5 • Criticism, Justification, and Common Sense

5.1 A Pragmatic Account of Objectivity

I have characterized the project of determining what is good as a quest for self-understanding. It is an attempt to make sense of our own attitudes and evaluative experiences. If my theory of value is right, then the things that are good are the things it makes sense for us to value. The standards of value for things are the standards of rational valuation for us. Ideals are the self-conceptions through which we try to understand ourselves, to make sense of our emotions, attitudes, and concerns. Making sense of ourselves is not a matter of theorizing about an object whose properties we cannot affect. We *make* ourselves intelligible to ourselves by cultivating attitudes that make sense to us, by determining to act in accord with ideals we accept that have survived critical scrutiny.

My account of value thus hinges on its connections to our subjective states and contestable ideals. This raises the concern that there are no objective constraints on what attitudes make sense. A rational attitude theory of value would then have to represent values as merely subjective. Subjectivism is the view that the mere existence of a favorable subjective state taking x as its object (thinking that x is valuable, wanting x, identifying with an ideal that endorses x) makes x valuable to the person in that state.[1] If this were so, there would be no room for error or genuine disagreement in value judgments when people know their subjective states. In this chapter I propose a pragmatic account of how we can objectively justify our value judgments, and I defend it against several levels of subjectivist and skeptical criticism.

The subjectivist concern could be put like this. I identify the good with the object of a rational "pro-attitude." To have a pro-attitude toward something is to like it. But there are no constraints on what we might

rationally like. So, what is valuable is whatever we happen to like. A more challenging criticism would claim that there are no objective constraints on the ideals we could adopt that could rationalize taking up any attitude toward any thing. The choice of ideals is all a matter of taste, about which there can be no rational dispute.

The first objection rests on a false analogy between liking and other favorable attitudes. There are almost no constraints on what may be sensibly liked. But there are significant constraints on what can be a sensible object of other modes of valuation, such as love, respect, or admiration. It doesn't make sense to admire musical performances for being sloppy, humdrum, or out of tune. It doesn't make sense to respect people for being servile, immature, petty, or sleazy. It doesn't make sense to romantically love heartless people. Asserting an ideal that endorses these valuings is not enough to convince us otherwise. One must be able to tell a story that makes sense of the ideal, that gives it some compelling point, that shows how the evaluative perspective it defines reveals defects, limitations, or insensitivities in the perspectives that reject these valuings.

One might reply that since a person could like almost anything, as long as liking something can make it valuable, my theory still places virtually no constraints on what is good. But my theory does not quite allow that liking something makes it valuable. It says that what is valuable is the object of a rational favorable attitude, not the object of just any favorable attitude. If mere likings are not subject to rational criticism, they are not rational, but arational. Their objects, therefore, lie only at the margins of the good. Because it can make sense to disapprove of or otherwise disvalue what one likes, objects of mere liking don't count as unqualified goods. People may like what they judge to be junky food, insipid music, or kitschy art. This is consistent with the thought that what is liked usually has some value, however marginal.

Mere likings or tastes are distinguished from other attitudes in that they are largely exempt from processes of justification. No one demands that another justify her picking blue, or even chartreuse, as her favorite color. "There is no disputing about tastes" applies only to tastes, and it applies there because it makes sense to have a social practice in which people are allotted emotional space for the cultivation and free play of idiosyncratic valuations exempt from demands for public justification. This social practice is governed by the norm against disputation. Tastes are valuings that are constituted by this norm. What identifies a liking as a mere liking is its relatively complete exemption from justificatory demands, its nearly complete subjectivity.

Although rational evaluative attitudes are partly constituted by social norms that determine their appropriate objects, we still disagree about what attitudes to take toward particular things and persons. Should Pete Rose be admired as a great baseball hero, even though he betrayed the game by betting on it? Here, demands for justification come to the fore, where people offer reasons for and against rival proposals. People's attitudes are rational to the degree that they respond properly to these reasons. The norms of appropriate response are objective to the degree that they are determined by objective practices of justification.

What would it be for a claim arising from a process of justification to be objectively valid? An objective claim requires two things: the possibility of error or deficiency (the mere fact that one accepts a claim does not make it true or valid) and a basis for free agreement by different people on the same claims. I propose that a process of justification is objective if its participants can reach significant agreement or progress on the matters under discussion when they adhere to norms like the following:[2] All participants acknowledge the permanent possibility of a gap between their actual attitudes and judgments and what would be the most rational attitudes and judgments for them to hold. They acknowledge the equal authority of others to offer criticisms and proposals, giving them weight in discussion. For example, they may not dismiss others' criticisms out of hand or bully or belittle the people making them; they must instead offer reasons for rejecting others' proposals and accepting their own. (A group counts a consideration as a reason if its members commonly acknowledge it as counting for or against proposals.) No one capable of participating in justification is excluded from it. Participants must be consistent: they must be willing to apply reasons in the same way to their own and others' proposals. They are committed to making themselves mutually intelligible. This means that they aim for agreement or a common point of view and agree to work from common ground (mutually accepted reasons) toward resolution of their disagreements. Finally, the practice contains methods for introducing novel considerations as reasons and for criticizing what participants currently take to be reasons.

The practice of justification has been described as a process by which different travelers arrive at a common point of view in the "space of reasons" (Sellars 1963, p. 169). Justification is called for when people endorse different attitudes and judgments and when they have some interest or need to come to agreement. It is possible when people share some common territory in the space of reasons (the considerations each party accepts as counting for or against attitudes and judgments overlap) or

when they have the capacity to find such common territory. Reasons function like traffic signs in this space, directing people away from defective paths of reasoning toward a point of view all can endorse. The parties to a dispute try to reach a common destination by pointing to those signs that indicate defects in one another's points of view. They try to show that the perspective of those who disagree embodies defects such as inconsistency, ignorance, partiality, confusion, double standards, insensitivity, or pragmatic self-defeat. These are features that the others cannot rationally endorse and thus have reason to eliminate from their perspective. People provisionally call their attitudes and judgments rationally justified and objective when they are reflectively endorsable from a common point of view achieved in such normative discussion.

Objectivity can vary by degrees, with respect to both the scope of the justifying community and how well that community lives up to the norms of objectivity. Existing practices of justification fall short of this ideal. The norms against bullying and ad hominem attacks and in favor of universal, equal participation have arrived very late in human history and even now are weakly enforced. It is an open question to what degree human communities are capable of achieving objectivity in judgments or whether an objective agreement reached by a local community can be extended to the entire human community, or to all rational beings.

