Then they said, ACome, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.≅ And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the sons of men had built.

And the LORD said, ABehold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another=s speech.≅

So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

Therefore its name was called Ba=bel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Genesis,
The Bible

Those who first broke the yoke of what called itself the Universal Church, were in general as little willing to permit difference of religious opinion as that church itself. But when the head of the conflict was over, without giving complete victory to any party, and each church or sect was reduced to limit its hopes to retaining possession of the ground it already occupied; minorities, seeing that they had no chance of becoming majorities, were under the necessity of pleading to those whom they could not convert, for permission to differ. It is accordingly on this battle field, almost solely, that the rights of the individual against society have been asserted on broad grounds of principle, and the claim of society to exercise authority over dissidents, openly controverted.

John Stuart Mill,
On Liberty

Modernity, which for all practical purposes is synonymous with the

Enlightenment project, developed a refined suspicion towards tradition. Traditional ways

of thinking, which for modernists meant ways of thinking informed by prejudice, cultural

bias, dogmatism and colloquialism, were disparaged by modernists like Descartes and

Kant in favor of a notion of rationality which, if freed from the limits of dogma, could put

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one in touch with the true nature of the world and morality. As Gadamer, a great commentator on the Enlightenment's prejudice against prejudice, remarked: Ain general, the Enlightenment tends to accept no authority and to decide everything before the judgement seat of reason≅ (Gadamer, 1960: 272). Despite their ambivalent stands towards religion, enlightenment thinkers ended up endorsing a notion of humanity where humans are fundamentally free thinking, rational and informed thinkers who can and will unearth the certainty underneath the contingency of appearance.   The idea was that if only these thinkers could be unshackled from the harness of tradition, of dogmatic religion, of public opinion, that constrained their thinking, they would lead us to a moral and scientific utopia.

In regards to epistemological inquiries, Descartes keyed modernity to this note by emphasizing the rational search for certainty. Descartes wanted to put science, and all knowledge in fact, on the same footing that mathematics appeared to be on. He suggested that we could, in one great purging, jettison the traditional ideas we had about the world and construct, through the use of a priori rational thought, a conception of the true world. This new conception would be superior in the sense that it would be stripped of all ties to prejudice, to uncritical acceptance. Just as geometry seemed to be rationally certain, our knowledge could become certain if only we would get rid of tradition and begin to rationally think through our beliefs and their relation to truth. Through the logical self-consciousness dictated by the Cogito, Descartes thought he had proven how to gain a transparent vision of the metaphysical world.

In regards to ethical matters, Kant filled much the same role Descartes did in epistemology. Like Descartes, Kant tried to ground philosophy and specifically ethics on

a rational, certain foundation. Retreating from the empiricist threat presented by Newton, he made the human self, inherently rational and ethical, the foundation of reality. He rewrote Plato=s appearance versus reality dichotomy into a dichotomy between two different types of world: the phenomenal world and the noumenal world. The authentic self, inherently rational and ethical, was part of this noumenal world. Kant suggests that the certainty we are looking for is deeply rooted in the inherent rationality of our subjectivity.

The history of modernity, however, has not always been a search for rational certainty. There is another strand of modernity, a strand that emerges later in modernity, which was developed as a way of dealing with uncertainty, with fallibility. This tradition, drawing on thinkers like John Stuart Mill, the other Utilitarians, Adam Smith, the American founding fathers, and later the pragmatists, suggests that we should, in light of the fallibility of human opinion, respect differences in views on morality and the world. From this perspective, the goal is to develop a notion of politics and government that would provide a forum for different views about ethics and reality to be debated and discussed.

