I have tried to arrive at this most intimate of notions not by imagining myself as someone else . . . but by searching out and analyzing the symbolic forms--words, images, institutions, behaviors--in terms of which . . . people actually represent themselves to themselves and to one another" ("From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding" in *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*, ed. Rabinow and Sullivan [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979], 228; see also Geertz's *The Interpretation of Culture* [New York: Basic Books, 1973]).

22. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 29.

23. As Winch concurs, "My aim is not to engage in moralizing, but to suggest that the concept of *learning from* which is involved in the study of other cultures is closely linked with the concept of *wisdom*. We are confronted not just with different techniques, but with the new possibilities of good and evil in relation to which men may come to terms with life" ("Understanding a Primitive Society," *Ethics and Action* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972], 42; as quoted in Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 29).

24. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. and ed. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).

25. For an excellent historical account of hermeneutics, see Richard Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969). Up until the 19th century hermeneutics was limited to the study of literary and sacred texts; Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher expanded the scope of hermeneutics as a mode of rationality appropriate for defending religious thought from the domination of the positivist model. Wilhelm Dilthey in his *Critique of Historical Knowledge (Texte zur Kritik der historischen Vernunft* [Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983]) argued that hermeneutics provided the proper methodology for the study of the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) in contradistinction to the positivist model of the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*). In the 20th century, Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), accentuated the importance of hermeneutics for philosophical reflection. Gadamer's *Truth and Method* may be read as an explicit attempt to dissolve the Cartesian dichotomy by articulating the ontological nature of historic reason. Paul Ricoeur in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, trans. and ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981) has endeavored to apply hermeneutical understanding particularly to the philosophy of psychology. Jürgen Habermas has been developing a critical hermeneutics of the social sciences. Cf. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 107-115. These studies confirm the suspicion that hermeneutics has been largely a Continental phenomena. The relevance of hermeneutical study in Anglo-American circles was brought about largely by Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*; in the last chapter of this work, titled, "From Epistemology to Hermeneutics," he argues for hermeneutics not as a "successor subject" to epistemology, but, rather, as "an expression of hope that the cultural space left by the demise of epistemology will not be filled" (315).

26. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Problem of Historical Consciousness," *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 129-30. Cf. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 34.

27. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 91; Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 120.

28. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 91-99; Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 120-23.

29. Gadamer puts it in these terms: ". . . the form of operation of every dialogue can be described in terms of the concept of the game. It is certainly necessary that we free ourselves from the customary mode of thinking that considers the nature of the game from the point of view of the consciousness of the player. . . . the very fascination of the game for the playing consciousness roots precisely in its being taken up into a movement that has its own dynamic. . . . Now I contend that the basic constitution of the game, to be filled with its spirit--the spirit of buoyancy, freedom and the joy of success--and to fulfill him who is playing, is structurally related to the constitution of the dialogue in which language is a reality. When one enters into dialogue with another person and then is carried along further by the dialogue, it is no longer the will of the individual person,

holding itself back or exposing itself, that is the determinative. Rather, the law of the subject matter is at issue in the dialogue and elicits statement and counterstatement and in the end plays them into each other" ("Man and Language" in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. David E. Linge [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976], 66).

30. The term 'prejudice', as Gadamer uses it, comprehends three characteristics: (1) that which is handed down via tradition, (2) that which is constitutive of what one is at any given moment and of that which one is in the process of becoming, and (3) that which is always anticipatory, i.e., open to future testing and transformation. See *Truth and Method*, 235ff., especially 239; Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 127-31.

31. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 146; Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 125-31.

32. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 235ff, especially 248; Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 128-31.

33. Clearly, the crucial question here is how one distinguishes between those prejudices that are "enabling" from those that are "blind." Bernstein responds, "For Gadamer [against Descartes], it is in and through the encounter with . . . what is generally handed down to us through tradition that we discover which of our prejudices are blind and which are enabling. In opposition to Descartes' *monological* notion of purely rational self-reflection by which we can achieve transparent self-knowledge, Gadamer tells us that it is only through the *dialogical* encounter with what is at once alien to us, makes a claim upon us, and has an affinity with what we are that we can open ourselves to risking and testing our prejudices" (*Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 128-29).

34. *Ibid.*, 139.

35. Against the Wittgenstenian notion of language as a tool, Gadamer understands language as the medium of all understanding and tradition, i.e., the medium in which *Dasein* lives. See n. 13 above.

36. See Book Six of the *Nicomachean Ethics* for the manner in which Aristotle distinguishes practical knowledge, *phronésis*, from theoretical knowledge, *epistéme*, and from technical or productive knowledge, *techné*.

37. The hermeneutical element of application is developed in Gadamer's "Hermeneutics and Social Science," *Cultural Hermeneutics* 2 (1975): 307-16; and "Practical Philosophy as a Model of the Human Sciences," *Research in Phenomenology* 9 (1980): 74-85.

38. As Bernstein indicates, for Gadamer "the appropriation of the classical concepts of *praxis* and *phronésis* enables us to gain a critical perspective on our own historical situation, in which there is the constant threat and danger of the domination of society by technology based on science, a false idolatry of the expert, a manipulation of public opinion by powerful techniques, a loss of moral and political orientation, and an undermining of the type of practical and political reason required for citizens to make responsible decisions" (*Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 174-75).

39. *Ibid.*, 150-65.

40. *Ibid.*, 154.

41. *Ibid.*, 155.

42. *Ibid.*, 156 & 158 respectively.

43. This consists in "a softening up of the old Cartesian dilemma by denying that there could *ever* be anything like a pure objectivism" (Hanna, 112, see n. 1 above). Once the claim to

ultimate foundations is relinquished, the force of the relativist counterargument becomes discredited since the point of its critique depends upon and is directed against rigid, uncompromising foundationalist proposals.

44. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 225.

45. Bernstein then proceeds to consider, notwithstanding differences, the "common ground"--the practical-moral concern--illuminating the views of Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, Hannah Arendt and Richard Rorty so as to show how each contributes to the movement beyond objectivism and relativism. With respect to Habermas, Bernstein notes how his focus on the systemic features of contemporary society that undermine, distort, or prevent the realization of communicative action provides Gadamer with a critical apparatus for examining contemporary social practices and institutions. Insofar as Hannah Arendt is concerned, Bernstein calls attention to her persistent reminder that *praxis* is a permanent human possibility capable of orienting communal action in the interests of public freedom. And, lastly, from Rorty, Bernstein discovers a neopragmatism that, beyond his deconstructionist pursuits, fosters a vision of community in which the "Socratic virtues" are realized. When focusing on the deep moral-practical concern of all four voices, Bernstein indicates that he is "not confronted with a babble of 'incommensurable' languages but with a coherent conversation that has direction" (*ibid.*, 225).

46. *Ibid.*, 231.

47. Jürgen Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions" in *Habermas and Modernity*, ed. Richard J. Bernstein (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 193.

48. It should be recalled that Rorty is also especially critical of the *a priorism* typical of the transcendental/foundationalist positions of the Cartesian-Lockean-Kantian legacy: "It is the notion that human activity (and inquiry, the search for knowledge, in particular) takes place within a framework which can be isolated *prior* to the conclusion of inquiry--a set of presuppositions discoverable *a priori*--which links contemporary philosophy to the Descartes-Locke-Kant tradition. For the notion that there is such a framework only makes sense if we think of this framework as imposed by the nature of the knowing subject, by the nature of his faculties or by the nature of the medium within which he works. The very idea of 'philosophy' as something distinct from 'science' would make little sense without the Cartesian claim that by turning *inward* we could find ineluctable truth, and the Kantian claim that this truth imposes limits on the possible results of empirical inquiry. The notion that there could be such a thing as "foundations of knowledge" (*all* knowledge in every field, past, present, and future) or a "theory of representation" (*all* representation, in familiar vocabularies and those not yet dreamed of) depends on the assumption that there is some such *a priori constraint*" (*Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 8-9 [italics mine]).

49. In this respect Jürgen Habermas has been characterized as "his generation's personification of the Frankfurt School and the German philosophical legacy insofar as he has encompassed the full range of Western thought and humane concern" (*Habermas, Critical Debates*, eds. John B. Thompson and David Held [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982], backcover; henceforth *Critical Debates*). Thomas McCarthy expressed the moral-political vision that imbues Habermas' work in these terms: "Jürgen Habermas is the dominant figure on the intellectual scene in Germany today, as he has been for the past decade. There is scarcely an area of the humanities or social sciences that has not felt the influence of his thought; he is master, in breadth and depth alike, of a wide range of specialized literatures. But his contributions to philosophy and psychology, political science and sociology, the history of ideas and social theory are distinguished not only by their scope but by the unity of perspective that informs them . . . , a vision that draws its power as much

from the moral-political intention that animates it as from the systematic form in which it is articulated" (Preface, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978], ix; henceforth *Critical Theory*). In Bernstein's own idiom: "One might epitomize Habermas' entire intellectual project and his fundamental stance as writing a *new* Dialectic of Enlightenment--one which does full justice to the dark side of the Enlightenment legacy, explains its causes but nevertheless redeems and justifies the hope of freedom, justice, and happiness which still stubbornly speaks to us" (Introduction, *Habermas and Modernity*, 31).

50. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?," *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), 21-25; McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 277.

51. The term *philosophy of emancipation* is used within the context of this paper to refer in a technical sense not only to Habermas' more recent work on the theory of communicative action but also to his earlier work on the theory of human or cognitive interests.

52. When treating the specific difference between Gadamer's and Habermas' view, McCarthy explains, "While he agreed with Gadamer on the necessity for a *sinnverstehenden* access to social reality, he insisted nevertheless that the interpretation of meaningful phenomena need not, indeed could not, be restricted to the type of dialogic understanding characteristic of the hermeneutic approach. He held out instead the possibility of a theoretically grounded analysis of symbolically structured objects and events which, by drawing on systematically generalised empirical knowledge, would reduce the context-dependency of understanding and leave room for both quasi-causal explanation and critique" ("Rationality and Relativism: Habermas' 'Overcoming' of Hermeneutics," *Habermas, Critical Debates*, eds. John B. Thompson and David Held [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982], 57; henceforth "Rationality and Relativism").

53. It would be a gross misunderstanding of Habermas' intentions if one would take this as meaning that Habermas is proposing one more objectivist position. Habermas envisions his program as a hypothetical undertaking within the general rubric of the reconstructive versus nomological sciences as the ensuing paragraphs will make clear.

54. What follows will be limited to a succinct presentation of the main lines of Habermas' proposal for the purpose of better indicating Habermas' alternative response to the objectivist/relativist dichotomy. The theory of universal pragmatics will be developed in detail within the context of the third chapter.

55. Jürgen Habermas, "Appendix: *Knowledge and Human Interest: A General Perspective*," *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 317; henceforth, Appendix. By means of the theory of communicative action, Habermas endeavors to avoid the theoretical impasse maintained by both Marx and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School insofar as the relation of reason to freedom is concerned. Marx envisioned that the delimitation of freedom imposed by the need to produce for the satisfaction of individual and communal needs would be greatly facilitated by a progressive process of rationalization generative of technological breakthroughs. Max Weber, however, countered that the process of rationality and technology in fact leads to a process of reification wherein the most efficient means for achieving predefined goals leads to greater calculability, control and systematic planning, bureaucracy, economic and administrative efficiency. Weber understood rationalization as a progressive process of depersonalization and desacralization of the natural and social world. The Frankfurt School, following Weber, abandoned reason in favor of a negative dialectics which espoused that conceptual reason (instrumental reason) turn against itself and its reifying tendencies in the direction of art as a form of non-reified thinking. Yet, given that art is better understood as a

medium for transcending experience rather than as a model of dialogical relationships needed for reconciliation, Habermas proposes a view of critical theory that argues for a more fundamental sense of reason: viz., that instrumental reason itself depends on communicative reason. Habermas purports then by means of his theory of communicative action to provide the normative context for social critique. For the relationship between Marx, the Frankfurt School and Habermas, see "Reason, Utopia, and the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*" in *Habermas and Modernity*, 35-66. For a reconstruction of the philosophical argument of critical theory which places the work of Habermas in the tradition of metacritique, see Garbis Kortian, *Metacritique: The Philosophical Argument of Jürgen Habermas*, trans. John Raffan (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

56. Cf. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 182.

57. Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," 195.

58. Herbert Schnädelbach in *Kommunikation und Reflexion*, ed. W. Kuhlmann and D. Böhler (Frankfurt, 1983), 361; as quoted in Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," 195.

59. Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," 196.

60. *Ibid.*, 194.

61. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, 390; cf. Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," 195.

62. Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," 196.

63. *Ibid.*, 196. Habermas' theory of communicative action involves a three-tier research program: (1) a general theory of communication, which Habermas calls "universal pragmatics," that concerns itself with the rational reconstruction in universal terms of the happening of understanding; (2) a general theory of socialization, i.e., a theory of the acquisition of communicative action in accordance to hierarchically-arranged developmental stages that correspond to a developmental logic; and (3) a theory of social evolution, consisting in a reconstruction of historical materialism (i.e., a critique of capitalist society) with the end in view of developing an historically oriented analysis of contemporary society with a practical intent.