The importance of achieving objectivity in judgments about a given subject is also an open question. Liberal theory tends to sharply divide the morally right from the good, reserving objectivity in the strictly universal sense to the former and relegating the good to individual, subjective desires or tastes. Although morality demands objectivity of a wider scope and with more urgency than other values because disagreements here more often lead to violent conflict, it is a mistake to assimilate the good to pure subjectivity. The difference between the right and the good in respect of objectivity is a difference in degrees, not in kind. The good is grounded in communities of valuing, not just in individualistic liking (Walzer 1983). These communities usually should not cover all of humanity. Pluralism implies that different individuals and communities properly aspire to different ideals which need not be ranked in relative worth. The space of reasons is wide enough to accommodate diverse ideals.

Why does it make sense to engage in practices of justification that have a potential for objectivity? The project of figuring out what is valuable is a project of self-understanding, of making sense of one's own valuings. This cannot be a purely individual project, for the attitudes one has that tran-

scend mere liking are partly constituted by social norms of appropriateness that inhabit the public space of reasons. One can make sense of one's own attitudes only by taking up a point of view from which others can also make sense of them. To refuse to criticize and justify one's attitudes is to withdraw from this space and, consequently, to deprive oneself of the capacity to have and express coherently any attitudes beyond mere liking. Because we do have attitudes that transcend mere liking, we can make sense of ourselves only by participating in practices of justification. These practices have the potential for objectivity, since emotional communication, like all meaningful expression, requires a commitment to mutual intelligibility and must make room for the possibility of error and of common agreement. But why do people have reason to engage in normative discussion with others on terms of equality? For most of human history, mutual intelligibility has been achieved mainly by some people's forcing others to accept their attitudes as their own. I am skeptical of proposals that trace the norm of equal and universal participation to the internal logic of communication (Habermas 1975, pt. 3) or to its advantages for reproductive fitness (Gibbard 1990, pp. 76–80). Because this norm is of extremely recent origin (as Habermas 1989 showed), I suggest that its rational appeal be traced to historically contingent practices that make egalitarian social relations for the first time both conceivable and attractive.

This account of objectivity raises the possibility of a more sophisticated subjectivism than the one about mere liking. On this view, the subjectivity of value follows from the fact that ideals are *essentially contestable:* they inherently invite disagreement (Gallie 1955–1956). They invite disagreement, not just a parting of ways, in that the parties dispute with one another, seeking and so presupposing the possibility of agreement based on the exchange of reasons. But they inherently invite disagreement, suggesting that no rational discussion can settle the issue. If all ideals are essentially contestable, then one might think that no objectivity in value judgments is possible.

Consider the prospects for objectively criticizing and justifying the "reverential" and "populist" aesthetic ideals for classical music that were discussed in §1.4. I shall argue that (1) criticizing an ideal requires interpreting its associated attitudes; (2) interpretations can be supported by empirical evidence; and (3) interpretations of attitudes undermine or support their endorsement. A populist might interpret the reverential attitude as an example of the emperor's new clothes phenomenon—in truth, those who attend high-class symphonies and operas are bored and stifled, but, fearing

ridicule from their peers and social superiors, they feign appreciation. This can be empirically tested: would one feel relief and seek other musical enjoyments if those whom one regarded as one's social peers or superiors confessed their own boredom at concerts? This interpretation, if true, is clearly damning. But the highbrow music lover replies that he feels uplifted at concerts, not stifled. The populist attributes this feeling not to intrinsic appreciation of musical merits, but to snobbery—the feeling of superiority one gleans from appropriating aesthetic objects to create social distance between oneself and purported inferiors (Bourdieu 1984). This can also be empirically tested: does the highbrow aesthete abandon his reverence for particular pieces as soon as they become popular among the masses (consider Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata")? This interpretation is also clearly damning, if true. The highbrow aesthete may reply that his abandonment is due not to popularity but to excessive repetition and exposure, which makes any piece tedious. But then why do he and his peers so insist that the New York Metropolitan Opera stick to the same old repertory that it hasn't staged a new opera for decades? He replies: the musical geniuses of the past are peerless, and we are simply upholding the grand tradition of classical music in the same way those artists whom we revere would have upheld it. The populist interprets this tradition as betrayed by the very reverence thought to uphold it. Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin were revolutionaries, eagerly embracing new techniques, exploiting the richness of folk music and other popular genres through shameless quotation and outright plagiarism, breaking old conventions and making new ones, composing for instruments of the future. In revering the tradition by fixing it in an imaginary exalted past, highbrow aesthetes merely embalm a tradition whose vitality they have destroyed. Populists hold out the prospect that the dynamism and creativity of the classical tradition could be restored by breaking down the sharp line between highbrow and lowbrow music so carefully cultivated by their rivals.

This dialectic illustrates the ineluctable intertwining of interpretation and evaluation inherent in the quest for self-understanding. It can lay a legitimate claim to progress or improvement. For the challenges posed by adherents of the rival ideal, if supported by empirical evidence, cannot be honestly ignored by adherents of the ideal being criticized. They demand a response, which may consist in a change of attitude on the part of those challenged: they recognize features of their attitudes that they cannot reflectively endorse, and they alter these attitudes so they make sense in the context of an enlarged self-understanding. This explanation of valuational change supports the claim that the change constitutes a genuine

improvement, because it represents the change as clearing up confusions in self-understanding, as achieving greater consistency, as enabling one to carry on one's commitments more fruitfully than before (Taylor 1985b, 1985d). But even if the response involves sticking to one's guns, improvement can be registered in the form of extending one's understanding of what one is committed to in doing so and acting accordingly. Such extensions will affect one's attitudes and practices, just as judicial interpretations of legitimate statutes, in clarifying their implications, tend to make behavior more consistent with the law.

Where the best explanation of change of attitudes represents it as progressive, there is a legitimate claim to objectivity. This claim does not require a proof that there exists some end point of agreement, not yet discovered through rational discussion, that will settle all disputes. There is no way to know this independent of participating in the discussion of disputants. Their assumption of potential agreement is supported by every progressive change of attitudes in response to reasons offered by the other side. The continual eruption of yet new disagreements inherent in essentially contestable ideals need not undermine this assumption, as long as each side can register improvements in its own progressively shifting terms along the way.

