

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS AND THE REAL

The role our conceptual framework plays in obtaining knowledge might be broadly described as follows: We obtain knowledge of the world by means of a set of concepts that are employed to make sense of items which (even if such items be our own experiences) are "in the world". Whether or not an item falls under a concept depends on the features of the concept and the item; nothing else. Picking out "correct" judgments will be "an issue to be settled solely by the concept and item in question".<sup>1</sup> In attempting to obtain knowledge that a particular item falls under a particular concept, we are nothing more than observers, ascertaining whether or not the concept, which has certain features, and the item, which has certain features, "objectively" match.

Specifying the content of our conceptual framework will then be a matter of getting the connections among concepts and items right. In so much as the laws of logic are of great importance in getting the connections right, it might be said that :

the laws of mathematics and logic are true simply by virtue of our conceptual scheme. For, it is certainly by virtue of that scheme that those laws are central to it; and it is by virtue of being thus central that the laws are preserved from revision at the expense of statements less strategically situated.<sup>2</sup>

The *nature* of our conceptual "scheme" is seen as the final arbitrator of truth and from the nature particular truths acquire their importance (or lack).

Such a sparse description needs filling in but before doing so we might consider several warnings that the above forms a flawed picture of our enterprise. These warnings come as arguments from Thompson Clarke and Richards Rorty that (respectively) a conceptual framework that requires the above kind of 'objectivity' leads to paradox and furthermore, that the very notion of conceptual framework contains 'the seeds of its own destruction'.

In this paper we will examine Clarke's and Rorty's arguments and conclude that while Clarke's position is assailable, the force of both arguments is felt by the above conception. In our examination we will see Clarke offer what is best conceived of as a transcendental argument that incidentally shows difficulty with the above while Rorty, in reaching his final position denigrates all transcendental arguments.<sup>3</sup> We conclude that realism and the claim that our conceptual framework is but one of many alternative conceptual frameworks that could be employed by persons in dealing with their environment are both notions whose bankruptcy stems from the same source. It is this source, in the standard conceptual framework, that we wish now to consider.

# I

In "The Legacy of Skepticism" Thompson Clarke argues that a close examination of skepticism and what Clarke calls 'philosophical common sense' (hereafter PCS) will show that both skepticism and PCS presuppose a conceptual framework that is fraught with paradox. Clarke's conclusion is particularly interesting in that the characterization he provides of this standard conceptual framework (SCF) seems to capture perfectly our intuitions about "objectivity" and "pure" knowledge. Clarke's strategy is to show first that both skepticism and PCS are tenable positions only if we employ the SCF.<sup>4</sup> However, Clarke argues, independent arguments show that if the SCF obtains, then skepticism and PCS yield paradox. Clarke can also be seen as offering a transcendental argument to show that given our concept of "dream" is as it is then it must be the case that our environment can be known as real.

Clarke begins by distinguishing two different domains of discourse, the "plain", and the "pure". Within the domain of the plain a knowledge claim does not require invulnerability. ("The domain, of course, is the everyday, the particular questions, claims, et. al., occurring within the specific, elaborate, contexts of everyday life," (p. 754) Clarke argues that implained the skeptic's doubts seem "absurd, irrelevant, and out of place". The question of philosophical import concerns how far the circle of the plain extends. Clarke claims that it extends far enough to include a plain species of "philosophical common sense". (p. 757) Clarke

see Moore as the paradigm articulator of the tenants of this plain PCS. Individually these tenants are just ordinary (at least at the beginning) bits of plain knowledge, e. g. a physiologist claiming for his purposes that we know when we are awake, not dreaming (p. 756), removed virtually, perhaps entirely, from the control of ordinary contexts. In order to philosophize properly, though, one is forced

to step outside the circle of the plain, ( which ) is to step outside the nonsemantical practice, then speaking simple English, ask, affirm, assess, but, as a consequence ( of stepping outside the plain), in unrestricted, un-trammeled fashion. The peculiarly philosophical character of questions and propositions is their 'purity'. What we ask, or affirm, is what the words with their meanings do per se. Our commitments, implications, are dictated solely by meanings. (p. 760)

