

## Examples for MRes Philosophy of Knowledge Session 4

### ***Rorty on Pragmatism***

Pragmatists think that the history of attempts to isolate the True or the Good ... supports their suspicion that there is no interesting work to be done in this area. It might, of course, have turned out otherwise. People have, oddly enough, found something interesting to say about the essence of Force and the definition of "number." They might have found something interesting to say about the essence of Truth. But in fact they haven't.

... This does not mean that they have a new ... set of answers .. to offer, but rather that they do not think we should ask those questions any more. ... they do not invoke a theory about the nature of reality or knowledge or man which says that "there is no such thing" as Truth or Goodness. Nor do they have a "relativistic" or "subjectivist" theory of Truth or Goodness. They would simply like to change the subject.

Pragmatism cuts across this transcendental/empirical distinction by questioning the common presupposition that there is an invidious distinction to be drawn between kinds of truths. For the pragmatist, true sentences are not true because they correspond to reality, and so there is no need to worry what sort of reality, if any, a given sentence corresponds to -no need to worry about what "makes" it true.

Introduction to Richard Rorty (1982) *Consequences of Pragmatism*, University of Minnesota Press.