Actual disagreements rarely exhibit the idealized rationality illustrated in the example above. Many vices and psychological obstacles, such as stubbornness, glibness, smugness, stultification, defense mechanisms, and repression, stand in the way of rational self-understanding and change. Debates are often suppressed or distorted through the exploitation of power relations between disputants, which rationalize the trivialization, ignorance, dismissal, or misrepresentation of challenges from the less powerful. Finally, disputants often speak at cross-purposes, appealing to considerations in a part of the space of reasons not within the horizon of those challenged, while at a loss to find ways to move them to a point where they can be recognized as reasons. Eventually, disputants may simply part ways and cease to discuss their differences or to care about them. One could then say that their practices embodied values that were simply different—as opposed to common values whose interpretation is contested—for which there can be better and worse answers objectively valid for both parties.

5.2 The Thick Conceptual Structure of the Space of Reasons

To justify an evaluative claim is to appeal to reasons that make sense of particular attitudes toward the evaluated object. To interpret an attitude is

to represent it as endorsable or not from an adequate evaluative perspective informed by such reasons. Therefore, a great deal hangs on the conceptual structure of the space of reasons. Pluralism maintains that the evaluative concepts by which we express our reasons for valuation and action are fundamentally diverse. They are mostly what Bernard Williams (1985, p. 140) has called "thick" evaluative concepts. The concept "snob" is one such thick concept, employed in a reason for rejecting the reverential ideal of music. Thick concepts apply to particular domains of action and guide particular feelings. They contrast with the "thin" evaluative concepts—"good," "bad," "right," "wrong," and "ought." The thin evaluative concepts are the most general evaluative concepts we have and are applicable to all domains of action and feeling. According to pluralism, the application of the thin concepts is largely determined by evaluative standards expressed in terms of thick concepts. Monists hold that we should bypass the thick concepts and try to directly access what is good, bad, right, and wrong. They think we should do so largely because they are skeptical about the fundamental reason-giving authority of claims expressed in terms of thick concepts. Before examining these skeptical challenges, consider how pluralism accounts for the reason-giving authority of such claims.

The distinctive feature of authentic thick evaluative concepts seems to be that they are simultaneously "world-guided" (particular facts must obtain for them to be applied) and "attitude-guiding" (they offer reasons for valuing and acting). In contrast, thin concepts are said to be only action- and attitude-guiding. This contrast may not hold up. For example, "good" is conceptually tied to such concepts as benefit or advantage, which are world-guided (Foot 1978a, 1978b). A significant distinction between thick and thin evaluative concepts can still be drawn if, as I contend, the thin concepts derive their world-guidedness only through their conceptual ties to thick concepts. Some thick concepts describe objects as meeting standards defined in terms of the attitudes they merit: as humiliating, ridiculous, wonderful, deplorable, titillating, fascinating, and so forth. Others describe objects as meeting standards defined without direct reference to attitudes. These include concepts of virtues and vices, such as sincerity, integrity, brutality, and stinginess, and non-moral evaluative concepts of qualities of character, such as being cool, cheeky, macho, independent, witty, and vivacious. That people meet standards defined by such concepts gives us reason to adopt various attitudes toward them, depending on their relation to us: pride, shame, respect, contempt, admiration, ridicule, approval, or disapproval. Concepts of human flourishing

and diminishment, such as autonomy, dignity, loneliness, and neurosis, guide the expression of various kinds of self- and other-concern, such as pity and respect. Aesthetic evaluative concepts, such as of the beautiful, the goofy, and the quaint, guide such responses as admiring contemplation, disparaging amusement, and nostalgia. Other evaluative concepts refer to institutionalized norms or rules that guide particular attitudes: the rude is that which warrants feelings of offense and indignation; the unjust warrants resentment; the immoral warrants guilt, shame, and outrage. We need a plurality of thick concepts to make sense of the variety of evaluative attitudes we have toward persons and things.

Most commentators have focused on the logic of thick concepts to support claims about the cognitive status of value judgments or about the ontology of values (Hare 1952; Foot 1978a; McDowell 1979; Williams 1985; Wiggins 1987a). I set aside these issues and draw attention instead to their reason-giving functions in practices of justification. Three features of thick concepts (besides their essential contestability) are important for understanding their role in making sense of our valuations. First, their applications are determined by interpretive processes that employ evaluative reasoning (McDowell 1979; Williams 1985, pp. 141–142). Second, their coherence depends on the social practices and contexts that make their proper attitudes intelligible (MacIntyre 1981, ch. 1). Third, they tend to evolve in reciprocal interaction with their proper attitudes (Wiggins 1987a).

The first feature of thick concepts defeats attempts to fix their applications in neutral factual terms that could be determined without employing value judgments. To apply them to new factual circumstances, we must be able to interpret their evaluative point. This demands that we engage in distinctively evaluative reasoning—reasoning which engages judgments about what standards rationally govern our attitudes. Consider how the rules of etiquette apply in the context of changing gender roles (Martin 1989, pp. 304–305). Traditional rules of etiquette encourage men to give women personal compliments. They discourage women from calling attention to their achievements or openly objecting to others' opinions. They also tell businesspeople to avoid personal compliments in a business context, while permitting them to seek credit for their achievements and to frankly express their disagreements with others about business projects. So, if a man compliments a woman on her clothing at the office, is he being gallant or rude? Can a woman succeed in business without being rude? Does women's liberation demand that we disregard etiquette? If etiquette were just a matter of descriptively fixed rules, it

would be in trouble here. In fact, the application of such rules in novel or apparently conflicting cases is open, pending an interpretation of their underlying evaluative point.

Judith Martin argues that the apparent conflict between rules of etiquette is generated by the fact that different rules apply to business and private sociable relations, combined with the sexist and obsolete assumption that women exist only in the latter sphere. In the sphere of private sociability, etiquette permits persons of either gender to compliment others on their clothing and generally to recognize their gender. This suits a function of sociable conversation—to facilitate the development of personal relationships. Social manners also discourage both men and women from aggressively asserting their opinions or calling attention to their achievements in polite conversation, for social occasions are supposed to add to the charm of life, not facilitate competition. In a business context, etiquette tells people to identify others according to their job, not their gender, and permits them to act competitively. These rules suit the functions of business, where performance is what matters, where gender doesn't matter to the performance of most jobs, and where competitiveness improves performance. On that account, when a man compliments a woman on her clothing in a business context or takes offense at her competitive office behavior, he is mistakenly applying private social manners to her. To do so is to imply that "when ladies are around, serious business is suspended" (Martin 1989, p. 305). This is an insult to women and disrupts their careers and the effective performance of the business as a whole. Etiquette therefore demands that men and women alike be treated by the rules of business etiquette in the business world and by the rules of social etiquette in social life. (This leaves open the possibility that many gendered rules of social etiquette can be internally criticized as demeaning to women.)