While that tradition has often been better known for its political insights, behind these political insights are assumptions about truth, fallibility and dialogue that profoundly redirect the Enlightenment tradition. Whereas people like Descartes and Kant were interested in developing philosophical theories based on a prior rational thought which assumed that the metaphysical world underlay our shifting beliefs about the world,

people like Mill[1] were interested in developing a framework for practically discussing historical dynamic and culturally different views on morality and the external world. Emerging from an American and British context, these thinkers were interested in laying a thin notion of truth, a practical understanding of rationality, and a liberal democratic government which would serve as a forum for debating more substantial, rival views about these topics. Each of these thinkers, in their own way, had faith that truth, thought of as a fallible, temporary approximation, would emerge from the process of rational discussion. Rather than truth being a metaphysical object accessible by clear-headed rational introspection, truth emerged from a discussion between differences. While Descartes and Kant wanted to get to what was the same within all of us, the Millian tradition offered us a way of making a good out of the differences that divide us.

Most of these Millian thinkers, however, still tangled these two traditions together by thinking that Truth - the way things really are - would emerge from this discussion. With the possible exceptions of James and Dewey, these thinkers committed some version of the Peircian mistake of thinking that this discussion somehow, in Peirce=s case at the hypothetical end of the discussion, would lead us to a knowledge of metaphysical Truth, of the necessary, ahistorical, universal being that underlies our experiences. These thinkers were still by and large nurturing the Socratic hope that Truth would reemerge from discussion, that truth existed independent of opinion but that a conflict of opinion was the best way to access Truth.

Rorty=s importance is that he makes clear that these two traditions are in tension.

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[1] I choose to emphasize Mill here, even though he is subsequent to thinkers like Adam Smith, because Mill, in On Liberty, seems to offer the most elegant expression of this tradition.

For Rorty, it's a difficult and unnecessary balancing act to hold onto a metaphysical understanding of truth, rationality and ethics, while still endorsing a liberal democratic process of deciding those issues. If you're endorsing a discussion of these issues that draws on different ideas, different assumptions, different vocabularies, you shouldn't claim metaphysical notions set necessary limits on the range of difference in these vocabularies. From Rorty's perspective, the dynamic discussion which characterizes a debate about these topics never ends, it only stops temporally at provisional conclusions only to later move on to renewed discussion. Whereas metaphysicians hoped for a rational discussion that would lead to truth, a Aconversation about metaphysics,≅ Rorty endorses an Aopen conversation.≅ He endorses the discussion itself as a process from which interesting ideas emerge. Drawing the cumulative rhetorical force from the notion of evolution, he suggests that we should let this discussion select our ideas and see which ideas seem to work, at a specific time for a specific place.

There is no fundamental, metaphysical justification for this conversation, in Rorty=s view; it is just the best idea we have about how to conduct moral and epistemic inquiry. We can make some good rhetorical moves when advocating this vision, we can appeal to evolution, to freedom, to plurality, but ultimately these moves don=t prove the value of this conversation, the rely on an acceptance of its virtues. To try to justify this conversation metaphysically would be to postulate some fixed limit to what ideas we should entertain. We should, in contrast, accept the virtues of tolerance, diversity of opinion and open discussion as cultural virtues without metaphysical sanction. We should only limit these virtues for practical reasons, for example when tolerance leads us to tolerate people who are dangerously intolerant. Our goals should be to foster these

virtues as practically and comprehensively as we can, realizing that in certain situations we=ll have to make exceptions. For Rorty, the virtues that characterize this conversation stand on their own, but are no worse off because of that.

Rorty=s turn back to society gives new wind to the idea that what distinguishes the liberal democratic community, both in regards to how we think of our morality and our academic pursuits, is a set of historically and culturally located virtues.   Some of these virtues - like tolerance, the active encouragement of diversity of opinion, and clear discussion - overlap the moral, political and epistemic spheres of society; they are definitive of the general liberal democratic mentality. Other virtues are more specifically located in particular moral or academic vocabularies. For example, the sensitivity to other cultures that is necessary to be a good anthropologist, or the clearheaded rigor that is needed to be a good physicist, or the wit and humor that is needed to tell a good story are all virtues needed by participants in different vocabularies. Rorty clearly admits and that these moral and epistemic advantages of a liberal democratic community are products of socialization, products of our moral and epistemic teachings. These virtues come from the same place, are created in the same way, as the Nazis= hatred of the Jews and the Biblical scientist=s disregard for the scientific academy.   Culture is the well from which both liberalism and its competitors spring.