64. Although a consideration of Habermas' critique of deconstructionism is beyond the scope of this present study, from what has been said thus far concerning Habermas' conception of the role of philosophy, a conception to be developed in greater detail in subsequent chapters, it is nonetheless possible to indicate the fundamental thrust of Habermas' position with respect to this contemporary challenge to reason. In this respect Habermas argues that Foucault's radical historicization of the idea of reason in function of an archaeological and genealogical history of the human sciences presupposes an undeveloped notion of validity that will always have to go beyond local context in order to be effective. This inconsistency entails Foucault, Habermas contends, in the paradox of a performative self-contradiction. For a discussion of this paradox, see ch. IV, sec. A. On the other hand, Habermas argues that Derrida's method of dissemination or deconstruction ultimately is enmeshed in the paradoxes of philosophies relying on subjectivity. Derrida's extreme aesthetic contextualism fails to take account of social learning processes by which social subjects attain an improved understanding of both natural and social reality. For Habermas these learning processes are rooted in the validity claims serving as the communicative dimension in terms of which truth and normative claims may be rationally adjudicated. David Couzen Hoy points out that Derrida's over-emphasis on texts was equally criticized by Foucault: "Foucault also accuses Derrida of being overly preoccupied with texts and ignoring their social context. Foucault suspects that Derrida's method tacitly claims authority for itself as a result of the authority and primacy it grants to the text. Furthermore, Foucault believes that a text is not autonomous from the social practices to which it is tied both in its own time and in the time of its later interpretation" ("Splitting

the Difference: Habermas' Critique of Derrida," *Praxis International* 8 [January 1989]: 453). For Habermas' critique of Foucault, see "The Critique of Reason as an Unmasking of the Human Sciences: Michel Foucault," and "Some Questions Concerning the Theory of Power: Foucault Again" in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987). For his critique of Derrida, see "Beyond a Temporalized Philosophy of Origins: Jacques Derrida's Critique of Phonocentrism" also in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Also in this volume, see "The Entry into Postmodernity: Nietzsche as a Turning Point." For recent discussions on Habermas' critique of Foucault, see Dieter Freundlieb, "Rationalism v. Irrationalism? Habermas' Response to Foucault," *Inquiry* 31 (June 1988): 171-92; and Thomas R. Flynn, "Foucault and the Politics of Postmodernity," *Nous* 23 (April 1989): 187-198. For a discussion on Habermas' critique of Derrida, see David Couzens Hoy's article (cited above); Christopher Norris, "Deconstruction, Postmodernism and Philosophy: Habermas on Derrida," *Praxis International* 8 (January 1989): 426-46; and Charles Scott, "Postmodernism and Rationality," *The Journal of Philosophy* 85 (October 1988): 528-38. See also Thomas McCarthy, "The Politics of the Ineffable: Derrida's Deconstructionism," *The Philosophical Forum* vol. XXI, Nos. 1-2 (Fall-Winter 1989-90): 146-68; and Richard J. Bernstein, "Dallmayr's Critique of Habermas," *Political Theory* 16 (Nov. 1988): 580-93. For an excellent critique of deconstructionist themes in light of Habermas' proposal, see Thomas McCarthy, *Ideals and Illusions: On Reconstruction and Deconstruction in Contemporary Critical Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991); henceforth *Ideals and Illusions*. For a discussion of deconstruction as a disguised metaphysics, see Gillian Rose, *The Dialectic of Materialism: Post-Structuralism and Law* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), ch. 8.

65. Anthony Giddens, "Reason Without Revolution?" Habermas' *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* in *Habermas and Modernity*, 113-14.

66. Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 8-20; and McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 274-79.

67. Other reconstructive sciences include Noam Chomsky's work in linguistics, where he undertakes to reconstruct the system of rules that permits potential speakers to acquire competence in producing and understanding grammatical sentences (see his *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* [Cambridge, Mass., 1965]); Jean Piaget's studies in developmental psychology, where he endeavors to unravel the processes involved in cognition (see his *The Moral Judgment of the Child* [New York, 1965], and *Biology and Knowledge* [Chicago, 1971]); and Lawrence Kohlberg's work in ethics, where he seeks to articulate the complex stages of moral development (see his "Stage and Sequence" in *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research*, ed. D. Goslin [Chicago, 1969]; and "From Is to Ought" in *Cognitive Development and Epistemology*, ed. Theodore Mischel [New York: Academic Press, 1971]).

68. Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 24-25; and McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 279.

69. Jürgen Habermas, "A Reply to my Critics" in *Critical Debates*, 234. Thomas McCarthy adds, "Rational reconstructions of universal competencies cannot make the strong *a priori* claims of the Kantian project. They are advanced in a hypothetical attitude and must be checked and revised in the light of the data, which are gathered *a posteriori* from the actual performances and considered appraisals of competent subjects. Any proposal must meet the empirical condition of conforming in a mass of crucial and clear cases to the intuitions of competent subjects, which function ultimately as the standard of accuracy" ("Rationality and Relativism," 60). Habermas nonetheless generates confusion when he distances himself from Kantian transcendentalism while using expressions such as "the general and unavoidable presuppositions of achieving understanding of language," "what must be presupposed," what is "unavoidable," and

what is "necessary." After the publication of his first systematic work, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro, [Boston: Beacon Press, 1971]), Habermas has qualified his project to disassociate himself from this strong transcendental strain; see Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 184-85.

70. Hesse, "Science and Objectivity" in *Critical Debates*, 110-11; and McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 58.

71. Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 16.

72. Jürgen Habermas, "A Postscript to *Knowledge and Human Interests*," trans. C. Lenhardt, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 3 (1973): 180; henceforth "Postscript." Hesse clarifies that Habermas' position "must be distinguished carefully from a realism which presupposes that the aim of science is to derive true statements corresponding to an antecedently given 'real' domain of objects, and which issues in the possibility of technical control only as an incidental spin-off. On the contrary, Habermas believes . . . that there is no antecedently given domain of objects which are the direct referents of true statements. Empirical objects and 'empirical reality', in general, are constituents of human commerce with the natural world, constituted *in the course of* human pursuit of those technical interests which are continuous with the need of all animal species to survive in their natural environment" ("Science and Objectivity," 99). Notwithstanding Habermas' position here, in response to criticism from Hesse, he recognizes his: "obligation . . . to explain how empirical limitations operate in the process of justifying truth-claims connected with descriptive statements." Indeed Habermas readily "admit[s] that the 'evidential dimension' of the concept of truth is badly in need of further clarification" ("A Reply to My Critics," 275).

73. It will be the object of the next three chapters to develop Habermas' model of communicating subjects within the context of his philosophy of emancipation.

74. See Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 192-94; Hesse, "Science and Objectivity," 109-14; Steven Lukes, "Of Gods and Demons: Habermas and Practical Reason," *Habermas, Critical Debates*, eds. John B. Thompson and David Held (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), 139-45 and 147; and Fred Alford, "Is Jürgen Habermas' Reconstructive Science Really Science?," *Theory and Society* 14 (1985): 331-35; also see following note.

75. McCarthy, "Rationality and Relativism," 62.

76. Though McCarthy speaks, for instance, of the various realms of reality about which one can come to an understanding as unavoidable "idealizing suppositions," it would appear that their unavoidability stems from what is known of each of these realms as a fact of human experience. McCarthy states, "The idealizing suppositions we cannot avoid making when attempting to arrive at mutual understanding--suppositions, for instance, of the intersubjective availability of an objectively real world, of the rational accountability of interaction partners, and of the context transcendence of claims to truth and moral rightness--are actually effective in organizing communication . . ." (*Ideals and Illusions*), 2-3.

77. Jürgen Habermas, "Interpretive Social Science vs. Hermeneuticism" in *Social Science as Moral Inquiry*, ed. Norma Haan *et. al.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 261.

78. Cf. Stephen K. White, *The Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas: Reason, Justice and Modernity* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 129-30; henceforth *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*.

79. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 194-95; quote from McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, ix f.

80. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 190-91 (italics mine).

81. Habermas, "A Reply to my Critics," 233.

82. Bernstein's articulation of the "primordial intuition" deserves careful attention: "The recent celebration of relativistic doctrines and the enthusiasm for an endless playfulness of interpretation that knows no limits has already elicited a strong reaction. It has been argued that regardless of the many errors of those who have been wedded to the concept of representation, the correspondence theory of truth, the doctrine that the function of the mind is to mirror nature, we cannot avoid the 'primordial intuition' that there is a world that is independent of our beliefs and fancies that forces itself upon us willy-nilly and constrains what we can think, say, and do" (*Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, 4).

83. George F. McLean makes this suggestion when he states: ". . . how can the interest in emancipation be kept alive? . . . It can be done by drawing upon our heritage in the manner suggested by Heidegger" ("Hermeneutics, Cultural Heritage and Social Critique," *Reading Philosophy for the XXIst Century* [Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and University Press of America, 1989], 53).

84. Indeed Aristotle considered not the question of the *meaning* of Being but rather the question of *what* a being is, and Aquinas the question *that* a being is. Whereas the What-question has led to numerous studies concerning the nature or essence of being, the That-question has resulted in studies concerning the character of existence. For Heidegger the problem with this traditional distinction is that it leads to two different senses for the common term 'to be', a distinction that may lie in Being itself or in the human effort to think it. Cf. Manfred S. Frings, Introduction, *Heidegger and the Quest for Truth*, ed. M. S. Frings (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 13.

85. Joseph J. Kockelmans, "The Founders of Phenomenology and Personalism" in *Reading Philosophy for the XXIst Century*, ed. George F. McLean (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and University Press of America, 1989), 191-93.

86. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 32.

87. This concern with the meaning of Being is of course reflected in all of the great human enterprises, be they religious, philosophical, artistic, or scientific.

88. This state may be understood as reflected in humanity's perpetual concern with the great questions: Where did *I* come from? Why am *I* here? Where am *I* going?

89. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 487.

90. The Heideggerian fundamental ontology proceeds not from the point of view of an extra-mundane transcendental ego, as Husserl's does, but from the point of view of an historically situated mundane ego. As Kockelmans elucidates, "Though the world must be explained in its transcendental constitution by the human subjectivity, this must be taken not as a transcendental world-less ego, but as this concrete man in the world. For this reason, the first task of philosophy consists in explaining that this being indeed is different from all other beings" ("The Founders of Phenomenology and Personalism," 194).

Notes to Chapter II

1. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971).

2. Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* and *vol. 2: Lifeworld and System: The Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984 and 1987 respectively); henceforth *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1 or vol. 2.

3. Bernstein, Introduction, *Habermas and Modernity*, 17. The term "foundations" as used here by Bernstein is to be understood in function of Habermas' hermeneutic sensitivity, i.e., as referring to empirical rather than to ahistoric, transcendental proposals that, as such, are susceptible to empirical justification. Henceforth, whenever the term "foundations" is used in connection with the work of Habermas, it is this restricted sense that will be intended.

4. Habermas makes it clear that his own program should not be construed as a return to a modernist-foundationalism of a transcendentalist sort: "An investigation of this kind, which uses the concept of communicative reason without blushing, is today suspect of having fallen into the snares of foundationalism. But the alleged similarities of the formal-pragmatic approach to classical transcendental philosophy lead one down the wrong trail. I would recommend that the reader who harbors this suspicion read the conclusion first. We would not be able to ascertain the rational internal structure of action oriented to reaching understanding if we did not already have before us--in a fragmentary and distorted form, to be sure--the existing forms of a reason that has to rely on being symbolically embodied and historically situated" (*Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, xli).

5. Bernstein puts it in these terms: "Habermas no longer speaks of 'quasi-transcendental' cognitive interests. This has led some to think that he has simply abandoned the major systematic theses of *Knowledge and Human Interests*. It is true he has sought to purge his thinking of the vestiges of the philosophy of consciousness and the philosophy of the subject. But the insights contained in his original trichotomy of human interests are conceptually transformed in a new register within the context of his theory of communicative action. . . . This distinction is not abandoned in Habermas' universal pragmatics. On the contrary, it is refined and developed in far more detail than in his earlier work. Furthermore, from the perspective of the theory of communicative action, we gain a clearer perspective of the theory of communicative action, we gain a clear understanding of the conceptual space and foundations for what Habermas called the practical and emancipatory cognitive interests." (Introduction, *Habermas and Modernity*, 17).

6. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 196-97.

7. When considering the nature of the Habermasian theory of interests, the subject of *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Henning Ottmann states: "Human interests are not 'transcendental' in a simple (i.e. Kantian) sense of the word, because they do not fit into the framework of a sharp division between transcendental constitution on the one hand and the 'empirical' as constituted on the other" ("Cognitive Interests and Self-Reflection: The status and systematic connection of the cognitive interest in Habermas' *Knowledge and Human Interests*," *Habermas, Critical Debates*, eds. John B. Thompson and David Held [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982], 82; henceforth "Cognitive Interests and Self-Reflection").

8. The emancipatory interest will be developed in the second and third sections of this chapter.

9. Ottmann, "Cognitive Interests and Self-Reflection," 82. David Held adds: "Habermas understands knowledge in light of the problems man encounters in his efforts 'to produce his existence and reproduce his species being'. The conditions of the constitution of knowledge which determines 'the structure of objects of possible experience' are historical material conditions in which the development of the species has occurred" (*Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980], 255; henceforth *Introduction to Critical Theory*).

10. Ottmann, "Cognitive Interests and Self-Reflection," 82. As Held also notes, "Cognitive interests, which are the transcendental conditions of knowledge, are themselves materialistically grounded." Held clarifies, "That is, the rule systems governing the activities of the species 'have a

transcendental function but arise from actual structures of human life" (*Introduction to Critical Theory*, 255).

11. This work appeared as an appendix to *Knowledge and Human Interests* under the title "Knowledge and Human Interests: A General Perspective," *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 301-17; henceforth Appendix.

12. *Ibid.*, 303.

13. *Ibid.*, 301.

14. *Ibid.*, 304.

15. *Ibid.*, 311.

16. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 196-97.

17. The objectivist illusion, according to Habermas, "prevents consciousness of the interlocking of knowledge with interests from the life-world" (Appendix, 305-06).

18. Habermas, "Postscript," 178.

19. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 196.