In order to understand the notions of "nonsemantical practice", "purity", and "meanings per se" we must examine Clarke's myth of the airplane spotters. Consider a group of humanoids much like us except that they "never dream or hallucinate, whose sentences are unerring", add further that they have available to them only the concepts necessary for them to understand the situation in which they are in. The situation is described by Clarke thusly :

Pilots are being taught to identify enemy aircraft. Ten kinds of enemy aircraft, A, B, . . . J, are characterized in terms of their capabilities and mutually distinguishing features. The pilots are instructed to identify any enemy aircraft by running through a provided checklist of features. It is recognized that this may result in misidentifications : there are types of enemy aircraft, antiquated, rarely used, intentionally not covered by the checklist, which specifies features sufficient for distinguishing the ten types one from another but none from X, Y, Z, the antiquated types which the pilots are instructed to ignore. This procedure is adopted for certain overriding practical advantages. ( Clarke, p. 759 )

Given this description it is apparent that the humanoids are not in a skeptical situation. At this point, though, Clarke merely compares the position of the humanoid pilot with someone claiming knowledge within the plain. The meaning of the words of both are to be taken only with the qualification that certain "remote" possibilities are to be ignored. There are however, occasions when we wish to step back, remove ourselves from the plain and consider the pure meaning of knowledge claims. At this point we have stepped outside the plain into the pure. Pure knowledge is possible only in so far as our conceptual constitution is the same as the humanoids. For though the humanoid pilot realizes his spotings may be subject to the possibility that a airplane is of the antiquated type it is still possible for him (or someone else) to move to a "pure position" and identify the antiquated type.

PCS taken as pure is a possibility then only if our conceptual framework is standard. In order for there to be any pure knowledge at all, concepts and items must be related in the manner specified by the standard conceptual framework. That is, in order to have "pure" knowledge one's knowledge claim must be invulnerable, which in turn requires that one's knowledge be dependent solely on a particular item falling (objectively) under a particular concept<sup>5</sup>.

Using a similar strategy, Clarke argues that the skeptic too, but for slightly different reasons, requires the SCF. To begin, the skeptic must face up to the fact that his doubts carry no weight in the domain of the plain. Suppose that the skeptic raises the possibility that we could wake up sometime in the future and discover that we had been dreaming all along. This possibility involves the assumption that when we do wake up in the future we can know then that we are awake and not dreaming. Thus, the skeptic in such a case does not succeed in undermining knowledge, that is, in order for the sceptical possibility to be genuine some "plain" knowledge is required when we are awoken (that we know that we are not dreaming). Likewise, according to Clarke, the sceptic's other possibility (Pne) that we are perhaps asleep and dreaming (without any intimation that we could know one way or the other) has an epistemic requirement that must be met. This epistemic require-

ment, that at some point the real is knowable as real, is a central point in Clarke's argument and it has been questioned by Barry Stroud. But before considering arguments for and against this requirement, we will indicate how the above shows that scepticism also requires the SCF.<sup>6</sup>

In effect the sceptic argues that we are confined to making restricted claims as are the humanoid plane spotters. We are forever implained. But in order for our implained sceptical doubts to be genuine, philosophical knowledge must be possible though in fact unobtainable. In other words the sceptic postulates the SCF but argues that we are unable to step into the pure. We are unable then to rule out all the counterpossibilities to knowledge claims and are left in a sceptical position. At this point, "Plain knowing would then be viewed from an *absolutely objective* perspective, 'knowing' in a manner of speaking only". (Clarke p. 767)

Clarke's final argument that produces the actual paradox inherent in the SCF depends directly on the epistemic requirement mentioned above. The argument goes like this: Suppose that we ask the philosophical question, Q, "Can we ever know that we are awake, not dreaming?" Suppose further we answer, "Yes." If we answer this way, then Pe and Pne (the possibilities that we could wake up and realize that we had been dreaming) are genuine possibilities because the epistemic requirement is met and it is a possibility that when we awake later we will know that we are awake, not dreaming. If Pe and Pne are genuine then we must answer Q "No". If we answer Q with "No" then Pe and Pne are not genuine possibilities. But if this is so then there is no reason not to answer Q affirmatively. And so on.