Rorty has brought the Enlightenment=s intellectual journey back to its beginning. He lets us see Descartes and Kant as the founding figures of a new tradition of thought. This tradition has decentered authority from the overbearing entrenched traditions of Christianity and Aristocracy to the individual. Whereas archetypal Enlightenment thinkers thought this individual, inherently rational, would be able to connect to a

universal, ahistorical metaphysical reality, Rorty suggests that these individuals, and the various communities in which they act, will develop their own traditions of ethics, epistemology and rationality. They will develop vocabularies that work for them. The Enlightenment, rather than a metaphysical foundation that permits these different traditions is, in Rorty=s view, a larger tradition which can accommodate and encourage these smaller traditions. Without metaphysics as a unifying force, Rorty endorses the fundamental decentering of this discussion thereby dropping the metaphysical residuals that still infect those in the Millian tradition. He rewrites this Millian tradition into a rival to the metaphysical tradition. His vocabulary provides us with a consistent and coherent way of thinking this tradition of liberal discussion without metaphysical safety nets or metaphysical targets.

Rorty=s turn, his renunciation of the metaphysical projects characteristic of Enlightenment thinking, challenges us to rethink our self-conceptions as recipients of this Enlightenment culture. We=ve already rethought our self-conceptions in many other ways. We=ve stopped delimiting, officially at least, the realm of liberal participants by race, religion, sex, as well as countless other, often uncounted, limitations. Rorty=s challenge is to accept our Enlightenment culture as a *tradition*. He wants us to stop trying to *ground* that culture and start trying to *grow* it. He calls up on us to acknowledge that the contingencies that produced our Enlightenment culture are the same sorts of contingencies that produced the redwoods in California. Our culture, like the redwoods, didn=t develop out of necessity but from fortunate circumstances. And also like the redwoods, the contingency of this development in no way decreases the splendor of the outcome.

We end up where we began: with tradition. While we end in the same place, we=ve learned a lot of new things about how to see ourselves and the world in the journey. While we didn=t end up finding the rational certainty in epistemology or morality that Descartes and Kant hoped for, we did create a new tradition of thought in the searching. This new tradition, unlike the Christian tradition that preceded it, focuses on self-assertion, democratic dialogues, tolerance, freedom of choice, as well as critical discussion. Rorty weeds out the Enlightenment=s long-standing prejudice against prejudice, and acknowledges that our virtues are products of our society not of a trans-cultural rationality. Rorty re-embeds notions of rationality in an explicitly cultural context. His vocabulary is a framework for tolerant, open-minded, and sincere discussions realizable in liberal democratic governments. Freeing this discussion from metaphysical pretensions, he removes the metaphysical obstacle from the liberal democratic road to inquiry.

This turn back to tradition, however, is a perilous one. The problem with Rorty is that he fails to appreciate all the motivating fears behind the drive towards metaphysics. His refusal to countenance the charge of relativism illustrates his insensitivity to the metaphysician.   While Rorty acknowledges and openly addresses the desire for metaphysical comfort made famous by Nietzsche, he fails to see that metaphysics is not just about Abeing,≅ is not just about arresting the dynamism of the world.   The fascination with metaphysics also stems from the fear that permitting the proliferation of groups of inquirers will confuse important issues, will stifle progress, will balkanize society.   Relativism is scary not only because a relativist gives up the hope for metaphysical comfort, but also because relativists are by nature a diverging group.   If

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every vocabulary is relatively self-sufficient, rival vocabularies are all internally legitimate. Relativism suggests that all the roads of thought may not lead to the same place.

Fortunately, the Millian tradition Rorty is drawing upon provides him ample resources for making some good arguments about why the charge of relativism, especially within a liberal democratic society, is a red herring. It shows us how to think of this diversity as a boon. From the interaction between these different viewpoints comes new ways of dealing with old problems. This interaction clarifies issues, it strengthens our ideas about solutions. Premised on the idea that through the fire of argument good ideas are tempered, this Millian viewpoint claims that the difference in opinion characteristic of a liberal society is a good not a bad. Rorty=s view already has the components to make this sort of response to the metaphysician, though Rorty doesn't connect these ideas to the charge of relativism. It seems, then, that as long as we are comfortable with being liberal democrats, we shouldn't be concerned about this sense of relativism.