Martin's interpretation of the demands of etiquette (the extension of the thick concepts "polite" and "rude") constitutes a justification of the norms she recommends because it makes sense of our attitudes. We make sense of our attitudes when we meet various pragmatic demands: when, by means of our self-understandings, we articulate, cultivate, and refine our attitudes in satisfactory ways, when we overcome confusion and contradiction, orient ourselves consistently and successfully to our world, and do so in a way that withstands a reflective understanding of how we manage it. The activity of making sense of our attitudes by articulating the reasons for them or the underlying evaluative points toward which they are oriented guides our attitudes in ways more coherent and focused than before. Having accepted Martin's arguments, we are in a position to

engage in sociable and business interactions with persons of both genders with greater confidence and success and less ambivalence and confusion about what we are doing and how we should feel about it.

The refinement of attitudes that comes from reflection on thick concepts in justification sets the stage for further extensions of these concepts, often in radically new directions. Thick concepts and attitudes evolve in reciprocal interaction through history, in such a way that an extension of a thick concept that did not make sense at one point in time may make sense at another. This interaction is mediated by social practices that provide the background conditions for the coherence of the attitudes expressed in them. Thus, the application of the thick concepts "rude" and "polite" was once regarded as inescapably gendered in all social contexts. Even today, women who assert their opinions or claims on men—that is, women who act as equals with men—are judged more harshly by conventions of etiquette than men who behave the same way. But modern sensibilities about etiquette are evolving under the pressure not only of the moral norm of equal respect for all, but of concrete social practices that enable women to participate as juridical equals in marriage, politics, and the workplace. The gendered thick concept of social order that demands female submissiveness to male authority is being supplanted by more egalitarian conceptions of social order which make sense only against the background of the social practices that embody them. Such practices enable people to experience their social world as successfully ordered through more egalitarian norms and to cultivate sensibilities which help justify the norms that make sense of them. In the absence of such practices, people who rejected gendered norms of etiquette would be left with a sense of vertigo; they would be at a loss as to how to conduct themselves. Rejection in such a context would not make sense of people's attitudes or successfully guide their conduct.

The properties singled out by an egalitarian etiquette as calling for offense or indignation depend on the cultivation of a certain egalitarian sensibility. There is no way to identify the trajectory of an egalitarian sensibility for etiquette without assuming its own perspective, for this sensibility is responsive to culturally specific meanings internal to the particular social practices embodying it. Attitudes and their associated thick concepts evolve in reciprocal interaction and, when they inform a practice with vitality, tend toward ever-greater articulation, differentiation, and refinement. Thick concepts, because of their open-endedness and essential contestability, have a dynamic and generative character which enables us to envision new possibilities for living.

These features of thick concepts reflect the need to preserve their attitude-guiding functions. In interpreting the underlying evaluative point of such concepts, people seek to make sense of the valuations at stake in their disputes by characterizing their appropriate objects. The descriptive content of thick concepts cannot, therefore, be determined independent of a process of justification that engages our understandings of our attitudes. Judgments expressed in terms of thick concepts give us reasons for valuing and action to the degree that their scope is guided by a reflectively endorsable understanding of our concerns. Because our concerns and attitudes often make sense only against a background of socially contingent and historically evolving social practices and conditions, our evaluative concepts evolve in concert with changing social circumstances and offer opportunities for divergent interpretations in the face of social conflict.

Some theorists claim that thick concepts are inherently incapable of providing the terms in which authentic reasons and intrinsic value judgments can be framed. Authentic reasons and value judgments must motivate anyone who sincerely avows them. But people can accept claims expressed in terms of thick evaluative concepts without being motivated to follow them. This reasoning motivates the demand to bypass thick concepts and directly access the thin evaluative concepts (such as "good" and "right"). Only claims expressed in terms of the thin concepts are thought to have the inherent link to motivation that qualifies them as authentic. R. M. Hare (1981, pp. 72–75, 21–22) uses this argument to justify a monistic theory of value, according to which non-moral intrinsic value judgments are simply expressions of personal preference.

Hare's motivational requirement is unreasonable. For something to count as an authentic value judgment or reason, it must be reflectively endorsable. But actual motivational states are not always reflectively endorsable. One of the functions of value judgments is to note when one's motivational states are deficient because they fail to track what one judges to be good. Boredom, weariness, apathy, self-contempt, despair, and other motivational states can make a person fail to desire what she judges to be good or desire what she judges to be bad (Stocker 1979). This prevents the identification of value judgments with expressions of actual desires and preferences, as Hare insists.

The rational attitude theory of value says that to judge that something is good is to judge that it makes sense for someone to value it. This makes intrinsic value judgments at least six times removed from actual first-order desires for the apparent good. First, they are immediately

normative for attitudes, not desires. Second, they usually take persons and things, not states of affairs, as their objects. A person's judgment that a historic coal mine rescue was an excellent deed may inspire her awe for the rescuers, but what must it make her want to do? Third, they say only what a person's attitudes ought to be, not what they actually are. A depressed person could judge that her accomplishments merit pride, but be incapable of rousing herself to feeling it. Fourth, even when they inspire the right attitude, that attitude's motivational effects may depart from its rational demands. Appropriate guilt may induce paralysis rather than desires to make amends for any wrongdoing. Fifth, they may express impersonal judgments of value, not personal judgments of importance. A person could think it would be a very good thing if the couple next door kissed and made up, but she could also think it is none of her business to do anything about it. Finally, even intrinsic value judgments of high personal importance can still rationally leave a person wide latitude to indulge in caprice, impulsiveness, and sheer bad taste. A poet may judge that her dedication to writing fine poems is good and important. But this needn't prevent her from whimsically trying her hand at Hallmark greeting card doggerel. Nor does her choice commit her to the judgment that these mawkish ditties are any good or that it is good to write them.

Thus, no evaluative considerations *necessarily* motivate choice, for there can always be a gap between what one judges to be valuable and what one finds oneself actually caring about at a given time. Engaging in objective discussion with others is one of the ways we try to get our attitudes in line with what makes sense. Value and importance judgments framed in terms of thick concepts give people reasons for valuation because they provide the sensibility conditions for different ways of caring about things. Take away norms expressed in terms of thick concepts, permit only reasoning in terms of a homogeneous "good," and one wouldn't know whether it made sense to admire, honor, love, or merely like the object in question. Emotions, feelings, and cares would be reduced to a uniform, inarticulate blur if we were deprived of the thick concepts by which we delineate different *kinds* of goods. The application of thin evaluative concepts to the world therefore depends upon the outcome of discussions by which people try to make sense of their attitudes through the exchange of reasons. There is no hope of identifying what is good (right, wrong, and so on) or of defining a comprehensive, empirically determinate standard of goodness in terms that completely avoid thick concepts (Hurley 1989).