20. Habermas states, "For knowledge is neither a mere instrument of an organism's adaptation to a changing environment nor the act of a pure rational being removed from the context of life in contemplation" (*Knowledge and Human Interests*, 197). Habermas' characterization of interests as both transcending and reflecting the natural genesis and cultural history of humankind has been the object of intense critical discussion. On the one hand, idealists like Günter Rohrmoser accuse Habermas of an unreflected empiricism or naturalism; Fred Dallmayr puts it this way: "Habermas' attitude toward science involves not so much an amendment as a deterioration of critical theory; the recognition of science merely implies a more intimate embrace by the tentacles of empiricism and historical relativism" (*Beyond Dogma and Despair: Toward a Critical Phenomenology of Politics* [Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981], 249; henceforth *Beyond Dogma and Despair*; see Rohrmoser, *Das Elend der kritischen Theorie*, 2nd ed. [Freiburg: Rombach, 1970], 89). On the other hand, positivists such as Hans Albert attack Habermas' work, as Dallmayr indicates, "as baseless speculation and as a transgression of the limits of empirical knowledge" (*Beyond Dogma and Despair*, 249); see Albert, *Plädoyer für kritischen Rationalismus* [Munich: Piper, 1971], 54-55). Such critics fail to comprehend that Habermas is avoiding a simplistic dichotomy that would attempt either to isolate the knowing subject from its relation to external nature or to rivet attention on external nature at the cost of the knowing subject; Habermas' notion of cognitive interests attempts to render more fluid the relations and connections between the subject and external nature.

21. In this sense McCarthy states, "Although the sciences must preserve their objectivity in the face of *particular* interests, the conditions of possibility of the very objectivity that they seek to preserve include *fundamental* cognitive interests" (*Critical Theory*, 58).

22. Jürgen Habermas, "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," *Theory and Practice*, trans. John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 8-9.

23. Habermas, Appendix, 308.

24. *Ibid.*, 311.

25. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 255-56. It should be noted that though Held uses the language of transcendental philosophy, "the mode in which reality is disclosed, constituted and acted upon," he comments that while "the rule systems governing the activities of the species 'have a transcendental function . . . [they] arise from actual structures of human life'" (*ibid.*, 255). The point here is to underscore once again that mitigated transcendentalist framework from which Habermas conducts his own investigations.

26. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 197-98.

27. Habermas himself views *Knowledge and Human Interests* as an "investigation [that] cannot claim more than the role of a prolegomenon" (vii). In "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," Habermas again makes mention of the "fragmentary and provisional character of these considerations" (14). The developmental character of both his theory of cognitive interests and theory of communicative action lends itself to further exploration and development.

28. At the time Habermas wrote *Knowledge and Human Interests*, the German edition was published as *Erkenntnis und Interesse* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968), the very possibility of grounding critical theory in a manner that escapes the charge of arbitrariness and relativism demanded that the positivist delimitation of knowledge as referring exclusively to nomological science be adequately challenged. A major aim of this work then consisted in the refutation of the positivist presupposition of value-neutral knowledge by developing an epistemological framework that uncovers the relation between knowledge and interests.

29. Habermas, "The Crisis of the Critique of Knowledge," (chs. 1-3), 1-63.

30. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, vii.

31. Habermas, "Postscript," 164.

32. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 19.

33. *Ibid.*, 24; more explicitly Habermas states, "When philosophy asserts itself as authentic science, the relation of philosophy and science completely disappears from discussion. It is with Hegel that a fatal misunderstanding arise: the idea that the claim asserted by philosophical reason against the abstract thought of mere understanding is equivalent to the usurpation of the legitimacy of independent sciences by a philosophy claiming to retain its position as universal scientific knowledge. But the actual fact of scientific progress independent of philosophy had to unmask this claim, however misunderstood, as bare fiction. It was this that served as the foundation-stone of positivism. Only Marx could have contested its victory. For he pursued Hegel's critique of Kant without sharing the basic assumption of the philosophy of identity that hindered Hegel from unambiguously radicalizing the critique of knowledge" (*ibid.*).

34. See Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, ch. 2.

35. Cf. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 296-300.

36. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, vii.

37. *Ibid.*, 71-81.

38. *Ibid.*, 89.

39. *Ibid.*; as quoted in Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 302.

40. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 83.

41. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 302; quote from Karl-Otto Apel, "The *a priori* of Communication and the Foundation of the Humanities," *Man and World*, no. 5 (February 1972): 10.

42. Held clarifies this point via Apel, "In a position parallel to Habermas, Apel argues that the fundamental shortcomings of positivism spring from a lack of reflection 'upon the fact that all cognition of objects presupposes understanding as a means of intersubjective communication'. Science, he contends, is unintelligible *qua* human activity, if one cannot understand the implicit and explicit conventions and rules, or more general, the communication community or language game, which it presupposes. On his account, even tacit conventions about the use of words--'not to mention explicit conventions about definitions, theoretical frameworks, or statements of facts in empirical science'--imply 'an intersubjective consensus about situational meanings and aims of

practical life'. Science, in its adoption of procedural conventions, goes beyond the 'scientific rationality of operations which could be performed in a repeatable way by exchangeable human subjects . . . and passes into the realm of a . . . *pre- and meta-scientific rationality* of intersubjective discourse mediated by *explication of concepts* and interpretations of intentions'" (*Introduction to Critical Theory*, 303; quote from Apel, "The *a priori* of communication," 26, 7, and 8 respectively).

43. It is on the basis of Habermas' examination of the logic of this *meta-scientific* realm that will lead to his proposal of a technical interest as constituting the central aim of the scientific enterprise.

44. See bottom of n. 42 above.

45. See Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, ch. 5. For articles dealing with Habermas' views on the philosophy of science, see "The Analytical Theory of Science and Dialectics," and "A Positivistically Bisected Rationalism," in T. Adorno, *et al.*, *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* (London: Heinemann 1969); McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 40-52.

46. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 304.

47. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 91.

48. Dallmayr understands Karl-Otto Apel as holding a similar contention: "Countering the pretensions of neopositivism and especially the 'unified science movement', Apel argued that scientific inquiry itself was inconceivable without the infrastructure of semiotic interpretation in a community of investigators--as Peirce had shown" (*Beyond Dogma and Despair*, 231).

49. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 304; cf. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 124.

50. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 62.

51. For Habermas the "Empirical-analytic sciences disclose reality insofar as it appears within the behavioral system of instrumental action. In accordance with their immanent meaning, nomological statements about this object domain are thus designed for a specific context in which they can be applied--that is, *they grasp reality with regard to technical control that, under specified conditions, is possible everywhere at all times*" (*Knowledge and Human Interests*, 195).

52. *Ibid.*, 191.

53. *Ibid.*, 124.

54. Habermas states, "In the *empirical-analytic sciences* the frame of reference that prejudices the meaning of possible statements establishes rules both for the construction of theories and for theoretical testing. Theories comprise hypothetico-deductive connections of propositions, which permit the deduction of lawlike hypotheses with empirical content. The latter can be interpreted as statements about the covariance of observable events; given a set of initial conditions, they make predictions possible. Empirical-analytic knowledge is thus possible predictive knowledge. However, the *meaning* of such predictions, that is their technical exploitability, is established only by the rules according to which we apply theories to reality" (*ibid.*, 308).

55. *Ibid.*, 192.

56. *Ibid.*, 308; as quoted in Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 305.

57. Habermas is not arguing for a strict instrumentalism; rather his argument is that the knowledge generated by the empirical-analytic sciences typically, i.e., for the most part, are concerned with technical control over the natural processes so objectified.

58. Habermas elaborates: "In controlled observation, which often takes the form of an experiment, we generate initial conditions and measure the results of operations carried out under

these conditions. . . . These observations are supposed to be reliable in providing immediate evidence without the admixture of subjectivity. In reality basic statements are not simple representations of facts in themselves, but express the success or failure of operations. We can say that facts and the relations between them are apprehended descriptively. But this way of talking must not conceal that as such the facts relevant to the empirical sciences are first constituted through an a priori organization of our experience in the behavioral system of instrumental action" (Appendix, 308-09).

59. Habermas, "A Positivistically Bisected Rationalism," 209; as quoted and amended by Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 306.

60. Habermas, Appendix, 309.

61. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 62.

62. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 35.

63. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 62.

64. On this point McCarthy is illuminating: "The communication structures presupposed by the community of natural sciences cannot themselves be grasped within the framework of empirical-analytic science. The dimension in which concepts, methods, theories, and so forth are discussed and agreed upon, in which the framework of shared meanings, norms, values and so on is grounded, is the dimension of symbolic interaction that is neither identical with nor reducible to instrumental action. The rationality of discourse about the appropriateness of conventions or the meaning of concepts is not the rationality of operations on objectified processes; it involves the interpretation of intentions and meanings, goals, values, and reasons. Thus the objective knowledge produced by empirical-analytic inquiry is not possible without knowledge in the form of intersubjective understanding. This availability of an intersubjectively valid pre- and meta-scientific language, of a framework of shared meanings and values, is taken for granted in the natural sciences. The cultural life-context (*Lebenszusammenhang*), of which scientific communication is only one element, belongs instead to the domain of the cultural sciences" (*ibid.*, 69).

65. Though Habermas does not consider the work of Gadamer in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, in his later writings he does critically draw on his insights.

66. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 308.

67. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 148. Cf. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 308-09.

68. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 309; see Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 154-58.

69. *Ibid.*, 156; as quoted in McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 71.

70. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 180ff.

71. *Ibid.*, 176.

72. *Ibid.*

73. Habermas states, "*In the context of communicative action*, language and experience are not subject to the transcendental conditions of action itself. Here the role of the transcendental framework is taken instead by the grammar of ordinary language, which simultaneously governs the non-verbal elements of a habitual mode of life conduct or practice" (*ibid.*, 192).

74. *Ibid.*, 172.

75. *Ibid.*, 191.

76. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 310.

77. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 175.

78. *Ibid.*, 176-77; as quoted by McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 74.

79. For Habermas' earliest critique of Gadamer, see "A Review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*," reprinted in *Understanding Social Inquiry*, eds. Fred R. Dallmayr and Thomas McCarthy (Notre Dame, Indiana: The University Press, 1977): 335-63; "Summation and Response," *Continuum*, vol. 8, nos. 1 and 2 (Spring and Summer, 1970): 123-33.

80. Habermas, "A Review of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*," 360.

81. For an excellent exposition of Habermas' critique of important contributors to hermeneutic science, including Husserl, Weber, Schutz, Wittgenstein, Winch, Garfinkel and Gadamer, see McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 137-93.

82. Christopher Broniak, "What is Emancipation for Habermas?," *Philosophy Today* 32 (Fall 1988): 202. In this article Broniak develops several stages on the road to emancipation in Habermas: (1) from domination to exploitation, which occurs when, as a result of a failure to distinguish between instrumental and communicative rationality, human subjects become means to an end, wherein technology reduces reason to results; (2) from exploitation to alienation, which occurs when interaction between subjects is transformed from a person to person relationship to a subject versus object relationship; (3) from alienation to liberation, that refers to Kant's development of subjectivity over and above phenomena as the locus of domination. At this level, Broniak, indicates, "While liberation is a necessary part of the process of emancipation, it is not identical with it. Intuitions need thought, concepts need content: once these hypostatized axes of consciousness, viz. thinking and feeling, recognize their mutual need of one another, emancipation (in Habermas' view) is possible" (*ibid.*, 200); (4) from liberation to emancipation, which consists in the ability of an individual or a social unit to make itself transparent so as to overcome obstacles standing in the way of realizing one's autonomous potential (*ibid.*, 195ff).

83. Habermas, "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," 22-23; as quoted and amended in Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 317. It is precisely the power of critical cognition that Habermas maintains was inadequately understood by both Peirce and Dilthey: "But neither Peirce nor Dilthey discerned what they were actually doing. Otherwise they would not have been able to preserve themselves from the experience of reflection originally developed by Hegel in the *Phenomenology*. I mean the experience of the emancipatory power of reflection, which the subject experiences in itself to the extent that it becomes transparent to itself in the history of its genesis. The experience of reflection articulates itself substantially in the concept of a self-formative process. Methodically, it leads to a standpoint from which the identity of reason with the will arises" (Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 197-98). "Self-reflection" aims at attaining insight leading to self-transparency, i.e., a form of Socratic self-knowledge.

84. Though Habermas connects cognition and emancipation, he does not hold that the success of action is a sufficient criterion of the truth of propositions. Habermas' position is that the "truth of a proposition is not established by means of interest gratification, but only by an argumentative redemption of the truth claim itself" ("Postscript," 179). Habermas' discourse theory of truth will be a central concern of the next chapter.

85. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 197-98. Dietrich Böhler takes issue with Habermas on the grounds that reason merely demonstrates an interest in emancipation from dogma and ignorance but does not prescribe standards for concrete activity; see "Zum Problem des 'emanzipatorischen Interesses' und seiner gesellschaftlichen Wahrnehmung," *Man and World*, 3 (1970): 26-53; also Dallmayr, *Beyond Dogma and Despair*, 258-59. This critical challenge to Habermas will be addressed in the fourth chapter as it relates to practical discourse.

86. Cf. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 318. Habermas states, ". . . we can methodologically ascertain the knowledge-constitutive interests of the natural and cultural sciences only once we have entered the dimension of self-reflection. *It is in accomplishing self-reflection that reason grasps itself as interested.* Therefore we come upon the fundamental connection of knowledge and interest when we pursue methodology in the mode of the experience of reflection: as the critical dissolution of objectivism, that is the objectivistic self-understanding of the sciences, which suppresses the contribution of subjective activity to the preformed objects of possible knowledge" (*Knowledge and Human Interests*, 212); in another passage, "Indeed the category of cognitive interest is authenticated only by the interest innate in reason. The technical and practical cognitive interests can be comprehended unambiguously as knowledge-constitutive interests only in connection with the emancipatory cognitive interest of rational reflection. That is, only in this way can they be understood without being psychologized or falling prey to a new objectivism. Because Peirce and Dilthey do not comprehend their methodology as the self-reflection of science, which it is nonetheless, they miss the point where knowledge and interest are united" (*ibid.*, 198).

87. Habermas, "Postscript," 176; as quoted in Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 318-19.

88. The third section of this chapter will maintain the primacy of the emancipatory interest insofar as it is oriented toward the dissolution of hypostatizations.

89. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 313.

90. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 319.

91. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 214; as quoted in Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 319.

92. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 217; as quoted in Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 320.

93. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 252. This review of Habermas' relation to psychoanalysis draws from Held's treatment; see *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 321-22.

94. Habermas' three-tier research program corresponds to each of the three levels of the psychoanalytic model; see ch. I, n. 63; cf. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 321.

95. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 258.

96. Dallmayr indicates, "By rendering transparent previously hidden or mangled layers of experience, self-reflection is able to produce a personal catharsis and transformation of character, an emancipation from the domination of past constraints" (*Beyond Dogma and Despair*, 259-60).

97. *Ibid.*, 260.

98. There is nothing simplistic in Habermas' view of such therapy, as Dallmayr indicates, "In his interpretation, the Freudian model implies not so much the transfer or imposition of knowledge, but rather a complex dialogue between analyst and patient, a dialogue in which only the patient's acceptance of a diagnosis can have the emancipating effect of deepened self-awareness. The mutual relationship, he notes, is thus not technical but practical in character, and as such embedded in the contingencies of practical experience: apart from aiming at the relief of concretely identifiable pathologies, therapeutic efforts are experimental and never assured of success" (*ibid.*, 243).

99. In this respect Freud cautions against an unreflective adoption of the psychoanalytic model into the cultural community; see *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, (New York: Norton, 1962), 91.

100. Gadamer, "Replik," in Apel, *et al.*, *Hermeneutik und Ideologiekritik*, 283-317; as quoted in Dallmayr, *Beyond Dogma and Despair*, 262.

101. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 394; also see Rick Roderick, *Habermas and the Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 68-69; henceforth *Foundations of Critical Theory*.

102. This view of Habermas' theory of universal pragmatics as the representing his more recent methodological framework for critical theory will be considered within the context of the ensuing chapter.

103. George F. McLean expresses this contention in these terms: "Emancipation could not be the central reality of life itself, but only a propitious state for physical survival. Habermas not only disagrees with the arbitrariness of this presupposition, but proceeds to show how the structural elements Freud cites are essentially analytic dimensions of a situation of interpersonal--if deformed--communication between psychoanalyst and patient. Their meaning is derivative, not of physical forces, but of the reality of symbolic communication and its disruptions" ("Hermeneutics, Cultural Heritage and Social Critique," 47).

104. Erich Hahn disagrees arguing that Habermas fails to take adequate account of Marx's emphasis on the dialectical relations between "force" and "relations of production" ("Die theoretischen Grundlagen der Soziologie von Jürgen Habermas," Johannes H. von Heiseler, *et al.*, *Die "Frankfurter Schule" im Lichte des Marxismus* [Frankfurt-Main: Verlag Marxistische Blätter, 1970], 70-89; as quoted in Dallmayr, *Beyond Dogma and Despair*, 266-67). Rolf Zimmerman expresses his disagreement in these terms: "While we can accept Habermas' distinction between purposive-rational and communicative action, we cannot accept his identification of purposive-rational with labour as much since labour also includes the moment of communicative action" ("Emancipation and Rationality: Foundational Problems in the Theories of Marx and Habermas," *Ratio* 26, [Dec. 1984]: 158; henceforth "Problems in the Theories of Marx and Habermas"). See also Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 390ff. McLean, however, insists on a fundamental distinction between labor and interaction: "Liberation from the suppression of persons by the institutional framework of labor and rewards requires more than merely instrumental productive action, for this can respond only to external constraints. Communicative action is required in order to be aware: (a) of the moral totality of human dignity as this is reflected in the highest vision of a cultural heritage, (b) of its disruption by repressive institutional manipulation for the private interest of the class in power, and (c) of the types of changes which will be truly emancipative" ("Hermeneutics, Cultural Heritage and Social Critique," 47).

105. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 307.

106. Roderick, *Foundations of Critical Theory*, 54.

107. On this point Held contends, ". . . it seems apparent from post-Kuhnian philosophy of science that no straight forward separation can be made between what Habermas calls the 'empirical-analytic and the hermeneutic sciences' . . . Hermeneutic problems are central to all attempts to comprehend lawlike regularities in natural or social phenomena. While a knowledge of regularities and a capacity for prediction seems an important constitutive element of most forms of interpretative knowledge" (*Introduction to Critical Theory*, 392). Though this is true Habermas' point is that the metatheoretical operations that precede nomological investigation and disclose the technical interest cannot be understood within the context of the hypothetico-deductive methodology but involves the distinctive methodology proper to hermeneutics.

108. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 208.

109. Ottmann, "Cognitive Interests and Self-Reflection," 90; quotes from Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 131. On this point McCarthy comments, "This construction makes it possible to avoid some of the problematic features of Kant's thing-in-itself. For one thing,

nature-in-itself is not unknowable; it is knowable but only subject to the conditions of possible objectivity. It "appears" only in relation to possibilities of instrumental action; what we "catch 'of'" it is its technical controllability" (*Critical Theory*, 117).

110. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 117.

111. *Ibid.*, 117-18; quote from Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 131. Ottmann makes a similar point, see "Cognitive Interests and Self-Reflection," 90.

112. See ch. I, sec. B, and ch. III, sec. B.

113. Habermas' discourse theory of truth will be considered in detail in the ensuing chapter, sec. B.

114. Though not considered by Habermas, one way to view the importance of this conception of science consists in that it does not initially discount other possible orientations to natural reality. In this respect, an explanation, for instance, of the phenomenon of miracles *may* or *may not* be ultimately susceptible to nomological scrutiny. In the latter case, the phenomenon *may* result from an intervention other than those accessible within the compass of nomological methodology.

115. Though sympathetic with Habermas' positions, Apel was one of the first to point out the conflation of the two senses of reflection in *Knowledge and Human Interests*; see Apel's study on this question in *Materialien zu Habermas' 'Erkenntnis und Interesse'*, ed. Fred Dallmayr (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974).

116. Habermas, "Postscript," 182.

117. Habermas, "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," 22-24.

118. For Habermas "Self-reflection brings to consciousness those determinants of a self-formative process of cultivation and spiritual formation [*Bildung*] which ideologically determine a contemporary praxis of action and the conception of the world. Analytic memory thus embraces the particulars, the specific course of self-formation of an individual subject (or of a collective held together by group identity). Rational reconstructions, in contrast, deal with anonymous rule systems, which any subjects whatsoever can comply with in so far as they have acquired the corresponding competence with respect to these rules. Reconstructions thus do not encompass subjectivity, within the horizon of which alone the experience of reflection is possible. In the philosophical tradition these two legitimate forms of self-knowledge have generally remained undifferentiated and have both been included under the term of reflection. However, a reliable criterion of distinction is available. Self-reflection leads to insight due to the fact that what has previously been unconscious is made conscious in a manner rich in practical consequences: analytic insights intervene in life, if I may borrow this dramatic phrase from Wittgenstein. A successful reconstruction also raises an 'unconsciously' functioning rule system to consciousness in a certain manner; it renders explicit the intuitive knowledge that is given with competence with respect to the rules in the form of 'know how'. But this theoretical knowledge has no practical consequences. By learning logic or linguistics I acquire theoretical knowledge, but in general I do not thereby change my previous practice of reasoning or speaking" (*ibid.*, 22-23).

119. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 101; quotes from Habermas, "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," 24.

120. Habermas, "Postscript," 184.

121. *Ibid.*, 176

122. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 94; quote from Habermas, Appendix, 314.

Notes to Chapter III

1. See Rose B. Calabretta, *The Intellectual Origins of the Problem of "Value-Free" Sociology* (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1979).
2. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 345.
3. Habermas, Appendix, 317.
4. McCarthy, Translator's introduction, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, iv.
5. Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 26.
6. *Ibid.*, 61.
7. The summary presentation of universal pragmatics in the first chapter aimed at distinguishing Habermas' position from that of Gadamer's. This section will endeavor to interpret universal pragmatics as representing the methodological framework within Habermas' philosophy of emancipation.
8. See ch. I, sec. B.
9. This term is used here to denote the object of knowledge characteristic of modern and contemporary rationalist, empiricist, and transcendentalist epistemologies.
10. Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 5-6.
11. *Ibid.*, 41-44.
12. *Ibid.*, 42.
13. *Ibid.*
14. By means of a strategic speech act an actor uses deception, threat of sanctions or the promise of reward--whether directly or indirectly--in order to influence behavior. For Habermas this mode of speech is derivative from the more basic speech act--communicative action--wherein an actor endeavors to motivate another subject rationally, i.e., by depending on the illocutionary binding force contained in the speech act. In communicative interactions the participants coordinate their actions consensually. See *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, 279-95. However, Dallmayr points out that both communicative and strategic action are teleological or goal-oriented. Both are social actions conducted within social contexts, and both consist in a means (speech) for attaining an end (doing something). Notwithstanding, the formal affinities between these two modes of action, Habermas would claim that the crucial difference between the nonstrategic and the strategic speech act consists in their respective aims: on the one hand, to bring about interpersonal understanding, and, on the other, to influence the behavior of another deceptively. Cf. Roderick, *Foundations of Critical Theory*, 98; and McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 25.
15. For Habermas the primary *per se* function of a speech act consists precisely in its orientation to reaching interpersonal understanding. In this sense Habermas argues that action theory as understood by intentionalist semantics is unsatisfactory: "This nominalistic theory of meaning is not suitable for clarifying the coordinating mechanism of linguistically mediated interaction because it analyzes the act of reaching understanding on a model of action oriented to consequences" (*Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, 274ff). Notwithstanding his criticism of intentionalist semantics, Habermas has yet to provide an adequate account of meaning: "It is not clear whether he accepts a Gricean-Searlean account of meaning in terms of intention, or something closer to Chomsky's account. . . . Habermas pays insufficient attention to the distinction between semantic and pragmatic levels" (Roderick, *Foundations of Critical Theory*, 98-99).
16. Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 44-59.

17. *Ibid.*, 41ff. Note that Habermas also employs the modifiers "assertoric," "interactive," and "expressive" corresponding to the speech acts constative, regulative and avowal, respectively, to indicate the mode of communication which each type of speech action effects; see *ibid.*, 58.

18. *Ibid.*, 59.

19. *Ibid.*, 63.

20. *Ibid.*, 63; cf. *ibid.*, 53ff.

21. John B. Thompson takes issue with this point: "It seems to me implausible and misleading to contend that all four validity-claims are necessarily raised with the utterance of *every* speech-act. In what sense does reading a poem, telling a joke, or greeting a friend presuppose the truth of what is said? Is not sincerity characteristically suspended rather than presupposed by the participants in a process of collective bargaining, or by friends engaged in the light-hearted activity of 'taking the mickey'? In what sense, precisely, does the utterance of a sentence like 'The sky is blue this morning' raise a claim to correctness which is clearly distinguishable from its intelligibility or its truth? Habermas may be right to criticise Austin for working with an undifferentiated notion of 'objective assessment'; but Habermas in turn seems mistaken to maintain that the various claims which he discerns in this notion are necessarily raised with every speech-act, albeit in an implicit and unthematic form." ("Universal Pragmatics" in *Critical Debates*, 126). Habermas responds to Thompson in these terms: "I do not understand bargaining as a case of communicative action; a silent greeting is as a rule the non-linguistic equivalent of an illocutionary abbreviated speech-act, the meaning of which can be expanded with reference to the underlying norm of action; indirect speech-acts can likewise be expanded--if necessary through modifying available expressions or introducing new ones jokes, fictional representations, irony, games, . . . rest on intentionally using categorial confusions which, in the wake of the differentiation of validity-claims and corresponding modes (being/illusion, is/ought, essence/appearance), are seen through as category mistakes" ("A Reply to My Critics," 270-71).

22. Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics," 2-3 (italics mine).

23. Concerning Habermas' views on the inadequacy of semantic theory, see "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 32. Cf. *ibid.*, 30-31; see also "Towards a Theory of Communicative Action," *Recent Sociology*, 2, ed. Hans Peter Dreitzel (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 22.

24. Thompson takes issue with the various distinctions--number of speech acts, realms of reality, validity claims--stating, ". . . there is a lack of clarity about the nature of the distinctions cited by Habermas and the grounds for treating these distinctions as fundamental. Without a more precise specification, it is difficult to judge whether the proposed distinctions are genuinely universal or merely extrapolated from the tradition of Western philosophy" ("Universal Pragmatics," 128). Habermas counters, "Thompson would have to show . . . that, for example, the logical arguments for assuming three validity-claims are false. If one examines the ways in which the validity of a standard utterance as a whole can be contested, one finds, in my view, precisely three aspects under which a hearer can, if need be, say no. He or she can say no to the truth of the statement asserted (or of the existential presuppositions of a mentioned propositional context), to the rightness of the utterance in relation to a normative context (or to the rightness of an underlying norm of action itself), and finally to the truthfulness or sincerity of the intention expressed by the speaker. One arrives at the same result through formal-pragmatic investigation of elementary sentences with descriptive, normative and expressive contents, and through the pragmatic logic of the corresponding (types of) argumentation specific to questions of truth, justice and self-deception. Furthermore, the decentred understanding of the world, the development of which can

be found both in ontogenesis and in the changing structures of world-views, also speaks for the universality of the distinction among exactly three worlds" ("A Reply to My Critics," 271-72).

25. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 291; quote from Habermas, "Vorbereitende Bemerkungen zu einer Theorie der kommunikativen Kompetenz," *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie -- Was leistet die Systemforschung?* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), 120.

26. All quotes from this paragraph are from McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 288-89.

27. Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 64. This is to say that an individual can only convince another of the sincerity of what he says not so much by providing reasons but by behaving in conformity to expressed intentions.