According to Clarke the pathology of the situation depicted in "The Legacy of Skepticism" is as follows: (1) There are no particular features of my experience that are incompatible with my being asleep. (2) The epistemic requirement necessitates that in order to apply the concept dream the real must be knowable as real. But if concepts and items are related as the SCF specifies then, in order to incorporate (1) we must give up invulnerability as a requirement for knowledge. However (2) requires "pure" knowledge which in turn requires invulnerability.

Stroud has doubted the epistemic requirement upon which (2) above is based.<sup>7</sup> Stroud suggests that the concept dream requires only that there be someone who *believes* that it is possible to know the real as real rather than someone who *knows* the real as real. If Stroud is correct serious damage has been done to Clarke's argument. For Clarke's argument can be at least partially construed as a kind of transcendental argument to the effect that it must be possible for the real to be knowable as real. He argues that since we have the concept of dream and since it is not possible to have such a concept unless the real is knowable as real, then (the transcendental conclusion) the real must be knowable as real. This knowability of the environment as real then itself is not possible if we have a SCF, hence we cannot have a SCF. Stroud's general criticism of this argument would have as substitute a doxastic requirement for the epistemic requirement, thus, if the move is successful, blocking the derivation that it is possible that the real is knowable as real and also the further demonstration of the untenability of the SCF. As Clarke says, on such matters we must be wine tasters of the conceivable. However it does not seem to us that we are in quite that weak a situation vis-a-vis the substitution of the doxastic requirement for the epistemic one. We will now argue that no rational philosopher who holds the SCF thesis, nor any sort of ideal observer/evil demon could fulfill the doxastic requirement and that furthermore the belief that we are being asked to attribute to some person is unintelligible. Hence it is illegitimate to substitute a doxastic requirement for the epistemic requirement.

As knowledge within the SCF requires invulnerability thus any rational person who believes that the SCF is our conceptual framework and also believes that the concept of dream is not a marks and features concept will see at once that he will be contradicting himself if he believes that he can know the real as real for in such a situation invulnerability is unobtainable. No rational common sense philosopher can satisfy the doxastic requirement. Let us consider then whether or not the doxastic requirement could be met by an ideal knower of some sort. Now, if the ideal knower is to believe that he can know the real as real he must, as it were, look at the world "through our eyes". If he is an ideal observer in such a situation he will see



well before we could that he would never rationally satisfy the doxastic requirement. Thus neither the philosopher of common sense nor ideal knower with a SCF could satisfy the doxastic requirement. Let us consider what reply one should give to the further case of the ideal observer with a non-standard conceptual framework (as a candidate for fulfilling the doxastic requirement). Consider however, what is involved in such a situation. If the SCF is not employed by him who fulfills the requirement then the skeptic loses his all important dialectical tool, the requirement of the PCS that knowledge requires invulnerability, with which he challenges the claims of others to have knowledge. Hence by using such an argument the skeptic undermines his own case if he succeeds and, of course, has said something quite without point if the argument does not succeed.

There is one more defense that the proponent of the doxastic requirement might advance, though it does have the look of a rather extreme nature to some. One might argue that even though it has been shown that no rational ideal observer or rational person could satisfy the requirement it is still possible that a perfectly normal person might be found who for some reason had come to believe that humans have a SCF and that he knows the real as real, thus he can fulfill the doxastic requirement. The person who himself advances such an argument does not himself, of course, claim that he thinks the person's beliefs are correct.

We need here to look very closely at the person whose existence we are being asked to entertain to see if we can understand what we are being told. We can see that we are being asked to imagine a person who has a radically defective set of beliefs, beliefs that are blatantly contradictory. Now, it is pretty clear that we are going to encounter some difficult problems in translating this belief into something that we can understand. As Davidson has said

Hesitation over whether to translate a saying of another by one of various nonsynonymous sentences of mine does not necessarily reflect a lack of information: it is just that beyond a point there is no deciding, even in principle, that the other has used words just as we do but has more or less weird beliefs and the view that we

have translated him wrong. Torn between the need to make sense of a speaker's words and the need to make sense of his pattern of beliefs, the best we can do is choose the translation that maximizes agreement. Surely there is no point in supposing that in earnestly uttering the words 'There's a hippopotamus in the refrigerator' the other has disagreed with us about what can be in the refrigerator if we must also find ourselves disagreeing with him about the size, shape, colour, manufacturer, horsepower, and wheel base of hippopotamus<sup>8</sup>.