5.3 How Common Sense Can Be Self-Critical

My pragmatic account of justification takes as its starting point the commonsense evaluative intuitions that constitute the space of reasons for a community at any given time. An intuition is an opinion endorsed under conditions favorable to sound judgment—when one is reflective, calm, coherent, informed, and responsive to others' perspectives. Most commonsense intuitions are expressed in terms of thick concepts such as "kindness," "friendship," and "dignity." But philosophers have often attacked the use of intuitions and thick concepts to justify evaluative claims. Many worry that reliance on intuitions traps people into following judgments informed by superstition, prejudice, cultural bias, and obsolete practices. The intuitions of a racist are untrustworthy but supposedly impervious to criticism from an intuitive point of view. Intuitive thinking, incapable of critical self-reflection and tied to the status quo of received opinion, secures the smug in their prejudices, the hidebound in their habits, and the oppressed in their lowly positions (Singer 1974, p. 516; Brandt 1979, p. 21; Hare 1981, p. 76). Only a non-intuitive form of critical reasoning can rescue people from these failures, by giving them a standpoint independent of their social practices. Such critical thinking would bypass the culturally contingent thick concepts embodied in intuitions and would reason directly about the good and the right using only logic and value-neutral scientific facts (Hare 1981, ch. 1; Brandt 1979, pp. 22, 1990). This argument is the basis for consequentialist claims of having a critical advantage over pluralist theories such as mine that are grounded in social practices (§3.1).

I contend that all the genuine critical practices that make sense can be included in intuitive reasoning. Commonsense critical practices can objectively endorse the intuitions they employ because they already contain methods for criticizing what people take to be reasons and for introducing novel reasons in normative discussions. These practices, or ordinary extensions of them, provide all the reasons we have to reject or refine old intuitions and create new ones. They can meet all the demands for objective justification that it makes sense to care about.

Let's recall some of the conditions for objective justification (§5.1). Justification is a response to criticism, complaint, and conflicting views. It arises in the context of conversation among people who aim to reach some common point of view, and it is addressed to those who disagree. It is pointless to engage in justification when the parties have no interest in reaching agreement, when there is no concrete complaint, or when there

is no common ground from which to begin a dialogue. Common ground could consist in shared intuitions or in curiosity, trust, and a willingness to try alien practices. Common ground determines the starting point of justification. We try to reason or explore from it to a new position that resolves the disagreement (Rawls 1971, pp. 580–582).

Consider three ways in which one person might criticize another's evaluative claim. She could challenge the importance of the other's reasons in favor of his judgment; she could argue that the reasons don't really apply to the case; or she could challenge the authenticity of these reasons. To support a disagreement of the first type, a person must offer an *overriding* reason for judging differently. For example, in opposing the construction of a new intensive care unit, a hospital administrator may argue that it is more important to devote the resources the new unit would require to the prenatal care clinic. Reasons like this appeal to comparative value judgments of the kind discussed in §3.2 and §3.4. To support a disagreement of the second type, a person must offer *interpretive* reasons for thinking that the facts don't support the first party's claims. Against Sharon's complaint that Mark owes her payment for a loan, Mark could offer evidence that both of them understood her transfer to be a gift when it took place. People invoke interpretive reasons when they try to extend the application of a thick concept by interpreting its evaluative point (§5.2). To support a disagreement of the third type, a person must offer *undermining* reasons against the authenticity of the first person's values. That is, she must show that they don't make sense, that they don't reflect or support anything worth caring about.[3] The point of view from which they seem to make sense is shown, from a more objective point of view, to be confused, limited, or founded on error. This section will vindicate the use of intuitions and thick concepts in critical thinking by showing how they can generate undermining reasons.

When we inquire into the authenticity of values, what we wonder, generally, is whether it makes sense to value them for the reasons they purport to offer. No plausible account of making sense comes close to offering its sufficient conditions. But no such account is needed. We should ask no more of ethics than of science. Science provides no test that guarantees the veracity of its starting points. It is enough that it provides means for detecting and correcting errors and for introducing superior theories, concepts, and methods. Commonsense evaluative practices provide similar means. They offer a catalogue of critical strategies that generate undermining reasons and enable expansions of the space of reasons. More critical strategies exist than are listed here, and more could be

invented. It is reasonable for a person to think that a value is authentic when it seems to make sense to her and when it survives the gamut of critical strategies that can be launched against it in discussions governed by the norms of objectivity (§5.1).

Critical strategies can be roughly divided into three classes. Internal or "ethnocentric" strategies rely only on commonsense shared intuitions, armchair reflection, and ordinary observation. Scientific strategies draw upon empirical knowledge obtained through scientific investigations. Experiential and persuasive strategies enable people to grasp novel intuitions. Most worries about the conservatism of theories that appeal to intuitions result from the mistaken view that such theories can accept only strategies of the first type. Some intuitive theorists such as Walzer (1987) and Rorty (1989) accept the ethnocentric constraint. Their position, though needlessly narrow, has the merit of demonstrating how rich are the internal intuitive resources for criticism. Consider three such resources: internal coherence testing, narrow reflective equilibrium, and idealistic self-criticism.

Thick concepts can be tested for internal coherence and found to be irresolvably unclear. Or analysis could reveal that a purported thick concept cannot simultaneously perform its reason-giving and descriptive functions. John Stuart Mill (1977) used this strategy to undermine the use of nature as an evaluative standard. He showed that the concept of nature was deeply equivocal. Any interpretation of "nature" that had descriptive content had no normative force (for example, the natural as the usual). And any interpretation of "nature" that seemed to have normative force reduced to some other value (for example, the natural as the functional).