28. *Ibid.*, 64. It should be noted that the validity claim truthfulness remains largely undeveloped in the work of Habermas. Donald Jay Rothberg proposes that this claim be understood as dealing with an individual's interiority, i.e., as properly referring to the religious/spiritual dimension of human experience. In an important article Rothberg challenges Habermas' contention that the "disenchantment of the world" brought about within the context of modernity "represents a conclusive 'overcoming' (or *Aufhebung*) of religious (and metaphysical) worldviews," where "the implicit and 'ungrounded' authority of the 'sacred' is generally replaced by the explicit rational authority of a 'grounded consensus'" ("Rationality and Religion in Habermas' Recent Work: Some Remarks on the Relation Between Critical Theory and the Phenomenology of Religion," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 11 [Summer 1986]: 221, 223-24; see *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, 119f). Rothberg argues that while Habermas fails to present any acceptable reasons in his argument against the validity of religious claims, he also fails to consider religious experience. In this respect Rothberg states, "Habermas' critique of religion, it is clear, makes very strong claims that are at once formal, normative, and universal. Perhaps what is most striking about Habermas' argument is his radical separation of form (or structure) and content in dealing with the question of the relationship between rationality and religion. The main focus is on the extent to which different worldviews approximate the formal structures identified by the theory of universal pragmatics, and the level of the development manifest according to the criteria such as differentiation, reflexivity, and so on. Such an approach obviously differs from those contemporary inquiries into religion, such as the phenomenology and philosophy of religion, which largely take seriously the content of religious experience and claims" ("Rationality and Religion," 224-25).

29. *Ibid.*, 63-64.

30. The main work which treats Habermas' theory of truth is found in his "Wahrheitstheorien," [Theories of truth] *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion: Festschrift für Walter Schulz*, ed. H. Fahrenbach (Pfullingen, 1973), 211-265. Passages in English from this work used in this study are from McCarthy's *Critical Theory*; Held's *Introduction to Critical Theory*; Thompson's *Critical Hermeneutics: A Study in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Roderick's *The Foundations of Critical Theory*. Translations of Habermas' study will be annotated by first providing the reference to the English version and then to the German original (e.g.: McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 300; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 219).

31. Though Habermas uses both "discourse theory" and "consensus theory" to characterize his theory of truth, this study will prefer the former so as to distinguish it from C. S. Peirce's own consensus theory. Cf. C. S. Peirce, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear" (1878).

32. This section draws from McCarthy's lucid formulation of Habermas' discourse theory of truth and his constitution theory of objects; see *Critical Theory*, 291-310.

33. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 299; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 219. Alessandro Ferrara articulates the nature of Habermas' conception of truth as follows: "Habermas' consensus theory of truth represents one of the best available responses to the difficulties typical of the accounts in terms of coherence and correspondence. It fits into the post-Kuhnian discussion as a promising attempt to steer a course between two unsatisfactory alternatives, exemplified by Lakatos's renewed search for an *apriori* criterion of validity and by Rorty's renunciation of all normative implications of the concept of validity. These alternatives are part of the new turn taken in recent times by the philosophical confrontation, central in the development of Western thought on truth and validity, between universalism and skepticism. As it has been suggested, today the age-old opposition of universalism and skepticism has taken the form of a confrontation between objectivism and relativism. Those who continue to search for a set of meanings, rules or presuppositions capable of transcending cultural and temporal particularity have abandoned all metaphysical, or otherwise 'absolutistic' pretensions. Today, those who defend universalistic positions defend them within the framework of a fallibilistic objectivism" ("A Critique of Habermas' Consensus Theory of Truth," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 13 [Fall 1987], 39; henceforth "Consensus Theory of Truth.") Ferrara traces the four-stage development of Habermas' conception of truth: (1) "The first stage of Habermas' theory of truth lasts from 1963 to 1965. At this time Habermas takes an active role in the polemical confrontation between Adorno and Popper which goes under the name of *Positivismusstreit* and tries to outline a notion of scientific truth or validity in terms of an immanent critique of Popper's theses. This immanent critique is aimed at bringing out the implications of the hermeneutic presuppositions of Popper's critical rationalism and at elaborating them in a pragmatist direction." (2) "In the second stage of his theory of truth (1965-68), Habermas develops systematically the point--concisely stated in "Analytische Wissenschaftstheorie und Dialektik" (1963) and in "Gegen einen positivistisch halbierten Rationalismus" (1964)--that we can form a rational consensus about the validity of basic statements only insofar as we share, underneath the diversity of theoretical perspectives, a more fundamental pre-theoretic orientation. This pre-theoretic orientation concerns the necessity for our species to control natural processes in order to preserve itself and to reproduce social life. . . . This alternative theory of knowledge--which takes into account the relation of knowledge to the life-world and to the interests underlying our cognitive enterprises--is spelled out in *Knowledge and Human Interests* 1968." (3) "The third stage of Habermas' theory of truth (1969-1973) can be characterized through the attempt, made for the first time in "Wahrheitstheorien," to spell out the notion of rational consensus. In fact, in order to avoid the relativistic implications of the pragmatist and conventionalist theories of truth, Habermas needs to specify the kind of consensus which can count as rational and as such warrant the assertibility of a statment. . . . Rational consensus is any consensus formed under the conditions which define the ideal speech situation.?" (4) "In the fourth stage (1974-) Habermas brings some internal adjustments to his theory, but adds little of strategic significance. The two most important issues that he addresses are the status of the ideal speech situation and the so-called evidential aspects of truth. The question 'How is the ideal speech situation to be understood?' has been a considerable source of concern for Habermas ever since he formulated his consensus theory of truth. In 1971 he characterized the ideal speech situation as the prefiguration of a liberated form of life. The same formulation was used in his paper 'Wahrheitstheorien'. Most of Habermas' later remarks on the status of the ideal speech situation are devoted to retracting this infelicitous early formulation and to stressing an alternative conception, according to which the ideal speech situation is only an 'unavoidable presupposition

of argumentation" ("Consensus Theory of Truth," 40ff). Cf. discussion on ideal speech situation in section C of this chapter, and in sections B and C of chapter V.

34. The fourth statement treating the ideal speech situation, i.e. the formal canons for the argumentative vindication of truth claims, constitutes the essence of the "logic of theoretical discourse" and will be considered in the next section of this chapter.

35. Strawson distinguishes between a speech episode and the asserted propositional content of an assertion: "My statement' may be either what I say or my saying of it. My saying something is certainly an episode. What I say is not. It is the latter, not the former we declare to be true" (P. F. Strawson, "Truth," *Truth*, ed. G. Pitcher [Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964], 33); as quoted in McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 300.

36. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 300; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 219.

37. Jürgen Habermas' *Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie?* (Frankfurt, 1971), 206-07; as quoted in McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 295.

38. Habermas, "Postscript," 180.

39. Thompson does not agree with Habermas on this point: ". . . I wish to distinguish between the justification for the assertion of a statement, and the justification for the assertion that a statement is true. There may well be cases in which these two types of justification overlap or even coincide, but it seems mistaken to assume that this must necessarily be so. One may assert, for example, that a person P is in pain, and one may justify this assertion on the basis of what P does; but the justification of the assertion that it is true that P is in pain may require an appeal to additional evidence, such as how P feels at the time in question" (*Critical Hermeneutics*, 207). Habermas' response to Thompson consists in emphasizing that the statements which would be the object of discursive justification would be hypothetical statements and modal statements; i.e., those which are negative and counterfactual; see "A Reply to My Critics," 275.

40. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 301; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 223.

41. Habermas, "Postscript," 170.

42. Habermas is not espousing here a correspondence theory of truth; his argument against correspondence follows.

43. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 301; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 218.

44. Habermas, "Postscript," 169; as quoted in McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 301. Habermas' rationale for rejecting a simple correspondence for the expression "This ball is red" is provided by Ferrara: "In the first case, to establish the truth of 'This ball is red' appears a simple matter of comparing our words with the world only because we are taking for granted a host of assumptions about colors, matter, perception, light and what not. Yet this non-problematical quality of the validity of statements such as 'This ball is red' quickly vanishes once we move from the level of the life-world to the level of scientific inquiry. Then all tacit assumptions which allow us to simply 'look at the world' can no longer be retained and the consensual dimension of truth comes again to the fore" ("Consensus Theory of Truth," 46). Notwithstanding, Ferrara argues for the role of some non-naïve form of the correspondence theory within the context of scientific inquiry; see n. 78 below.

45. Here it would probably be helpful to recall that for Habermas the constitution of objects of experience is the product of the "systematic interplay of sense reception, action and linguistic representation."

46. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 302; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 216.

47. Roderick indicates, "Habermas points out that the correspondence theory is based on the correct insight that our statements should agree with the facts and that these facts must be 'given'

in perceptual experience. To escape the problems in the correspondence theory of truth in explaining the relationship between facts and the world, Habermas appeals to his theory of discourse. It is only in discourse, he claims, that 'facts' can be certified as 'facts' and this is 'always only at the time when the validity claim connected with statements becomes thematized'. In his view, both what we mean by 'facts' and what the 'facts' actually are can only be clarified by referring to discourse in which problematical validity claims are examined" (*Foundations of Critical Theory*, 84; quotes from Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 216-17).

48. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 302. With respect to the relation of correspondence that is said to obtain, McCarthy indicates, "The history of philosophy is replete with discarded attempts to characterize the latter in terms of picturing, mirroring, correlation, congruity, likeness, and so forth; but "how can an idea be like anything that is not an idea?" (*ibid.*, 303).

49. *Ibid.*

50. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 303; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 218.

51. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 303.

52. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 303; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 219.

53. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 303; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 239.

54. See sec. C below.

55. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 304. Ferrara expresses the circularity and Habermas' response in these terms: "If the truth of a statement rests on rational consensus, and rational consensus is defined as agreement in the ideal speech situation, what grounds the validity of the claim that rational consensus is consensus achieved in the ideal speech situation? Habermas would be cornered, according to this argument, between the risk of an infinite regress and the equally undesirable necessity to adopt some strong variety of transcendental argument which could exempt the claim that only consensus reached in the ideal speech situation is rational from the need for being itself validated in ideal discourse. . . . By showing through a pragmatic analysis that whoever engages in discourse but denies the implicit presuppositions of discourse specified in the notion of the ideal speech situation commits a performative contradiction, Habermas avoids the circularity without paying the price of having to claim an *a priori* or strong transcendental status for these presuppositions of discourse. In fact, his reconstructive hypotheses can be empirically falsified through the production of utterances which violate the implicit rules of discourse and yet in at least one culture or historical period are not regarded as performative contradictions" ("Consensus Theory of Truth, 47).

56. Giddens, "Reason Without Revolution?," 115-16.

57. Thompson, "Universal Pragmatics," 130.

58. *Ibid.*, 130-31; quotes from Habermas, "Postscript," 170 and 169 respectively. Ferrara agrees with Thompson: "Habermas purports to account for truth solely in terms of consensus but in fact cannot avoid implicit reference, which takes the form of tacit assumptions without which the consensual dimension of truth cannot make sense, to the notions of truth as consistency and truth as correspondence which he explicitly rejects" ("Consensus Theory of Truth," 47-48).

59. Habermas, "A Reply to My Critics," 273.

60. *Ibid.*, 275.

61. The terminology used here to refer to the three formal criteria of discourse are the author's and not Habermas'.

62. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 56.

63. Ferrara adds, "What is it about the ideal speech situation that guarantees that the best argument and only the best argument will prevail. No answer to these questions can be found for

the simple reason that they do not represent sensible questions for Habermas' theory of truth. The ideal speech situation does not contribute to the correct selection of the best argument among several competing ones, but rather *defines* the one deemed the best as the argument to which it is rational to consent" (Ferrara, "Consensus Theory of Truth," 52 [italics mine]).

64. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 87; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 214.

65. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 87.

66. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 88; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 241.

67. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 89; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 243.

68. Cf. Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 97-107, specifically "The Pattern of An Argument: Data and Warrants" and "Backing and Warrants." Cf. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 88f.

69. Richard J. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 223-25.

70. Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology: The Origins, Grammar and Future of Ideology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), 144.

71. Raymond Geuss, *The Idea of a Critical Theory: Habermas and the Frankfurt School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 66-67.

72. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 396.

73. Roderick, *Foundations of Critical Theory*, 86.

74. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 344; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 258.

75. This, of course, is not to discount the possibility that at one time a sort of ultimate *material* criterion may be articulated that may be invoked in settling questions of truth in theoretical discourse.

76. Thompson counters, ". . . it is difficult to see why subjects can be said genuinely to agree about something only when their agreement is induced by the force of the better argument, as opposed, for example, to the feeling of compassion or the commitment to a common goal" ("Universal Pragmatics," 129). On this point Habermas is especially illuminating: "The communicative practice of everyday life is immersed in a sea of cultural taken-for-grantedness, that is, of consensual certainties As soon, however, as an element of this naively known, prereflexively present background is transformed into the semantic content of an utterance, the certainties come under the conditions of criticisable knowledge; from then on disagreement concerning them *can* arise. Only when this disagreement is stubborn enough to provoke a discursive treatment of the matter at issue do we have a case concerning which I am claiming that a *grounded* agreement cannot be reached unless the participants in discourse *suppose* that they are convincing each other only by force of better arguments. Should one party make use of privileged access to weapons, wealth or standing, in order to *wring* agreement from another party through the prospect of sanctions or rewards, no one involved will be in doubt that the presuppositions of argumentation are no longer satisfied" ("A Reply to My Critics," 272-73).

77. Habermas concedes, "I readily admit that the 'evidential dimension' of the concept of truth is badly in need of further clarification" ("A Reply to My Critics," 275).