Here we are being asked to imagine that the person in question disagrees with us on a fantastic number of issues if we are even to begin to make sense of his pattern of beliefs. We might even be asked to imagine that he does not believe in the law of non-contradiction. It seems then fairly clear that it is illegitimate to appeal to even this figure to satisfy the doxastic requirement.

While Clarke's position is saved from Stroud's attack; placing him in the broader framework of Rorty's arguments will lead later to rejecting his final position. But we must pause first and reconstruct the position Rorty takes in "The World Well Lost".

## II

Almost all philosophers employ in some manner in their account of the relationships of persons and the world the notion of "conceptual frameworks". If the claims Rorty makes in "The World Well Lost" are correct the vast majority of philosophers radically misunderstand this relationship. Most importantly Rorty argues both that the notion of a conceptual frame-work is untenable and that the correspondence theory of truth and realism are either false or uninteresting trivialities.

According to Rorty the two distinctions needed to develop the notion of a conceptual framework were first perfected and codified by Kant; the spontaneity/receptivity distinction and the necessary/contingent truth distinction.

Since Kant we find it almost impossible not to think of the mind as divided into active and passive faculties, the former using concepts to "interpret" what "the



world" imposes on the latter. We also find it difficult not to distinguish between those concepts which the mind could hardly get along without and those it can take or leave-alone-and we think of truths about the former concepts as "necessary" in the most proper and paradigmatic sense of the term. But as soon as we have the figure in focus, it occurs to us, as it did to Hegel, that those all important *a priori* concepts, those which determine what our experience or our morals will be, might have been different. (Rorty, pp. 649-650)

Clearly then, if either of these distinctions is untenable the notion of "conceptual frameworks" is itself untenable. Let us first look at the spontaneity/receptivity distinction as this is viewed by Rorty. If it is the case that given the characteristics of an unsynthesized Kantian intuition there is no way to make the receptivity/spontaneity distinction and if unsynthesized intuitions are needed in the formulation of the spontaneity/receptivity distinction then the distinction will itself have been shown to be untenable. Rorty's argument can be seen as a kind of dilemma.

An intuition is either effable or not effable.<sup>9</sup> If it is effable then it is a perceptual judgement. If it is not effable it can have no explanatory power with respect to the conceptual framework of the organism in question. The dilemma then casts doubt on the positing of a faculty of the mind, receptivity, whose only function is to "receive intuitions".<sup>10</sup> The faculty of receptivity then seems perfectly superfluous. If the intuitions can exert no influence on how they are to be synthesized then the faculty that shapes the intuitions must itself have a faculty of receptivity in which it receives intuitions from the faculty of receptivity. If the faculty of spontaneity is capable of such receptivity then there is no need to posit another faculty of receptivity to receive the intuitions. There thus seems no need, as Rorty says to posit an intermediary between the physical stimulus and the conscious judgment. Nor is there any need to split the mind into a receptive faculty that simply blindly receives stimuli and an active faculty that interprets these stimuli.

There is then no neutral material which our conceptual scheme can be said to shape. We then move from the claim

that different *a priori* concepts supplied by varying constructions of the spontaneity/receptivity distinction give us different phenomenal worlds to having either to say a difference in *a priori* concept gives us "different worlds" or to dropping the notion of conceptual framework altogether. We can see then that a consideration of what is involved in the notion of a conceptual framework alternative to our own "contains the seeds of doubt about the notion of 'conceptual framework' so of its own destruction". (Rorty, p. 651)

The above argument is of considerable import, but there is as Rorty notes, a shorter way to cast considerable doubt on the notion of conceptual frameworks. This shorter way is the Quinian attack on the necessary/contingent truth distinction. Quine has suggested the distinction between necessary and contingent truth is merely that contingent truths are easier to give up than necessary truths. If we cannot make this distinction then, we cannot tell when we are altering the framework and when we are changing things within the scope of the framework. In so far as the notion of a conceptual framework presupposes a distinction between conceptual frameworks and empirical theories the notion of conceptual frameworks is undermined by Quine's attack on the cluster of notions involved in the analytic/synthetic distinction and the necessary/contingent distinction.