In the method of narrow reflective equilibrium people attempt to organize their intuitions into a coherent, consistent, systematic whole (Daniels 1979, p. 258). Critical development of their views works through exploiting the tensions and contradictions they find between the general evaluative principles they accept and their intuitions about particular cases. This strategy is driven by a desire for consistency and a sharper, more effectively action-guiding articulation of principles. Narrow reflective equilibrium can provide reasons that undermine intuitions about principles. One such reason could be that we can't find any particular cases in which they offer more sensible guidance than rival, simpler principles. Narrow reflective equilibrium can also provide reasons that undermine intuitions about particular cases. An example could be that we can't discover any evaluative point expressible in a principle that endorses the particular intuition. Reflective equilibrium does not merely offer a

strategy for constructing a consistent input-output decision-making mechanism: as the etiquette case illustrated in §5.2, reflective equilibrium accepts and rejects intuitions according to their capacity to express or promote some intelligible evaluative point.

Walzer's (1983, 1987) strategy of idealistic self-criticism moves beyond armchair reflection to a study of social practices. Its materials for criticism are the gaps between the actual practices of a community and the ideals by which a community justifies them. Ideals always stand at some distance from their supposed embodiments. This allows us to criticize the practices, institutions, or persons attempting to realize them by articulating their demands more adequately. Although the ideal of democracy in the United States is partly constituted by a conception of such social institutions as elections and representative assemblies, it is not exhausted by their present forms. It provides reasons for thinking that democracy would be better realized through reforms. For example, public financing of elections would reinforce the democratic principle that popular support, as opposed to the support of well-financed special interests, be the effective determinant of who gets elected. An interest in integrity motivates this critical method. It is not simply a matter of adjusting practices to fixed principles. Meanings can be implicit in practices which people haven't articulated at the level of principles. If they can articulate new ideals or principles which better account for practices they find fulfilling, then the practices offer grounds for accepting the principles. By accepting them, people can engage in their practices more self-consciously and effectively than before. In other cases, accepting some principles that purport to account for our practices might make them go less well than before. This would provide powerful evidence that there is something wrong with our practices, our principles, or both (Taylor 1985d).

Criticism does not stop at interpreting the demands of intuitions and practices. It can also undermine the factual beliefs underlying them by drawing upon scientific knowledge. This is how people discover that their intuitions are founded upon prejudice, superstition, cultural bias, and other cognitive distortions. There are at least six ways science can be used to undermine intuitions. First, science can show that a factual concept used for normative purposes is radically at odds with causal knowledge. This was shown for the teleological conception of nature needed to sustain Aristotle's theory of the good and for the concept of race as a biological category which is needed to justify certain racist practices. This kind of criticism is especially important for undermining claims about instrumental goods and bads, for example, the notion of witchcraft as an

instrumental evil. Second, science can provide evidence that an ideal cannot come close to being realized, and so is merely utopian. This need not undermine the ideal's authenticity, since the options open to human beings just might be miserable. But it does undermine attempts to generate action-guiding norms from the value, because such norms would be futile. Defenders of capitalism employ utopian criticism against democratic socialism when they argue that there is no "third way" between capitalist democracy and totalitarian communism (Hayek 1944). Third, science can show that there are viable alternatives to practices that are justified on grounds of necessity or are thought to reflect an inevitable framework of thought. Anthropologists have exposed alternatives to social practices based on a bi-modal concept of gender; and radically different conceptions of masculinity and femininity than those structuring Western gender roles (Ortner and Whitehead 1981). Fourth, historical reflection can undermine an intuitively accepted norm by showing that it has lost its function or point. Early-rising was a virtue when nearly everyone was a farmer and the productive use of daylight hours was a condition of responsible farm management. It is obsolete for people in urban settings, who can fulfill their responsibilities at other times.

Fifth, social theory can show that the background social conditions needed to make sense of a thick concept do not exist. Social practices may not support the application of normative distinctions that once made sense. Surviving legal documents from early medieval Europe invoke the rich vocabulary of Roman law. But historians discovered that early medieval institutions of property and contract were too primitive to support full-blooded applications of Roman thick legal concepts. The words survived their meaningful uses and functioned as little more than magical phrases conferring legal authority to contracts actually enforcing simpler obligations than the words in their Roman context would suggest (Cheyette 1978).

Finally, genealogical criticism can expose the incoherence of a value by showing that vicious or self-deceptive motivations are required for its genesis,, evolution, and endorsement. The purported reasons for supporting the suspect value are masks for attitudes their own adherents cannot reflectively endorse. Nietzsche (1969) used genealogical criticism to attack Christian morality. While Christians and moralists claim to support morality as an expression of universal love, it in fact expresses *ressentiment* against noble, powerful, vital people. Morality involves a pragmatic contradiction, for the only motive that can move people to embrace it is one that morality must condemn. Genealogical criticism of different

forms also underlies the critical methods of psychoanalysis and consciousness-raising (Ricoeur 1970; Fay 1987; MacKinnon 1989).

A final class of critical strategies appeals to experiences whose most illuminating or compelling descriptions invoke alien intuitions. Some philosophers have suggested that a person's evaluative experiences are mere creatures of the intuitions she already accepts (Harman 1977, ch. 1). If an individual has the intuition that persons of color are inferior and thus need not be respected, then she will experience disrespect toward them without outrage, horror, remorse, or other emotions that embody a contrary intuition. This empirical claim is false. People often experience events in evaluative terms that are at odds with their intuitions.[4] Such experiences, if not accounted for in terms that enable a person to discount their putative claim on herself, pose a challenge to her evaluative perspective. They can cause crises whose rational resolutions require the creation of a new evaluative perspective that does justice to the experience.

Crises can be brought about by factors other than anomalous experiences. Practices may fall into crisis, as new circumstances and experiences render them incapable of performing their functions or make their participants lose confidence in their evaluative point. They may cease to provide a useful map of the practical landscape. Moral and political theories that relied on the idea of a hierarchical order of beings, with God and the King at the top, nobles and clerics next, and different ranks of commoners at the bottom, each inferior subject to the face-to-face authority of some superior, had to break down once classes of people arose who were "masterless"—such as vagabonds, who, wandering the roads, had no immediate superior. These people couldn't be fit into the old political map, which could find no norms to govern them. Liberalism provided a new account of legitimate political order, appealing to the thick concept "consent," which was designed to accommodate "masterless men" (Herzog 1989, ch. 2). In testing political regimes against the consent of the governed rather than against conceptions of the cosmic order, liberalism introduced new intuitions and thick concepts into political debates and undermined old ones. This innovation can be justified by the fact that it provided a perspective which explained why the older system fell into crisis, and that it enabled people to resolve or dissolve the crisis, while successfully performing the practical tasks demanded of it.[5]

A justified change to a new normative perspective need not be motivated only by crisis. Sometimes persuasion is sufficient. One person or culture can present a new perspective in an especially appealing way, opening up possibilities never before imagined. People commonly

change their aesthetic intuitions in this way. They are invited by others to see if they can experience and appreciate a work of art in the terms proposed by them. Rational persuasion need not operate by direct appeal to the thick ethical concepts endorsed by an agent. Typically, the persuading agent must establish her authority with those she wishes to persuade. She may do so by joining the community she wishes to persuade. Having gained the members' trust, she may convince them to try the norms she endorses, but they don't. Or a stranger may manifest extraordinary qualities of courage, mercy, or charisma recognized by others who do not share her intuitions. Her possession of these exemplary qualities may give them reason to credit her perspective with authority, for they may view her admirable qualities as signs of the worthiness of her perspective.