78. Ferrara, "Consensus Theory of Truth," 48.

79. Ferrara insists that Habermas' tendency to present his theory as antagonistic to correspondence approaches to truth, "creates the expectation of a theory of truth completely free of correspondence elements. Then when the inevitable reference to the correspondence aspects of truth is detected, in the form of tacit assumptions about competent participants or about the topic of discourse in the ideal speech situation, the presence of such reference appears as a flaw in

Habermas' theory. No impression of inconsistency would arise, instead, if Habermas allowed for the notion of consensus to be seen as complementing, rather than replacing, the notion of the correspondence of an assertion with reality" ("Consensus Theory of Truth," 54). Ferrara's point is well taken; however, Habermas' failure to stress correspondence theories is in function of his critical understanding of theory languages; see sec. B above.

80. Ferrara, "Consensus Theory of Truth," 55; also see ch. I, sec. A.

81. Jürgen Habermas, "Legitimation Problems in the Modern State," *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, 186.

Notes to Chapter IV

1. Stephen K. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*; see especially chapter 3, "Justice and the Foundations of Communicative Ethics," 48-68, and chapter 4, "Toward a Minimal Ethics and Orientation for Political Theory," 69-89.

2. *Ibid.*, 48; quote from Jürgen Habermas, "Über Moralität und Sittlichkeit--Was macht eine Lebensform 'rational'?", in *Rationalität*, ed. Herbert Schnädelbach (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984), 225. Another translation of this passage distinguishing between moral and evaluative questions reads: ". . . the development of the moral point of view goes hand in hand with a differentiation within the practical into *moral questions* and *evaluative questions*. Moral questions can in principle be decided rationally, i.e., in terms of *justice* or the generalizability of interests. Evaluative questions present themselves at the most general level as issues of the *good life* (or self-realization); they are accessible to rational discussion only *within* the unproblematic horizon of a concrete historical form of life or the conduct of an individual life" (Jürgen Habermas, "Discourse Ethics: Notes on a Program of Philosophical Justification," *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt & Shierry Weber Nicholsen [Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990], 108; henceforth "Discourse Ethics"). See also Habermas, "A Reply to My Critics," 251.

3. Habermas initiates his philosophical justification of discourse ethics by carefully defending the domain of moral phenomena in a manner that addresses the objections of a "die-hard skeptic." In this effort he uses the work of P. F. Strawson who "develops a linguistic phenomenology of ethical consciousness whose purpose is maieutically to open the eyes of the empiricist in his role as moral skeptic to his own everyday moral intuitions" ("Discourse Ethics," 45; see also Strawson, *Freedom and Resentment* [London, 1974]).

4. Habermas is careful to avoid incurring in the naturalistic fallacy as typically occurs in ontologistic and intuitive forms of ethics by emphasizing the analogous--and never identical--character of assertoric and regulative speech acts. In this regard, he follows Toulmin in distinguishing between the predication of an assertoric statement, e.g., "This table is yellow," consisting in the adjectival predication of the property "yellow" to a table; and the form of a regulative statement, e.g., "Which course of action is the right one?" The regulative statement does not assert a property but asks "whether there are any reason[s] for choosing one course of action rather than another." This position, that views practical questions as admitting argumentative vindication in a manner analogous to truth claims, rejects the notion that the truth or validity of a statement is limited to descriptive propositions only. See Toulmin, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge, 1970), 28; cf. "Discourse Ethics," 53f.

5. Jürgen Habermas, "Morality and Ethical Life: Does Hegel's Critique of Kant Apply to Discourse Ethics," *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, 197; henceforth "Morality

and Ethical Life." Indeed Habermas wants "to defend the cognitivist approach in ethics against the metaethical diversionary tactics of value skepticism and to lay the groundwork for answering the question of in what sense and in what way moral commands and norms can be justified" ("Discourse Ethics," 57).

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.* In defining discourse ethics as deontological, cognitivist, formalist, and universalist, Habermas is not attempting to revive transcendental philosophy. McCarthy has attempted to meet this familiar charge with an eloquent rebuttal: "These misrepresentations often involve confusing universal claims with transcendental claims, forgetting that the latter aspire to necessity as well as universality. A glance at the natural sciences serves as a reminder that universal claims need not be based on a priori reasoning or pretend to infallibility. The shoe is actually on the other foot; on what grounds do antiuniversalists claim to know--a priori?--that there are and can be no universals of language, culture, cognition, morality, and the like? There is no obvious reason why this shouldn't be treated as an empirical-theoretical question that will have to be answered, as such questions usually are, with reference to the fate of various research programs in the human sciences. This is, at any rate, Habermas' approach" (Introduction, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* xiii, n. 8).

8. For a discussion attempting to reconcile Habermas' universalist claim with Alasdair MacIntyre's Thomism, see Michael Kelly, "MacIntyre, Habermas, and Philosophical Ethics," *The Philosophical Forum*, vol. XXI, nos. 1-2 (Fall-Winter 1989-90): 70-93; see also Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

9. McCarthy explains the difference between communicative and deontological ethics in these terms: ". . . rather than ascribing as valid to all others any maxim that I can will to be a universal law, I must submit my maxim to all others for purposes of discursively testing its claim to universality. The emphasis shifts from what each can will without contradiction to be a general law, to what all can will in agreement to be a universal norm. A rational will is not something that can be certified and secured privatim; it is inextricably bound to communication processes in which a common will is both 'discovered' and 'formed'" (*Critical Theory*, 326).

10. Cf. Habermas, "Morality and Ethical Life," 203-04.

11. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 65.

12. *Ibid.*, 63.

13. *Ibid.*, 66.

14. *Ibid.*, 63.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, 104; see also Habermas, "Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action," 121-22.

17. Habermas, "Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action," 122.

18. Hans Albert, *Treatise on Critical Reason* (New York, 1985); cf. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 79.

19. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 79. For a metacritique of the Münchhausen trilemma, see Karl-Otto Apel, "The A Priori of the Communication Community and the Foundations of Ethics," *Towards a Transformation of Philosophy* (London, 1980), 225ff.

20. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 80.

21. *Ibid.*, 80-81. The "performative contradiction" has been developed in Apel's "The Problem of Philosophical Foundations Grounding in Light of a Transcendental Pragmatics of

Language," *After Philosophy: End or Transformation*, eds. K. Baynes, J. Bohman, and T. McCarthy (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 250-90. It should be noted that Habermas, consistent with his own reconstructive efforts, denies in opposition to Apel that the attempt to justify ethical principles via transcendental-pragmatic procedures can be viewed as somehow conclusive: "No harm is done, however, if we deny that the transcendental-pragmatic justification constitutes an ultimate justification. Rather, discourse ethics then takes its place among the reconstructive sciences concerned with the rational bases of knowing, speaking, and acting. If we cease striving for the foundationalism of traditional transcendental philosophy, we acquire new corroborative possibilities for discourse ethics. In competition with other ethical approaches, it can be used to describe empirically existing moral and legal ideas. It can be built into theories of the development of moral and legal consciousness at both the sociocultural and the ontogenetic levels and in this way can be made susceptible to indirect corroboration. ("Discourse Ethics," 98).

22. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 74.

23. *Ibid.*, 51; quotes from Jürgen Habermas, *Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983), 90, and from "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 64.

24. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 55.

25. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 57.

26. See ch. III, sec. C.

27. Habermas' expresses this dimension of his analysis in these terms: "Thus the impartiality of judgment is expressed in a principle that constrains *all* affected to adopt the perspectives of *all others* in the balancing of interest. The principle of universalization is intended to compel the *universal exchange of roles* that G. H. Mead called 'ideal role taking' or 'universal discourse'" ("Discourse Ethics," 65).

28. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 87; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 214.

29. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 88; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 254.

30. Cf. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 89; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 243.

31. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 88. For an example of a pragmatic argument, see ch. III, sec. C.

32. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 88; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 299.

33. In this respect John Rawls proposes an original position--the "veil of ignorance"--wherein those engaged in practical discourse meet as rational and equal partners who counterfactually decide upon a contract in ignorance of each other's true social positions; see *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), 136. G. H. Mead presents still another proposal--"ideal role taking"--which requires that one engaged in moral determinations should place himself in the position of those who would be expected to abide by a proposed plan of action or regulation; see "Fragments on Ethics," *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1934), 379-89. Habermas' own principle of universalization differs from these in that "Argumentation insures that all concerned in principle take part, freely and equally, in a cooperative search for truth, where nothing coerces anyone except the force of the better argument. Practical discourse is an exacting form of argumentative decision making. Like Rawls's original position, it is a warrant of the rightness (or fairness) of any conceivable normative agreement that is reached under these conditions. Discourse can play this role because its idealized, partly counterfactual presuppositions are precisely those that participants in argumentation do in fact make. That is why I think it unnecessary to resort to Rawls's fictitious original position with its 'veil of ignorance'. Practical discourse can also be viewed as a communicative process *simultaneously* exhorting *all* participants to ideal role taking. Thus practical discourse transforms what Mead viewed as *individual, privately*

enacted role taking into a public affair, practiced intersubjectively by all involved" ("Morality and Ethical Life," 198).

34. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 57; quote from Habermas, *Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln*, 54, 103.

35. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 50.

36. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, 104. Though the performative contradiction states that a skeptic in arguing the fallibilist position is guilty of employing a minimal logic incompatible with his fallibilism, this does not mean that the skeptic is forced to engage in the specifically post-conventional form of argumentation that Habermas proposes by means of his discourse rules. The skeptic can fulfill the supposition of accountability by opting for a less reflective, more conventional form of argumentation. In similar fashion one can argue for a variety of forms of argumentation that satisfy the stated supposition as in the case of primitive modes; cf. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 57-58. In this regard McCarthy states: ". . . the members of 'primitive' cultures often disagree about matters relating to oracles, witchcraft, magic and the like and are able to resolve their differences successfully without recourse to discursive argumentation in the sense at issue. In fact Habermas considers the institutionalization of discourse to be a relatively late evolutionary development, one of the most difficult and endangered innovations of human history" (*Critical Theory*, 324; Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 265, n. 45). Habermas' response to this move consists in arguing for a developmental logic with the intent of presenting communicative competencies, i.e., the ability to reason about truth and rightness claims, as a superior stage of reasoning. In this respect Habermas argues that Piaget's "empirical" studies on the development of logical reasoning and Kohlberg's studies on the development of moral judgment both support his contention concerning the superiority of modern structures of consciousness when compared with earlier, more primitive modes of reasoning; cf. Habermas, "Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action," 116-94; "Reconstruction and Interpretation in the Social Sciences," *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, 33-41. Kohlberg's analysis provides the following three levels of moral development, with each level further divided by two grades or stages of moral competence: I. Preconventional level: Stage 1: "*The punishment and obedience orientation*": the morality (goodness or badness) of an action is determined solely in terms of the physical consequences that such an action may have. Stage 2: "*The instrumental relativist orientation*": the morality of an action is determined on basis of whether it satisfies one's needs and at times those of others. II. Conventional level: Stage 3: "*The interpersonal concordance or 'good boy--nice girl' orientation*": the morality of an action is determined by whether or not it pleases or helps others and meets with their approval. Stage 4: "*The 'law and order' orientation*": morality is determined by fulfilling one's duty, expressing deference for authority, and generally upholding the given social order. III. Postconventional level (the level of principles): Stage 5: "*The social-contract legalistic orientation*": morality is acknowledged as consisting in individual rights and responsibilities, that recognizing the relativism of personal values and opinions stresses consensus via procedural rules, allowing for the amendment of law if it favors social utility (corresponds to the "official" morality of the American government and constitution). Stage 6: "*The universal ethical principle orientation*": morality or right is determined by conscience in function of self-chosen universal ethical principles (the equality of human rights and respect for human persons). The validity of a law or a contract is determined in light of principles such that corrective measures are initiated whenever either of these fails to meet the ethical standard (see Kohlberg, "From Is to Ought," *Cognitive Development and Epistemology*, ed. Theodore Mischel [New York: Academic Press, 1971], 164-65).

37. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 103.

38. *Ibid.*, 104-05. The Hegelian critique of Kantian ethical formalism, which argues that norms of action cannot be generated from the pure form of rationality, purportedly does not apply in the same sense to Habermas' ethical scheme. As McCarthy explains, "Since, . . . , the generalizability of interests is what is at issue in practical discourse, rational consensus means agreement about the norms regulating opportunities for need satisfaction; the content belongs to the very situation of discourse. What this content is, concretely, depends on the historical contours of that situation, on the conditions and potentials of social existence at that time and place. The principle that those affected by proposed norms should seek rational agreement among themselves precludes the possibility of legislating once and for all and for everyone" (*Critical Theory*, 328).

39. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 51.

40. See Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1.

41. Habermas, "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," 25-26.

42. See Bertrand Russell, "Freedom and Government," in *Freedom: Its Meaning*, ed. Ruth N. Anshen (New York, 1940).

43. Max Scheler indicates: ". . . not only does everyone discover himself against a background of, and at the same time as a 'member' of, a totality of interconnections of experience which have somehow become concentrated, and which are *called* in their temporal extension *history*, in their simultaneous extension *social unity*; but as a moral subject in this whole, everyone is *also* given as a '*person acting with others*', as a 'man with others' and as 'co-responsible' for everything morally relevant in this totality" (*Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Value* [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973], 520).

44. Habermas states, "In self-reflection, knowledge for the sake of knowledge comes to coincide with the interest in autonomy and responsibility (*Mündigkeit*). For the pursuit of reflection knows itself as a movement of emancipation. Reason is at the same time subject to the interest in reason. We can say that it obeys an *emancipatory cognitive interest*, which aims at the pursuit of reflection" (*Knowledge and Human Interests*, 197-98).