Unfortunately, however, there is another fear related to relativism which Rorty=s position is less able to withstand. In addition to the fear of a factioned community, metaphysicians fear the sorts of irrationalism that can characterize such a divergence of public opinion. The strong metaphysician wonders how this conversational milieu can be a good if each of the participants is speaking a different tongue. How can we have productive dialogues if participants are coming from incommensurable viewpoints that cannot be understood by others? In the proverbial case of the Tower of Ba=bel, the many languages and many cultures are a cause of confusion. Metaphysicians are motivated,

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then, by another function-position that we have yet to identify. To complete our outline

of the function-positions that motivate the metaphysician, we can summarize this position

as:

> **(4) The commensurability function**: answering the metaphysician question will
> enable us to understand how we can have rational, constructive discussions that
> can lead to consensus.

Metaphysicians fear that giving up on metaphysics means giving up on the hope that we

can ensure rational discussion that leads to consensus. They want to answer the

metaphysicist question because they think that answering that question will how us why,

if we=re all careful enough, if we=re all rational enough, we=ll come to the same

conclusions. Coming to the same conclusion allows us to act concertedly, decisively and

productively.

Rorty=s position, in its endorsement of the proliferation of various vocabularies,

plays right into this fear. If you give up on the Socratic hope that discussion will lead to a

rediscovery of the fundamental Truth, then you suggest that differences cannot be

dialectically transcended. By highlighting the argumentative incommensurability

possible between different vocabularies, Rorty suggests a picture of inquiry that at critical

junctures - junctures involving disagreements between rival vocabularies - there is simply

no possibility of decisive argument. There is no hope, in Rorty=s view, of appealing to

common criteria as a way of making decisions. Though we can have rational arguments

within vocabularies, according to Rorty, we cannot have such arguments between

adherents of different vocabularies. Different groups seem destined to be mired in

irresolvable disagreements.

Like some other philosophers dealing with the perplexing issues involved in

paradigm shits, Rorty=s position seems to lead to an irrationalism at the level of vocabularies.[2] As Bernstein has noted, Rorty tends to represent our options in terms of a set of restricted choices.[3] *Either* we appeal to a neutral, cross-vocabulary criteria for deciding between vocabularies *or* we should let these vocabularies randomly seed or die in our intellectual landscape. Since neutral criteria seem suspect, the second option Rorty provides - letting vocabularies be selected in the course of cultural evolution - seems the only choice. At the level of vocabularies, Rorty shifts from the extreme of completely commensurable and rational decision-making to irrational, non-deliberative decision making.

Rorty=s appeal to evolution as a way of bypassing the issue of rationality may seem hopeful at first but ultimately proves inadequate. Since we can=t explain these shifts in terms of rationality, Rorty looks to a story of causal factors as a way of explaining these shifts. Claiming that cultural change at this vocabulary level is more like a popularity contest than a rational discussion, Rorty underemphasizes the role of reasoned discussion in this process. For him, vocabulary shifts mark generation gaps. For the same reasons kids came to like rock and roll, intellectuals came to like Newtonian science. While it appears that at times Rorty acknowledges a facet of deliberative decision making in this process, his position seems to suggest the impossibly of constructive dialogue. The rhetoric of evolution, tool using and other attractive tropes seems to be an attempt to bypass questions of how these decisions are made on the level

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[2] See Bryan Norton=s discussion of Thomas Kuhn and others in the sixth chapter of <u>Linguistic Frameworks and Ontology</u>.