John Stuart Mill's defense of equality in marriage uses a persuasive strategy (1975). While he defended marital equality on grounds of justice and the welfare of women, Mill also sketched an appealing picture of an ideal of marriage as a friendship between equals. This ideal was alien to much of his audience. Yet Mill rightly believed that exposure to such marriages could exert a powerful attractive influence. Unequal marriages in which wives are treated merely as servants are notorious for their emotional sterility. Wouldn't men who reflected upon the contrast between their own lives and the richer, more fulfilling lives of self-confident men living in more equal marriages feel a tinge of envy toward them and perhaps even of self-contempt in recognizing that their own sense of self-esteem is staked upon bullying domination? If persuasion did not work for men set in their ways, it held promise for their sons, who knew their fathers' failures all too well and had the flexibility and ambition to seek something better.

This catalogue of critical strategies is not exhaustive. But it is sufficient to put to rest the objection that intuitive thinking is incapable of critical self-reflection. None of these critical strategies requires wholesale rejection of appeals to intuitions. They all work through people's common sense, intuitions, and experiences. Even the scientific strategies rely on second-order intuitions about the reasonableness of intuitions. This is true of all the critical strategies thus far put to use outside arcane philosophical contexts. The indeterminacies and tensions in intuitive thinking, combined with changing social circumstances, personal experience, and scientific knowledge, provide people with ample reasons and materials for self-criticism. They have reason to find a new perspective superior to their old one if it articulates the concerns they were inarticulate about, resolves

their contradictions, clears up their confusions, enables them to determinately apply them to their old predicaments (or to new ones they confront), allows them to settle practical conflicts that were unresolvable under the old perspective, or simply permits them to lead their lives in terms they find more compelling (Taylor 1985b). The critical strategies outlined above enable people to find such superior perspectives, without resort to heroic attempts to transcend ordinary modes of reasoning. If an intuition is defective because of cultural bias or other factors, people can discover this fact through ordinary means of investigation.

My view of criticism might suggest that I accept the coherentist, antifoundationalist account of justification known as "wide reflective equilibrium." According to this view, a judgment is justified to a person if it is part of a coherent, reflectively stable system of beliefs she holds, including (a) intuitions about particular cases; (b) intuitions about general principles; and (c) various background scientific and ideal theories, including theories of the person, of moral development and human motivation, of social order, rational choice, and so forth (Daniels 1979). I resist identifying my position with theories of wide reflective equilibrium. Wide reflective equilibrium demands that justified evaluative judgments form part of a theoretical system, but it isn't evident that our evaluative intuitions can or ought to be systematized into theories in the way supposed (Baier 1989; Noble 1989).

More important, theories of wide reflective equilibrium usually fail to think through the implications of the social character of justification. Justification is concerned with making sense of our concerns and attitudes. But rational attitudes are essentially constituted by social norms the authority of which can be established only in dialogue with others. A person may be in personal wide reflective equilibrium but know that his attitudes are poorly developed as a result of inexperience, defective character, neuroses, or other problems. These facts give him reason to distrust the deliverances of his own attitudes and judgment and to trust the intuitions of more experienced, wise, reflective, and virtuous people. Every person has reason to take seriously the judgments of others just from the fact that any individual's own point of view, no matter how reflective and informed, is still limited by his personal biography and particularity. In emphasizing the availability of methods for learning from and persuading others, I avoid the charges leveled against coherence accounts that they are merely subjective or give us no way to adjudicate disputes between incompatible but internally coherent systems (Singer 1974, p. 494; Hare 1976, p. 82; Brandt 1979, p. 22; Copp 1984, p. 161). Discussion, persua-

sion, and interaction can provide new conceptual resources for mutual understanding and adjudication of disputes.

5.4 Why We Should Ignore Skeptical Challenges to Common Sense

The conception of justification in which thick concepts and common-sense intuitions function does not satisfy certain skeptical doubts. On the view I defend, justification involves meeting specific intelligible complaints and criticisms by means of arguments that begin from some common starting point. There is no need to justify the entire framework of justification or to justify the starting point in the absence of evidence that the point in question involves some specific ethical or cognitive error. Although any particular intuition or thick concept can be intelligibly criticized, it makes no sense to criticize the whole lot at once, for the only way we can frame an intelligible criticism is in terms of some intuitions and thick concepts whose authenticity must provisionally be presupposed.

Skeptical critics of intuitions reject intuitive claims in the absence of independent reasons to accept their authenticity. Some moral theorists used to believe that intuitions report observations about an independently existing, nonnatural realm of values. But few can accept the extravagant platonic metaphysics needed to sustain this foundationalist account of justification. Alternatively, one could take a coherentist approach to justification and argue that intuitions are among the beliefs with which any satisfactory evaluative system must cohere. But for this to be the case, we must have a reason for granting them some initial credibility. Lacking an account of the authority or credibility of intuitions, they have no probative value at all (Brandt 1979, pp. 20–22; Hare 1981, p. 76).

This criticism of intuitions is sometimes expressed in the claim that the point of justification is to answer the skeptic. To justify intuitions to a skeptic, an account of justification must explain how intuitions could be justified *in themselves*. But the best a coherentist account of justification can do is explain how intuitions can be justified relative to a person's beliefs and concerns, which themselves may be faulty. No appeal to intuitions can justify evaluative claims in themselves without begging the question against the skeptic (Copp 1984, pp. 142–143, 147–149). Critics of thick concepts draw two normative inferences from these arguments. First, lacking some answer to the skeptic, we must prefer skepticism to the use of intuitions in evaluative argument (Brandt 1979, p. 3). Second, we should search for some way to reason about the good and the right which

bypasses intuitions and thick concepts. Only by finding a direct route to the right and the good that is independent of evaluative intuitions can we justify value judgments in themselves (Brandt 1979; Hare 1981). The need to respond to the skeptic motivates a reductive, thin account of values.