Both of the objections to the notion of conceptual frameworks so far considered depend on an attack on traditional ideas of givenness and analyticity and its relatives. There is, as Rorty says,<sup>11</sup> a much shorter way to attack the notion of alternative conceptual frameworks. Rorty develops these arguments from Davidson's John Locke Lectures and Berry Stroud's paper "Conventionalism and the Indeterminacy of Translation".<sup>12</sup> This argument turns on our inability to recognize as persons anything purportedly employing a conceptual framework other than our own. One should note that two individuals cannot be said to be employing different conceptual frameworks unless most of the sentences one employs would be translated by sentences false in one language and true in the other. One may reconstruct the argument as follows, only if we can find a case where most of the sentences of a speaker are matched up with false sentences in our language have we discovered the employer of a conceptual framework alternative to

our own. However, if we think of meaning in terms of the discovery of speech dispositions then we will not be able to draw a distinction between individuals using words differently from us and their having many very unusual beliefs. Moreover we shall never reach the limiting case in which most if not all of the sentences of the individual in question are translated as false, for that would simply show that we have not been able to translate the individual's noises into our language. Hence we shall never have any reason to think that there exists persons who employ conceptual schemes alternative to our own. One should note that this argument does not claim to show that there could not be individuals employing alternative conceptual frameworks. As Rorty says, we need merely employ our imagination and we may easily be able to tell coherent stories about how such individuals might exist all around us yet unknown by us. We thus reach a kind of antinomy in which we are unable to say whether or not there might be conceptual frameworks alternative to our own perhaps even now being employed by individuals we would not even take as persons.

The Davidson/Stroud argument can be used to answer what Rorty calls the standard objection to the coherence theory of truth, that "it cuts truth off from the world". (Rorty, p. 659). It is claimed by critics of the coherence theory of truth that the world is one definite unique way whereas there is no reason to think even if all our observational reports were in there would be one unique way to form from them one optimally coherent system.<sup>13</sup>

Now the Davidson/Stroud objection supplies a simple if temporizing answer to the standard objection to the coherence theory. Since most of our beliefs (though not any particular one) simply must be true—for what could count as evidence that the vast majority of them are not?—the specter of alternative conceptual schemes shifts to the possibility that there might be a number of equally good ways to modify slightly our present set of beliefs in the interests of greater predictive power, charm, or what have you (Rorty, p. 660).

We are then guaranteed that most of our beliefs must be true and that hence we cannot recognize anything as an alternative conceptual scheme.

We have seen then that the world must be such that most of our beliefs are true. Philosophers that speak of alternative conceptual schemes must employ the notion of the world as some sort of unspecifiable thing-in-itself. Realism is then an interesting view only in so far as one has not seen the purely empty quality of the realists notion of the world as a kind of distant goal of inquiry and cause of session. When we see the world as those of our objects of knowledge not currently under critical scrutiny then the only version of realism stateable is a quite uninteresting triviality.

In the Deweyian vision evidently endorsed by Rorty the arts and the sciences are not attempts to formulate truth or beauty but "Attempts to solve problems—to modify our beliefs and desires in ways that will give us greater happiness than we have now" (Rorty, p. 665). To briefly state what we take to be the major import of "The World Well Lost", any mode of thought which depends essentially on the notion of a conceptual framework or sees itself as involved in a search for the truth in any sense in which we are not automatically in touch with it has to come to terms with Rorty's arguments against conceptual frameworks and against a non-trivial version of realism.

We wish now to turn to a consideration of certain objections that might be raised to the arguments of Rorty's that we have considered. One might well suggest that if our intergalactic explorations were to bring us into contact with a group of objects that look much like humans, live in what look much like certain types of earth homes and communities, engage in what looks to us like lengthy conversations, make use of complex artifacts in going about their business, etc., whose language we could make no headway whatsoever in translating, we well might hold that the best explanation for our inability to translate their language lies in the fact that they employ a conceptual scheme alternative to our own. This would be particularly plausible if we had in the meantime encountered all sorts of aliens whose physical makeup is perhaps quite different from ours and had been successful in translating their language into ours. Let us consider what use can be made of this suggestion in the current dialectic. We have endeavoured to set out a case where it seems plausible to say that certain beings employ a concep-

tual scheme other than our own even though we are unable to specify the particulars of this conceptual scheme. If this is indeed the most plausible thing to say about this situation then it presents a serious difficulty for Rorty's attack on the intelligibility of the notion of alternative conceptual schemes.