45. Paul Ricoeur's analysis of the dialectic of freedom is compatible with Habermas' general orientation; his dialectical scheme defends the notion of the primacy of an emancipatory interest. This appears when one considers the pervasive presence of freedom in each of the three spheres --labor, language, politics--as it refers to human life and history. At the level of external nature the emancipatory tendency is present in the ongoing endeavor to secure an ever superior technological mastery over nature in the effort to meet the material needs rooted in the human organism. Yet, given that the process of attending to such needs may lead to "ideologically frozen relations of dependence," the emancipatory interest serves to register abuses of technical power (see Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science, and Politics*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro [Boston: Beacon Press, 1970], 83). The emancipatory interest is also present on the level of intersubjectivity, where language while serving as a medium for organizing community relations and the body politic, may nonetheless be a carrier of interest-oriented perspectives/values intended to legitimize particular interests. This form of domination is not so much a technological one but a cultural one. Emancipation from communicative distortion is operative then in the critique of ideology whether technical or cultural. See Paul Ricoeur, "Nature and Freedom," *Political and Social Essays* (Ohio University Press, 1974), 23-45.

46. Habermas, "Morality and Ethical Life," 200.

47. Habermas adds, "Justice conceived deontologically requires solidarity as its reverse side. It is a question not so much of the two moments that supplement each other as of two aspects of

the same thing" ("Justice and Solidarity: On the Discussion Concerning 'Stage Six'," *The Philosophical Forum*, vol. XXI, nos. 1-2 [Fall-Winter 1989-90], 47).

48. Cf. Gabriel Marcel, "In Search of Truth and Justice," *Searchings* (Newman Press, 1967), 3-15.

49. McCarthy, Introduction, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, viii.

50. Habermas, "Morality and Ethical Life," 202.

51. The significance of this assertion will be better understood when considering in the ensuing chapter the nature of the "transcendent ground" toward which Habermas' emancipatory model points.

52. Habermas, "Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action," 121.

53. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 61.

54. Habermas also acknowledges the possibility that "a norm whose validity is in fact redeemable does not necessarily meet with actual recognition or approval" (*ibid.*).

55. *Ibid.*, 104.

56. *Ibid.*, 108.

57. *Ibid.*, 103.

58. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 71.

59. White is particularly lucid on this point: "Focusing on the relationship between the satisfaction of needs and the legitimacy of norms is *not* the first step toward building the following sort of argument: there are certain basic or genuine needs which *all* fully emancipated individuals would have; these needs will necessarily be discovered by anyone who sincerely enters into a practical discourse; and, finally starting from such needs, one can derive determinate principles of justice. On the contrary, Habermas has in mind no such substantive conception of needs or principles of justice. When he discusses needs, his concern almost always is to draw attention to the way in which the core values of a culture deeply structure what constitutes a 'need' within that culture. In fact, Habermas usually does not refer simply to 'needs' but rather to 'need interpretation', a locution which expresses their cultural variability. If I interpret him correctly here, what he is implying is that what is taken to be a 'need' in a given society will be a function of what that culture defines as necessary to the flourishing of human life" (*ibid.*, 69-70).

60. Habermas, "A Reply to My Critics," 257-58; see also White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 75-77. McCarthy puts it this way: ". . . *rationality motivated* agreement as a moral-political alternative to coercion may well involve elements of conciliation, compromise, consent, accomodation, and the like" (*Ideals and Illusions*, 197); also see *Critical Theory*, 331.

61. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 76-77.

62. *Ibid.*, 75.

63. Steven Lukes, "Of Gods and Demons: Habermas and Practical Reason," *Critical Debates*, 134; henceforth "Of Gods and Demons"; quotes from Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, 185 and 184.

64. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 76. McCarthy explains, ". . . if judgments of the relative cogency of reasons that cite needs, interests, feelings, sentiments, and the like vary with interpretive and evaluative standpoints, and if there is no common measure by which to assess the relative weights of reasons articulated in different evaluative languages, then the distinction between argument and rhetoric, between convincing and persuading becomes less sharp than the discourse model allows" (*Ideals and Illusions*, 194).

65. Lukes, "Of Gods and Demons," 142.

66. *Ibid.*, 139.

67. *Ibid.*, 145; quote from Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, 108.
68. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 59-60.
69. For Habermas, "States of affairs, for their part, must be assumed to exist independently of whether we formulate them by means of true propositions or not" (*ibid.*, 61).
70. Habermas, "Discourse Ethics," 61.
71. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 313.
72. McCarthy indicates, "As there is no Archimedean point from which to judge whether what democratic majorities regard as the better argument is really better, dissenters can only continue to debate. If minorities regularly fail to convince majorities or to be convinced by them, we may well conclude that judgments of better and worse in this domain are intrinsically susceptible to considerable variation" (*Ideals and Illusions*, 194-95).
73. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 82-83.
74. Seyla Benhabib, "In the Shadow of Aristotle and Hegel: Communicative Ethics and Current Controversies in Practical Philosophy," *The Philosophical Forum*, vol. XXI, nos. 1-2 (Fall-Winter, 1989-90): 22; henceforth "Current Controversies in Practical Philosophy."
75. Michael Walzer, "A Critique of Philosophical Conversation," *The Philosophical Forum*, vol. XXI, nos. 1-2 (Fall-Winter 1989-90): 195.
76. Benhabib, "Current Controversies in Practical Philosophy," 13. This view is expressed by Zimmerman in these terms: "as far as truth as a practical question is concerned the question which arises is: Where can we find something analogous to the concept of theoretical foundations? Insofar as we are unable to fall back upon an objective structure of practical reason on the Kantian model or to support the possibility of a semantic correspondence to verification . . . , we are left with relativistic conclusions. It is true that these conclusions are not damaging to a political ethics based upon the readiness to pursue agreement and understanding discursively but they force us to distinguish such an ethics sharply from a consensus-ethics of discursive foundations" ("Foundational Problems in the Theories of Marx and Habermas," 160-61). For a discussion which explicitly supports Habermas' discourse ethics as a theory of democratic legitimacy and basic rights, see Jean Cohen, "Discourse Ethics and Civil Society," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 14 (1988): 315-337.
77. Joel Whitebook, "Reason and Happiness: Some Psychoanalytic Themes in Critical Theory," *Habermas and Modernity*, 160; henceforth "Reason and Happiness."
78. Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," 216.
79. As is well-known, whereas Western Marxists concentrate on the work of the young Marx as articulated in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (the "Paris Manuscripts"), the Orthodox Marxists concentrate on the work of the later Marx in collaboration with Engels. Indeed in support of their deterministic and scientific reductionism, the Orthodox Marxists depend on two works not authored by Marx, viz.: Engel's *Anti-Dühring* and Lenin's *Materialism and Empirico-Criticism*. Western Marxists, on the other hand, recognize that not all social facts, including human cognition and volition, are reducible to physical facts. Georg Lukács presents in his *History and Class Consciousness* the classic defense of Marx in function of a concrete, more existential--versus purely idealistic--conception of the Hegelian dialectic. For a recent work on Habermas' relationship to this tradition, see Tom Rockmore, *Habermas on Historical Materialism* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1989).
80. Habermas, "Morality and Ethical Life," 211; quote from Max Horkheimer, "Materialism and Morality," *Telos* 69 (1986): 85-118.
81. Whitebook, "Reason and Happiness," 153.

82. "From Hegel's critique of Kant, Gadamer borrowed the insight that all formalism presupposes a context from which it abstracts and that there is no formal ethics that does not have some material presuppositions concerning the self and social institutions" (Benhabib, "Current Controversies in Practical Philosophy," 3). See also Michael Kelley, "Gadamer/Habermas Debate Revisited: The Question of Philosophical Ethics," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 14 (1988): 369-89.

Notes to Chapter V

1. George F. McLean, "Imagination in Aristotle and Kant," in *Moral Imagination and Character Development*, ed., G. F. McLean, (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and University Press of America, in press).

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. Habermas' model of communication is eminently compatible with a teleological orientation: "... communicative action does not lend itself (as instrumentality does) to a means/end understanding; on the other hand, what is the proper understanding for communicative action if it is not one of purposiveness or teleology? Habermas turns to validity (whose meaning depends upon a context of purposiveness) in order to help and protect his theory of communicative action. Outside of this context, the theory has no meaning" (Broniak, "What is Emancipation?," 205). Though Habermas is currently working on the role of aesthetics within his overall scheme of rationality, he has indicated in an important passage that "The one to one relationship which exists between the prescriptive validity of a norm and the normative validity claim raised in regulative speech acts is not a proper model for the relation between the potential for truth of works of art and the transformed relations between the self and the world stimulated by aesthetic experience" ("Questions and Counterquestions," 203). This interest in aesthetics has led Georgia Warnke to comment that it is not clear whether: "aesthetic experience and the criticism that encourages it can offer insight into standards of value. He [Habermas] now argues straightforwardly that art can affect not only values but 'our cognitive interpretations', our normative expectations' and 'the manner in which all these moments refer to one another'" ("David Ingram's 'Habermas and the Dialectic of Reason'," *Praxis International* 8, [April 1, 1988]: 94; quotes from Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," trans. Seyla Benhabib, *New German Critique* 22 [1981]). For a discussion on Habermas, art and aesthetic reflection, see David Ingram, *Habermas and the Dialectic of Reason* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

7. Kenneth L. Schmitz, "From Anarchy to Principles: Deconstruction and the Resources of Christian Philosophy," *Communio: The International Catholic Review*, 16 (Spring 1989): 83; henceforth "The Resources of Christian Philosophy."

8. See following note.

9. Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter," *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, 2.

10. Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 84.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Schmitz puts it in these terms: "A Christian philosophy, then, is neither of two extremes: on the one hand, it is not a philosophy that is done by someone who happens to be a Christian, but

which could as easily have been done by someone who is not; on the other hand, it is not a philosophy that receives the vindication of its premises directly from religious faith, without its own work in accordance with the canons of rationality. . ." (*ibid.*, 83).

13. *Ibid.*

14. Kenneth L. Schmitz, "Postmodern or Modern-Plus?," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 17 (Summer 1990): 157; henceforth "Postmodern or Modern-Plus?."

15. See n. 7 above.

16. Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 70.

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, 70.

19. Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy*, trans. Christine-María Gros & the author (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1987); henceforth *Heidegger on Being and Acting*. This work is a translation from *Le principe d'anarchie: Heidegger et la question de l'agir* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1987).

20. Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 72-73.

21. *Ibid.*, 73-74.

22. *Ibid.*, 85.

23. Aristotle has a complex understanding of the term principle, i.e., *arché*: "'Beginning' means (1) that part of a thing from which one would start first, e.g. a line or a road has a beginning in either of the contrary directions. (2) That from which each thing would best be originated, e.g. even in learning we must sometimes begin not from the first point and the beginning of the subject, but from the point from which we should learn most easily. (3) That from which, as an immanent part, a thing first comes to be, e.g. as the keel of a ship and the foundation of a house, while in animals some suppose the heart, others the brain, others some other part, to be of this nature. (4) That from which, *not* as an immanent part, a thing first comes to be, and from which the movement or the change naturally first begins, as a child comes from its father and mother, and a fight from abusive language. (5) That at whose will that which is moved is moved and that which changes changes, e.g. the magistracies in cities, and oligarchies and monarchies and tyrannies, are called *archai* and so are the arts, and of these especially the architectonic arts. (6) That from which a thing can first be known--this also is called the beginning of the thing, e.g. the hypotheses are the beginnings of demonstrations" (*Metaphysics* V: 1012b34-1013a17).

24. See Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 75-77; Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 97.

25. Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 333-34; as quoted in Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 76.

26. *Ibid.*, 74; also see Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, 1-25.

27. Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 74; cf. with the notion of "objectivism" as developed in ch. I, sec. A.

28. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. J. Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972).

29. Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 81.

30. For other articles by Schmitz on the relationship between the question of principles and its relation to discourse, see "Analysis by Principles and Analysis by Elements," in *Graceful Reason: Essays in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy Presented to Joseph Owens, CSSR*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983), 315-330; and "Gibt es für

den Menschen Wichtigeres, als zu überleben? Das Erbe Griechenlands: Rationalität in *Das Europäische Erbe und seine Christliche Zukunft*, ed. N. Lobkowicz (Köln: Hanns Martin Schleyer-Stiftung, 1985), 95-104 (English text: 348-56); and "Metaphysics: Radical, Comprehensive, Determinate Discourse," in *Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 39, no. 4 (June 1986): 675-94.

31. Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 86.

32. *Ibid.*, 86; also see Schmitz's *The Gift of Creation* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press [The 42nd. Aquinas Lecture], 1982).

33. John 3:16-17; all scriptural quotations from *The Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985).

34. Philippians 2:6-8.

35. Galatians 4:5-7.

36. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 44, esp. art. 1 & 2.

37. Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 87. In another passage Schmitz comments that insofar as the Godhead as the "diversity of infinite persons in the most perfect unity" is concerned, "we find intimations of that unity and diversity in human fellowship" ("Postmodern or Modern-Plus?," 164). It is crucial to underscore however that Schmitz recognizes that the "disclosure into the inherent 'sociality' of the divine life has not yet been cultivated in philosophy to the degree that it needs to be done" ("The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 87). This theme will be developed further in sec. C of this chapter.

38. John 17:21-23. It may be argued that the very crucifixion of Christ was brought about by his pronouncement to the Jewish people that he with his Father is God: "The works I do in my Father's name are my witness . . . The Father and I are one.'The Jews fetched stones to stone him, so Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many good works from my Father; for which of these are you stoning me?' The Jews answered him, 'We are stoning you, not for doing a good work, but for blasphemy; though you are only a man, you claim to be God.'Jesus answered: 'Is it not written in your Law: *I said, you are gods?*'So it uses the word 'gods' of those people to whom the word of God was addressed--and scripture cannot be set aside. Yet to someone whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world you say, 'You are blaspheming' because I said, 'I am Son of God'" (John 10:25-36).