[3] See <u>Beyond Objectivism and Relativism</u> pg. 67-8.

of individual intellectuals. Rorty=s appeal to a sweeping narrative obscures the thorniness of this issue.   His account suggests, vividly for the metaphysician, a tendency to slide into a pit of irrationalism, into cultural dialogues characterized by mere rhetorical manipulation.   He leaves the metaphysician gasping while he holds her out over a sea of radically different, ultimately incommensurable, vocabularies. The Tower of Ba=bel becomes all the more real in the metaphysician's mind.

The other central problem with Rorty=s position is that he doesn't even clearly indicate what non-rational factors spur vocabulary shifts, which leaves us unable to explain how vocabulary shifts occur at all.   While the evolutionary story Rorty wants to sell is attractive, it's too vague. It doesn't give us an explanation for why one vocabulary would come to replace another. Cultural evolution is not like biological evolution because we choose to adopt our vocabularies while species don=t chose whether they survive.   This is not just a problem for Rorty=s description of intellectual history, it also makes it hard to see how Rorty himself, as an advocate for a new vocabulary, can succeed.   Rorty=s quietism about why we make leaps of faith into a new vocabulary seems to frustrate his own explanations for why we should choose to adopt this neo-pragmatist vocabulary.

Now in a certain regard, we may well wonder whether Rorty=s position is a consistent endorsement of his vision of liberal democracies. Do we really want more than a rhetorical exchange between incommensurable vocabularies?   Should we really want some sort of consensus?   If Rorty drops the Millian tradition's pretenses of discovering Truth through the process of argumentation, why can=t we acknowledge that

disagreements between different vocabularies are going to be fundamentally

undecidable? Why can=t we look at liberal democratic forums as a way of coping with

this incommensurability?

The problem is that there are virtues of reasoned arguments for and against a

particular vocabulary that are not connected to the hope of developing consensus. The

set of choices Rorty gives us is artificially restricted. The most promising alternative

Rorty neglects is the possibility for insightful, clear and ongoing discussion of a proposed

vocabulary. Arguments, even if not rationally decidable, help us to clarify our

vocabularies, strengthen our vocabularies, and revise our vocabularies. Even if

vocabularies are not argumentatively commensurable, we can have interesting arguments

between adherents of different and incommensurable vocabularies. Often out of an

argumentative exchange we don=t come up with Athe answer," but we do come up with a

better understanding of our own argument, the other options and the relative strengths

and weaknesses of each. Rorty too often makes arguments sound like the sort of thing

that goes on in mathematical proofs. He makes it sound like arguments settle issues, that

they prove one claim or another by an appeal to common criteria. Arguments, such as

political debates, are often, however, more like exchanges between different vocabularies

than logical proofs.   Despite the fact that everyone knows when they go into a political

debate that neither side is going to push the other against an argumentative wall, people

are interested in such arguments as ways of clarifying a particular vocabulary, of

weighing a particular vocabulary.   The problem with Rorty=s position is that it

underplays how arguments in cross-vocabulary shifts can be interesting and important.

Mill, I believe, would have recognized this facet of Rorty=s thought and feared it.

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Mill, while an active endorser of rival viewpoints, wedded that endorsement with an

emphasis on sustained, intelligent debate between those viewpoints. He wrote that:

> In the case of any person whose judgement is really deserving of confidence, how has it
> become so?   Because he has kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct.
> Because it has been his practice to listen to all that could be said against him; to profit by
> as much of it as was just and expound to himself, and upon occasion to others, the fallacy
> of what was fallacious. Because he has felt that the only way in which a human being
> can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject, is by hearing what can be
> said about it by persons of every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it
> can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in
> any mode but this; nor is it in the nature of human intellect to become wise in any other
> manner. The steady habits of correcting and completing his own opinion by collating it
> with those of others, so far from causing doubt and hesitation in carrying it into practice,
> is the only stable foundation for a just reliance on it: for, being cognizant of all that can,
> at least obviously, be said against him, and having taken up his position against all
> gainsayers - knowing that he has sought for objections and difficulties, instead of
> avoiding them, and has shut no light which can be thrown upon the subject from any
> quarter - he has a right to think his judgement better than that of any person, or any
> multitude, who have not gone through a similar process (Mill, 1859:   24-5).