Plausible as this explanation of the phenomena may appear, anyone who appeals to anything that goes on in this situation is in a radically untenable position. He is talking about what goes on in something that by his very own argument is incomprehensible both to himself and those at whom he is directing his example. Hence nothing about the situation we are now in is going to be affected by the suggestion that something incomprehensible to all involved in the argument might be true. If the proponent of alternative conceptual schemes appeals to any of the features of this supposedly different conceptual framework then he either must understand the framework in question hence contradicting his claim that it is an alternative to our own or he does not understand the conceptual framework in which case he is simply speaking gibberish. One can see then that even if one leaves aside his scruples about calling the things in our story persons we still cannot appeal to anything in their situation in argumentation. As parallels our remarks about Stroud's objection to Clarke, it will not do to simply say that even though we can never understand what it would be for "—————" to be true this does not mean or entail that "—————" could not be true. If we know what is being suggested to us then it is false that we do not understand "———" and if no one understands "—————" then obviously no one can appeal to it in argument.

It may appear to some that the argument we are here examining may depend upon some sort of verificationist principle. Critics may point out that just because we could never have any evidence for all or most of our beliefs being false it does not follow from this that most of our beliefs cannot be false. Again we have to know what is being suggested to us if we are to take account of it. We are here again being asked to speak a language that is unintelligible to us and to the person who is speaking it to us. The same occurs when we are asked to imagine a human society millions of years from now at which time they will assent

to an entirely different class of sentences than we do. Again we do not know what we are being asked to imagine here.

If one were to concede the absolute maximum of intelligibility to these anti-Rorty suggestions they at the very best present us with antinomies about which we do not know what to say. However, this charitable view of the object's remarks is conceding too much for, as we have argued, we cannot understand both sides of the purported antinomy. We do not even know what question we are being asked to decide.

### III

Almost all that we have so far considered can be seen as a criticism of the assumptions of traditional philosophy. In particular we have been at pains to show that as a minimum we cannot have a standard conceptual framework and more radically that the notion of conceptual frameworks and global alternatives are both bankrupt notions. It may well appear also that if the arguments set out by Rorty are correct considerable damage has been done to the notion of truth. Certainly anyone who sees any sort of search for the truth as a project that most people do not automatically fulfill would be right to be disturbed by the arguments considered herein. One should above all avoid expressing Rorty's argument as showing simply that there are no alternatives to our conceptual framework. Rather he has tried to show that there is no sense to be made of the notion of a conceptual framework and hence obviously no sense to be made of the notion of alternative conceptual frameworks. The equivocal use of "the world" by realists is also an extremely pervasive phenomenon. Here we refer to the world as the object of our unquestioned platitudes and the world as the unspecifiable cause and goal of inquiry<sup>14</sup>.

If Rorty is right about the untenability of the notion of conceptual frameworks then, as Clarke is dependent on the notion of a conceptual framework, Clarke's arguments will ultimately fail. Clarke, among other things, tried to show that we could not have a standard conceptual framework by attempting to show that our conceptual framework has features not found in SCFs. We wish now to turn to a consideration of how Clarke's argument fails and just as importantly to a consideration of the



fact that even though Clarke's arguments do not work, the criticisms used to show this failure cannot be used consistently against Clarke by the holder of the SCF thesis. In other words the argument does work against the holder of standard conceptual framework thesis.

Crucial to Clarke's attack on the standard conceptual framework are certain claims Clarke makes concerning the concept of dream. Clarke does not argue for these claims and says that it is hard to supply arguments on such matters suggesting that we can be merely wine tasters of the conceivable. It should be clear that if Rorty's arguments are correct then Clarke is not entitled to his claim about dreams; for this claim depends on the existence of concepts as entities which have some sort of content which can be got at by considering what we can imagine to be true. The content of the concept or its properties is then to be considered discoverable by this process.