I will argue that it doesn't make sense to care about meeting skeptical standards of justification. This response is unlikely to disarm philosophers driven by skeptical doubt. So I also offer a diagnosis of the motivations that lead philosophers to entertain skeptical doubts. I argue that such doubts are incoherently expressed in skepticism toward evaluative intuitions. These motivations are tied to misleading disanalogies between science and ethics, as well as to intuitions about the normative authority of science which are inconsistent with its official skepticism toward all intuitions.

We have no reason to take skeptical challenges seriously, because their practical implications are absurd. Brandt claims that if no independent grounding can be given to our intuitions, then we should prefer skepticism. Like most critics of intuitions, Brandt confines his skepticism to *moral* intuitions—intuitions about moral right and wrong and perhaps also about a person's good. But none of the skeptical arguments against intuitions hangs on any supposed peculiarity of moral intuitions. If they work against moral intuitions, then they work against all evaluative intuitions, including intuitions about rationality, good grammar, good arguments, and good scientific experiments.[6] Should we cease to speak grammatically, or to correct one another's grammar, because we have no account, independent of our intuitions about grammar, of what it is to be grammatically correct? This is absurd. We have no way of making sense to one another apart from following the rules of grammar.

It might be suggested that the concept of making sense allows us to draw a distinction between intuitions about grammatical and epistemic values and intuitions about other kinds of value, for the latter are not needed to make sense of anything. This is a grave error. As argued above, we need value judgments to make sense of many of our basic emotions, cares, concerns, and practices. The *moral* skeptic is in a position to argue that we would be better off without guilt. Perhaps morality is bad for us. But moral skepticism makes sense only against a background of intuitions about other goods, such as human flourishing, health, or perfection. The skeptical arguments employed by the critics of intuitions cannot stop at morality. If they work, they work against all evaluative intuitions. They amount to the recommendation that, in the absence of some transcendent justification, we should cease to care about things in *any* of the ways that

involve intuitive value judgments. We must cease to admire or aspire to be anything and cease all the practices that embody value judgments. This kind of life is conceivable. Fish and birds lead such lives. But it is absurd to claim that humans must live like birds and fish if they can't "justify" living like humans.

In any event, the skeptic has nowhere to stand in deriving normative implications from his skeptical claims. To assert that skepticism is to be preferred to any value judgments is itself to rely on a normative intuition that somehow escapes the skeptical demand for justification. To this, the skeptic might reply that he is merely making a theoretical point, that no account is forthcoming of how intuitions can justify evaluative claims *in themselves,* apart from any relation they may have to any person's beliefs and concerns. This retreat from practice to theory in discussions of justification is incoherent. Justification is an inherently normative concept directed to what claims we ought to accept. If it doesn't make sense to adjust one's beliefs according to their relation to some standard, the standard doesn't count as a criterion of justification at all.

The skeptic might respond: but surely it makes sense to care about whether one's values are right or wrong *in themselves!* After all, being justified relative to some set of beliefs and concerns isn't satisfactory if the beliefs and concerns are mistaken. This claim is not strictly true. Some mistakes are harmless or inconsequential. More important, the skeptic must come up with a notion of what it would be to be mistaken, or to fail to make sense, which is not discoverable by means of any of the critical strategies outlined above or by any analogous strategy that makes use of evaluative intuitions. On the pragmatic view of justification defended here, all our evidence for the soundness of value judgments expressed in intuitions is contained in the following kinds of facts: that such judgments express what we actually find to be valuable; that they successfully orient our lives, actions, and feelings, providing them with points we can reflectively endorse; and that they survive the kinds of criticisms sketched above. If our intuitions enable us to overcome frustration, confusion, irresolvable conflict, irresolution, and similar pragmatic defects, why should we purge them from our lives?

The skeptical demand seems to be for some ontological underwriting of our intuitions, some demonstration of how they can track a realm of objective normative facts or "values in themselves" that can be characterized independent of our concerns. It is difficult to see how the success or failure of intuitions to track some realm of facts characterized *independent* of our interests and concerns could or should matter to us. Being valuable

is just a matter of meeting standards that it makes sense to care about; making sense, in turn, is just a matter of achieving a perspicuous self-understanding justified in pragmatic terms.

The skeptic, then, has no argument that we should care about meeting his standards and, hence, no argument that his standards constitute authentic demands of justification. But skeptical arguments against intuitions are so popular that some diagnosis of their appeal should be made. All the above-mentioned skeptics of evaluative intuitions believe that science provides a model of how to justify claims in themselves. Their skepticism about the justificatory power of evaluative intuitions is derived from a supposed contrast with the justificatory power and authority of science. Specifically, they are struck by a presumed disanalogy between observation statements in science and particular intuitions in ethics. We appear to have an account of how observation statements can provide evidence for theoretical claims about a world that exists and operates independent of our concerns. But particular ethical intuitions cannot provide an analogous kind of evidence for evaluative claims without presupposing an extravagant platonic metaphysics. So the kind of justification available to science is not available to ethics (Harman 1977, ch. 1). Skepticism about evaluative intuitions is a way of expressing reverence for science in conjunction with a normative intuition that any practices that command comparable reverence must exhibit the same structure of transcendent justification supposedly available to science.

This line of thought undermines itself in at least two ways. First, the relevant analogy to evaluative intuitions in ethics is not observation statements in science, but its evaluative standards of evidence, method, and argument. What evidence do we have that our norms of evidentiary relations and scientific method are authentic? We know only that they successfully guide the construction of theories that realize various epistemic values which make sense to us, such as predictive power, simplicity, fruitfulness, and coherence. We have no account either of how these epistemic values track values-in-themselves or of how the realization of these values enables us to track truth-in-itself. The interpretation of these epistemic values is also as essentially contestable as those in any other domain (Kuhn 1977). Justification in science depends upon evaluative intuitions that are on a par with the evaluative intuitions we follow in any other practice.

Second, the skeptical attitude that reflects a reverence for science depends upon an intuition about norms for reverence that stands in need of the same justifications as any other. In fact, the reasons for our rever-

ence for science—its satisfaction of aspirations toward mastery over nature, autonomy, and mature, objective understanding, unsullied by childish superstition, wishful thinking, and slavish obedience to authority—are themselves dependent upon acceptance of the normative authority of claims expressed in thick concepts (Taylor 1985a, pp. 235, 244). The skeptical demand is incoherent, because it makes the warrant for holding science in awe dependent upon the very norms it calls into question.