While this passage is still, I think, steeped in residual metaphysical notions, the virtues

Mill writes about are still valuable after we get rid of metaphysics. Debates between

advocates of different vocabularies are not ways of coming to a better understanding of

the Truth, but they are better ways of understanding how useful a vocabulary is.

Persuasion in a post-metaphysical world will have a lot to do with cross-

vocabulary exchanges.   At the vocabulary level we should no longer conceive of

argumentation as resembling logical or mathematical proofs.   Argumentation at this level

if focused on inconclusive discussions of vocabularies. If Wittgenstein was right when

he wrote that language-games are connected to forms of life, then we have to pay

attention to what vocabularies are suited to what sorts of lives, and questions of which

life we want to live.   We need to have clearheaded ways of discussing these issues, ways

that while not immanently resolvable, are still illuminating.   What has to be balanced in a

post-metaphysical account of cross-vocabulary persuasion is the desire to ensure the

proliferation of various vocabularies, vocabularies which are unable to assure persuasion when dealing with other vocabularies, with conceptual room for an account of a process of constructive disagreement between those vocabularies. I claim that Rorty=s account articulates a vocabulary too weighted to the proliferation of vocabularies. My suggestion is that an account of constructive disagreement can focus on the functional considerations that motivate the adoption of particular vocabularies. This alternative account of cross-vocabulary persuasion suggests that argumentative incommensurability does not preclude intelligent debates between adherents of different vocabularies. While these debates won't resolve issues, they will allow us to learn about, discuss, and evaluate what work we can expect a vocabulary to do and how likely we think a particular vocabulary will do that work.   All we need for constructive disagreement is a common topic to discuss, not a common algorithm for deciding discussions.

In contrast to the thin account that Rorty provides of these decision making processes, I think we should develop a notion of Apractical rationality" in terms of functional interests.   While I follow Rorty=s account in construing this rationality in terms of dialogue rather than the application of a rule, it's also important to remember that this rational discussion can, at its best, exhibit intellectual virtue.   We need to stop thinking that rationality can only be the sort of mathematical rationality that involves the application of a common set of rules. Rationality can also be a way of critical engaging in disputes without assurance of the resolution of those disputes.   This notion of practical rationality, something Bernstein has helped to flesh out in Beyond Objectivism and Relativism, is a healthy way of ensuring enlightening disputes in a multi-vocabulary world.

This notion of Apractical rationality,≅ following the work of Blumenberg, provides the conceptual resources to balance Rorty=s deficit when it comes to charges of relativism and irrationalism. While there are good reasons to acknowledge the limitations of argumentative criteria in resolving disputes across vocabularies, rational discussion does not demand such criteria. Rational discussion can focus on the functional considerations that motivate the maintenance of a particular vocabulary. This discussion, though unable to Aprove" anything in the sense associated with mathematics, is able to make practical arguments about these functional issues.   This discussion clarifies the potential in different vocabularies, it clarifies what our choices are. Arguments about the merits of vocabulary permit us to intelligently compare different vocabularies.   These arguments, as Rorty insists, are not resolvable by a common algorithm.   But they do encourage, as Mill would have appreciated, sustained thinking about the merits of a vocabulary.   In the context of the freedom of discussion endorsed by liberal democrats, these persuasive arguments can be criticized and revised in a process of continual evaluation. In this manner, vocabularies can be strengthened and reworked.   They can be the products of general discussion , not isolated genius.

Making this shift, re-embedding vocabulary shifts in the context of a notion of Apractical rationality" is the best guard against the real threat of relativism: the treat of silly, immature and unenlightening intellectual conversation.   If we endorse this notion of practical rationality, we will, I think, be much closer to reoccupying the *commensurability function*.   What this function really gets at, I suggest, is the need for intelligent debate about the merits of different vocabularies.   This intelligent debate, however, does not need to have anything to do with metaphysics or commensurability.