39. Schmitz, "The Resources of Christian Philosophy," 87.

40. John 14:12-13.

41. Since Aquinas did not systematically develop an existential approach to the metaphysical doctrine of transcendentals, this study will draw on a study conducted by John Edward Twomey titled *The General Notion of the Transcendentals in the Metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1958; henceforth *Transcendentals in Aquinas*). This work explicitly attempts "a recovery of the thought of Thomas Aquinas in terms of a unification of the implications in the scattered references embodying the existential approach to these transcendentals" (*ibid.*, ix). The textual analysis of Aquinas's work provides "an approach that underscores the role of these transcendentals as predicates of the metaphysical judgment of existence by and in which is expressed (positively) the intellectual intuition (the notion) of being" (*ibid.*). Such an approach yields a *criterion of transcendentality* which is crucial for determining whether "it may be shown that notions other than the one, the true and the good are genuinely transcendental" (*ibid.*, x). This criterion will be applied to Habermas' communicative model in an effort to see the extent to which his own categories may have metaphysical import as possible transcendental properties of *esse*. It should be noted that translations of Aquinas's texts (*Opera*

Omnia, 16 vols. [Rome: iussu Leonis XIII edita, 1882-1948]; and *Opera Omnia*, 25 vols. [Parma: Fiacadori, 1852-1873]) will follow Twomey's.

42. The framework of Aquinas's *corpus scientificum* is found in Armand Maurer, *St. Thomas Aquinas: The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, Questions V and VI of his Commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius, trans. with Introduction and Notes (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1953).

43. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 58.

44. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 55.

45. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 58-59.

46. *Ibid.*, 60-61.

47. For Aquinas *esse* is "separate from matter and motion because [it does not] depend upon matter and motion for the to be" (*In de Trinitate*, V, 4 c).

48. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 60-61.

49. The subject of metaphysics for Aquinas, being as *esse* can be clarified by briefly considering its formulation in contradistinction to the conceptions advanced by his philosophical predecessors. Accordingly, on the one hand, Parmenides proposed that the truly real was a notion of being as *identity*, a view that while affirming the reality of being rooted in the intellectual-report and elucidated in terms of predicates such as one, immobile and unchanging, categorically argued, after the manner of the *reductio ad absurdum*, against a conception of non-being rooted in the sense-report and expressed in terms of potentiality, change and multiplicity. On the other hand, Heraclitus, in opposition to Parmenides, claimed that the truly real was indeed the dynamic reality of becoming as continuous flux, mobility, change, and multiplicity rather than a static notion of reality as unity and immobility. Although Plato followed Parmenides's idealist orientation and argued that the nature of the truly real was indeed its unchanging character, he denied that reality was numerically one. Plato proposed instead that the changing multiplicity of forms found in the sense-report represented an imperfect participation of such natures in the perfection of their fully realized archetypes that, existing in a separate, transcendent realm of intelligibility and known via the intellectual-report, manifest being as ideal *form*. For Plato the forms and qualities abstracted from sensible beings were reified and situated in a super-sensory realm apprehended by reason. His view in favor of multiplicity was put forth in terms of a doctrine of participation that involved a principle of "otherness" identified with relative non-being or that which limits one being so that it cannot be anything other than itself and, as such, distinct from every other being. Aristotle, however, rejected Plato's doctrine of participation which viewed the real as existing in a separate realm and instead argued that the concrete, sensible being as *substance* is composed of the co-principles of matter and form, wherein the former expresses a passive potency which is ordered toward its realization in function of the latter. For Aristotle the ordering of matter toward form explains motion as the process in which a sensible being proceeds from a state of potency to one of actuality. Aquinas, in his turn, takes issue with Plato's and Aristotle's views on the basis that they both operate within an essentialistic understanding of being while taking for granted the question of the *existence* versus non-existence of such beings. This is to say that whereas Plato purports to resolve the question of multiplicity by introducing a principle of limitation that would serve to explain the question of how there may be many individuals in the same class, Aristotle endeavors to settle the problem of motion by introducing a principle of potency that would serve to explain the question of the intelligibility of motion/alteration at the level of substantial and accidental change. For Aquinas the more fundamental question, however, is why should there be beings at all? His answer consists in elevating the principle of potency from its essentialistic

expressions in Plato and Aristotle to its metaphysical signification as that which--as potential existence--limits according to its form/nature/essence its reception of the act of to be.

50. For Aquinas "God is not the subject of metaphysics but rather the cause of its subject. . . . He is the *term* of the science of metaphysics" (*ibid.*, 65). Cf. Maurer, "Division and Methods of the Sciences," xx.

51. Aquinas, *In de Trinitate*, VI, 1 c; also see Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 79, 8.

52. Cf. Aquinas, *In XI Metaphysicorum*, lectio 3, n. 2197.

53. Aquinas, *Q. D. De Anima*, 1, 1, ad 17m. Cf. Aquinas, *Q. D. De Veritate*, 2, 11 c.

54. Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputate de Potentia*, 7,2 ad 9m. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 3, 4c.

55. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 70.

56. *Ibid.*, 68-71.

57. *Ibid.*, 65.

58. See G. Klubertanz, *Saint Thomas Aquinas on Analogy* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1960); and Gerald Phelan, *St. Thomas and Analogy* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1941).

59. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 200-01. Said another way: "If the notion of being and its immediate implications is predicated analogously by an analogy of proper proportionality (which is considered as a comparison of intrinsic really distinct relations from the standpoint of similarity) then how can this notion (and its immediate implications) be predicated of a being in whom there is no real relation between essence and the act of to be, but whose essence is the act of to be?" (*ibid.*, 199).

60. Cf. *ibid.*, 199-200.

61. *Ibid.*, 201.

62. See n. 41 above.

63. *Ibid.*, 71.

64. *Ibid.*; quote from Jacques Maritain, *A Preface to Metaphysics* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1948), 66.

65. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 71-73.

66. *Ibid.*, 202-03. In another passage Twomey defines the criterion of transcendentality in these terms: "that notion which is genuinely analogical (arrived at through the negative judgment of separation) and fundamentally predicable of both the infinite and finite being is a transcendental notion, or a transcendental" (*ibid.*, 203).

67. *Ibid.*, 205. Also see Aquinas, *In De Trinitate*, V, 1 c and V, 4 c.

68. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 204.

69. These absolute transcendentals will be considered in greater detail in third section of this chapter.

70. Application of this method to a number of transcendental predicates will be provided later in this section.

71. *Ibid.*, 226.

72. *Ibid.*, 231-32. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 13, 5 c.

73. The distinction between *res significata* and *modus significando* is articulated by Aquinas in these terms: "Because it is to find every perfection of a creature in God but in another manner, whatever names designate a perfection *absolutely, without defect*, are predicated of God and of other things: such as goodness, wisdom, to be, and others of this kind. But whatever name of this kind expresses perfections in terms of the *mode* proper to creatures, cannot be said of God except

by way of a similitude and a metaphor. . . . But those [names] which express perfections of this kind in terms of the mode of supereminence by which they are fitted to God, are said of God alone: such as 'the highest good', 'the first being', and others of this kind. However, I say that some of these names mentioned *imply no defect with regard to that-to-be-signified* in terms of which the name was given: but with regard to the *mode of signifying*, every name is defective. . . . And thus in every name said by us, as far as the *mode of signifying* is concerned, there is found an imperfection which is not apropos of God, although the *thing signified* is apropos of "goodness" and "the good"; for goodness signifies: as non-subsistent, however, the good: as concrete. And with regard to this no name is conveniently fitted to God, but only in terms of that to-which-to-be-signified the name is used. Therefore names of this kind can be both affirmed and denied of God, as Dionysius teaches: affirmed indeed because of the meaning of the name; but denied, because of the *mode of signifying*" (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 30).

74. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 230-31. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 13, 3 c.

75. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 233.

76. Aquinas, *Q. D. De Potentia*, 7, 3, ad 4m.

77. Aquinas, *In I Sententia.*, d. 8, q. 4, a.2, ad 1m.

78. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 233-35.

79. Aquinas, *Q. D. De Potentia*, 7, 5 ad 8m.

80. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 235-37.

81. Aquinas, *In I Sententia*, d 45, q. 1, a. 1 c.

82. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 238-40.

83. Aquinas, *In II Sententia*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1m.

84. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1, 21, 1.

85. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 246-47. Twomey successfully applies this criterion of transcendental to other notions, including knowledge (*scientia*) 235-37; wisdom (*sapientia*) 238; power (*potentia*) 242-44; cause (*causa*) 244-45; act (*actio*) 245-46; life (*vita*) 247-48; and duration (*duratio*) 249-50. He mentions other transcendental notions such as exemplarity, person, and supposit.

86. *Ibid.*, 232.

87. Habermas, Appendix, 309.

88. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 308.

89. *Ibid.*, 137.

90. Broniak, "What is Emancipation for Habermas?," 202.

91. Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory*, 319.

92. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 89.

93. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 310.

94. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 396, n. 5.

95. Habermas, "What is Universal Pragmatics?," 26.

96. *Ibid.*, 63-64.

97. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 93; quotes from Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," 258.

98. McCarthy, *Critical Theory*, 307. It should be pointed out that although Habermas in his later works prefers the formulation "unavoidable presuppositions of argumentation" in lieu of the phrase "ideal speech situation," this shift in terminology appears directed to appease his critics, who typically reject the notion of an "ideal speech situation" as being unrealistic. It does not appear that Habermas' change of terminology affects the role that such a notion plays in either his logic

of theoretical or practical discourse; this is to say, that it is only when dialogical participants position themselves so as to approach that which the "unavoidable presuppositions of argumentation" signify that the predicates true and right may be said of the consensus attained via discourse. Cf. Ferrara, "Consensus Theory of Truth," 45.

99. McCarthy explains what is involved here in a more plausible manner: "The charges for example, that the outcome of a critical discussion was in some way determined by force or threats of force from the outside, or by a differential distribution of privilege or authority within, or by consciously or unconsciously strategic motivations on the part of any of the participants, or by the inability of any of them to know or to speak their mind or to 'listen to reason', would normally be regarded as a challenge to that outcome. If any such charge could be substantiated, the consensus would no longer count as rationally motivated; it would not have been brought about solely by the force of argumentation but would bear the influence of extra-argumentative constraints" (*Critical Theory*, 309).

100. Aquinas, *In de Trinitate*, VI, 1c.

101. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 89.

102. Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 11, 1 c.

103. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 42.

104. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 95.

105. Twomey states, "To say that being is one is not to utter some tautologous nonsense since there is a minor distinction of reason" (*ibid.*, 97).

106. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 11, 3, ad 2m.

107. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 42.

108. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 11, 1 c.

109. See the discussion on the property of unity in function of the traditional monological framework when compared with Habermas' dialogical framework in the third segment of this section; especially see n. 140 below.

110. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 107-08; cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 6, 3, ad 1m.

111. Aquinas, *Q. D. De Veritate*, 1, 10, ad 5m.

112. Consider the formulation: "Every being, to the extent that it exists, is metaphysically true, as necessarily conformed to the divine intellect, because it depends absolutely upon God for its being" (Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 132).

113. *Ibid.*, 116-17.

114. Aquinas, *Q. D. De Veritate*, 1, 4 c.

115. *Ibid.*, 1, 8, c.

116. *Ibid.*, 1, 10, ad 5m. "Logical falsity 'follows' not being but 'follows' or is founded upon the logical truth" (Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 128).

117. Aquinas, *In I Sententia*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 c.

118. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 130; cf. Aquinas, *Q. D. De Veritate*, 1, 1, ad 3m.

119. Here *esse* is comprehended as a desirable good; cf. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 7.

120. Aquinas, *Q. D. De Veritate*, 21, 2 c.

121. *Ibid.*, 21, 1, ad 1m.

122. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 146-47; cf. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 3.

123. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 5, 1 c.

124. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 150-51; quote from Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 6, 1, ad 2m.
125. Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 37.
126. Twomey, *Transcendentals in Aquinas*, 158.
127. *Ibid.*
128. George F. McLean, "Harmony, Transcendence and Freedom," unpublished manuscript.
129. White, *Recent Work of Jürgen Habermas*, 137.
130. McLean, "Harmony, Transcendence and Freedom."
131. *Ibid.*
132. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 94, a. 2.
133. See *ibid.*, I-II, q. 95, a. 1.
134. Anthony Battaglia, *Toward a Reformulation of Natural Law* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 2.
135. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 93, a. 1.
136. McLean, "Harmony, Transcendence and Freedom."
137. *Ibid.*
138. *Ibid.*
139. Schmitz, "Resources of Christian Philosophy," 87.
140. Schmitz, "Postmodern or Modern-Plus?," 164. Fernando Rielo is a contemporary philosopher who, rejecting the efficacy of the notion of identity as a metaphysical principle, proposes a new model in which Christian revelation, including the *Trinity* and the notion of *person*, finds metaphysical articulation in function of his "genetic conception of the principle of relation." See Fernando Rielo, "Hacia una nueva concepción metafísica del ser," in *¿Existe una filosofía española?* (Seville: Fundación Fernando Rielo, 1988); see also "Concepción Genética de lo que no es el sujeto absolutofundamento metafísico de la ética," in *Raíces y valores históricos del pensamiento español* (Seville: Fundación Fernando Rielo, 1989); and "Concepción genética del principio de relación," III Congreso Mundial de Filosofía Cristiana: Ateísmo y Transcendencia Divina (Quito, July 9-14, 1989) in print. Secondary sources include: José M. López Sevillano, "Metafísica Pura en Fernando Rielo ["Pure Metaphysics in Fernando Rielo," trans., R. P. Badillo]; Augustin Riska, "Identity and Relation: Some Logical Observations of Fernando Rielo's Genetic Conception of Being"; and Joseph J. Romano, "Beyond Identity: Rielo's New Approach to Being," in *Fernando Rielo: poeta y filósofo/Poet and Philosopher*, Symposium on Fernando Rielo, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., October 29, 1989 (Seville: Fundación Fernando Rielo, 1991); also see José M. López Sevillano, "La nueva metafísica de Fernando Rielo," *Ciclo de Pensamiento Español* (Madrid, Fundación Fernando Rielo, May 8, 1990), in print.

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- *What follows is a list of Habermas' most significant works; all of which--with the exception of one article in German--have been translated into English. The order of the texts follows the original

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