If in the non-standard conceptual framework what a dream is can be said in some way to be constituted via what we think it to be then we do not have an objective content which we can somehow inspect. We need an inspectable, determinate concept of dream if Clarke's arguments are to succeed, but a dream as a phenomena and dream as a concept both have objective existence then it is not, as Clarke requires, a necessary truth that they match up. If the concept of dream is somehow constituted by our thought then Clarke's attempts to demonstrate a necessary feature of our conceptual framework does not succeed. What Clarke needs are concepts that are determinate and a world that is indeterminate but if he has this then he will not be able to get his necessary connection between experience and necessary features of either the world or non-standard conceptual frameworks.

It remains to consider why the sort of considerations brought against Clarke above cannot be used by the proponent of the SCF thesis. If concepts and items are determinate then it is possible that all references to the concept dream are purely referential<sup>15</sup> and it may be that through some causal process or other, people have the content of the concept of dreams wrong even though they do succeed in picking out the concept dream. Just as it is not necessary that Alexander the Great

was a famous military leader of ancient Greece merely because that is one of the standard descriptions used in picking him out it does not follow from the fact that we use certain descriptions in picking out the concept dream that the concept dream has certain properties. If the realist or the proponent of SCF's attempts to follow the line of criticism of Clarke used here he will end up cutting concepts and items from each other in such a rigid way that he will be unable to answer the skeptic, much as Clarke says. If he attempts to say that concepts and items are not determinate then he abandons in the process of the SCF thesis and undermines his own position.

#### IV

Let us begin a preliminary consideration of where all of this leaves us. Many philosophers will probably take as the most important consequence of the views herein examined the claim that there can be no sense given to the oft made claim that our conceptual scheme is but one of many equally acceptable global alternatives. This means that the tremendous amount of loose talk philosophers have engaged in during which they suggest the multitude of different ways of looking at the world should cause us to either tolerate quite diverse views or to hope for illumination of our own position by the study of conceptual schemes unlike our own are founded on a false belief. We should note that the denial of alternative conceptual frameworks does not lead to the adoption of any sort of "relativism" as may appear, but in fact removes the possibility of making sense of any sort of theory that claims truth is immanent or relative to conceptual schemes.

We are automatically assured of having mostly true beliefs and hence we have a very short way of defeating skepticism that does not simply assume skepticism false. On the approach herein being considered rather than being dragged into dreary controversies concerning competing criteria of truth, we have come to see that the correspondence theory of truth is true but completely trivial or simply depends on absurd realism. Paralleling our strategy in dealing with certain popular criticisms of transcendental arguments we must ask the realist what he means by his notion of the world. If he can tell us then he defeats his

own case for he knows then what the world is, if he cannot tell us then neither we nor he can have any idea of what he is talking about and are obligated to ignore the suggestions he is making.

Of nearly equal import are the arguments to the effect that people do not employ anything like what philosophers have called conceptual frameworks. We must then look for an account of the relationship between persons and their environment that does not employ the notion of conceptual frameworks. Rorty suggests that we modify our beliefs in order to solve problems and increase happiness. On this view truth might be said to take care of itself. Truth is a rather uninteresting property to ascribe to anything. Hard core realists will say that truth is being misapplied here. We would not even use the word 'true' if truth had not long been treated as the desired and distant goal of some sort of inquiry about the realists' world.

One would then need to turn to a study of the structure of the plain. We differ from Clarke in that we do not think the plain is best explained or explored via discovering what sort of conceptual framework we do have if we do not have a standard conceptual framework. One may well find that all one wants to know is buried somewhere in a very unplain structure. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.<sup>16</sup>

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#### NOTES

1. Thompson Clarke, "The Legacy of Skepticism," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 69 (1972), 754-769. All further references to Clarke's paper will be included in the text.
2. W. V. Quine, *Methods of Logic* (Third Edition), (New York, Holt, Reinhart, and Winston Inc., 1972) P. 3.
3. See "Verificationism and Transcendental Arguments", *Nous*, 5 (1971), 3-14, where Rorty argues that transcendental arguments are "parasitism arguments", that is, arguments that are used to buttress a position already held against a "revisionary scheme".
4. By SCF (standard conceptual framework) we mean the sort of conceptual framework specified in the first two paragraphs of this paper.