All it requires is a sensitivity to the functional characteristics of different vocabularies and an acknowledgement of the value of clearheaded discussion. While we can=t claim to have a notion of metaphysical truth in order to protect well-thought-out rational dialogue, by refocusing disputes between different vocabularies on functional considerations, we can offer a sense of clash and clear thinking. We can get good rational arguments on the level of analyzing function-positions. While this might not lead to consensus, it does lead to a refined sense of our alternatives and the wisdom that Mill remarked upon above. We drop the idea of getting to complete consensus over the Truth, but we still keep the goal of intelligent debate. While such debating is easier to do within a vocabulary, it is still possible on the level of vocabulary shifts if we look to a discussion of vocabularies in relation to functional considerations, rather than about truthhood or falsehood. Truth and falsehood are the sorts of things you get when you have agreed upon rules that interact with the world in certain patterns. Functional considerations are the sorts of things you use when discussing vocabularies. These functional considerations, fluid in the stream bed of socialization, are not the sorts of rules that produce truths or falsehoods. They are, however, the sorts of things that let us understand what we are choosing between when we are discussing new vocabularies.

This functional account is also a means of explaining how advocates for a new vocabulary can persuade adherents of an entrenched vocabulary to adopt the new vocabulary. By a combination of reoccupation claims and therapeutic claims, advocates of a new vocabulary can make rational arguments for the superiority of a vocabulary. By making persuasive arguments about the very functional considerations that motivate participants in a vocabulary to maintain that vocabulary, advocates for a new vocabulary

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can persuade adherents of the entrenched vocabulary to adopt a new vocabulary.   In this account, evaluating the merits of a vocabulary is at the same time to evaluate what we consider Amerits."   The latter evaluation, of course, is not resolvable by appealing to common ground between vocabularies.   In fact, there is a natural conservative tendency at this level of function-positions.   Adherents of a vocabulary have been taught to see particular functional considerations as decisive.   Their imaginations have been constricted by tradition and socialization.   These restrictions, however, can be loosed by crises in a vocabulary and sustained therapeutic philosophizing.   The therapeutic theorists can convince us that we're heading in the wrong directions, by showing us how the very considerations that motivate us to hold onto our vocabulary are the causes of our affliction.   Over generations this sort of therapeutic philosophy can lead a society to replace one vocabulary with another.   The gradual aspect of vocabulary shifts, then, is explained as a process of resocializing us away from the functional considerations that have constrained our imagination.

The analysis of Rorty=s vocabulary in terms of function-positions provided in chapters2-4 helps illustrate the positive advantages of this account of cross-vocabulary persuasion. By relating Rorty=s vocabulary to the function-positions associated with the modern vocabulary, I have helped to set the groundwork for an intelligent debate about the merits of Rorty=s vocabulary.   While the function-positions I have outlined are, of course, open to dispute, this outline offers us a place to begin an intelligent comparison of Rorty=s vocabulary with the modern vocabulary. I have tried to show how Rorty successfully reoccupied many of the function-positions that concern modernists, while demonstrating why Rorty thinks we should just plainly give up certain desires. I have

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tried to show why metaphysics is a bad thing, and how we could choose a different orientation for our lives that would embrace our history, our contingency, our own communities. I have tried to make the Rortyian vocabulary persuasive for modernists.

In the process of this functional-analysis, function-positions which Rorty does not adequately address became apparent. This study, besides presenting and explication Rorty=s neo-pragmatists vocabulary, has offered some insights into ways we can improve Rorty=s vocabulary and thereby make his vocabulary more attractive to modernists. In a good Millian dialectical process, this study has helped us strengthen Rorty=s vocabulary. By specifying the limits of Rorty=s endorsement of relativism, and developing a post-metaphysical model of persuasion across different vocabularies, we can better imagine what a post-metaphysical world would look like and we can make this vision more attractive to modernists. If we rebuild Rorty=s neo-pragmatist vocabulary to incorporate this new understanding of vocabulary shifts, an understanding that focuses on the option for rational discussion of vocabularies in functional terms, we will have a more robust neo-pragmatist vocabulary. We will be better able to make it through the Rortyian turn.