5. Recent papers attempting to define knowledge in terms of indefeasible, true belief can be seen as attempts by those working largely with the SCF to specify the part that invulnerability plays in the conceptual framework. For further elaboration on this matter see Melvin Ulm, "Chisholm's Fourth Axiom" *Philosophical Studies*, 25 (1975), 57-61.
6. See Anthony Quinton, *The Nature of Things* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), "We only have the concept of dreaming because there are identifiable tracts of our biographies in which an exceptionally high proportion of the beliefs we form are mistaken." (p. 152).
7. Barry, Stroud, APA symposium, December 28, 1972, commentary on "The Legacy of Skepticism."
8. "On Saying That", in *Words and Objections*, ed. by Donald Davidson and Jaakko Hintikka (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing co., 1969), 165-166. See also Davidson's remarks related to this in "Mental Events", in *Experience and Theory*, ed. by Lawrence Foster and J. W. Swanson (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), 79-102. It is of interest to note that Stroud himself seems to endorse the kind of argument being here given against the last case. Stroud stated in "Conventionalism and the Indeterminacy of Translation" in *Words and Objections* that "Any allegedly new possibility must be capable of being fitted into or understood in terms of our present conceptual apparatus. This means that what we count as possible is not as wide as the positivists have claimed" (p. 93). It would, we think, be of some interest to see if other attempts to defeat transcendental arguments by the substitution of a doxastic requirement for an epistemic one likewise ask us to consider persons whose patterns of beliefs are unintelligible to all concerned. One should note that it simply is not correct to say that this unintelligible suggestion might nevertheless be true for the person who says this can have no idea what he is talking about. See also Quine's remarks on "Prelogical Mentality" in *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M. I. T. Press, 1960), 57-61.
9. See Rorty, p. 650.
10. The precise characteristics of Kantian intuitions have, 'of course, been a source of great perplexity to readers of Kant. However, it does not appear to us necessary to give a lengthy defense of Rorty's treatment of Kantian intuitions. Virtually all the major commentators would agree that in so far as something plays the role of a particular subsumed under a universal, then the item in question is not merely an intuition. Rorty's claim that perceptual judgements are not merely intuitions can be supported by reference, for example, to the Introduction to the *Critique of Judgement* where Kant says, "Judgement in general is the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the general". (p. 18, Oxford edition) For a discussion of the relationship between intuitions and conceptualization, see Wilfrid Sellars, "Some Reflections on Kant's Theory of Experience," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 64 (1967), 633-647. See also Hegel's discussion of Kant in the third volume of his lectures on the history of philosophy, where he says, "Judgement signifies the combination of thought determinations as subject and predicate". (p. 430, Humanities Press Edition

11. See Rorty, p. 652.
12. The Davidson Lectures, delivered at Oxford in 1970, as of yet are unpublished.
13. See *Word and Object*, Chp. 1, sec. 6, where Quine gives similar reasons for rejecting the so-called pragmatic theory of truth and the definition of truth via the ultimate outcome of scientific method.
14. One can perhaps see a hint of this equivocation in Quine's remarks concerning difficulties in radical translation. "If the linguist fails in this, or has a hard time of it, or succeeds only by dint of an ugly and complex mass of correlations, then he is entitled to say—in the only sense in which one can say it—that his heathens have a very different attitude towards reality from ours and even so he cannot coherently suggest what this attitude is," "Speaking of Objects", in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays* (N. Y. Columbia University Press, 1969), 5-6.
15. See Saul Kripke, "Naming and Necessity", in *Semantics for Natural Languages* ed. by Donald Davidson and Gilbert Harman (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1972), 253-355. See esp. Lecture 1. See also Keith Donnellan, "Proper Names and Identifying Descriptions," in *Semantics for Natural Languages*, 356-380.
16. It is our view that the essential results of Clarke and Rorty were anticipated by Hegel in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. It may be easier to get a picture of where we are left if we examine Hegel's exposure of the inadequacy of various conceptual foundations for knowledge in relation to his notion of absolute knowledge as a level of consciousness at which it makes no sense to speak of alternatives to our knowledge claims and which is adequate for its own formulation and foundation.

